

Portugal Highlights – 11 days / 10 nights

Portugal

“Life is not measured by the breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.”

Day 1 – Arrival Lisbon

Arrival at Lisbon International Airport and Check-in at your Hotel.
Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Lisbon – 4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

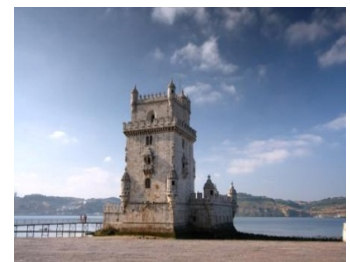
Day 2 – Discovering Lisbon



After breakfast - Visit the most impressive historical parts of Lisbon.

Today Begin by exploring the typical quarter of Alfama and its narrow streets that remember the Moorish occupancy and which leads up to Saint George’s Castle. Enjoy the view from the walls of this old monument. Drive through The Black Horse square – an immense square that brings downtown to the Tagus River, the largest river on the Iberian Peninsula.

Tagus River is cross by two bridges. The oldest one is 25th April Bridge, considered to the present day’s one of the largest suspended bridges of Europe. Vasco da Gama is the other bridge that cross this river, with a total length of 17.2km, it was also for a long time considered the largest bridge in Europe.



After a visit to Alfama, we continue to the quarter of Belém, from which the Portuguese Caravels sailed off to the epic maritime discoveries. Once in Belém, visit two of Lisbon’s ex-libris: the church of Jerónimos Monastery and the Tower of Belém – whose origins date back to the 16th century, both considered World Heritage by UNESCO and represent the most luxurious and prestigious times of the Portuguese Monarchy. Before leaving Belem, a visit to the "Pasteis de Belém" -



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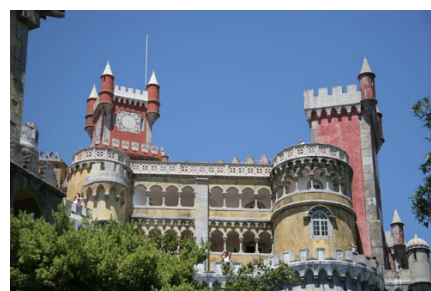
Pastry Shop to taste the delicious and traditional "Pastel de Nata", served warm with sugar and cinnamon on top.

Overnight in Lisbon

4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

Day 3 – Sintra / Cascais & Estoril

After breakfast leave in direction of the majestic village of Sintra, It is easy to reach from Lisbon, just a 30-minute drive. Portugal's fairytale town on the edge of Europe and its mystical hills dotted with fairytale palaces and extravagant villas have bewitched visitors for centuries. It is indeed an extraordinary place with a surreal mixture of history and fantasy, protected by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Its fairytale palaces, incredible vistas, and notable museum collections make it a destination you should make the effort to see Here have free time to walk in the streets of the village of Sintra (Cultural Landscape by UNESCO) that enchanted Kings and inspired poets to appreciate the several handicraft shops and tea-rooms to taste the delicious local sweets like the "queijadas" or the "travesseiros".



Leave to Colares, region demarcated and recognized for its table wines, following until Cabo da Roca, the most western point in continental Europe, passing for the beach of Guincho until Boca do Inferno always sea viewing enjoying the landscape.

Return to your hotel passing by the magnificent coast. Panorama view of the Bay of Cascais, continue on to Estoril where stands the famous Casino do Estoril and back to your hotel **in Lisbon for Overnight**

4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

Day 4 & 5- Algarve area South of Portugal –

Today you will be heading South to the Algarve, around a 3 hour drive.



The Algarve region presents one of the premier Portuguese holiday destinations. With its breathtaking cliffs, natural bays and grottos, beautiful beaches, luxury resorts, and picturesque whitewashed towns, foreigners flock to the region when summer arrives. Spend the rest of the day chilling out and the

Hotel or a one of the beautiful beaches.



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Spend these 2 days wandering through the Algarve.

To the west of Faro you'll find the classic postcard images – namely a series of tiny bays and coves, broken up by weird rocky outcrops and fantastic grottoes. They're at their most exotic around the major resort towns of Lagos, Armação de Pêra and Albufeira. Other recommended stops include Alvor and Ferragudo, which still retain some character and are close to fine beaches. Inland are the interesting old market towns of Loulé and Silves, the nineteenth-century spa town of Caldas de Monchique and the neighbouring market town of Monchique. West of Lagos beyond Luz, development has been restricted by the Parque Natural do Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina, which embraces most of the coastline. As a result, erstwhile fishing villages as such as Burgau and Salema retain a fair amount of charm, while the south coast ends at a dramatic cliff-edged plateau around Sagres, with fine beaches and a lively surfing scene.

The coast north of Sagres is the least developed part of the Algarve – partly because this stretch of the Atlantic is distinctly cold and often pretty wild.

