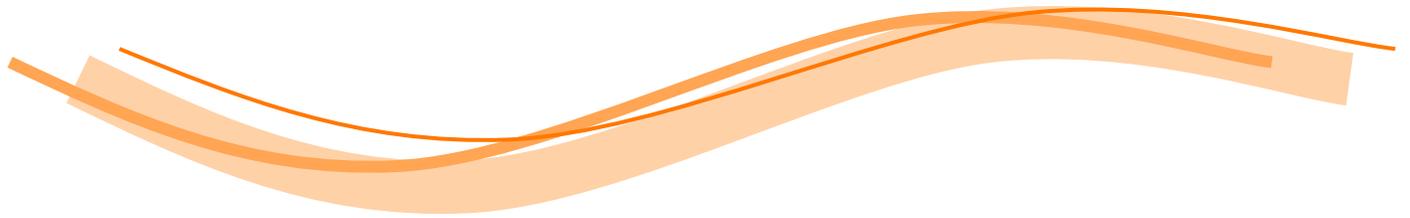




# PORTUGAL





<p><b>PORTUGAL</b></p>	<p>No matter where you go in Portugal you will find history, museums, arts and music - coupled with beautiful cities, monuments, gardens, religious buildings and more.</p> <p>Alongside the incredible depth of arts and culture, Portugal is also blessed with <b>beautiful landscapes</b>. Snow-capped mountains in the east and breathtaking coastline from Atlantic Islands like Madeira and the Azores to jet-setting beach resorts such as Albufeira. No wonder it is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations.</p> <p>Portugal has <b>19 UNESCO World Heritage sites</b>. These treasures reflect the variety and cultural richness of Portugal: monumental buildings, historic quarters and architectural sites as well as landscapes.</p> <p>You will find everything from Pre Roman pottery to the religious architecture of the Sephardic times when synagogues, mosques and churches stood together in peaceful coexistence. And from the explosion of music, art and learning during the Renaissance to today's hub of modern artistic expression in all forms.</p>
<p><b>Location</b></p>	<p>Portugal is located on the Iberian Peninsula, between Spain to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.</p>
<p><b>Geography</b></p>	<p>Mainland Portugal is split by its main river, the Tagus that flows from Spain and discharges in the Tagus Estuary, in Lisbon, before escaping into the Atlantic. The northern landscape is mountainous towards the interior with several plateaus indented by river valleys, whereas the south, which includes the Algarve and the Alentejo regions, is characterized by rolling plains.</p> <p>Portugal's highest peak is Mount Pico on the island of Pico in the Azores. This ancient volcano, which measures 2,351 m (7,713 ft) is an iconic symbol of the Azores, while the Serra da Estrela on the mainland (the summit being 1,991 m (6,532 ft) above sea level) is an important seasonal attraction for skiers and winter sports enthusiasts.</p> <p>The archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores are scattered within the Atlantic Ocean: the Azores straddling the Mid-Atlantic Ridge on a tectonic triple junction, and Madeira along a range formed by in-plate hotspot geology. Geologically, these islands were formed by volcanic and seismic events.</p>
<p><b>Name</b></p>	<p>The name of Portugal derives from the joined Romano-Celtic name Portus Cale.</p>
<p><b>Population</b></p>	<p>The population of the country is a little over ten million. Lisbon has 2.2 million inhabitants and Porto has 1.8 million.</p>

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<p><b>Language</b></p>	<p>Portuguese – but English is widely spoken in tourist areas. Portuguese is a Romance language that originated in what is now Galicia and Northern Portugal, originating from Galician-Portuguese, which was the common language of the Galician and Portuguese people until the independence of Portugal.</p> <p>The Portuguese language is also the official language spoken in Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, and East Timor. These countries, plus Macau Special Administrative Region (People's Republic of China) where Portuguese is co-official with Cantonese, make up the Lusosphere, similar to the Francophonie.</p>
<p><b>Currency</b></p>	<p><b>1 Euro = 1.50 Canadian Dollars</b> (Nov 2017)</p> <p>Portugal is one of 19 European Union countries whose common official currency is the euro.</p> <p>1 euro is divided into 100 cents. The coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents, and 1 and 2 euros.</p> <p>The notes are differentiated by their size and colour and come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros.</p> <p>One side of the coins has a common design (the European side), and the other side has a national symbol. All euro coins can be used in any euro-zone country, irrespective of which national symbols they display.</p> <p><b>ATMs - Automatic Teller Machines (Multibanco)</b> Portugal has a national network of cash machines (ATMs) identified by the symbol MB (Multibanco), from which you can withdraw cash 24 hours a day.</p> <p><b>Currency Exchange</b> You can exchange money at banks, which are open from 8.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. five working days a week; at bureaux de change; and at automatic currency exchange machines (these are for currency sale transactions only).</p> <p><b>Credit cards</b> In Portugal, the most commonly used credit cards are: Visa, American Express, Diners Club, Europay / MasterCard, JCB and Maestro.</p>
<p><b>Tipping</b></p>	<p>Service is included in the bill in restaurants, though it is customary to leave an additional tip of about 5-10% of the total.</p> <p>It is also normal to tip taxi drivers 5-10 % or rounding up the amount paid to the nearest euro.</p>
<p><b>Government</b></p>	<p>Portugal has been a semi-presidential representative democratic republic since the ratification of the Constitution of 1976, with Lisbon, the nation's largest city, as its capital. The Constitution grants the</p>

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	<p>division or separation of powers among four bodies referred as "organs of Sovereignty": the President of the Republic, the Government, the Assembly of the Republic and the Courts.</p> <p>The President, who is elected to a five-year term, has an executive role: the current President is Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa.</p>
<b>Documentation</b>	Canadian passports are required, but no visa is necessary
<b>Time zone</b>	Portugal is 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time
<b>Health</b>	Portugal does not pose any major health hazards. The rich cuisine - garlic, olive oil, and wine - may give some travellers mild stomach upset. The water is safe to drink throughout Portugal.
<b>Safety tips</b>	Normal traveller precautions apply. The risk of any terrorist activity affecting tourists is minimal. Travellers are advised not to leave passports and tickets in their car. Pickpockets exist in some areas of Lisbon.

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	<p>Portugal is defined as a Mediterranean climate and mixed oceanic climate along the northern half of the coastline and also Semi-arid climate or Steppe climate and is one of the warmest European countries: the annual average temperature in mainland Portugal varies from 8–12 °C in the mountainous interior north to 16–19 °C in the south and on the Guadiana river basin.</p> <p>The Algarve, separated from the Alentejo region by mountains reaching up to 900 metres (3,000 ft) in Alto de Fóia, has a climate similar to that of the southern coastal areas of Spain or Southwest Australia.</p>
<b>Today's weather</b>	Today, 27 October 2017, Lisbon is 30C and sunny with a few clouds
<b>Best time to visit</b>	Portugal is very much an all year round destination. Winter is especially pleasant in the south of the country in the Algarve, when the weather is at its worst here in Canada. Summer is glorious in the north of the country around Porto and the Duoro Valley. Spring and Fall are perfect in the central region around Lisbon. In Madeira, the weather is spring-like all year round.

<b>GETTING THERE</b>	
<b>Flying</b>	<p><b>TAP Portugal</b> now fly five times a week direct from Toronto to Lisbon with onward connections to Porto, Faro (Algarve), Madeira and the Azores, plus over 50 cities in Europe.</p> <p><b>Air Canada</b> fly to Lisbon and Porto from Toronto and to Lisbon from Montreal.</p> <p><b>Transat</b> fly seasonally to Lisbon, Porto and Faro in the Algarve. Flight time is around 6 hours with direct flights from Canada.</p>
<b>Lisbon</b>	<p><b>Lisbon</b></p> <p>Lisbon is a cosmopolitan city, and there is so much to see and do that it</p>

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is difficult to have enough time to see everything you want at your leisure... Here are recommendations which cannot be missed in the Portuguese capital.

### **1. Climb to the Castle of São Jorge and stroll through Alfama**

Anyone coming to Lisbon and not going to the Castle of São Jorge will have surely missed an unforgettable moment. It is the highest point in the city, set amongst the most typical of neighbourhoods. A unique opportunity to feel and understand the city's relationship with the river Tagus.

### **2. Listen to Fado**

Whether or not you like the style of music, dinner by candlelight listening to fado in Lisbon is unmissable. Consider yourself lucky and do stop, if you hear it sung while strolling through some street in Alfama, Mouraria or Madragoa. This style is the so-called fado vadio, or amateur, sung when someone gets the urge to sing, with the guitars simply joining in.

### **3. Go to Terreiro do Paço**

The largest square in Lisbon and also one of the most iconic symbols of the city and its rebuilding after the great earthquake of 1755. Currently, it mostly offers a very pleasant walk along the river in the late afternoon. It is also a very beautiful view from the river as you pass on a boat.

### **4. Go up in the Santa Justa elevator**

You cannot miss it when you pass it while ambling through the downtown district. It offers enviable views over this old part of Lisbon, and it is a privilege to travel in this elevator designed by Ponsard, a disciple of the great master of iron works, Gustave Eiffel, more than a hundred years ago.

### **5. Take a tram ride**

The tram is a common means of transport for Lisbonites, but also one of the best ways to travel through the historic neighbourhoods. It looks good on any photo, and the sound of the trams running on their rails is one of the most characteristic of the city. The no. 28 is the best known, but there are others...

### **6. Visit the Jerónimos Monastery and the Tower of Belém**

Lisbon has two unique monuments which are World Heritage Sites. They are two jewels of the Gothic Manueline style that easily impress. Apart from the vaults carved in stone that are a remarkable piece of engineering, the wealth of decorative elements linked to maritime aspects and the voyages of the Navigators is fascinating.

