

Portugal

Europe's West Coast



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Index

- P. 3 Introduction
- P. 7 Lisboa
- P. 11 Porto e Norte
- P. 15 Centro de Portugal
- P. 19 Alentejo
- P. 23 Algarve
- P. 27 Madeira Islands
- P. 31 Azores
- P. 35 World Heritage
- P. 37 Golf
- P. 39 Gastronomy and Wines
- P. 41 Sun and Sea
- P. 43 Culture and Leisure
- P. 44 Useful information

Portugal Europe's West Coast



Portugal keeps all of its charms shielded behind its jagged coast – a line of sand and foam caressed by the sea breezes. Cloaked in an air of mystery that has lasted for more than 800 years, this country is genuinely diverse, and it is here that all of the most intriguing dualities become inextricably intertwined: past and present, a long cultural heritage and the simple joy of living.

A place of sun and sea, history and cosmopolitanism, Portugal's rich collection of monuments brings great charm to the nation's life and provide a contrast with the lightness of its inhabitants' relaxed and carefree spirit. With its unique geographical location and its distinctive Atlantic flavour, the West Coast invites visitors to enjoy the pleasures of nature, beaches, gastronomy and entertainment. In this land filled with sunlight, an inexhaustible source of energy, the past reinforces the sense of the present.

In the midst of medieval castles and modern shops, Roman, Gothic and Manueline monuments, beaches with deep blue seas and rolling green plains disappearing into the distance, historic villages and luxury resorts, the sophisticated cuisine of great chefs and the simple delights that the sea can offer, contemporary art museums and prehistoric rock drawings, golf courses and busy, vibrant avenues, there live a people who are creative, open and welcoming, who wish to share with you the best of everything that they have and know about, appealing to your senses and celebrating life.

"From Marvão one can see almost the entire land.

[...]

It is understandable that from this place, high up in the keep at Marvão Castle, visitors may respectfully murmur, 'How great is the world'.

Journey to Portugal by José Saramago, the 1998 Nobel Prize winner for literature

Marvão Village, Alentejo



Lisboa

Lisbon, the capital of light, sprawls along the right bank of the River Tagus, keeping to itself the mystery of both those arriving and those departing. With its twenty centuries of history, it is a city that sails through time, remaining forever vibrant and cosmopolitan. A city with a soul, it combines the charm of the narrow cobbled streets of its traditional quarters such as Alfama and Mouraria with the hustle and bustle of its busy avenues and the new urban development of Parque das Nações. The only capital city in Europe where the sun sets over the sea, Lisbon is a city of contrasts, in which history and modernity coexist harmoniously by the side of the river. The Mosteiro dos Jerónimos and the Torre de Belém are neighbours of the Centro Cultural de Belém and the Berardo Collection Museum. The sun-coloured trams are an original way of discovering the real heart of the city and the many stories that lie hidden there. The tile-covered façades of its buildings tell stories in all kinds of different colours, while the cobblestones of the pavements draw black and white pictures of fish, flowers, mermaids and birds. In Bairro Alto, one of the city's oldest and liveliest quarters, there are bars, restaurants, design and fashion shops, all standing side by side with "tascas" (taverns), where you can listen to **fado**, the music in which the Portuguese soul sings of its fate. Close at hand is Chiado, one of the city's most charming quarters and the centre of its cultural life, with its theatres, bookshops and cafés with long literary traditions, such as the Brasileira, where the poet Fernando Pessoa sits waiting for you on the terrace outside.

Twenty minutes from Lisbon is Estoril, with its attractive cosmopolitan atmosphere. In Cascais, a former fishing village, the typical streets are filled with shops selling leading international brands, while in the marina the anchored boats and yachts sway peacefully in the wind, dreaming of their next voyage. Also a mere stone's throw from Lisbon, the romantic town of Sintra stands lost in the mists of time and its landscape still retains the magic of hills dotted with royal palaces and mysterious castles. No visit to this area is complete without a trip down to Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of continental Europe, where every day Mother Nature offers a quite unique spectacle when, in the evening, the fiery sun plunges into the ocean.

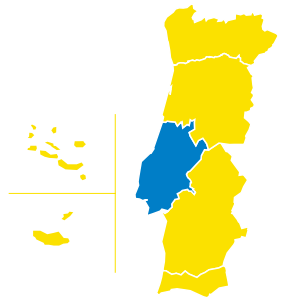
Make your way down to the River Tagus and

its estuary and let yourself be dazzled by the beautiful images of the flamingos and its nature reserve. Over the other side of the river, between the mountains and the sea, the Arrábida Natural Park invites you to enjoy the adventure of extreme sports, or inspires you to engage in some more personal moments of meditation. But don't miss the chance to visit Setúbal and watch the dolphins play from very close up in the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve.

North of Lisbon, Óbidos keeps its medieval charm firmly enclosed within the walls that protect its small squares and narrow streets lined with white houses, their windows filled with flowers. This town, where the castle has been converted into a "pousada", summons forth more romantic spirits and tells you tales of kings and queens. Along the west coast, small fishing villages still keep alive the ancient art of trawling directly onto the shore. Close by, in Caldas da Rainha, you can discover the city's spa and museums and take back with you a locally handcrafted article.

In the Serras de Aire e Candeeiros Natural Park, stone is an inescapable feature of the landscape, either on the ground or in the walls that separate the cultivated fields. This natural area is a genuine delight for all those who like to explore the earth's innermost depths, for there are many caves with some quite remarkably-shaped limestone formations. The city of Leiria is surrounded by the thick pine-forest planted at the orders of the king Dom Dinis in the 14th century. It was from here that the timber was extracted to build the caravels that, a century later, were to take part in the great epic of the Portuguese Discoveries. More recently, it has been the Sanctuary at Fátima, one of the world's main sites in the cult of the Virgin Mary, which attracts large pilgrimages by the faithful.

Facing east, Santarém, with its monuments, narrow streets, walls and churches, looks down over the endless meadows disappearing from sight. A few kilometres away, in Tomar, is the Convento de Cristo, founded in 1162 by the Knights Templar and, centuries later, the headquarters of the Order of Christ. Its rich architecture is a dramatic blend of the Romanesque, Gothic, Manueline and Mannerist styles.



1. Tram, Lisbon
2. Palácio da Pena, Sintra
3. Óbidos Castle
4. Tabuleiros Festival, Tomar
5. Pousada, Setúbal



Lisbon is flaunting its playful side these days, from edgy design shops to chic late-night lounges that have turned this old port city into a youthful place to party.

The New York Times

Parque das Nações, Lisbon



Porto e Norte



Porto, a riverside city with a soul of granite and some most solemn silhouettes, is a lively place with many different attributes. Classified as a World Heritage site, it is an old and authentic city, offering some extraordinary panoramic views and a rare mixture of architectural styles that make you feel as though you're travelling in time. When visiting the city's Romanesque cathedral, stop for a while and breathe in the Middle Ages as you admire the great mass of houses making their way down to the banks of the River Douro. A little further on, you can walk through Renaissance squares and discover baroque monuments, such as the Torre dos Clérigos, best seen in the early evening with its unforgettable silhouette. And then be sure to round off your visit in the 21st century by admiring the contemporary art works at the Serralves Museum or taking in a concert at the Casa da Música. The city has many other attractions and an interesting and varied cultural programme.