East of Faro, there's a complete change as you encounter the first of a series of sandy offshore islets, the ilhas, which front the coastline virtually all the way to the Spanish border. The resorts here have a more Portuguese feel than those in the central stretch, and first-choice bases here would be Faro itself – capital of the entire region – Olhão, Fuzeta, Cabanas or Tavira, all of which offer access to the sandbank islands.

Most of the other resorts on this stretch – with the exception of Monte Gordo – are fairly small-scale, while the Portuguese coast peters out at Vila Real de Santo António, a historic small town that preserves a fair bit of character. Vila Real lies near the mouth of the Rio Guadiana, which forms the Spanish border. **Overnight in the Algarve area.**

4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

Day 6 - Évora / Esporão

After Breakfast, departure to Évora one of Portugal's finest and most delightful towns with lots to see and visit. It is a true open-air museum with a large number of wonderfully preserved monuments and buildings of public interest. In Évora, visit the ruins of the Roman Temple, the Romanesque Gothic Cathedral, and the Chapel of Bones. A walk along its streets will help you to enjoy this typical town considered World Patrimony by Unesco. Évora is a living tradition, with a rich history, handicrafts and gastronomy.



Because of the extremely rich variety of its architecture, which has been preserved and kept alive, with its heritage from different cultures and different eras, this site of the



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Portuguese Court during the period of the Discoveries (16th c.) and one of Portugal's oldest universities has kept intact the historic walled centre, palaces, convents and monuments that were the stage for some of the most important events of the country's history.

Outside the walls, on the open plains, the religious presence (from prehistoric times to 18th cent.) is marked by the grandeur of the sanctuaries and monasteries.

Overnight in Évora -4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

Day 7 - Óbidos /Coimbra

In the morning travel north, towards Coimbra, with a stop to visit the stunning town of **Óbidos** – a walled medieval town that has been restored to its original ways by eliminating all the signs of modernity, such as TV aerials, any traffic within the walls. The houses are built in medieval architecture and it has many small churches, as it is a custom for any rich family to build a chapel or a church as a way of thanking for heavenly gift. The visit of Óbidos is done on foot, for over an hour.



Continue in route to visit Coimbra, one of Europe's oldest university towns, it has kept its secular academic traditions, as seen in the black-caped students, in the soulful tones of the "Fado de Coimbra" (traditional song sung to the sound of guitars, by the students) and in the Queima das Fitas, a boisterous celebration of the students' graduating year.



The university, one of the oldest in Europe and the oldest academic institution in the Portuguese-speaking world, attracts visitors from around the world due to its monumental buildings and history.

In Coimbra you visit the university (Overlooking the city with its old tower and a sumptuous Baroque library), the library and church of Santa Clara.

Overnight in Coimbra or Viseu.

4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar



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Day 8 –Peso da Regua – DOURO VALLEY

After breakfast at the hotel depart to Peso da Regua, with a stop in **Viseu** according to some explanations, the city's name derived from the Roman term "viso", which means a good view, and in fact from its highest point, where the original settlement was formed in Roman times, Viseu offers its visitors some quite magnificent panoramic views.



Viseu is located in the centre of a demarcated wine region that has taken the name of the river passing through it - **Dão**. It is an area that produces reds and whites of exceptional quality, ideal accompaniments for the region's excellent cuisine, with a special mention being reserved for the roast veal cooked in the Lafões style.

Douro Valley - land of Port wine. This is definitively one of the most beautiful wine regions in the world. The region is characterized by the steep terraced vineyards that line the wide and winding Douro River, and the white and yellow hacienda style wineries (called "Quintas") that punctuate the hillsides. The source of the Douro River is in Spain, 200 km from where it spills out into the Atlantic in Porto and the most beautiful part is certainly the Douro Valley in Northern Portugal. Main wine hubs on the river are Pinhão and Peso da Régua.

This is the land of Portugal's finest wines where you will find mythical names for wine lovers like Quinta do Crasto, Quinta da Pacheca, Barca Velha, Quinta Nova, Quinta de la Rosa, Quinta do Tedo, etc... The spectacular vineyard terraces climb up on either side of the river like giant steps and the landscapes are extraordinary.

At Douro valley visit the village of Peso da Regua, Pinhão and the Douro Museum.

Peso da Regua - Situated on the banks of the River Douro, Peso da Régua played a fundamental role in the production and sale of Port wine, for it was from here that the barrels were transported in the special boats known as barcos rabelos to Vila Nova de Gaia, where the wine was left to age in the local wine lodges. In this region, the vines are grown on terraced slopes leading down to the river, providing visitors with a series of spectacular views, which are best admired from the area's many viewpoints, such as those of São Leonardo at Galafura and Santo António do Loureiro.



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The **Douro Museum in** Peso da Régua is a regional museum and the ideal place for welcoming visitors and showing them a representation of the memory, culture and identity of the Douro wine region, classified as World Heritage.