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	<p><b>7. Taste a pastel de Belém</b> This is a highlight of Portuguese cuisine and its recipe is a closely guarded secret that makes them unique. Not to be missed! A sweet pastry that Lisbonites like to eat along their coffee.</p> <p><b>8. Visit the Oceanarium in the Parque das Nações</b> The Parque das Nações is a success story in the revitalisation of an industrial area, with a privileged location on the river. It is worth visiting the Oceanarium, one of the largest in Europe, where you can appreciate the flora and fauna of the various oceans of our planet.</p> <p><b>9. Visit the National Tile Museum and the Coach Museum</b> These two museums are unequalled anywhere in the world. One tells the story of the tile in Portugal from its first uses on 16th century walls to the present day; the other has an unrivalled collection of carriages, with fine examples from the 18th century, exuberantly decorated with paintings and gild work.</p> <p><b>10. Dine in Bairro Alto</b> Lisbon is also known for its very lively and busy nightlife. After an afternoon shopping in the elegant Chiado district, there's nothing like a late afternoon at one of the viewpoints of Santa Catarina or São Pedro de Alcântara, then staying for dinner in the Bairro Alto. It's the place to be for those who enjoy a night out having fun.</p>
<p><b>Porto</b></p>	<p><b>Porto</b> On a brief visit to Porto, there are some places that cannot be missed. In the words of many visitors, this city has something mystical that are difficult to describe and which varies according to the place, time of day and light.</p> <p>Whatever it is, it certainly has to do with its people, known to be generous and easy-going, as well as the River Douro and its heritage on both banks, with its bridges and monuments, the tiles, the flowering balconies and the shopping streets. The historic centre of Porto and the River Douro on the Gaia side, where the Port Wine lodges are located, are classified as World Heritage.</p> <p>S. Bento Station, with its atrium lined with tiles, is an ideal starting point. Just ahead is the Cathedral, not to be missed, whose precinct offers the first view of the river, the cascading houses and the opposite bank. From there you descend by steps and mediaeval streets to Ribeira, with its café terraces and picturesque corners.</p>

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It's worth staying a little to get a flavour of the atmosphere and take in the river with the D. Luís Bridge and the opposite bank, before going on a cruise under Porto's six bridges.

Once you've seen the outline of the cascading houses and church towers, you will want to see the gilt interior of the Church of S. Francisco. Nearby, you can see more tile-fronted churches and monuments, and visit the Palácio da Bolsa (former Stock Exchange palace).

The tram leaves from next to the river for a trip that goes to Foz (the mouth of the Douro), where you can take a stroll and fill your lungs with the sea air. Avenida da Boavista starts here, and not far away is Serralves, with its gardens to stroll or rest in and its contemporary art exhibitions. The museum is the work of Álvaro Siza Vieira, one of the foremost architects of the Porto School of Architecture, and winner of the Pritzker Prize.

The architecturally imposing Casa da Música, with its full programme of cultural events, is on Rotunda da Boavista, an area that is good for shopping. There are also good shops to be found around Avenida dos Aliados. In between are the Crystal Palace gardens, with another panoramic view of the river, and the Soares dos Reis Museum. Another garden, full of sculptures, is Cordoaria, surrounded by churches and other monuments. It's worth climbing the Clérigos Tower for a different view of Porto. Immediately nearby is the Lello bookshop that inspired some of the Harry Potter stories.

Continue walking towards Aliados, past the shops and art nouveau buildings. After exploring this broad avenue, it's worth strolling along the pedestrians-only Rua de Santa Catarina for more shopping. Then pop in to the Café Majestic for a break.

There's still a visit to be made to the south bank of the river to go to a Port Wine lodge and taste some Port in its unique setting. From Ribeira, cross the D. Luís foot bridge and you'll see them. One of the most beautiful views over Porto can be had from Gaia. And you can also take the chairlift, which follows this side of the river.

In terms of gastronomy, this side of the river is a good option, but Ribeira also teems with restaurants and café terraces, as does Foz, which also has beautiful views over the sea. Portugal's cuisine is always a winner with tourists, but this is even more true in Porto and Northern Portugal. You can be sure of a good meal, accompanied by fine wines

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	from the Douro or the fresh Vinho Verde typical of the region, in any restaurant, from the finest to the most popular.
<b>Distances</b>	Lisbon to Porto: 314 kms Lisbon to Faro, Algarve: 278 kms Lisbon to Madrid, Spain: 625 kms
<b>Metro</b>	In Lisbon and Oporto it operates between 6 a.m. and 1 a.m. The Lisbon underground ( <a href="http://www.metrolisboa.pt">www.metrolisboa.pt</a> ) is the older of the two and reaches a considerable part of the city. Its network has gradually been extended in recent years. Both the oldest and the most recent stations are decorated with panels of tiles by renowned Portuguese artists, making them true underground art galleries. In Porto, the underground ( <a href="http://www.metro-porto.pt">www.metro-porto.pt</a> ) is new. There are six lines in operation - blue, red, green, yellow, violet and orange - and most of their route is above ground
<b>Buses</b>	There are regular coach services between Portugal's main towns and cities. For details of routes, timetables and fares visit <a href="http://www.rede-expressos.pt">www.rede-expressos.pt</a> the website of Rede Nacional de Expressos.
<b>Trains</b>	Comboios de Portugal ( <a href="http://www.cp.pt">www.cp.pt</a> ), the Portuguese railway company, offers a vast rail network covering the whole of mainland Portugal and also offers international train services to Vigo, Madrid and Paris. There are a number of options: - The top-of-the-range " <b>Alfa Pendular</b> " trains offer the fastest and most comfortable rail link between Lisbon and the Algarve and, in the north, Porto or Braga, with stops in Coimbra. - The " <b>Intercidades</b> " or Intercity service covers the Lisbon-Porto-Guimarães, Lisbon-Guarda, Lisbon-Covilhã, Lisbon-Évora-Beja and Lisbon-Faro routes. - The international <b>Sud-Express train and Lusitânia</b> hotel-train leave from Lisbon. - There is a vast network of regional, inter-regional and suburban trains covering the whole of the country. In addition to normal train ticket prices, Comboios de Portugal - CP (Portuguese Rail Services) is offering discounts on day or leisure trips with the Tourist Travelcard (Bilhete Turístico) which allows you unlimited travel on suburban trains from Lisbon (on the Sintra/Azambuja, Cascais and Sado lines), Porto (on the Aveiro, Braga, Guimarães and Marco de Canaveses lines) and on regional trains on the Algarve line, and the Beach Ticket (Bilhete Praia) for trips from Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra to the nearest beaches.
<b>Car Rental</b>	There are car rental services at airports, international rail terminuses and in the main towns and cities. To rent a car you must: - be at least between 21 and 25 years old, depending on the company's rental policy

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- show identification (identity card for EU citizens or a valid passport for other nationalities)</li> <li>- have had a driving license for more than one year</li> </ul>
<b>Ferries</b>	<p>There is a ferry service connecting Madeira with the neighbouring island of Porto Santo that takes 2.5 hours and runs daily.</p> <p>There are also ferries between the islands of the Azores.</p>

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	<p>There is a huge range of accommodation types in Portugal which are classified in as follows:</p> <p><b>HOTELS (H)</b> – the supply of hotels is diversified, with a large number of such units on offer, classified from 1 to 5-star depending on their location and the quality of their facilities;</p> <p><b>APARTHOTELS (HA)</b> – classified from 1 to 5-star, these are the ideal choice for tourists seeking greater independence, but still wishing to enjoy all the services of a hotel;</p> <p><b>POUSADAS</b> – housed in historic buildings or located at sites of great natural beauty, these are classified under 4 categories: Historic, Historic Design, Nature and Charm.</p> <p><b>Tourist Villages (A)</b> Classified from 3 to 5-star, tourist villages consist of interdependent accommodation units contained within a specially marked out area, where tourist support services are also provided.</p> <p><b>Tourist Apartments (AT)</b> Classified from 3 to 5-star, tourist apartments are the ideal choice for those who prefer to stay in an independent accommodation unit with access to shared areas and services.</p> <p><b>Resorts (CT)</b> Resorts are a good choice for those wishing to enjoy a variety of leisure services and equipment in the same area with access to different accommodation options, either in the form of a 4 or 5-star hotel or another type of tourist establishment.</p> <p><b>Tourism in a Manor House (TH)</b> Those who prefer to receive accommodation in a family environment can choose to stay in manor houses, palace-like houses or residences of recognised architectural, historic or artistic value, in either a rural or urban setting.</p>
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	<p><b>Tourism in the Country (TER)</b> Offering accommodation in country residences exhibiting the distinctive features of their particular rural setting, Tourism in the Country enables tourists to enjoy more direct contact with the local populations, their customs and habits, as well as with Nature itself. These accommodation units may be classified as:</p> <p><b>COUNTRY HOUSES (CC)</b> – these are houses located in villages and rural areas that still preserve the original design, building materials and other typical features of the local architecture;</p> <p><b>AGRICULTURAL TOURISM (AG)</b> – this consists of accommodation on a farm, where tourists can take part in the agricultural work if they so wish;</p> <p><b>RURAL HOTELS (HR)</b> – classified from 3 to 5-star, these hotels are to be found in rural areas, respecting the original layout and architectural characteristics of the surrounding region.</p>
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<p><b>LIFESTYLE GROUPS</b></p> <p><b>Families</b></p>	<p>There are numerous activities designed for the little ones, both outdoors and indoors, in castles, museums, zoos, theme parks and aqua parks. Following the footprints of dinosaurs, watching dolphins and whales at sea or learning about the stars are just some ideas of what you can do. Bicycle or donkey rides in natural parks and reserves are also much appreciated and a relaxed way to learn about and discover nature. On the fine sandy beaches, with their calm waters and pleasant temperatures, children can run and play at will, swim and make sandcastles. But the greatest fun of all is to take advantage of the waves and introduce the whole family to surfing.</p> <p><b>Lisbon</b> Lisbon is a perfect city in which to spend a few days with the children. It's welcoming and safe, with a mild climate and easy to explore on foot, besides having numerous activities designed especially for kids, both outdoors and indoors. The whole family will surely enjoy a tram ride to explore the city, heading for the Castle of São Jorge, for a walk between the walls and battlements, conjuring up stories of fearless knights. In addition, the capital's parks and gardens are always a safe option. In the Lisbon Zoo, there are elephants, a monkey village, lions, tigers, crocodiles and even an area with several species of reptiles. You can watch a dolphin show, the feeding of the sea lions and take a ride on the cable car.</p>
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	<p>Another suggestion is Monsanto Park. In this true “lung of the city”, there is fun for the whole family, with footpaths, extreme sports and various playgrounds, such as the Indians Park, Alvito Park and Serafina Park, for using up your energy on the swings, slides and other rides. In Parque das Nações, on the eastern side of the city, the Pavilhão do Conhecimento (Knowledge Pavilion) is an interactive science museum that is great fun. But the favourite is, without doubt, the Oceanarium, where the Earth’s various oceans are recreated. There are several garden spaces in the area, and you can rent a bike or take a cable car ride.</p>
<p><b>Romance</b></p>	<p>Portugal is a land of romance. Whether in the country or by the sea, they open up our palaces, farms and manor houses to romance, giving a big-hearted welcome to anyone who visits.</p> <p>Light and colour in Portugal are also a source of inspiration: the light and colour of the sea, but also the filtered light in a recess of the Sintra woods, the diffuse hues among the foliage that inspire poets, painters and lovers. You can experience them in an alleyway in Alfama, in Lisbon, on the endless Alentejo plain or on the island of Madeira, the perfect setting for a honeymoon. And in many other places, such as the Azores or the Alentejo coast, where nature is waiting to be discovered. No-one can resist the charm of a mediaeval castle adapted to modern times, where you can indulge in the comforts of living. Or a spa, a memorable meal, an endless stretch of beach, a wine tasting, a cultural and leisure programme.</p> <p>A ride in a horse-drawn carriage, a dinner by candlelight, a sunset over the sea, all provide fond memories. Even if it’s just for a few days, the mild climate, the diverse landscape and the romantic atmosphere will ensure unforgettable moments in Portugal.</p>
<p><b>Zoomers</b></p>	<p>Portugal is an excellent destination for the older traveler, combining high standards of accommodation and cuisine with easy transport and a wealth of cultural and scenic highlights.</p> <p>Mention the fact that you’re a senior when you make your travel reservations. Many hotels offer discounts for seniors. In most cities, people over the age of 60 qualify for reduced admission to theatres, museums, and other attractions, as well as discounted fares on public transportation.</p>