Famous for its truly irresistible cuisine, Porto is also the starting point for the unforgettable experience of a trip up the River Douro. Christened with the name of the "golden river", it has been gradually moulded by human hands and is now crossed by several imposing bridges that link a noble past to a promising future. On the terraced slopes of its banks are planted the vineyards that produce the famous Port wine, which sets off from here to conquer the world. The Douro Valley has been classified as a World Heritage site, a place of great charm for discovering the inspired and harmonious encounter between land and river. Close to Vila Real, a city with its own well-defined personality, be sure to visit the Palácio de Mateus, one of the most remarkable jewels of Portuguese baroque architecture.

For those who would like to delve into a history book and wander in person amongst its first pages, Guimarães is a city demanding to be discovered. Known as the cradle of the Portuguese nation, it was from here that Dom Afonso Henriques set out to conquer Portugal from the Moors. Its historic centre with its

grandiose castle, museums and churches all invite you to linger a while longer over your visit. In Braga, another historic city, you will find some most unexpected memories of bygone periods nestling in the shade of its impressive cathedral. Let yourself be surprised by a medieval tower rising up in the middle of the street and the baroque palaces of a city to which the University and contemporary architecture have brought light, colour and an unexpected modernity.

If you're looking for the splendour of the natural world, then the Peneda-Gerês National Park is definitely the place to visit. The diversity and abundance of its flora and fauna will provide you with some unforgettable moments in close contact with nature. But other places also clamour for their own right to remain forever in the visitor's memory, such as Viana do Castelo, a city that is just as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside. Situated between the mountains and the sea, its houses spread along the banks of the River Lima, on their way to meet the ocean. Here, the sumptuous baroque manor houses are emblazoned with the coats of arms of their respective families.

In the north east of Portugal, the landscapes have been preserved in their purest state, offering a beautiful mixture of green, golden and lilac hues. Rich in traditions, monuments and spirituality, its natural parks and communal villages reveal the great authenticity of this region. In the citadel of Bragança castle, the keep, which once stood proudly as a medieval guard surveying the region's borders, now houses a military museum. Here visitors can learn about the centuries-old history of the castle, while the top floor offers an excellent view over the city and the surrounding countryside. In the Douro International Natural Park, the steep banks of the deep valley dug out of the rock by the river form a series of breathtakingly monumental gorges. This is the refuge that various species of birds under threat of extinction have sought out to make their home. Further south, you can spend some time discovering the prehistoric Rock Drawings of Vale do Côa, classified as a World Heritage site.

1. Cycle Track, Vila Nova de Gaia
2. Palácio de Mateus, Vila Real
3. Largo da Oliveira, Guimarães
4. Praça da República, Braga
5. Port Wine Vineyards, Douro



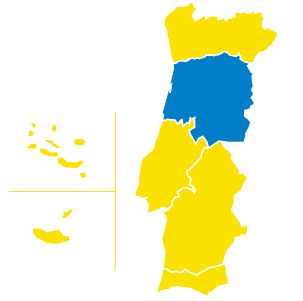


Outdoor events and festivals are so common in the country of Portugal that there is quite possibly one going on every day or week of the year at some location.

Tripadvisor

Cabeçudos and Gigantones at Festival of Nossa Senhora d'Agonia, Viana do Castelo, Porto e Norte

Centro de Portugal



In the Centro de Portugal, Coimbra is to be found contemplating itself, a vain city looking at its own reflection in the water of the River Mondego. A city of courtyards, steps and medieval arches, the bohemian Coimbra, inhabited by students, is sung about and feted by many poets. Step forth boldly onto the stone steps, shaped by centuries of use, and plunge deep into the history of the city, where the old cathedral [Sé Velha] stands impressively before all those making their way up to the centuries-old University on the top of the hill. Its most iconic feature, the Library, with its baroque architecture dating from the reign of Dom João V, reminds us of a chapel with its frescoes and carved and gilded woodwork.

To the south of the city, travel back to Roman times at the site of the well-preserved ruins of Conímbriga. The Centro de Portugal is also the region where you will find some of the country's most important spas, such as Curia and Luso which, with their relaxing landscapes and health-giving waters, are genuinely natural paradises where you can stimulate your senses.

Aveiro, a coastal city, dominates the lagoon and the labyrinth of canals that run across the countryside, unable to decide whether they belong to the sea or the land. The heart of the city is divided between the picturesque houses of the fishermen and the busy avenues, but all visitors to Aveiro also surrender immediately to the beauty of the slender "barcos moliceiros", the brightly-coloured boats that are used to collect seaweed and have many a legendary story to tell. The lagoon and maritime motifs again serve as the inspiration for the famous "Ovos Moles", a typical regional sweet mixture made from the yolks of eggs and used to fill wafers moulded into the shape of fish and seashells – a tasty delight that you cannot afford to miss.

As you head deeper inland, the Serra da Estrela is an excellent tourist destination, particularly for nature lovers. Step forth boldly along the

paths made by shepherds and their flocks and let yourself be surprised by the many hidden places of peerless beauty. In the hottest months, the region's green landscapes provide some most stimulating scenery, but the mountains are just as beautiful and captivating when the cold weather arrives and the predominant colour is the white of the snow. This region is full of many delights that will stimulate your taste buds, including the famous "queijo da Serra", the traditional handmade cheese produced from ewe's milk. With its unmistakable aroma and flavour, creamy and deep yellow in colour, it is best enjoyed between two slices of the tasty regional bread. Standing on one of the slopes of the Serra, Guarda is the highest city in Portugal, its traditional stone architecture being the most prominent feature.

Old manor houses, doorways with coats of arms carved above them in granite, and a busy and lively atmosphere are to be found hidden in the narrow streets shaded by the cathedral of Viseu, a city with an unmistakable character and an impressive array of monuments. Built entirely of granite and schist are the historic villages of Piódão, Belmonte and Almeida, still displaying their medieval layout and blending harmoniously into a well-preserved landscape. The cobbled streets and stone-built houses still retain many of the genuine characteristics of the Portugal of the olden days, displaying the authenticity of its people and their pride in the country's many centuries of fascinating history.

Close to Castelo Branco, we recommend a visit to the Naturtejo Geopark, recognised by UNESCO for its important natural heritage, where you can admire rocks covered with fossils and a mountainous landscape inhabited by griffon vultures and black storks. Scattered throughout the Centre of Portugal, the Schist Villages are warm and hospitable places, where visitors are always tempted to linger a little longer in order to discover more about the local customs, legends and knowledge.

1. Coimbra
2. Barcos Moliceiros, Aveiro
3. Grão Vasco Museum and Cathedral, Viseu
4. Village of Monsanto
5. Trekking, Serra da Estrela



Charming Portugal, a great European destination

Daily Herald

Serra do Açor, Centro de Portugal



Alentejo



An immense golden region of rolling plains, white limewashed houses and monuments that testify to the long presence of human life, the Alentejo is a land that must be discovered slowly. Here, there is always a landscape to be contemplated; a secret place to be visited; a new flavour to be discovered. In the plains, the wheat fields quiver in the wind and nestled amidst the olive groves are small villages, newly restored for rural tourism, where all visitors are welcomed with open arms. The local gastronomic delights compete against one another: the cheeses of Serpa, Évora and Nisa, the local wines and bread, the typical regional dishes perfumed with the herbs and spices from the fields and the divine sweet dishes based on traditional monastic recipes, which are like pieces of heaven that one has been allowed to taste on earth.

