

Destination Portugal & Travel Guide



Major Airports

The largest airports in Portugal are Lisbon Portela Airport and the Francisco Sa Carneiro Airport in Porto. Faro Airport is also used for those looking to stay in the Algarve region.



Highlights of Portugal Off the Beaten Path

Evora

Evora is located just east of Lisbon. A World Heritage Site, it is home to the impeccably preserved Roman Temple of Evora, and many other historic artifacts from a wide range of time periods. Evora is also known for its wine, offering many wineries to visit and tasting tours.

Braga

Braga is often referred to as the religious center of Portugal, with a symphony of church bells ringing out every hour from the various churches and cathedrals. Visit the Braga Cathedral with its large collection of sacred art, or climb the stairway to the Bom Jesus do Monte and get a bird's eye view of Braga and beyond.

Coimbra

Coimbra was the capital city of Portugal until the 13th century, when it was decided to move the capital to Lisbon. Wander the streets of this well preserved medieval and historic town, and visit the iconic University of Coimbra with its famed baroque library.

Sintra & Estoril

Take in the stunning Portuguese coastline with a stop in exclusive Estoril. Wander the streets and immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of this lively town. Then explore Sintra, just next door. Sintra is home to the best preserved medieval royal palaces, where the Portuguese Royal family spent their summers.



Top Activities and Experiences in Portugal

Pilgrimage to Fatima

Located in a small town located near Lisbon, Our Lady of Fatima sanctuary is a Catholic pilgrimage site where the Virgin Mary allegedly appeared in 1917. Even for visitors who are not of the Catholic faith, Fatima is an important place to visit. The Basilica de Nossa Senhora and its beautiful gold angels, and the Museu de Arte Sacra e Etnologia, which hosts many historical artifacts, are worth exploring.

See a Fado Performance

Fado is a traditional type of music in Portuguese culture dating back to the 19th century. A Fado performance is recommended for all travelers as you get to experience the music, dance and food that makes Portugal truly special.

Douro Valley Wine Tasting

Explore the beautiful Douro Valley by bus and boat. Visit Amarante and Provensende before you set sail down the Douro River, making stops for wine tasting along the way. Take in the beautiful views and learn about how wine is an important part of the Portuguese culture.

Guimaraes, Where Portugal Began

Guimaraes is in the northern part of Portugal and has been a UNESCO listed World Heritage Site since 2001. This city has historical connections to the emergence of the Portuguese national identity dating back to the 12th century CE. This town is well preserved, letting you go back in time and walk through a medieval settlement in modern times.



Essential Portuguese Foods to Try

Caldo Verde

Caldo Verde is a traditional Portuguese soup that is more popular among locals during the winter months. This green soup usually includes collard greens, potatoes, garlic, onion, olive oil and salt and pepper. Some more modern recipes now include meat such as ham hock.

Piri Piri Chicken

Piri Piri is a pepper that originated in Mozambique, but was brought back to Portugal. It is mixed with a variety of other spices and is a marinade for chicken and still holds a lot of tradition in both Portuguese and South African cultures.

Bacalhau

Bacalhau is Portuguese for “Cod,” and is a main staple in Portuguese cuisine. Cod used to be fished far away, so it was pickled in salt so it would survive the journey back home. Nowadays, cod is still used for many dishes, the most popular being Bacalhau a Gomes de Sá which is traditionally served on Good Friday, but can be found in many restaurants. The dish consists of salt cod, potatoes, onions, hard boiled eggs, olives and olive oil.

Pasteis de Nata

Pasteis de Nata is a custard tart that is usually served for dessert. This pastry can be found at many bakeries and cafes around Portugal.



Most Popular Itineraries for Portugal

The best Portugal itinerary really depends on the type of traveler you are. For a solid, all-over view of the country, a round-trip from Lisbon covering the best of Portugal is the way to go. You can also opt to stay in Lisbon as a city break on its own, as many of the country's smaller highlights are reachable on a day trip. The same can be said of Porto, though if you are spending more time in this city, it's well worth taking some time in the Douro Valley, particularly on a cruise.

Tips for Sustainable Travel

If you are looking to travel sustainably, then Portugal is the place for you. With many UNESCO listed World Heritage Sites, and ample sustainability initiatives all over the country which put an emphasis on gastronomy, crafts and history, there are many local and regional efforts to preserve the wonders of nature and Portuguese culture. Many cities in Portugal are connected via train making it easy to get around while keeping the environment in mind.

Where to Go Next

One of the easiest countries to visit after you tour Portugal is Spain, as they share a border. However, Europe does have some of the best train systems in the world, making it easy to continue your trip in France or Holland. Also, worth noting is the quick ferry ride across the Mediterranean to the shores of magical Morocco.