<p><b>UNIQUES</b></p>	<p><b>Fátima</b></p> <p>The Shrine at Fátima is one of the most important landmarks in the Marian worship, drawing pilgrims from all over the world. The location of the Shrine of Fátima, at Cova da Iria, had until 1917 been an unknown place in the municipality of Ourém, in the parish of Fátima. That year, a religious event changed its history and importance for ever, when three little shepherds, Jacinta and her two cousins,</p>
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	<p>Francisco and Lúcia, witnessed successive apparitions of Our Lady of the Rosary. Initially looked at with suspicion by the Church, albeit cherished by the people, the phenomenon was not acknowledged by the Bishop of Leiria until 1930. From then onwards, the development of the village boomed, leading to Fátima being given town status, in 1977, and city status in 1997.</p> <p>The world renown of the Shrine increased during the papacy of John Paul II, a confessed devotee of Our Lady of Fátima, who travelled there in 1982 to give thanks for having survived an assassination attempt the year before. In 2000, on his third visit to the site, he announced the beatification of Jacinta and Francisco, to whom the Vatican attributed the miracle of a cure.</p> <p>The first apparition occurred on 13 May, followed by others on the same day of the ensuing months until October, and that is the day of the main celebrations in Fátima. One of the most important events is the Candle Procession, on the evening of 12 May, when thousands of candles held by the faithful filling the grand Shrine plaza lend a magic atmosphere of communion and religious devotion to this place. It is as important as the Farewell Procession on the 13th.</p> <p>Not even non-believers can remain indifferent when confronted by the Shrine's grandiosity, spirituality and symbolism.</p> <p>As you enter the Prayer Area, at one end you will see the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima, with its tall 65-metre tower. In the centre is the Monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and, on one side, the Chapel of Apparitions, exactly where Our Lady asked the little shepherds to build a chapel.</p> <p>At the opposite end, the Most Holy Trinity Church – Lesser Basilica, inaugurated in 2007, is a modern piece of architecture, without intermediate supports and with a capacity for about 8,700 people. The design is by the Greek architect Alexandros Tombazis, with contributions by other artists, such as the Portuguese Álvaro Siza Vieira and Pedro Calapez. Outside, there is a Tall Cross in bronze by the German Robert Schad.</p> <p>Besides the Shrine, you can visit in the area the Museum of Sacred Art and Ethnology, the Wax Museum, the 1917 Fátima Museum and the Animated Nativity Scene and Village of Bethlehem.</p> <p>Aljustrel, where the little shepherds lived, is about 2km south. To recreate the story, you also need to go to Loca do Anjo and Valinhos, other sites associated with the apparitions.</p> <p><b>2017 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apparitions and so there are many events celebrating the centenary of this event.</b></p>
<p><b>Surprising</b></p>	<p><b>Madeira's Levadas</b></p> <p>Alongside its natural beauty, Madeira has another no less surprising beauty to offer: its great network of irrigation channels - the Levadas.</p>

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	<p>These waterways are a living reminder of the titanic effort of past generations to distribute the abundant water that flows from springs at the top of the mountains amongst the slopes and valleys. They cover several protected areas including, most importantly, the Madeira Natural Park and the Funchal Ecological Park.</p> <p>There are about 1,500km of levadas (irrigation channels) to explore, discovering breathtaking landscapes: a unique encounter with nature. Most of the trails are quite accessible, but there are varying degrees of difficulty, so you are advised to consult professionals in the field and specific publications on the subject, and use suitable equipment.</p>
<p><b>History</b></p>	<p>The territory of modern Portugal has been continuously settled, invaded and fought over since prehistoric times. The Pre-Celts, Celts, Phoenicians, Carthaginians and the Romans were followed by the invasions of the Visigothic and the Suebi Germanic peoples. In 711 the Iberian Peninsula was invaded by the Moors and for the following centuries Portugal would be part of Muslim Al Andalus. Portugal was born as a result of the Christian Reconquista, and in 1139, Afonso Henriques was proclaimed King of Portugal, thus firmly establishing Portuguese independence.</p> <p>In the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal established the first global empire, becoming one of the world's major economic, political and military powers. During this time, Portuguese explorers pioneered maritime exploration in the Age of Discovery, notably under royal patronage of Prince Henry the Navigator and King João II, with such notable discoveries as Vasco da Gama's sea route to India (1497–98), the discovery of Brazil (1500), and the reaching of the Cape of Good Hope.</p> <p>Portugal monopolized the spice trade during this time, and the Portuguese Empire expanded with military campaigns led in Asia. But the destruction of Lisbon in a 1755 earthquake, the country's occupation during the Napoleonic Wars, the independence of Brazil (1822), and the Liberal Wars (1828–34), all left Portugal crippled from war and diminished in its world power.</p> <p>After the 1910 revolution deposed the monarchy, the democratic but unstable Portuguese First Republic was established, later being superseded by the Estado Novo right-wing authoritarian regime. Democracy was restored after the Portuguese Colonial War and the Carnation Revolution in 1974.</p> <p>Shortly after, independence was granted to almost all its overseas territories, marking the end of the longest-lived European colonial</p>

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	<p>empire. Portugal has left a profound cultural and architectural influence across the globe and a legacy of over 250 million Portuguese speakers today.</p> <p>Portugal is now a developed country with a high-income advanced economy and a high living standard. It is the 5th most peaceful country in the world.</p>
<p><b>Books</b></p>	<p><b>Lonely Planet</b> is my go-to guide book series. Their <b>Portugal</b> guide, with 536 pages, is one of the best:  <a href="http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/portugal/portugal-travel-guide-9/">http://shop.lonelyplanet.com/portugal/portugal-travel-guide-9/</a></p>
<p><b>1000 Places to see before you die</b></p>	<p>There are nine entries for Portugal in Patricia Schultz' book:</p> <p><b>Estremoz and Marvao, Alentejo</b> – hilltop castles in ancient border towns</p> <p><b>Evora</b> – an open air museum of Portuguese architecture</p> <p><b>Bussaco Palace</b> – sylvan setting for a pleasure palace</p> <p><b>Obidos</b> – a town that belonged to the Queens of Portugal</p> <p><b>Bairro Alfame, Lisbon</b> – an ancient neighbourhood where history and fado live</p> <p><b>Great Museums of Three Collectors</b> – awe inspiring gifts in Lisbon</p> <p><b>Sintra, Lisbon</b> – summer resort of palaces and castles</p> <p><b>Madeira</b> – “Pearl of the Atlantic”</p> <p><b>Porto and the Duoro Valley</b> – storied history on the Golden River of Wine</p>
<p><b>Must Sees</b></p>	<p>Portugal has 19 sites or features classified as World Heritage, including monuments, historic city centres, landscapes and intangible heritage.</p> <p><b>Alto Douro Wine Region</b>  Wine has been produced by traditional landholders in the Alto Douro region for some 2,000 years. Since the 18th century, its main product, port wine, has been world famous for its quality. This long tradition of viticulture has produced a cultural landscape of outstanding beauty that reflects its technological, social and economic evolution.</p> <p><b>Central Zone of the Town of Angra do Heroismo in the Azores</b>  Situated on one of the islands in the Azores archipelago, this was an obligatory port of call from the 15th century until the advent of the steamship in the 19th century. The 400-year-old San Sebastião and San João Baptista fortifications are unique examples of military architecture. Damaged by an earthquake in 1980, Angra is now being restored.</p> <p><b>Convent of Christ in Tomar</b>  Originally designed as a monument symbolizing the Reconquest, the Convent of the Knights Templar of Tomar (transferred in 1344 to the</p>

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Knights of the Order of Christ) came to symbolize just the opposite during the Manueline period – the opening up of Portugal to other civilizations.

### **Cultural Landscape of Sintra**

In the 19th century Sintra became the first centre of European Romantic architecture. Ferdinand II turned a ruined monastery into a castle where this new sensitivity was displayed in the use of Gothic, Egyptian, Moorish and Renaissance elements and in the creation of a park blending local and exotic species of trees. Other fine dwellings, built along the same lines in the surrounding serra , created a unique combination of parks and gardens which influenced the development of landscape architecture throughout Europe.

### **Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its Fortifications**

The site, extensively fortified from the 17th to 19th centuries, represents the largest bulwarked dry-ditch system in the world. Within its walls, the town contains barracks and other military buildings as well as churches and monasteries. While Elvas contains remains dating back to the 10th century ad, its fortification began when Portugal regained independence in 1640. The fortifications designed by Dutch Jesuit padre Cosmander represent the best surviving example of the Dutch school of fortifications anywhere. The site also contains the Amoreira Aqueduct, built to enable the stronghold to withstand lengthy sieges.

### **Historic Centre of Évora**

This museum-city, whose roots go back to Roman times, reached its golden age in the 15th century, when it became the residence of the Portuguese kings. Its unique quality stems from the whitewashed houses decorated with azulejos and wrought-iron balconies dating from the 16th to the 18th century. Its monuments had a profound influence on Portuguese architecture in Brazil.

### **Historic Centre of Guimarães**

The historic town of Guimarães is associated with the emergence of the Portuguese national identity in the 12th century. An exceptionally well-preserved and authentic example of the evolution of a medieval settlement into a modern town, its rich building typology exemplifies the specific development of Portuguese architecture from the 15th to 19th century through the consistent use of traditional building materials and techniques.