In the Alentejo, the sun has a smile on its face and shines incessantly; its light both dazzles and enchants, serving as a guide for those wishing to explore the region's natural delights. Discover the secrets hidden in the stones of the megalithic monuments standing in the midst of the landscape and learn how man used to live thousands of years ago. Or visit Évora, whose proud outline can be seen on the broad horizon of the plain, the historic city lying hidden behind its walls. Once inside, you will discover a whole world of unexpected contrasts amidst its narrow streets, its public squares bathed in sunlight, Moorish courtyards, Gothic doorways and the bars and restaurants where you can taste the local cuisine. Beja, the Pax Julia of Julius Caesar's time, still maintains an atmosphere of peace that is difficult to find nowadays. It stands proudly overlooking the surrounding plain, stoutly defended by the keep of its castle.

All along the Alentejo coastline, from Tróia to Sines, the landscape is dominated by a deep

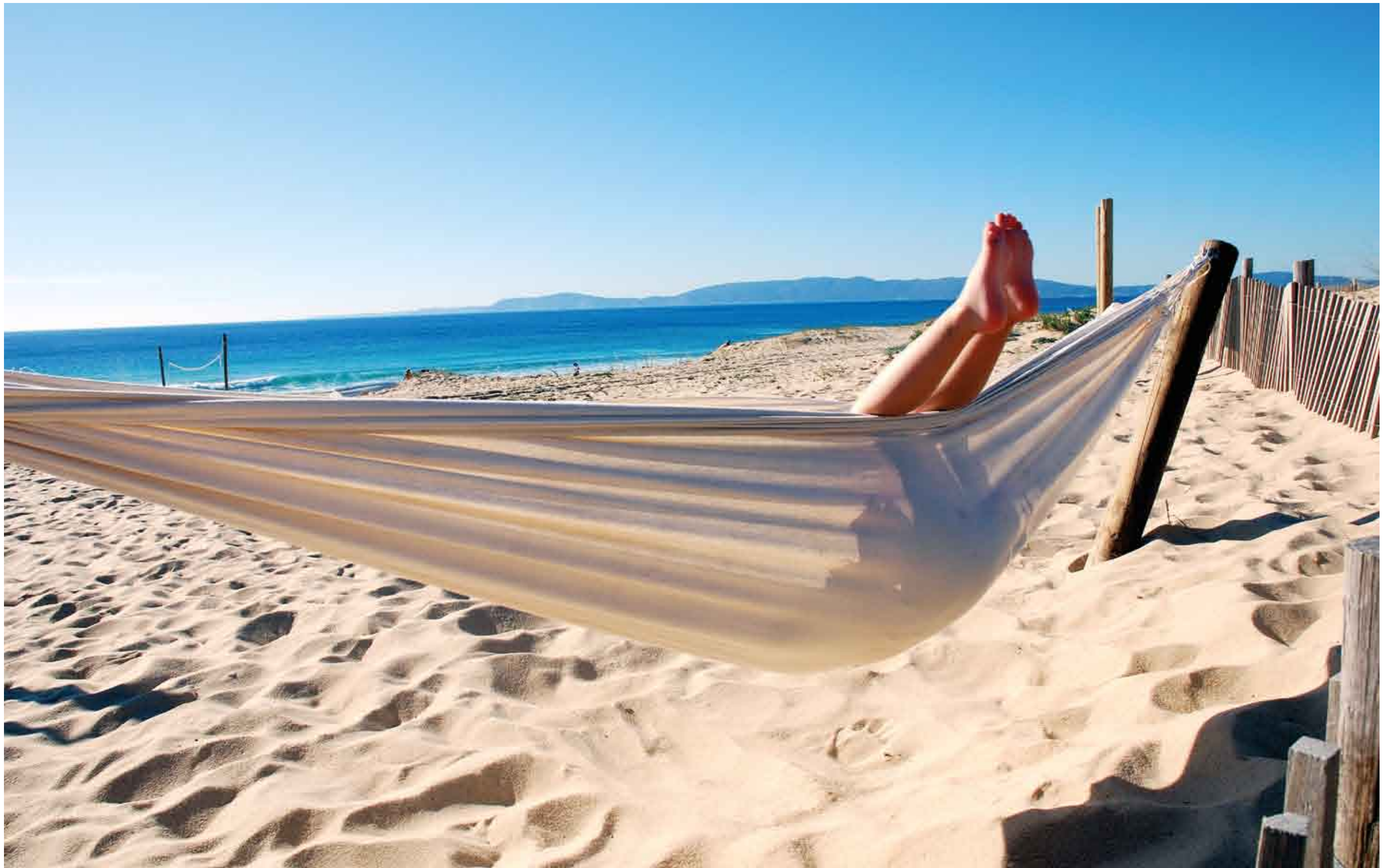
blue colour. There are many wild and unspoilt beaches hidden amidst the cliffs, where often the best reward for the more adventurous is the sheer pleasure of discovering them. Who would not like to have a beach of fine golden sand all to themselves, enjoying a peaceful dip in its transparent blue water? The South-West Alentejo has beaches to suit all moods: waves ideal for surfing and bodyboarding follow on from the calm waters of naturally-formed swimming-pools. The variety is enormous and Porto Covo, Vila Nova de Milfontes and Zambujeira do Mar are all names that you should try and remember. Spreading over more than 100 kilometres, the South-West Alentejo and Costa Vicentina Natural Park is the best conserved coastal area in continental Europe and has some unique species of fauna and flora.

The natural setting for countless battles and conquests, the River Guadiana has marked the border between Portugal and Spain for many centuries. Between Elvas and Monsaraz, visitors to the region can appreciate the vast mirror-like surface of the lake formed by the Alqueva Dam, ideal for trying a different holiday experience on board a houseboat, which will serve as the starting point for trips to discover the riverside villages. Protected by its impressive castle, Monsaraz looks like the keel of a boat sailing across the plain, living as if it had been left suspended there in a dream.

Further north, close to Portalegre, the São Mamede Natural Park has an abundant geological and animal wealth. The trees and wild plants that perfume the air constantly change colour along the different trails through the hills. Perched high on an enormous rock, almost touching the sky and protected by the walls of its fortress, Marvão is a unique town, full of fascinating stories. In Castelo de Vide, you can wander at random through one of Portugal's best preserved old Jewish quarters.

1. Alentejo Landscape
2. Roman Temple, Évora
3. Ducal Palace, Vila Viçosa
4. Local architecture, Évora
5. Zambujeira do Mar

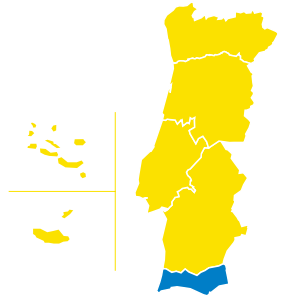




Portugal has 220 days of sun per year and more than 400 Portuguese coastal beaches for you to find out.