In Peso the Regua - we suggest lunch and a special visit to The Wine house Hotel <http://www.wonderfulland.com/pacheca/>

Pinhão is considered to be the geographical centre of the Douro demarcated wine region, and it is here that many of the Port wine estates are to be found, some of which offer accommodation under the system of rural tourism. Worthy of particular attention here is the railway station, built at the end of the nineteenth century, the inside of which is entirely lined with panels of azulejos.



Overnight in Douro Valley /4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

Day 9 – Porto

After Breakfast, departure in direction to Porto - discover Porto, acknowledged by UNESCO in December 1996 as World Heritage. Also in 1998, the European Union chose, together with Rotterdam, Porto as European Capital of Culture for 2001, recognising its qualified cultural activity. Known as well for its bridges, especially the Maria Pia, build by Eiffel and the D. Luís I bridge built by a pupil of Eiffel.



First of all we suggest a visit to the **São Bento railway station**, with its walls covered with painted azulejos form the 1930s, as well as the Cathedral, which began as a fortress church in the 12th Century, visiting the Cathedral a panoramic drive through **the Praca de Batalha, Avenida dos Aliados** and the **Clérigos tower** Porto's landmark and panoramic view point dating back from the 18th Century when baroque style flourished in the region, the **Stock Exchange Palace** – the most exquisite example of the 19th century piece of architecture, headquarters of the Oporto Commercial Association.



Continue along the Douro's riverside to pay a visit to **the local market – Mercado da Ribeira**. Cross the river Douro to the other side **Vila Nova de Gaia** – where the famous Port wine cellars are located, visit some more wine cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia. Not to be forgotten that Port wine is the much celebrated



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Portuguese wine, which originates from the Alto Douro region and is transported down river to the south bank cellars, opposite to the city, to reach its stage of maturation or do a

Cruise in the Douro River – duration of 1 hour – approx..

With this cruise, you can enjoy not only the magnificent overall view, but also the six bridges that unite Porto and Gaia. As we depart from the quay, you will have the opportunity to observe Ribeira, D. Luís Bridge, Monastery Serra do Pilar, Infante Bridge, D. Maria Pia Bridge, S. João Bridge and Freixo Bridge. As we get closer to S. João Bridge, we turn back, allowing you to see Oporto, World Heritage. After passing by D. Luís Bridge, we continue direction Arrábida Bridge, so that you can see the mouth of the river Douro and Afurada, the land of the fishermen. **Overnight in Porto**

4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar

Day 10 – Porto /Guimarães / Braga / Porto

Today you will be driving from Oporto to Guimarães & Braga.

Get around Portugal's Most Historical City Guimaraes. This city is for visitors, especially if they are interested in the country's history. Located in the Minho region in north Portugal, Guimaraes is hailed as the 'cradle of Portugal' for two obvious reasons. First, it is the birthplace of the country's first king, Afonso Henriques. Second, it was the first capital of the newly established Portugal kingdom.



Furthermore, the city is considered as one of the most important historical cities in the country. To prove this, its historical center has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. One historical structure in Guimaraes, Portugal that visitors should not miss paying a visit to is the Castelo de Guimaraes. While it was built in the 10th century to protect the people from the attacks of Moors and Normans, it is also believed to be where the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques, was born. Moreover, the Igreja de Sao Miguel de Castelo stands next to the castle, the church where the king was believed to be baptized. Besides its historical importance, the church is a view in itself because of its Romanesque structure.

Also standing across the church is the Palace of the Dukes of Braganca or the Paco dos Duques. Built in the 15th century, it is a medieval palace that houses a huge collection of furniture, carpers, porcelain, and portraits that date from the 17th and 18th centuries



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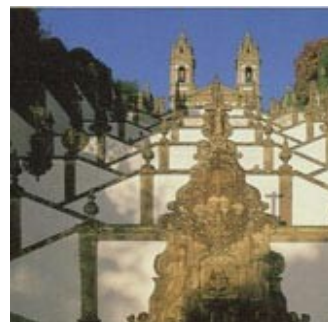
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Before exploring the ancient city of Braga we will make a break for lunch. Braga has always been an important centre for culture, commerce and religion with beautiful cathedrals and churches, the main attraction of the city.

Many of them were built yet in the beginning of the Middle Ages. The local citizens cherish the legacy of the past. Nowadays simply every church or cathedral of the city is home to unique religious artifacts. The historic part of the city is the most interesting one from excursion point of view. There is a beautiful park - Gardens of Saint Barbara - in the center of it. A large park with shady valleys and old trees will become a perfect destination for people who want to escape from the bustle of the city and enjoy the splendor of nature in its full. Return



to your hotel. **Overnight in Porto-4 star hotel /boutique hotel or similar**

Day 11 – departure day

After breakfast check-out your Hotel and departure from Oporto airport.



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