### **Historic Centre of Oporto**

The city of Oporto, built along the hillsides overlooking the mouth of the

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Douro river, is an outstanding urban landscape with a 2,000-year history. Its continuous growth, linked to the sea (the Romans gave it the name Portus, or port), can be seen in the many and varied monuments, from the cathedral with its Romanesque choir, to the neoclassical Stock Exchange and the typically Portuguese Manueline-style Church of Santa Clara.

### **Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture**

The 987-ha site on the volcanic island of Pico, the second largest in the Azores archipelago, consists of a remarkable pattern of spaced-out, long linear walls running inland from, and parallel to, the rocky shore. The walls were built to protect the thousands of small, contiguous, rectangular plots (currais) from wind and seawater. Evidence of this viticulture, whose origins date back to the 15th century, is manifest in the extraordinary assembly of the fields, in houses and early 19th-century manor houses, in wine-cellars, churches and ports. The extraordinarily beautiful man-made landscape of the site is the best remaining area of a once much more widespread practice.

### **Laurisilva of Madeira**

The Laurisilva of Madeira is an outstanding relict of a previously widespread laurel forest type. It is the largest surviving area of laurel forest and is believed to be 90% primary forest. It contains a unique suite of plants and animals, including many endemic species such as the Madeiran long-toed pigeon.

### **Monastery of Alcobaça**

The Monastery of Santa Maria d'Alcobaça, north of Lisbon, was founded in the 12th century by King Alfonso I. Its size, the purity of its architectural style, the beauty of the materials and the care with which it was built make this a masterpiece of Cistercian Gothic art.

### **Monastery of Batalha**

The Monastery of the Dominicans of Batalha was built to commemorate the victory of the Portuguese over the Castilians at the battle of Aljubarrota in 1385. It was to be the Portuguese monarchy's main building project for the next two centuries. Here a highly original, national Gothic style evolved, profoundly influenced by Manueline art, as demonstrated by its masterpiece, the Royal Cloister.

### **Monastery of the Hieronymites and Tower of Belém in Lisbon**

Standing at the entrance to Lisbon harbour, the Monastery of the Hieronymites – construction of which began in 1502 – exemplifies Portuguese art at its best. The nearby Tower of Belém, built to

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	<p>commemorate Vasco da Gama's expedition, is a reminder of the great maritime discoveries that laid the foundations of the modern world.</p> <p><b>Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde</b>          The two Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley (Portugal) and Siega Verde (Spain) are located on the banks of the rivers Agueda and Côa, tributaries of the river Douro, documenting continuous human occupation from the end of the Paleolithic Age. Hundreds of panels with thousands of animal figures (5,000 in Foz Côa and around 440 in Siega Verde) were carved over several millennia, representing the most remarkable open-air ensemble of Paleolithic art on the Iberian Peninsula.</p> <p><b>University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia</b>          Situated on a hill overlooking the city, the University of Coimbra with its colleges grew and evolved over more than seven centuries within the old town. The University's edifices became a reference in the development of other institutions of higher education in the Portuguese-speaking world where it also exerted a major influence on learning and literature. Coimbra offers an outstanding example of an integrated university city with a specific urban typology as well as its own ceremonial and cultural traditions that have been kept alive through the ages.</p>
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<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Golf</b>	<p>It is difficult to find a better destination for a golfing holiday. Voted the World's Best Golf Destination by the World Golf Awards in 2014 and 2015, Portugal has a wide range of courses with characteristics to suit different levels of difficulty and different budgets.</p> <p>There are some 90 courses throughout the country, of which 57 are 18-hole and 9 are 27-hole, with a range of layouts and major golfing challenges recognised by the most experienced golf professionals. Many of the courses were designed by famous architects such as Robert Trent Jones Jr., Jack Nicklaus, Arthur Hills, Nick Faldo, Severiano Ballesteros, Henry Cotton, Rocky Roquemore and Arnold Palmer, the creator of the award-winning Oceânico Victoria, one of golf's flagship courses, where the Portugal Masters has been held since it was first staged in 2007. One thing they all share is their environmental quality and the harmonious way in which they blend into the natural surroundings.</p> <p>The Algarve and the Lisbon coast are well-known destinations for more experienced players and have won several international awards. They host major competitions on the professional tours, as does Madeira with</p>

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	<p>its mountain courses. In the Azores, there's also rustic golf that is played in a rural setting. But it was in Porto and the North that it all began, where Espinho, the second oldest course in mainland Europe, is located.</p> <p>But the biggest challenge while you're playing is not to have your concentration broken by the beauty and light of the surrounding countryside. There are courses that overlook the sea flanked by cliffs and dunes with white sand. And others surrounded by lakes and mountains, where the perfumes of flowers and herbs blend and become impossible to distinguish one from the other.</p> <p>And even though games can be relaxed or hotly contested, the encounter concludes at a table in the clubhouse, or the restaurant... to practice a "sport" at which the Portuguese excel: socialising.</p>
<b>Tennis</b>	Tennis is available at most of the larger resort hotels on the Atlantic coast.
<b>Fishing</b>	Sea fishing in the Atlantic Ocean as well as fresh water fishing in the lakes and rivers of the mountainous in the East will delight all fishing enthusiasts.
<b>Horse riding</b>	Horse riding is available in all the regions of the country and in particular in the south of the country in the Algarve region. Here there are numerous stables providing both tuition and trail rides for the visitor.
<b>Hiking</b>	<p><b>Algarve</b></p> <p>If you enjoy cycling and walking, then visit the Algarve and discover the vast network of routes and trails on offer in the region. Not only will you have an unforgettable experience but you are sure to have the sun for company because the Algarve has sunshine almost all year round. As a result the climate is very pleasant, especially from September to June, the best months for cycling and walking. And as an added bonus, the scenery is very varied: winding trails through hills and valleys inland; a steep and almost completely unspoiled western coast; and to the south and east, flatter routes alongside the seashore or in the tranquil settings of the Ria Formosa and River Guadiana.</p> <p>Among the top choices for you to try are four major routes that interconnect with each other, allowing you to explore the entire region: <b>Rota Vicentina, Via Algarviana, Grande Rota do Guadiana and Ecovia do Litoral</b>. Cyclists or walkers taking any of these routes will discover a challenge appropriate to their fitness level, since there are stretches of varying degrees of difficulty.</p> <p>To the west, along one of the most beautiful and well-preserved coastal areas in Europe, the Rota Vicentina totals over 340km from Santiago do Cacém in the Alentejo to Cape St Vincent in the Algarve. The starting point on this route in the Algarve is Aljezur. This route is divided into two</p>

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	<p>parts that complement one another: the Caminho Histórico, or "Historical Route", which stretches for 241km and takes you through various localities, is suitable for walkers and mountain bikers; and the Trilho dos Pescadores, or "Fishermen's Trail", which goes all the way from Odeceixe to Sagres along the coast of the Southwest Alentejo and Costa Vicentina Nature Park. As this part is more difficult, it is only for walkers.</p> <p><b>Rota Vicentina</b> Connecting Cape St Vincent and Alcoutim in the easternmost part of the Algarve, the Via Algarviana stretches for some 300km. It cuts lengthways across the region, mostly going through the heart of the Algarve uplands. Suitable for walkers and mountain bikers, this route, perfumed with the scents of the countryside, lets you explore a virtually unknown Algarve, where farming and country life are the norm. With everyone's comfort and convenience in mind, the Via Algarviana is divided into 14 sections, always starting and finishing in a town or village offering accommodation and eating places.</p> <p><b>Via Algarviana</b> Alcoutim is where the Grande Rota do Guadiana begins. This route stretches for around 65km and ends in Vila Real de Santo António. The main attraction here is the River Guadiana, which offers beautiful panoramic views. Suitable for both walkers and cyclists, the route takes you through upland scenery and finishes beside the beaches on the south coast. Along the way, you can discover the fauna, flora and historical heritage of this little corner of the Algarve.</p> <p><b>Rota do Guadiana</b> Completing the network is the Ecovia do Litoral, which is part of the EuroVelo European Atlantic Coast Route. It connects Vila Real de Santo António to Sagres, taking you along 241km of the Algarve's southern coast. Along the way, you will pass through towns, cities and areas of unspoiled nature, such as the Ria Formosa Nature Park. Comprising a continuous series of distinct stretches that include areas exclusively for non-motorised vehicles and others where the quiet roads and tracks are shared by all vehicles, this route is suitable for walkers and cyclists.</p>
<p><b>Soccer</b></p>	<p>Football is the most popular sport in Portugal. The legendary Eusébio is still a major symbol of Portuguese football history. FIFA World Player of the Year winners Luís Figo and Cristiano Ronaldo, who won the FIFA Ballon d'Or, are two world-class Portuguese football players. Portuguese football managers are also noteworthy; José Mourinho and Fernando Santos are among the most renowned.</p>

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	<p>The Portugal national football team – Seleção Nacional – have won one UEFA European Championship title: the UEFA Euro 2016, with a 1–0 victory in the final over France, the tournament hosts. In addition, Portugal finished second in the Euro 2004 (held in Portugal), third in the 1966 FIFA World Cup, and fourth in the 2006 FIFA World Cup. S.L. Benfica, Sporting CP and FC Porto are the largest sports clubs by popularity and by number of trophies won, often known as "os três grandes" ("the big three"). They have won eight titles in the European UEFA club competitions, were in many finals and have been regular contenders in the last stages almost every season.</p>
<p><b>Surfing</b></p>	<p>Surfing is a 365 days a year activity in Portugal. Or 366 if it's a leap year! This is not an exaggeration, since the extensive Portuguese coast offers great waves every day. And there are many ways to tackle them, it all depends on your skill and enthusiasm.</p> <p>The diversity of natural conditions and an exceptional climate provide memorable experiences within everyone's reach, from beginners to pros. It's even said that there's no other coastline in the world with so many spots so close to each other.</p> <p>There are waves for every taste and discipline: from perfect tubes for surfing and bodyboarding, which are the setting for major international events, to giant waves, posing a challenge for the boldest surfers striving to ride their crests, and long waves that are among Europe's longest. But there are still a few secrets waiting to be unveiled.</p> <p>The wind is a great ally and offers unique conditions for windsurfing and kitesurfing, but there are many other sports for making the adrenaline run. And after a day at sea, the good vibes continue on shore, where there's always a party, a festival, a bar or a nightclub to provide unending fun every night.</p>
<p><b>Cycling</b></p>	<p>Cycling is popular in Portugal, even though there are few dedicated bicycle paths. Possible itineraries are numerous in the mountainous national/natural parks of the north (especially Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês), along the coast or across the Alentejo plains. Coastal trips are easiest from north to south, with the prevailing winds. More demanding is the Serra da Estrela (which serves as the Tour de Portugal's 'mountain run'). You could also try the Serra do Marão between Amarante and Vila Real.</p> <p>Local bike clubs organise regular Passeio BTT trips; check their flyers at rental agencies, bike shops and turismos (tourist offices). Guided trips are often available in popular tourist destinations.</p> <p>Cobbled roads in some old-town centres may jar your teeth loose if your tyres aren't fat enough; they should be at least 38mm in diameter.</p>