[Praia da Comporta, Alentejo](#)

Algarve



Seen from the sea, the Algarve coastline is a succession of cliffs, oddly shaped rocks offering a variety of silhouettes, caves formed by the dialogue between wind and sea, great expanses of sand, and water exhibiting every possible shade of blue.

All along the coast are beaches of different shapes and sizes, with one to suit every taste. Large or small, calm or with waves, deserted or highly popular, most of the Algarve's beaches proudly fly the EU's blue flag, and you can count on the sun's presence all year round. Whether you want to laze in the shade of a parasol, swim in the Atlantic Ocean, go underwater diving, do some angling, windsurf or jet-ski, the Algarve's beaches are a guaranteed delight for all your senses.

But there are also other landscapes to be found in the Algarve, where nature still continues to live as it was always intended to. In the nature reserves and natural parks, the fauna and flora are a constant source of amazement for those looking to discover rare plants and flowers and elegant birds such as flamingos, storks and herons.

More than 30 breathtakingly beautiful golf courses are a genuine paradise for even the most demanding golfer. The region's mild climate, with sunshine all year round, means that this sport can be played in every season, the silence only interrupted by the sound of a stroke being played or the singing of a bird.

The beauty of nature and the sophistication of contemporary culture combine in perfect harmony in an Algarve that is simultaneously

cosmopolitan and picturesque. Faro will surprise you at every step with its historic centre, enlivened with bars, shops, café terraces and restaurants where you can find an appetising range of fish and seafood dishes.

Surrounded by walls, Lagos is an imposing presence on one of the most characteristic stretches of the Algarve coast, with its caves and potholes carved out of the rock. At the western end of the coast is Sagres, which in the 15th century was the training school for the great navigators, and now invites you to stay a while longer and contemplate the sea from its promontory. In Albufeira, in the evenings, the sun is the last of all to say goodbye on the café terraces by the seaside, whereupon the moon comes up with its promise of warm nights in the bars and discotheques. Tavira, a city of many churches, with buildings crowned by unusual scissor-shaped hipped roofs, is surrounded by fig-trees and almond-trees that have inspired the production of sweets in the shape of fruits, fishes, birds and everything that the imagination can possibly dream of.

If your summer's dream is such that you're looking for a glamorous atmosphere, then come and join the jet set at Vale do Lobo, Ancão and Quinta do Lago. Bringing you entertainment with a cosmopolitan lifestyle and spirit, the ALLGARVE programme of events organises all kinds of concerts, shows, exhibitions and festivals. With their own special programmes certain to suit every taste, the casinos at Praia da Rocha, Vilamoura and Monte Gordo are all waiting for you, just as the Algarve awaits all those who enjoy living life to the full.

1. Porto de Mós, Algarve
2. Cathedral, Faro
3. Marina, Vilamoura
4. Ferragudo, Lagoa
5. Ocean Course, Vale do Lobo



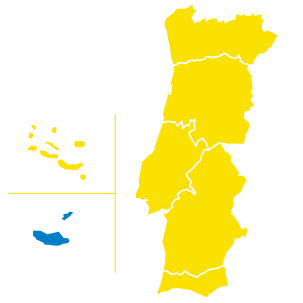
The combination of great weather, verdant fairways, and azure seas and skies is almost addictive.

The New York Times

Ocean Course, Vale do Lobo



Madeira Islands



This floating garden of verdant vegetation is the home of orchids, anthuriums and birds of paradise, as well as many other flowers with unforgettable aromas and unexpected colours. White clouds drift across skies of blue while, below, boats plough their way through the deep blue sea, contrasting sharply with the green of the island's forests and mountains.

The island of Porto Santo invites you to spend some time sunbathing before diving into the clear transparent waters of its vast sandy beach, running uninterrupted over a total of nine kilometres. The calm sea, with its gently lapping waves, is ideal for such sports as sailing, windsurfing or water skiing.

After this bout of personal therapy, you should head for Funchal and make your way deep inland on the island of Madeira, where some truly unforgettable adventures lie in wait for you. Have you ever imagined walking through a fantastic forest, many millions of years old, where the trees and shrubs never shed a single leaf? You can realise this dream in the world's largest and best preserved evergreen forest, classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

Another unique attraction is the series of irrigation channels known as "levadas" that are a result of the enormous project of building an irrigation system for the whole island. With a total length of roughly 1,400 kilometres, these channels form a network of pathways that you will want to follow and explore, discovering some truly breathtaking landscapes in an unforgettable encounter with nature in its purest form. Feel the adrenaline coursing through your veins when you accept the challenge of a somewhat more daring climb to the top of Pico Ruivo and Pico do Areeiro. You'll find yourself walking above the clouds with the whole island below you at your feet.

Enjoy some magnificent panoramic views as you try the unusual experience of a cable car, helicopter or even hot-air balloon ride over the island. In Funchal, visit the cathedral, convents, museums, churches, chapels and fortresses. If you can't resist bright and happy colours, then

walk into the market and wend your way amidst the stalls displaying fruits and vegetables of all shapes, sizes and smells. As you spend your time touring the island, you will find various statues erected in honour of historical figures such as João Gonçalves Zarco, the discoverer of Madeira, and Christopher Columbus, who lived for a while on Porto Santo and whose house you can visit. In this seaside garden, the local gastronomy will delight visitors with its sophisticated dishes of fish and exotic fruit. The famous Madeira wine, so greatly appreciated all around the world, is another of this island's great treasures.

And what about Madeira as seen from the sea? In the marina, where each day large cruise ships can be seen sailing in and out of the harbour, there are boats you can hire to take you out into the Atlantic Ocean and all around the archipelago, including the remote islands known as the "Ilhas Selvagens" (the "wild islands" and the refuge of the extremely rare monk seals) and the "Ilhas Desertas" (the "deserted islands", which are a genuine sanctuary for sea birds).

Rounding off all these pleasures is a calendar of events that includes, amongst other delights, Carnival parades, the annual flower festival and the Atlantic Festival, composed of firework displays and musical concerts. The year's high point is, however, the magnificent firework display held to mark the beginning of the New Year.

The inhabitants of Madeira are warm and friendly people, given to smiling all year round, and then there is the mild climate that makes it seem as though it is forever spring, turning this into the perfect place for resting both mind and body. Indulge yourself in the island's sophisticated spas with natural swimming-pools, saunas, thalassotherapy, hydromassage and Turkish baths.

Here, in the heart of the Atlantic Ocean, where there is no need for either time or timetables, the peaceful and relaxing atmosphere of Madeira awaits you.

1. Marina, Funchal
2. São Vicente
3. Trekking on the Levadas
4. Porto Santo
5. Madeira Wine



An island that surges from the Atlantic in a series of sharp volcanic peaks and knife-edged ridges, before dropping down to a verdant coastline as nibbled and lacy as a paper doily.

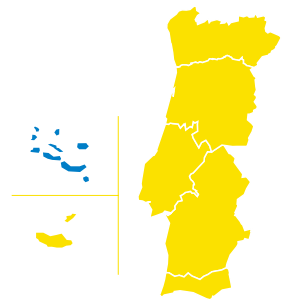
Times Online

[Viewing Point, Balcões da Madeira](#)





Azores



Visiting this green and blue archipelago, where the ocean touches the sky, is like watching the world being born in front of your very eyes. Here, the horizon disappears into infinity, time stands still and the paradise of these nine islands remains permanently unchanged.

In the East, closer to the European mainland, are the islands of Santa Maria and São Miguel. You'll be delightfully surprised by the vineyards of Santa Maria, which spread over the terraces of the hillsides in the form of an amphitheatre, suggesting steps that have been built specially for giants. Overlooking a large bay, Ponta Delgada, in São Miguel, is the island's main port. It is a dynamic city, its attention turned almost completely towards the sea, and with a busy economic life. The lakes of Lagoa do Fogo and Lagoa das Sete Cidades charm visitors with the music emanating from the songs of the wind and the legends that are told about them locally. They are truly unforgettable and breathtaking places. Feel the power rising up from the earth at the island's geysers, hot water spas and volcanic lakes, and make sure that you sample the famous "Cozido das Furnas", a dish that is slowly stewed inside the earth itself.

The central group of islands consists of Terceira, São Jorge, Pico, Faial and Graciosa, scattered harmoniously over the surface of the deep blue sea, where whales and dolphins frolic happily on the surface of the water, to the great delight of visitors.

The classification of World Heritage site that has been awarded to Angra do Heroísmo gives Terceira a quite unique status. In the streets of this city, the architecture of the olden days is perfectly preserved, protected by the powerful wall that defended both the population and the port itself from pirate attacks. Dotted across the criss-cross pattern of the verdant plains are the silhouettes of dairy cattle, contrasting with the bright colours of the gaudy chapels known as "impérios", interspersed amidst the white houses.

On the island of São Jorge, which gives the

impression of a magical boat eternally anchored in the midst of the ocean, you can admire the peculiar fajãs (seemingly flat surfaces on the sea) lying at the foot of high cliffs, in this fertile land of steep slopes and beautiful cross-country footpaths. Make sure to take advantage of your stay to sample the island's cheese with its unique and unmistakable flavour.

The Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture, classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, establishes a contrast between its hard, dark basalt terrain and the white summit, covered in winter snow, of the majestic volcanic peak that gives its name to the island, rising to a towering height of some 2,350 metres above a lava-covered landscape. Clearly visible to the west is the marina of the island of Horta, known to all oceangoing yachtsmen, where seafarers leave their paintings behind them on the walls and ground, reminding people of their passage through this region. Soak up the special atmosphere of the port by enjoying a drink at Peter's café, a bar that welcomes sailors from all over the world and makes them feel perfectly at home. While you're still on the island of Faial, make sure to visit the now extinct volcano of Capelinhos, standing in stark contrast to the living nature all around it and giving the impression of a lunar landscape.

The green island of Graciosa, which is "graceful" both by name and appearance, is also famous for its curious windmills, reminding its visitors of the far-off region of Flanders, from where some of its first inhabitants originally came.

In the western group of islands, nature reveals itself in all its wild exuberance and time seems to pass by much more slowly. On the island of Flores, it is impossible not to be charmed by the beauty of its natural waterfalls, but be sure also to take the chance to go diving in the Atlantic Ocean and discover its unique brightly-coloured underwater species. Corvo is a small community of white houses, living at the gentle pace of nature itself and extending a warm and heartfelt welcome to its visitors, just like all Azoreans.

1. Dolphins, Pico
2. Lake, Flores
3. São Miguel
4. Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira
5. Marina, Horta, Faial



Much of Portugal remains blissfully undiscovered.

l-escape

Lagoa de São Tiago and Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, Azores



World Heritage

Exploring its (Portugal's) towns, cities, villages and countryside will likely take longer than expected because there is so much richness and variety along the way.

The New York Times

The country's extremely rich monumental, artistic and archaeological heritage reflects the different encounters in time and space that have given Portuguese culture its unique characteristics in world terms. In Portugal, amongst its historic centres, archaeological sites, monuments, cultural landscapes and natural landscapes, there are thirteen locations classified by UNESCO as World Heritage sites. Here, a variety of styles and history overlap with one another, ranging from prehistoric rock drawings to the late baroque, from the cities built by man to the landscapes offered to us by Mother Nature, all of them classified as World Heritage sites.

Enjoy a stroll through the historic centres of the cities. In their streets, you can read the history of the different cultures that have inhabited and transformed them over the years. Discover the traces left in the museum-city of Évora by the Celts, Romans, Visigoths and Arabs, or the medieval origins of Porto's Historic Centre. Visit the palaces, monasteries, convents and churches of the Historic Centre of Angra do Heroísmo, on the island of Terceira in the Azores, and succumb to the charms of the castle of Guimarães and the historic centre of this city that gave birth to the nation of Portugal.

The encounter with other cultures and Portugal's mastery of the seas in the time of the Discoveries gave birth to Manueline art, named after the king Dom Manuel I. The Convento de Cristo in Tomar, whose architecture displays features that range from the Romanesque to the Mannerist, was founded in 1162 and centuries later became the headquarters of the religious and military Order of Christ. Take your time observing every detail of the monastery's famous window and enjoy the great beauty of the Charola (the Templars' Rotunda). At the Monastery of Alcobaça, one of the most important abbeys of the Cistercian Order, you will be struck by the grandeur of Gothic architecture, while at one of the most fascinating monuments in Europe, the Monastery of Batalha, you will be astounded by

the carefully carved details of the stonework and can listen to the secrets that lie hidden in this remarkable space. When you get to Lisbon, the Torre de Belém marks the apogee of Portuguese art in the century of the Discoveries, rising up symbolically at the point from which the great ships and caravels set sail on their epic voyages. The Mosteiro dos Jerónimos forms the most remarkable set of monastic buildings from the 16th century in Portugal, and is considered by many to be the supreme example of the Manueline style.

Sintra is one of those places that are full of magic and mystery, where nature and culture have joined together to form a cultural landscape that denotes a perfect symbiosis. Over the years, the court and the nobles built sumptuous stately homes and palaces all across the hills, surrounded by parks and gardens. In the Upper Douro Wine Region, the long tradition of viticulture has led to the formation of a landscape of exceptional beauty which, with the River Douro at its foot, has been producing wine since time immemorial; it is, of course, from here that the famous Port wine originates. In the Azores, on the island of Pico, the whims of nature and the determination of man have succeeded in turning the hard basalt rocks and volcanic soil into surprising vineyards, creating a cultural landscape that is unique in the world: the Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture. On the island of Madeira, the prehistoric and exuberant evergreen Laurissilva forest is one of the island's great natural attractions.

In the Côa valley, you can wend your way through an art gallery that is over 25,000 years old and appreciate at this unique site the world's largest collection of Palaeolithic figure drawings ever discovered. Seventeen kilometres of art displayed in the open air show the creative genius of our ancestors, from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Iron Age, taking you on a journey through time to the early origins of the history of humankind.

1. Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Lisbon
2. Ducal Palace, Guimarães, Porto e Norte
3. Laurissilva Forest, Madeira
4. Templars' Rotunda, Convento de Cristo, Tomar, Lisbon
5. Vineyards, Pico, Azores



Golf

Portugal has 10 golf courses in the top 100 of Continental Europe.