<p><b>CULTURE</b></p>	<p>Portugal is known as a <b>land of poets</b>. Our poetry began at the same time as the nation, with lyric poetry, but reached a high point during the</p>
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	<p>Renaissance, when <b>Luís de Camões</b> (1524-1580) published his "Lusíadas", relating the feats of the Portuguese Discoveries. In the early 20th century, Portuguese poetry became more universal, with the work of Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), the most-translated Portuguese poet. However, it was the prose of José Saramago (1922-2013), which won a Nobel Prize in 1998.</p>
<p><b>Arts</b></p>	<p>Portugal has a rich history in <b>painting</b>. The first well-known painters date back to the 15th century – like Nuno Gonçalves – were part of the Gothic painting period. José Malhoa, known for his work Fado, and Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro (who painted the portraits of Teófilo Braga and Antero de Quental) were both references in naturalist painting. The 20th century saw the arrival of Modernism, and along with it came the most prominent Portuguese painters: Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso, who was heavily influenced by French painters, particularly by the Delaunays. Among his best-known works is Canção Popular a Russa e o Fígaro.</p> <p>Traditional <b>architecture</b> is distinctive and includes the <b>Manueline</b>, also known as Portuguese late Gothic, a sumptuous, composite Portuguese style of architectural ornamentation of the first decades of the 16th century. A 20th-century interpretation of traditional architecture, Soft Portuguese style, appears extensively in major cities, especially Lisbon.</p>
<p><b>Music</b></p>	<p>Portuguese music encompasses a wide variety of genres. The most renowned is <b>Fado</b>, a melancholy urban music originated in Lisbon, usually associated with the Portuguese guitar and saudade, or longing. Coimbra fado, a unique type of "serenading" fado, is also noteworthy. Internationally notable performers include Amália Rodrigues, Carlos Paredes, José Afonso, Mariza, Carlos do Carmo, António Chainho, Mísia, and Madredeus.</p> <p>In addition to Fado and Folk, the Portuguese listen to pop and other types of modern music, particularly from North America and the United Kingdom, as well as a wide range of Portuguese, Caribbean and Brazilian artists and bands. Artists with international recognition include Dulce Pontes, Moonspell, Buraka Som Sistema, Blasted Mechanism and The Gift.</p> <p><b>Fado</b> Fado has been Intangible World Heritage since 2011. For many years, fado was associated with the name of Amália but today the new generation of fado singers is so popular that performers such as Mariza, Gisela João, Camané, Carminho and Ana Moura are just a few of those who have made a name for themselves on the international stage. There is no better way to truly experience fado, the emotion in the</p>

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	<p>singers' voices and the sounds of the Portuguese guitar, than in the candlelit setting of a "casa de fados" or fado house. The Fado Museum, in Lisbon, is also a good place to familiarise yourself with this very characteristic Portuguese music genre.</p>
<p><b>Film</b></p>	<p>Portuguese cinema has a long tradition, reaching back to the birth of the medium in the late 19th century. Portuguese film directors such as Arthur Duarte, António Lopes Ribeiro, António Reis, Pedro Costa, Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, Edgar Pêra, António-Pedro Vasconcelos, Fernando Lopes, João Botelho and Leonel Vieira, are among those that gained notability. Noted Portuguese film actors include Joaquim de Almeida, Daniela Ruah, Maria de Medeiros, Diogo Infante, Soraia Chaves, Ribeirinho, Lúcia Moniz, and Diogo Morgado.</p>
<p><b>Museums</b></p>	<p><b>Lisbon</b></p> <p><b>Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga</b>  Portugal's impressive national art collection, including 14-19th century European painting, artefacts of Portuguese contact with the East and Africa and a collection of ecclesiastical treasures. Highlights include Dürer's St Jerome, Hieronymus Bosch's Temptations of St Antony, Nuno Gonçalves' Adoration of St Vincent, and 16th century Japanese paintings of Portuguese traders.</p> <p><b>The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum</b>  Created from the personal collection of Calouste Gulbenkian, an Armenian who longed to see all his treasures displayed in a museum. A nice assortment of Egyptian artifacts, along with paintings by masters such as Rembrandt, Manet, Monet, Renoir, and Cassat. The museum's gardens are worth a visit in and of themselves, as a little oasis in the middle of downtown Lisbon.</p> <p><b>Fundação Arpad Szenes</b>  This museum is installed in the restored 18th-century former Royal Silk Factory. Its permanent collection covers a wide time period of the works of 20th-century painters Arpad Szenes and Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, and regularly hosts exhibits by their contemporaries.</p> <p><b>Museu da Electricidade (Electricity Museum)</b>  This excellent interactive exposition in a building of former power station, is an example how a perfect museum should look.</p> <p><b>Museu do Azulejo.</b>  Museu Nacional do Azulejo is one of the most important national museums, for its singular collection, Azulejo (Tile), an artistic expression which differentiates Portuguese culture, and for the unique</p>

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	building where its installed, former Madre de Deus Convent, founded in 1509 by Queen Dona Leonor
<b>Festivals</b>	<p>In summer, especially, Portugal comes alive with traditional festivities such as those in Viana do Castelo, Tomar, Campo Maior or the Flower Festival in Funchal, Madeira. And not forgetting the Popular Saints' Parades, with the high points being in Lisbon on 13 June, and Porto, on 24 June.</p> <p>Then there are the music festivals featuring a variety of genres from rock to jazz, ethnic and more... in fact, there is music to suit every taste and sometimes the venues are as attractive as the playbills. This is true of the Festival do Sudoeste, Paredes de Coura, Super Bock Super Rock and Nos Alive.</p>

<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	
<b>Beaches</b>	<p><b>The Algarve</b></p> <p>The best of the beaches are perhaps along the southern mainland coast of the Algarve. From long, sandy beaches protected by golden cliffs to small bays nestled between rocks, the Algarve has beaches to suit all tastes. What they have in common is the offer of a perfect holiday in the sun.</p> <p>They offer a mild climate, with sunshine for about 300 days a year. A clear sea, almost always warm and calm. And fine white sand, an invitation to relax that can't be ignored – it's as simple as laying on a towel in the sun to get a tan to die for or building sandcastles by the sea with the children.</p> <p>There are about 200 kilometres of beaches between the southwest coast near Aljezur and the eastern end close to Vila Real de Santo António, which differ widely among themselves. The majority have the high safety and quality conditions recognised by the European blue flag symbol, with amenities that promise fun and sports.</p> <p>Many beaches are of great beauty, offering idyllic settings for more romantic moments, and others are close to nightlife spots, sought after by those who must have some music and dance on their holidays. But there are also almost deserted beaches, where nature is preserved practically in a wild state.</p> <p>There's a large number of beaches accessible to people with mobility problems and many even have facilities that allow everyone to enjoy bathing in the sea. And there are also beaches reserved for naturists, and others that are so little known that they have areas where naturism is tolerated.</p> <p>The most pristine beaches are on the Costa Vicentina, in contrast to the central area, between Lagos and Faro, where you will find cosmopolitan beaches, as a result of the higher number of hotels and many high quality resorts.</p>

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	<p>The Parque Natural da Ria Formosa natural park is a quiet reserve, an area of calm waters dotted with islands, water channels and lagoons, which marks the transition to the east, where the sea is warmer and more serene and the sand swathes are very extensive.</p> <p>Almost all the beaches have restaurants and bars in which to relax and enjoy a refreshing drink when the sun is bearing down, taste the freshest fish in the region or sit to enjoy the sunset, with the sun dipping into the sea.</p>
<p><b>Wildlife</b></p>	<p>There are several species of mammals, including the fox, badger, iberian lynx, iberian wolf, wild goat (<i>Capra pyrenaica</i>), wild cat (<i>Felis silvestris</i>), hare, weasel, polecat, chameleon, mongoose, civet, and many others.</p> <p>Portugal is an important stopover for migratory birds, in places such as Cape St. Vincent or the Monchique mountains, where thousands of birds cross from Europe to Africa during the autumn or in the spring (return migration).</p>
<p><b>Parks</b></p>	<p>Protected areas of Portugal include one national park (Parque Nacional), 12 natural parks (Parque Natural), nine natural reserves (Reserva Natural), five natural monuments (Monumento Natural), and seven protected landscapes (Paisagem Protegida), which include the Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês, the Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela and the Paul d'Arzila.</p>
<p><b>Gardens</b></p>	<p><b>The Gardens of Madeira</b></p> <p>Famous all over the world for its natural beauty, the Island of Madeira is often called “the floating garden of the Atlantic”. Here, the hues of the vegetation that covers the hillsides are matched only in the exotic flowers that bloom from every recess.</p> <p>Owing to its mild, year-round temperate climate, you can admire flowers and plants from nearly every continent in their natural environment, such as orchids, birds of paradise, anthuriums, magnolias, azaleas, proteas, and many others.</p> <p>Some of these tropical and subtropical plants were introduced into the Island in the 18th and 19th centuries, by British merchants who made their fortunes from the Madeira wine trade and chose the Monte, Camacha, Santo da Serra and Jardim da Serra neighbourhoods to set up their quintas. The cooler and more humid climate in these areas, closer to English weather conditions, made them ideal for the plants to adapt.</p> <p>The Quintas of Madeira are today one of the region’s great attractions. You can get to know them since many have been restored for different purposes, such as holiday accommodation, museums, and cafés. The Quintas of Madeira boast large, spacious blooming gardens, brimming with the rarest and most varied plant life, and offer spaces that encourage you to rest and relax or simply gaze at nature. They are</p>