Golf World

Take advantage of the country's mild climate and set off to discover what many consider to be the golfers' paradise. Portugal has more than 70 golf courses from north to south, where you can play by the sea shore amidst grass-covered sand dunes, make your way through elegant parkland areas flanked by trees and delight in some magnificent views. Designed with great intelligence, these courses present difficult challenges even to the most skilful of golfers and offer all players the great beauty of their natural settings. The sun is an ever-present companion and provides some truly perfect days for golfing enthusiasts.

Twice voted the world's best golfing destination, the Algarve has more than 30 golf courses along its coast, all ready and waiting to see some great shots inspired by the ocean and visited by golfers from all over the world. Here, the sun's presence is even more certain, being guaranteed all year round. The courses have been designed by such highly regarded architects as Sir Henry Cotton and Arnold Palmer and provide some excellent challenges, playing against the beautiful backdrop of green superimposed on blue. Courses such as the Old Course and the Victoria Clube de Golfe in Vilamoura host a series of famous international events.

The Estoril Coast, with its privileged location close to Lisbon, is a destination highly appreciated by golfers. At the Belas course, designed by Rocky Roquemore, the wind requires players to rethink the natural trajectory of their strokes. The Quinta da Marinha Oitavos Golfe, set amidst pine-trees and sand dunes in an area of great natural beauty, is the first golf course in Europe and the second course in the world to be awarded the Audubon International "Certified Signature Sanctuary/Gold". Set in the Cultural Landscape of Sintra, classified as a World Heritage site, the Penha Longa Mosteiro and Atlântico courses together form a loop that presents challenges for all golfers. The Palácio de Pena, standing high up in the hills, and the ruins that you will

encounter in the middle of the course set the tone for your later discovery of the region.

To the south of the River Tagus, long, seemingly never-ending expanses of sand bathed by the immense Atlantic Ocean mark out the boundaries of the golf courses designed by world-famous architects such as Frank Pennink and Robert Trent Jones. Located in a protected area to the south of Setúbal, the course of Tróia is surrounded by pine-trees in an idyllic setting between the water of the River Sado on one side and the sea on the other.

Sea and beaches, cliffs and dunes, always warmed and illuminated by the sun, are the permanent painted backdrop to the golf courses of the west coast. Just a few kilometres from the historic medieval town of Óbidos, in an area of rare environmental beauty, the Praia D'el Rey course, designed by the American architect Cabell Robinson, offers golfers a combination of magnificent sea views, spectacular cliffs and elegant pine-groves. Thirty minutes from Óbidos, and rivalling this course in terms of both its beauty and the challenges that it provides, is the Golden Eagle course, designed by Rocky Roquemore with a typically American layout.

Madeira is another destination that is becoming increasingly popular amongst golfers. The breathtaking landscapes of the Palheiro Golfe and Santo da Serra courses compete with one another to be the most beautiful. The Porto Santo Golfe course, originally designed by the famous Spanish golfer Severiano Ballesteros, offers players a truly fabulous view over the extensive beach of the island of Porto Santo.

The Azores offer you the chance to play golf amidst lakes and mountains, with the sea always in view. The choice is between the Furnas golf course designed by the famous Scottish architect Mackenzie Ross, the plains of the Batalha course, or the Terceira course, surrounded by thousands of flowers.

1. Alcantarilha, Algarve
2. Sesimbra, Lisbon
3. Albufeira, Algarve
4. Vilamoura, Algarve
5. Óbidos, Lisbon



Gastronomy and Wines

Since the beginning of the century, Portugal has emerged from the shadows to become one of the most interesting and exciting red wine producing regions in the world.

Wine Spectator

Portugal has a gastronomy that is as rich and varied as its landscape and heritage. With its extensive coastal strip, it is impossible to find a restaurant by the sea that does not offer its diners tasty dishes of fresh fish or delicious seafood. The sea can also serve as your inspiration for discovering some of the 1001 recipes for the preparation of dishes based on "bacalhau", the dried salted cod that is so loved by the Portuguese. Nor can you afford to miss sampling the famous "cozido à portuguesa", a succulent dish combining meat and vegetables. Olive-oil and fresh aromatic herbs are a constant feature of our cuisine. You'll be astounded by the quality and variety of cheeses made from ewe, cow or goat's milk, such as those from Serra da Estrela, Serpa, Nisa or Azeitão.

And now the time has come to talk about Portuguese wine. Just how many images of a country can be found within one single bottle of wine? Drunk all over the world, white or red, whether made from immature "verde" or fully ripe grapes, our wine has its own special story to tell. And if you really want to know and understand a wine, it's not enough just to taste it: you have to visit the places where it comes into being, spending some time in the region where the grapes are grown under the watchful eye of time and savouring the best of the local gastronomy, in order to understand the soul of all the flavours. A region's wine, just like its gastronomy, springs from the landscapes and culture that it bears witness to.

In the Minho, where it seems that green has consumed all the other colours of the rainbow, verdant landscapes stretch all the way to the horizon. Due to the particular conditions of its soil and climate, this region produces a unique wine. Light and fresh, "vinho verde" is an excellent wine for accompanying starters, or fish and seafood dishes, or just for enjoying a relaxing break on a hot, sunny day. Make sure to try the "caldo verde" soup made from potatoes and cabbage, the corn bread known as "broa de milho", the sausages, the "bacalhau" dishes, the lamprey eel, trout and shad, and discover the most highly appreciated Portuguese "vinho verde", Alvarinho.

Also in the north of the country, in a region of granite hills, where the soil is heated by the sun, the most famous of all wines was first made in the grandiose amphitheatres that shape the valley of the River Douro. This has been a demarcated region since 1756, being the first in the world to be afforded

this status, and it is from this unique landscape – classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site – that Port wine is created. This unforgettable panorama of terraces, carved out of the hillsides by the hands of men, is best admired in all of its great exuberance from aboard a boat gently cruising along the river.

In the Serra da Estrela and the Serra do Caramulo, wherever you go, a mountain always appears in front of you, presenting such varied and interesting contrasts. We recommend you visit some of the most emblematic estates that produce the famous Dão wine and try out some of the local gastronomic delights, including a whole range of typical dishes prepared from kid, a variety of sausages, and the famous cheese known as queijo da Serra, raising a glass of wine at the same time, as a toast to life itself.

To the south, on the Peninsula of Setúbal, you will find a series of clear contrasts: mountain and sea, city and country, modernity and tradition. As you travel between Azeitão, Palmela and Setúbal, you will find all kinds of delights for the senses. Just smell the different aromas of the vines and savour some of the best regional gastronomy, such as fish and seafood dishes, cheeses and sweets, always accompanied by a glass of white or red, or one of the local sweet fortified wines.

In the Alentejo, the special properties of the land and the relentless sun combine to form some quite appetising creations. Discover the secrets of the towns and villages devoted to the art of viticulture, and ask for one of the wines from Borba, Redondo, Reguengos or Vidigueira to accompany the dishes made with such care and imagination, such as migas (bread crumbs mixed with bacon fat and garlic) with pork, açorda alentejana (bread soup with coriander and garlic), the local cheeses and the desserts made from the old recipes of the monks.

In the archipelago of the Azores, you should try the delicious cozido das Furnas (a stew cooked by using the heat inside the earth itself), the succulent meat from the beef cattle of the islands' green meadows, the famous queijo da Ilha cheese, the tasty locally-grown pineapple. Take advantage of your visit to taste the Verdelho wine produced from the vineyards of Pico, which are classified as a World Heritage site. In Madeira, let your taste buds be seduced by the espetada de carne (cubes of charcoal grilled beef on a skewer of laurel), the special bolo de mel (honey cake), the island's exotic fruits and, of course, the famous Madeira wine.

1. Port Wine Lodges, Gaia, Porto e Norte
2. Wine Tasting
3. Grilled Fish
4. Pastéis de Belém
5. Fine Cuisine



Sun and Sea

The beaches are great for those hoping to ride the waves, or simply to get away from the crowds to soak up the sun and the sound of the surf.

ABC News

Portugal has 850 kilometres of Atlantic beaches, with sunshine all year round. From the north to the south of the country, not forgetting the archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores, there are many beaches displaying the blue flag, guaranteeing their generally excellent state. All of these beaches have their own particular charms and represent a diversified supply with characteristics to suit every taste.

In the north, the water is cool and can be rather rough at times. Vila Praia de Âncora and the coastal strip around Esposende form a beautiful protected area of deserted sand dunes. If you prefer a little more excitement, then head for the beaches of Viana do Castelo, Póvoa de Varzim or Espinho, where you have excellent facilities for surfing, bodyboarding, volleyball, beach football, or just doing whatever takes your fancy.

In the centre of Portugal, you will find a predominance of large expanses of sand, such as the beach at Figueira da Foz, regularly used for major sports events. In Aveiro the sea continues into the lagoon, offering the chance of windsurfing, sailing and canoeing. If you prefer walking in the sand, then you can do this down by the ocean shore or through the dunes of São Jacinto.

For surfers from all over the world, Portugal is just one huge beach. We'll give you a few tips, but you'll have to discover your own special favourite! Begin with the beach known as Supertubos in Peniche, where the waves are a legend in surfing circles, and then carry on to Ribeira d'Ilhas in the area round Ericeira, a beach that each year hosts one of the various stages of the world surfing championships. In Guincho, the waves are more versatile and perfect for windsurfing. In Costa da Caparica, a 30 kilometre stretch of sand and just the right wind strength make this the ideal environment for kitesurfing.

Close to Lisbon, the whole of the coast leading to Cascais – and, in particular, the glamorous beach of Estoril, a refuge for the world's nobility and many famous spies in the first half of the 20th century – is still very much in fashion and

highly popular amongst bathers. Also exhibiting its own particular charm, captured so well by painters such as José Malhoa, is the Praia das Maçãs, which remains the preferred destination of the more traditional families.

Tróia marks the beginning of a long stretch of sandy beaches that extends all the way to Sines. In the South-West Alentejo, in the heart of the region's Natural Park, the landscape forms a series of small inlets. Discover one for yourself, stretch out and lie down in the sun and relax.

Enjoy the extraordinary sunlight in the south. In the Algarve, the sea is warmer, so you can go straight in and spend lots of time there. The settings change along the coast. In the west, you will find small beaches framed by flame-coloured cliffs, while in the east the beaches consist of small, almost completely deserted islands next to the Ria Formosa Natural Park. There is a wide range of different activities available. Choose whatever you prefer – boat trips to visit the caves along the coast or diving into the clear sea water.

In the archipelago of Madeira, the idyllic nine-kilometre-long beach on Porto Santo invites you to stretch out lazily in the sun between occasional dips in the transparent sea. Take advantage of the gentle waves and let yourself be gently rocked from side to side in a sailing boat, or glide effortlessly over the waves as you water ski.

In the Azores, you cannot afford to miss the opportunity to take a boat ride out into the ocean to see the whales and all the great wealth that nature has to offer us there.

For those who enjoy peace and quiet and direct contact with nature, there is nothing better than some holidays spent on board a sailing boat. In the marinas and harbours along the coast, including in the Azores and Madeira, you will find some tempting offers for venturing out into the Atlantic. You will also find ideal conditions here to enjoy a welcome and comfortable stay if you prefer to enter Portugal from the sea.

1. Sailing, Estoril, Lisbon
2. Praia da Falésia, Algarve
3. Praia da Comporta, Alentejo
4. Arrábida, Lisbon
5. Porto Santo, Madeira



Culture and Leisure

Don't tell the mallrats, but Lisbon is becoming an Iberian cultural hub.

Monocle

Are you interested in art? The National Museum of Ancient Art has some remarkable works on display made by Portuguese artists, such as the Belém Monstrance, and others that record the Portuguese legacy in the world, such as the Namban Screens. Two of the exhibits that you cannot afford to miss are Hieronymus Bosch's famous triptych entitled "The Temptations of St. Anthony" and Dürer's portrait of St. Jerome. At the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, discover the art of Egypt and Mesopotamia and the works of Rubens, Rembrandt and Monet.

Do you prefer other artistic styles? At the Berardo Collection Museum, you'll find the works of Vieira da Silva, Magritte, Mondrian and Picasso waiting for you. Give yourself some time to admire the exhibitions of Asian masks and the music and dance performances at the Orient Museum. Discover a typically Portuguese art at the National Tile Museum and let your eyes feast on the richly decorated royal carriages at the National Coach Museum. In Porto, make sure to visit the Serralves Foundation, where, besides displaying its own permanent collection, the Museum of Contemporary Art holds regular exhibitions of international artists, such as Andy Warhol, Francis Bacon, Juan Muñoz and Goldin.

Are you a music fan? In Portugal, there are concerts for lovers of all rhythms from the classics to more modern genres. Check out the list of major venues such as the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon and the Casa da Música in Porto. Don't miss the Sintra festival, which combines classical music with ballet in settings of great beauty. In the summer, the festivities bring people out into the street. Get into the party spirit at the many festivals taking place from the north to the south of the country. Don't miss the Optimus Alive Festival at the Passeio Marítimo de Algés, on the banks of the River Tagus. When July comes around, you can hear the best music at the Super Bock Super Rock Festival and see concerts performed by some of your favourite pop, rock, hip hop and funk groups. Listen to alternative rock bands playing live at the Paredes de Coura Festival,

in a natural amphitheatre, close to the town of the same name or at Zambujeira do Mar, where the Sudoeste TMN Festival is held every August, with some of today's most irreverent bands. Jazz is also very much on the agenda: in July, be sure to drop in at the Estoril Jazz Festival, while in August there's also Jazz at the Gulbenkian, in Lisbon, and, in October, at the Angra Jazz Festival in the Azores. And, finally, in November, there's the Guimarães Jazz Festival in the region of Porto e Norte.

If you're a film buff, come and discover the range of festivals taking place in Portugal each year. Get ready for the festival of fantasy films in February and March with Fantasporto, which has delighted film fans in the city of Porto for the past 30 years. And discover some of the new up-and-coming filmmakers and trends from world cinema at Indie Lisboa, the International Independent Film Festival held in Lisbon in April.