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	<p>indeed ideal places for a stroll or to spend a family holiday.</p> <p><b>Lisbon Botanical Gardens (Jardim Botânico)</b>  Rua da Escola Politécnica, 58 (between the Avenida da Liberdade and Bairro Alto).  A hidden gem. It was created several hundred years ago, by a King of Portugal at the time of the Discoveries. The story goes that this King wanted one of every type of plant in the world, and although that's unlikely, there is a huge collection dating back by three or four centuries which is worth checking out. Also some weird and wonderful bizarre grafted trees - the roots hang down like fingers and toes where one tree has been grafted onto another, sometimes completely different, species. And there's something quite eerie about seeing plants or huge trees from completely different climates growing next to each other in apparent harmony. A great place to take a picnic - this green oasis is completely surrounded by city but even the city sounds filter out.</p> <p><b>Parque Ecológico de Monsanto</b>  It is the largest green space in the heart of Lisbon, almost 1000 hectares of woodland. Integrated in the park the Lisboa Camping offers visitors two multi-sports areas, a mini-golf course, two tennis courts, a swimming-pool area with solarium and terrace, a common room and an amphitheatre.  In the park is the Espaço Monsanto Interpretation Centre, where it is possible to learn about the park in the permanent exhibition. There is also a medium-sized auditorium, a small amphitheatre, car park and a small picnic area.  Monsanto also includes the Alto da Serafina Urban Park, the Calhau Urban Park, a perfect place for a stroll, the São Domingos de Benfica Woodland, the Alvito Play-Ground, the Moinhos de Santana Urban Park and the Quinta da Fonte.</p>
<p><b>Historic Buildings</b></p>	<p>There are so many in Portugal that the list could never end, so I have just selected my personal favourite...</p> <p><b>Torre de Belém, Lisbon</b>  The harmony and delicate ornamentation of the Tower of Belém suggests a finely cut jewel to all laying eyes on her. However, its contemporaries took a rather different perspective: a formidable and imposing bastion defending the entrance to the Tagus and capable of combining firepower with the St Sebastian tower on the other bank of the river. Its construction was ordered by king Manuel I (1495-1521) and it was built by Francisco de Arruda between 1514 and 1521. The tower was built on a basalt island that was close to the right bank of the Tagus in front of Restelo beach. However, with the gradual change in the</p>

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	<p>course of the river, the tower has ended practically swallowed up by the bank.</p> <p>The tower takes on a quadrangular shape reminiscent of medieval castles and has a polygon bulwark, a defensive feature that meant it could withstand heavy bombardment from out at sea. The watch posts, complete with burgeoning cupolas and located on each corner, demonstrate the influence of Moroccan fortifications. Apart from such Moorish influences, the decoration otherwise takes on the Manueline style in the surrounding stone layouts, the heraldic designs and even the famous rhinoceros, the first stone statue of the animal in Europe. The most highly decorated side of the Tower is south facing, with its narrow balcony. On the cloistral wall that rises above the bulwark, there is a sculptured image of the Virgin with Child dating back to the 18th century, forming the prow of the tower.</p> <p>The interior is worth a visit simply to get up to the top floor with the effort paid back many times over by wonderful views over the river Tagus estuary and the western side of a city that is still able to evoke the Era of Discovery in Portuguese history.</p> <p>In 1983 the Tower of Belém was classified World Heritage by UNESCO.</p>
<b>Azores</b>	<p>For in-the-know travellers, the Azores have long represented a beckoning blip on the radar of possible destinations. Recognition from UNESCO and other organisations has helped that blip to pulse more brightly over the years.</p> <p>But most people still know little, if anything, about this far-flung archipelago in the middle of the Atlantic. And yet it is hard to imagine a place better suited to nature lovers, fans of adventure sports, or anyone looking for a beacon of sustainability.</p> <p>As if that wasn't tantalising enough, there is a new reason to visit this autonomous region of Portugal: restrictions on air routes to the Azores recently eased, which means more carriers, more choice and cheaper fares for travellers trying to reach this other Eden.</p> <p>The exposed tips of vast underwater mountains, the Azores lie on the nexus of the European, American and African tectonic plates, and they bear witness to the forces forever shaping our planet. This is a world of fumaroles, mud-pots and scalding springs; of caverns, columns and grottoes formed from once molten rock; of blue lakes ringed by forests of laurel and cedar, and green pastures patterning the slopes of calderas.</p> <p>UNESCO designated three of them (Graciosa, Flores and Corvo) as biospheres, and the archipelago also contains 13 Ramsar sites (important wetlands) and over 30 Blue Flag beaches. Combine</p>

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mineral-laden soil with a subtropical climate surrounded by Gulf Stream-warmed waters, and the result is a crucible for life. The two-and-a-half-hour hike around the rim of Faial's caldera is one of many spectacular routes for walkers

Thankfully, Azoreans seem intent on preserving their treasures – the built environment covers just five per cent of the land; the rest is a patchwork of protected areas and marine reserves. The regional government aims to produce 75% of the islands' energy from renewables by 2018.

Little wonder then that last year the Azores were named as the world's top destination for sustainable tourism by Quality Coast, a European Commission-supported certification programme. In fact, it is the only place in the world to receive a Platinum Award, the organisation's highest accolade.

### **Whale watching**

The Azores are best known for whale and dolphin watching; the archipelago is a pit stop or home for about a third of the world's species of cetacean.

Year-round residents include sperm whales, common dolphins and bottlenose dolphins. Many other species (including blue whales – the largest animal in the history of the planet) pass through on migration routes. Up to a third of the world's cetaceans can be found in the waters around the Azores, including bottlenose

Well-organised tours run from the larger islands and go to great lengths to whale watch responsibly. A code of conduct governs how many boats can congregate near a whale, the direction from which they must approach the animals, and how long they're allowed to shadow them. Not so long ago, of course, people came armed with harpoons rather than cameras. Whale hunting – introduced by Americans in the 18th century – played a part in the Azorean economy until as recently as 1987. In one of many ironies, the vigia (watchtowers) once used for hunting these leviathans now help to steer tourist boats to their quarry. The Whalers' Museum on Pico ([espacotalassa.com](http://espacotalassa.com)) and the Whaling Station at Porto Pim on Faial tell the story of the industry and its demise

### **Diving**

Nutrient-rich water welling up from the deep – or rather the life it supports – is what attracts the whales; this is also what makes the Azores one of, if not the, best diving locations in the Atlantic. Warmed to between 17C and 24C, the seas truly teem, and visibility reaches 30 metres between May and October.

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The kaleidoscope of species – from yellowmouth barracuda to devil rays, loggerhead turtles to slipper lobsters – arises from the extraordinary range of habitats. Wrasse, damsel fish and moray eels dwell in the coast's jade-green bays; marlin, tuna and shark swirl around the peaks of barely submerged volcanoes; jacks, bonitos and grouper patrol the walls of underwater cliffs; more delicate life forms shelter in caves formed from lava tubes; and countless other species take up residence in the shipwrecks cluttering the seafloor.

All the islands apart from São Jorge and Corvo have accredited dive centres offering excursions and equipment hire ([dive.visitazores.com](http://dive.visitazores.com)).

#### Watersports

The mild weather, warm water and variety of the coastline also make the Azores a year-round destination for watersports.

The attractions for sailors are obvious and Azorean harbours host a calendar of regattas and events. Horta, the main town of Faial, is the cosmopolitan centre of this transatlantic traffic, and its marina has become an open-air gallery of murals painted by superstitious crews before they depart on their voyages.

Over the last decade, word of the Azores' consistent, crowd-free surf has spread; Santa Maria and São Miguel have reliable beach and point breaks; aficionados, meanwhile, head to the fajãs (flat land at the foot of cliffs) of São Jorge, where the Atlantic crashes upon reefs to create longer, tube-shaped waves.

The conditions also make for great windsurfing, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, and other water-based activities, while those seeking something more restful can always take a dip in one of the swimming holes formed by lava as it cooled flowing into the sea.

#### Geotourism

Anyone remotely interested in geology will be in their element. The islands' topography speaks of their volcanic origin in dramatic fashion, but there is more to see than just craters and cones; cave systems, rock formations, hot springs, and further 'mistérios' (mysteries, the name given to lava-covered patches of land) await investigation.

The Capelinhos volcano that surged up from the seabed off Faial in 1957 is one of the best documented sites in the world ([turismo.cmhorta.pt](http://turismo.cmhorta.pt)); the interpretation centre beneath its now abandoned lighthouse does a superb job of explaining the Earth's occasional convulsions.

The eruption of Capelinhos off the coast of Faial in 1957 gave geologists a ringside seat to observe the development of a submerged volcano.

On Pico, you can descend into one of the world's longest lava tubes, the

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	<p>Gruta das Torres (<a href="http://www.parquesnaturais.azores.gov.pt">www.parquesnaturais.azores.gov.pt</a>), to inspect rare stalagmites of lava, as well as bizarre forms resembling benches, balls and lengths of rope.</p> <p>Aside from a beautiful lake, the parish of Furnas on São Miguel has crowd-pleasing volcanic activity, including fumaroles and mudpots; Azoreans use the thermal heat to slow-cook their traditional cozido, a stew of meat and vegetables, under the ground. Try it, pig's ear and all, at the art deco Terra Nostra Hotel then slip into the thermal pool in the adjacent botanical gardens.</p> <p><b>Hiking</b></p> <p>At 7,713ft, Mt Pico is Portugal's highest mountain. If conditions are right, the three-hour climb to catch sunrise or sunset is the Azores' premier hiking experience; however, it faces stiff competition with about 60 marked trails crisscrossing the islands. A brochure shot par excellence, the twin crater lakes of São Miguel's Setes Cidades are the focus of several routes. The two-hour trip from the Vista da Rei viewpoint to the caldera's floor is a good primer to Azorean walking, but a hike down to the shore of mist-obscured Lagoa do Fogo has the edge.</p> <p>Composed of a sheer-sided ridge, São Jorge is a hiker's daydream, but those whose eyes are forever drawn to the edges of a map should probably look to far-flung Flores, the westernmost point of Europe, a real-life Jurassic Park praised for its beauty even among Azoreans.</p> <p>Fans of <b>adventure sports</b> might find themselves paralysed by indecision, such is the choice on offer. The many waterfalls cascading into ravines make for world-class canyoning. Between them, São Miguel, Santa Maria, São Jorge and Flores have more than 50 equipped routes, from small drops for beginners to hair-raising descents for pros.</p> <p>Horse riders and mountain bikers are well catered for, and both forms of transport fit the islands' eco-friendly ethos. São Miguel, Terceira and Faial have stables, and you can hire bikes on São Miguel, Santa Maria, Terceira, São Jorge, Pico and Faial, with trails ranging from ultra-technical tracks to gentle lakeside circuits.</p> <p>The Azores have also hosted a paragliding festival for the past 20 years. The rims of São Miguel's craters make for ideal take-off points, and there can be no better way of appreciating this fantastical landscape than from above.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.trails.visitazores.com">www.trails.visitazores.com</a></p>
<p><b>Madeira</b></p>	<p>Right in the middle of the Atlantic, the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo are a haven of natural beauty. The exotic colours of the flowers stand out from among the blue sea and the emerald green vegetation;</p>

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this is an archipelago where two thirds are a protected area and where the largest Laurisilva forest in the world is located.