And, finally, have you heard about the famous Lisbon nightlife? Come and taste some of the new Portuguese cuisine in the bars and restaurants down by the river, enjoy a pleasant dinner listening to Fado music in one of Lisbon's more typical old quarters, or let yourself get captivated by the exciting rhythms that you'll hear at the bars and discos in the Docas area, along Avenida 24 de Julho, or further up the hill in Bairro Alto. Algarve's warm nights have many open air venues and beach festivals where you can party until dawn. Porto comes alive in the discos of Foz and the riverside districts of Ribeira or Cais de Gaia, across the river. Discover all the charm and seductiveness of the menus and atmospheres of the new restaurants. We want you to have fun, and there are certainly plenty of places available all around the country for dancing, listening to music, or simply enjoying some companionship and conversation. Gamblers will find Lady Luck waiting for them at the casinos in the north and south of the country. Let yourself be guided by the thousands of bright lights that fill the nights in Portugal.

1. Cais de Gaia, Porto e Norte
2. Docas, Lisbon
3. Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon
4. Music Festival, Zambujeira do Mar, Alentejo
5. Fado, Lisbon



USEFUL INFORMATION

Access

By plane

Portugal has international airports all around the country at Lisbon, Porto, Faro, Funchal (Madeira) and Ponta Delgada (São Miguel – Azores).

By train

there are international train connections, from Lisbon to Paris and Madrid – the Sud–Express and the Lusitânia hotel train, respectively – and from Porto to Vigo.

Transport within portugal

Urban Transport

All of Portugal's major towns and cities have a full public transport network. In Lisbon and Porto this network includes buses, trams and an underground/light railway system, for which it is possible to buy combined tickets for the whole network, valid for one or more days. They also offer special tourist cards that combine transport tickets with the right to enjoy discounts on admission charges to museums and monuments and on various tourism services.

Taxis

These are normally beige in colour, although it is still possible to see some carrying the old, traditional taxi colours of black cabs with green roofs. The price is shown on the meter and the respective fares are either displayed inside the vehicle or may be requested directly from the driver. Booking taxis by phone and carrying luggage in the boot will bring additional charges. Outside built–up areas, the taxi fare is based on the distance travelled in kilometres, the full fare being previously agreed between the driver and the passenger.

Trains

CP – Comboios de Portugal has a vast network of trains covering the whole of mainland Portugal. There is a range of different train services, which include the “Alfa Pendular” – the fastest and most comfortable link between the north and the south of the country – and the “Intercidades (Intercity)” service, connecting the country’s major towns and cities. There is also a vast network of regional, interregional and suburban trains.

Buses

Regular services connect all cities, towns and main destinations in Portugal.

Road network

This is composed of Motorways (Auto–estradas – AE), Principal/Main Routes (Itinerários Principais – IP), Complementary/Secondary Routes (Itinerários Complementares – IC),

National/Trunk Roads (Estradas Nacionais – EN) and Municipal/Regional Roads (Estradas Municipais). All motorways are signposted with their own international symbol and have toll booths. These offer a reserved express lane known as Via Verde, which use an electronic transponder. This has to be installed on the windscreen of your vehicle and registers the toll electronically, allowing you to pay by direct debit from your bank account. The system is only available to those who have previously purchased this device from Brisa, the company responsible for the building and maintenance of motorways in Portugal.

Car hire

There are self–drive car hire services available at airports and international train terminals, and in all of the country’s main cities and towns. Precise terms and conditions offered by each car rental company differ slightly but to hire a car you will need to be over 21 to 25 years of age, present some means of identification (an identity card in the case of EU citizens or a valid passport for other nationalities) and to have had a valid driving licence for more than a year.

Driving in Portugal

All traffic drives on the right in Portugal. At roundabouts, crossroads and junctions, you must give way to traffic coming from your right (unless otherwise indicated). Traffic signs comply with established international standards. Fines are paid on the spot. The wearing of seat belts is compulsory and the use of mobile phones while driving is strictly forbidden.

Maximum speed limits

for passenger vehicles without trailers and motorcycles the maximum speed limit is 50 km/hour in built–up areas, 90 km/hour on normal roads, 100 km/hour on roads restricted to the use of motor vehicles and 120 km/hour on motorways.

Legal alcohol limits

Driving is not permitted at or above the legal alcohol limit of 0.5 grams per litre of blood. Anyone found driving over this limit is subject to a fine, which will vary according to the level of alcohol in their blood.

Climate

In mainland Portugal, the climate is influenced by factors such as relief, latitude and proximity to the sea. Winters are mild, particularly in the Algarve, where the average temperature is 17°C. Further inland, in the north and centre of the country, average winter temperatures range between 5°

and 11°C, while in the summer the average is around 28°C. Along the coast, the heat is tempered by the cooling influence of the sea. In Madeira, the climate is mild and average temperatures range between 19°C in winter and 25°C in summer. In the Azores, average temperatures range between 17°C in winter and 23°C in summer. In both archipelagos, sea temperatures range between 17°C in winter and 22°C in summer.

Standard time

In mainland Portugal and Madeira, standard time coincides with Universal Coordinated Time (UTC) between 1 am on the last Sunday in October and 1 am on the last Sunday in March. From then on, clocks are put forward one hour and summer time comes into force, continuing until the last Sunday in October. In the archipelago of the Azores, standard time is always sixty minutes behind the rest of the Portuguese territory; in other words, when winter time is in force, it is one hour behind universal coordinated time, while in summer it is two hours behind UTC.

Currency

Portugal belongs to the group of 16 European Union countries where the Euro is the official common currency. Foreign currency can be exchanged at banks, foreign exchange offices and ATMs (these can only be used for operations involving the sale of foreign currency).

Opening times

Banks

Banks are open to the public on weekdays between 08.30 and 15.00. There is a national network of ATMs, identified by the sign MB (Multibanco), where cash withdrawals can be made 24 hours per day.

Museums

Museums are normally open from 10.00 to 13.00 and from 14.00 to 17.00, and are closed on Mondays.

Shops

Shops are open from Monday to Friday, generally opening between 09.00 and 10.00 and closing at 19.00. Some shops close for lunch from 13.00 to 15.00. On Saturdays, most shops close at 13.00, although some shops in city centres remain open in the afternoon. Shopping malls have longer opening hours, with shops generally remaining open from 10.00 until midnight every day of the week, including Saturdays and Sundays.

Restaurants

Restaurants normally serve lunch from 12.00 to 15.00 and are open for dinner between 19.00 and 23.00, although many of them may have longer opening hours, especially in large cities and in areas where there is greater nightlife.

Emergencies

The national telephone number to be dialled in the case of emergencies is 112, which may be rung at any time of the day or night, from anywhere in the country.

Health

If you need medical care, you should go to one of the local Health Centres (Centros de Saúde). Emergency services at hospitals should only be used in serious cases. In the event of an accident or illness during their stay in Portugal, citizens from the 27 European Union countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland are entitled to free or low–cost healthcare, provided that they exhibit the European Health Insurance Card (issued in the country of origin) and their passport or any other proof of identity.

Electricity

The electric current in Portugal is 230/400 volts, 50 hz, and sockets are in keeping with European standards. The use of American standard plugs also requires the use of a 230–volt transformer, as well as an adaptor plug.

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* Calls are charged at local rates

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