The springtime temperature, felt all year round, cries out for open air activities. You can go for a walk along the network of levadas (irrigation channels), visit the city of Funchal and discover the heritage associated with the Discoveries or roam freely around the island. Boat rides are an excellent way of admiring the coastline from a different perspective.

In such a naturally welcoming environment, balance and well-being are taken for granted. Madeira offers various tourist complexes and accesses to the sea with prime conditions for leisure boating and scuba diving. The island of Porto Santo, in particular, is the ideal place to escape from stress and undertake a thalassotherapy programme, or a beach holiday combined with a spot of golf.

Popular feasts, which take place all year round, are opportunities to appreciate traditional gastronomic flavours and see Madeira partying, especially for the Carnival parades, the Flower Festival, the Atlantic Festival and, above all, the end-of-year fireworks display.

### **Getting to Madeira**

The most practical and common way is by plane bound for the Santa Cruz Airport, where international flights are frequent and accessible from Lisbon and other mainland European cities. The flight is no more than 2 hours from the Portuguese mainland, making Madeira an easily accessible destination. Another way to visit is by cruise ship into the harbour of Funchal.

The sister island of Porto Santo also has an international airport, where you can find daily flights to Madeira averaging 15 minutes. You can also travel by the ferryboat called the “Lobo Marinho”, the most popular choice between Madeira and Porto Santo.

### **Accommodations**

Madeira offers a wide range of high-quality accommodations. Options range from refined traditional manor houses to more modern hotels; the kind hospitality of rural tourism homes provides close contact with nature; and the rich cultural legacy of Madeira's traditional villas.

The Madeira Island hotels are renowned for their quality, professionalism and the kindness of the local staff.

When I stayed on the island recently I enjoyed the hospitality of Pestana Casino Park Hotel. Designed by world-renowned master architect Óscar Niemeyer who responsible for the major buildings of Brasilia, the Brazilian capital city, this hotel is adjacent to the Funchal cruise port.

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Plus, it is only 5 minutes on foot from the city centre and extensive gardens. <https://www.pestana.com/en/hotel/pestana-casino-park>  
The world famous and iconic Reid's Hotel (now the Belmond Reid's Palace Hotel) is set in subtropical gardens overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Belmond Reid's Palace has, for more than a century, been the ultimate place to stretch out in the sun and relax and the Great and the Good have all been here, including Winston Churchill himself. A glass of Madeira on the terrace balcony is a must, or try the traditional Afternoon Tea served at 4pm...

<https://www.belmond.com/reids-palace-madeira/>

### **Funchal**

At whatever time of year, its mild climate makes Funchal the ideal destination for a short break. There are many places to visit in this 500-year old city, several of which are unmissable...

The best way to visit the Funchal's historic city centre is to do it by foot. The tour begins at the Gothic Cathedral, built in the 16th century. Upon entering, look up to admire the precious alfarge ceiling (an Iberian decorative multiform style) in cedar wood carved in the Mudejar style. Visit also the Collegiate Church, whose sober facade hides an interior rich in 17th century gilt woodwork, altar pieces and tile panels.

On the opposite side of the Largo do Município, in the former Bishop's Palace, is the Museum of Sacred Art, the core of whose collection is Flemish art of the 15th and 16th centuries, evidence of the trade contacts with Flanders, to which sugar cane grown on the island was sold. Tasting this and other local flavours at the Farmers' Market provides plenty to occupy the senses: from exotic fruits to traditional delights such as bolo de mel (honey cake), you mustn't forget also the craft shops, the flower sellers wearing traditional costumes and the lively fishmongers' stalls.

### **Touring the Island**

Despite its small surface area, Madeira is rich in majestic sceneries of rare beauty. The best way to get to know its charms is to rent a car and set off to discover this floating garden!

Heading west from Funchal, you will discover the typical fishing village of Câmara de Lobos and the Girão Cape, the highest headland in Europe and the second highest in the world at 580m.

You will also find here the distinctive parish of Curral das Freiras.

Located in a deep valley, Curral das Freiras boasts one of the most striking landscapes on the island, whose dizzying views (over 500 metres high from the Eira do Serrado lookout point) take any visitor's breath away.

Travelling on to the west, you will reach Ribeira Brava before climbing

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up to Encumeada along a belvedere-dotted route. Another alternative is to head to the sunny shores of Ponta do Sol and Calheta which abound in beaches that invite swimming and diving. You can also visit the Casa das Mudas Arts Centre which offers an extensive cultural programme all year round. For sportspeople, the beaches in the picturesque towns of Jardim and Paul do Mar offer excellent waves for surfing.

You will then climb to Paul da Serra, the largest plateau in Madeira, where you should take a break to admire the stunning view over the hillsides. Going on to Porto Moniz, you can regain your strength with a reinvigorating plunge into the famous natural rock pools. If you have children with you, a good option is to visit the Madeira Aquarium.

### **Hiking the Levadas**

Madeira is heaven on earth for hikers. The trails range from simple and easy to rugged and challenging. The best secret of this island are the Levadas. To reach the most amazing and dramatic landscapes, there is nothing better than going on foot along walking trails next to the canals known as “levadas”. “Levadas” are irrigation canals that were built in the past to bring water from the north slopes, where it existed in abundance, to the south side of the Island. On my recent trip I hiked the Balcoes Levada walk. This was an easy 40 minute ramble in the mountains, following the level course of a small irrigation channel with stunning mountain views, constant birdsong and forest peace punctuated by colourful wild flowers... A walk through nature’s spa!

### **Madeira Wine**

The Island of Madeira also owes its celebrity to the wine bearing its name, which has earned fame and prestige in the most varied parts of the globe.

Appreciated across the world, this “nectar” is one of the Island of Madeira’s key features. Chosen to celebrate the Independence of the U.S.A. in 1776, praised by Shakespeare, cherished by kings, princes, generals and explorers, Madeira Wine is undoubtedly a genuine treasure. A good place to sample this unique wine is at Blandy’s in the centre of Funchal as I did. Here you can take a tour and learn about the process of wine making on the island...and best of all, top it off with a sampling!

### **Porto Santo**

Right in the Atlantic Ocean, Porto Santo, 11km long and 6km wide, has been long dubbed the Golden Island, for its extensive, stunning 9km-long beach of fine and silky sand, bathed by turquoise waters. The climate in Porto Santo, mild all year round, with a sea temperature ranging between 17°C and 22°C, makes this island always attractive,

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	<p>even in the winter.</p> <p>The Portuguese navigators João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira arrived on the Island of Porto Santo in 1418, the first of the Portuguese discoveries overseas. Having been sent off their course by strong winds while exploring the western coast of Africa, Porto Santo provided them with a safe haven, hence its name which means Blessed Harbour. In 1446, Henry the Navigator appointed Bartolomeu Perestrelo as Governor of the island, which is one of its claims to fame: Perestrelo's daughter went on to marry Christopher Columbus, who spent some time on the island preparing for his great voyage of discovery to America. Today, it is possible to visit the 15th century house where Christopher Columbus is said to have lived. It is in Vila Baleira, and on display are portraits of Columbus and maps showing the different sea routes that he followed. The island is easily reached by a daily ferry service from Funchal harbour which leaves at 08.00 in the morning and returns in the evening.</p> <p><b>For More Information</b>          Website: <a href="http://www.MadeiraAllYear.com">www.MadeiraAllYear.com</a>          Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/visitmadeiraofficial/">https://www.facebook.com/visitmadeiraofficial/</a>          Instagram: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/visitmadeira/">https://www.instagram.com/visitmadeira/</a>          Pinterest: to see images of my recent trip to Madeira, take a look at the Travel Show Pinterest site here:  <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/madeira/">https://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/madeira/</a></p>
<p><b>Central Portugal</b></p>	<p>This is the very heart of Portugal and the region extends from north of Lisbon and south of Porto and from the Atlantic Ocean to the border with Spain. Here are some of the gems of this region:</p> <p><b>Aveiro</b> - Roaming through Aveiro is the same as diving in the waters of Centro de Portugal. Known as the "Portuguese Venice", the city is quietly dominated by the Ria de Aveiro, described by Saramago as "a living body that connects the land to the sea like a huge heart."</p> <p><b>Coimbra</b> - If "Coimbra is a lesson", as the popular fado song says, Coimbra is firstly a lesson of Portuguese History. Here is the grave of Kings Afonso Henriques and Sancho I, the first Portuguese Kings and, all over the city, you will discover landmarks left by those who built the nation, the University, created by King D. Dinis, and the contributions of King John III, the Marquis of Pombal and King Manuel</p> <p><b>Fatima</b> - the Apparitions of Fátima, It has become one of the key centers for the Cult of the Virgin Mary in Portugal and has been recognised world-wide by the Catholic Church. The first apparition took place in 1917, in Cova da Iria, at the site of the current Sanctuary. The</p>

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most important celebrations are held on 13th May including the Candlelit Procession on the night of the 12th and the Farewell Procession closing the event on the 13<sup>th</sup>

**Batalha** - The town of Batalha developed alongside the Monastery of Santa Maria de Vitória, constructed in 1386 to keep a vow by Portuguese King Dom João I to the Virgin Mary that he would build it if Portugal defeated Castile at the Battle of Aljubarrota on 14th August 1385.

**Nazare** - A typical fishing town, Nazaré is nowadays a busy summer resort, where side by side with the crowds of tourists, one still sees all over the streets of the town the fish-sellers, and the carapaus (horse mackerel) laid out to dry.

**Óbidos** - Encircled by a ring of medieval walls and crowned by the Moorish castle rebuilt by D. Dinis, which is now a pousada, Óbidos is one of the most perfect examples of our medieval fortress. It's in olden times, the town is entered through the southern gate of Santa Maria, embellished with eighteenth-century azulejo decoration. Inside the walls, which at sunset take on a golden colouring, one can sense a cheerful medieval ambience of winding streets, old whitewashed houses bordered with blue or yellow.

**Castelo Branco** - Distinct architecture, a Templar castle, 15th century doors and churches, Baroque gardens and manor houses belonging to families with Historical roots. If you visit Castelo Branco, the capital of "Beira Baixa", you will see all this in a place which combines tradition and novelty.

**Tomar** - Tomar, known as the city of the Templars, reveals other traces of their influence, particularly the Sete Montes Park, where traditionally rites of initiation are said to have taken place, and the Church of Santa Maria do Olival, founded by the Templars in the 12th century and containing the tombs of various Masters of the Order.

**Buçaco** - At the far end of Buçaco Mountain, where the highest range is 547 meters high, you'll find Buçaco Woods, surrounded by a high wall with eleven entrance doors. Make them your starting point for a stroll through Nature in the region and fall in love with the serene exuberance, almost magical, of Buçaco's intense green colour. After you track all paths in the mountain, take a rest at Bussaco Palace Hotel, one of the most beautiful neo-Manueline buildings in Portugal, or visit the Santa Cruz Convent, where General Wellington spent the night during the

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	<p>Battle of Buçaco.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.CenterofPortugal.com">www.CenterofPortugal.com</a></p>
<p><b>Alentejo</b></p>	<p>The Alentejo is situated in the south of Portugal, between the River Tagus (Tejo) and the Algarve. To the east, its frontier is with Spain and to the west it is bathed by the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>It is an extensive region, essentially rural and thinly populated, occupying a third of the whole of continental Portugal. The beauty of its landscapes and the quality of its archaeological, monumental, architectural and ethnographic heritage and, par excellence, its gastronomy and wines, provide it with exceptional legacies to be discovered through nature tourism and cultural tourism.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> dolphin watching, surfing, windsurfing, kite surfing, canoeing, kayaking, diving, sailing and fishing, nature outings on foot by mountain bike or jeep, ballooning, tasting of local products, open-air sports and visits to museums and monuments.</p> <p><b>Accommodation:</b> hotels de charme or luxury hotels, Pousadas, Rural Tourism, B&amp;Bs, Youth Hostels, Country Homes, self-catering flats and houses , or camp sites are some options.</p> <p><b>Castles:</b> e.g. Marvão - Built on the most inhospitable, abrupt, inaccessible and steep ridge of the Serra do Sapaio,</p> <p><b>Évora</b> is the inevitable reference point for anyone coming to the Alentejo inspired by the theme of Heritage. Classified by UNESCO as A World Heritage Site, Évora justly occupies an important place in any Cultural Tourism itinerary. Visit the Roman Temple, the Cathedral of Santa Maria, the Igreja (church) de São Francisco and the Chapel of Bones, the Palace of King D. Manuel, the Ermida (chapel) de São Brás (St Blaize), the Mirador-Terrace of the Casa (house) Cordovil, the Manueline Window of the Casa de Garcia da Resende, the Colégio do Espírito Santo, now part of Évora University, the Igreja da Misericórdia, Praça do Giraldo (the main square) and the Teatro Garcia de Resende. Taste the fabulous wines in Redondo and then go on to Granja/Amareleja, Moura, Reguengos de Monsaraz, Vidigueira, municipalities that are also on the Wine Routes.</p> <p>Follow the <b>Fresco Routes</b> throughout Viana do Alentejo, Alvito, and Cuba. Take a journey from the 15th to the 19th century, with murals painted in chapels, small chapels and churches. Make a detour to Beja and meet the "Queen of the Plain" and its surprising heritage. On this</p>

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	<p>route, discover typical choirs, singing modas of melancholy, loneliness, love and rural work. A few kilometres away, and closer to the sea, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Sado Estuary, an 18-hole golf course is waiting for you at the Tróia Resort.</p> <p>If you prefer a more relaxing time , enjoy the <b>Galeão do Sal</b>, a traditional vessel of the river Sado that will take you on an amazing trip through the Natural Reserve of the Sado Estuary to the beautiful antique wooden pier of Carrasqueira, during which you can watch dolphins and see the heritage of the area, as you pass by Roman and Phoenician remains.</p> <p>Make a stop in <b>Elvas</b> to eat a sericaia (typical dessert). Not far away, in <b>Estremoz</b>, a city with traces of baroque styles , the Marble Route begins. From here on, the palaces and churches, manors and modest houses or even taverns and pavements are covered in marble.</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.VisitAlentejo.pt">www.VisitAlentejo.pt</a></p>
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<p><b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p><b>Shopping</b></p>	<p>The main shopping streets in <b>Lisbon</b> are:</p> <p><b>Baixa:</b> From Praça do Comércio (aka Terreiro do Paço) to the Restauradores, the Baixa is the old shopping district in the city. It includes pedestrian Rua Augusta which has the most boring and mass-visitor tourist stores, and several European chain clothing stores like Zara, H&amp;M, Campers.</p> <p><b>Chiado:</b> home to a number of independent shops and services and well known brands such as Hugo Boss, Vista Alegre, Tony &amp; Guy, Benetton, Sisley, Pepe Jeans, Levi's and Colcci. The area is also teeming with cafés, restaurants, bookshops and a dedicated shopping area "Armazéns do Chiado".</p> <p><b>Avenida da Liberdade:</b> Louis Vuitton, Calvin Klein, Timberland, Massimo Dutti, Armani, Burberrys and Adolfo Dominguez are just some of the shops you'll find across this avenue, which is not just one of the most beautiful and wide in the city, but also one of the fanciest with splurge hotels and restaurants.</p> <p>For shopping in <b>Porto</b>, take a stroll around the Mercado do Bolhão which has a food market and handicrafts stores, and Santa Catarina street (highly recommended, even if only to stroll), which is near Bolhão. Cedofeita street is also a busy shopping street, as well as Boavista.</p>
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	<p>Porto and the suburbs have plenty of shopping centres, including Norte Shopping, Arrábida Shopping, Parque Nascente, Gaia Shopping and Mar Shopping (the biggest IKEA group shopping in Europe). Apart from these you also have less populated shops that are smaller but still great. Almost all the shops are open every day, but are usually overcrowded during the weekends and rainy days.</p> <p>Port wine, of course. This is the right place for it, in the city of Gaia, just south of the Douro river. You can also find great deals on clothes and shoes, especially during discount seasons.</p> <p>MUUDA, Rua do Rosário, 294-4050-522 "Art, food and design". This concept store offers a great variety of products signed by Portuguese designers. Fashion, objects, books, jewelery, shoes, gourmet and arts. You can have lunch at MUUDA, experience a wine or sushi workshop, learn how to make tricot, the newest painting techniques, photography... and much more.</p> <p>AGUAS FURTADAS 110326175646263 Rua Miguel Bombarda, 285 (CCB, Loja 4) Looking for unique objects or original Portuguese design? This is the place for it. From a minimalist Barcelos cockerel to colourful ceramics, you won't find many of these pieces anywhere else.</p>
<b>Markets</b>	<p><b>Mercado da Ribeira</b> Avenida 24 de Julho (Cais do Sodré). Lisbon 7AM-1PM except Sunday. A large indoor farmer's market open in the mornings. This is a great place to buy snacks for the day while traveling on a budget. Pick up nuts, fruit, veggies, cheese, bread or meat or delight your travel mate with some beautiful flowers. Go early as the stands tend to close down in the early afternoon.</p>
<b>Nightlife</b>	<p>In <b>Lisbon</b> you can go out at night to the central Bairro Alto, or 'High Neighborhood'. Just up the hill from Chiado, this is the place to go out in town. In the early evening, go to a fado-themed restaurant near the Praca Camoes, and head upwards as the evening goes on. If you're in Lisbon on the night preceding a Feriado or public holiday, you have to check this out. Tiny little streets which are empty in the daytime become crammed walkways which are difficult to get through.</p> <p>For more of a clubbing or disco experience, try the Docas district along the marina overlooking the Ponte 25 de Abril, or the Cais do Sodré area (just below Chiado and Bairro Alto, near the river), where, next to a couple of old dodgy sailors' bars, new trendy night clubs have recently opened which are attracting new crowds - here you can also go clubbing and occasionally catch live music ranging from pop, rock and jazz to electronica.</p>
<b>Casinos</b>	<p>There are eleven major casinos in Portugal, covering all areas of the country, including Lisbon, the Algarve and Madeira.</p>

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CUISINE	
<p><b>Food</b></p>	<p>Portuguese cuisine is diverse. The Portuguese consume a lot of dry cod (bacalhau in Portuguese), for which there are hundreds of recipes. There are more than enough bacalhau dishes for each day of the year. Two other popular fish recipes are grilled sardines and caldeirada, a potato-based stew that can be made from several types of fish. Typical Portuguese meat recipes, that may be made out of beef, pork, lamb, or chicken, include cozido à portuguesa, feijoada, frango de churrasco, leitão (roast suckling pig) and carne de porco à alentejana. A very popular northern dish is the arroz de sarrabulho (rice stewed in pigs blood) or the arroz de cabidela (rice and chickens meat stewed in chickens blood).</p> <p>Typical fast food dishes include the Francesinha (Frenchie) from Porto, and bifanas (grilled pork) or prego (grilled beef) sandwiches, which are well known around the country. The Portuguese art of pastry has its origins in the many medieval Catholic monasteries spread widely across the country. These monasteries, using very few ingredients (mostly almonds, flour, eggs and some liquor), managed to create a spectacular wide range of different pastries, of which pastéis de Belém (or pastéis de nata) originally from Lisbon, and ovos moles from Aveiro are examples. Portuguese cuisine is very diverse, with different regions having their own traditional dishes. The Portuguese have a culture of good food, and throughout the country there are myriads of good restaurants and typical small tasquinhas.</p> <p>As a rule, the Portuguese have three meals a day. Between 7:30 and 10 a.m. they have a light breakfast consisting of a drink - white or black coffee or fruit juice - and toast or a sandwich, often in their local café or cake shop.</p> <p>The main meals are lunch, between 12:00 and 2:30 p.m., which is often eaten at a restaurant near work, and dinner between 7:30 and 10:30 p.m.</p> <p>Most people eat a full meal including soup, a main dish and dessert or fruit. They may also have a snack consisting of a drink and a cake between these two meals, around 5 p.m.</p> <p>Eating out is common practice in Portugal. Having lunch or dinner out, especially at the weekend, is always a good excuse for meeting friends or going for a drive.</p> <p>There is a great variety of restaurants and they cater to all kinds of tastes and palates.</p> <p>While restaurants are usually open for lunch between midday and 3 p.m. and for dinner between 7 and 10 p.m. many of them have longer opening hours, especially in the big cities and areas with a busy nightlife.</p>

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<p><b>Drinks</b></p>	<p>Portuguese wines have enjoyed international recognition since the times of the Romans, who associated Portugal with their god Bacchus. Today, the country is known by wine lovers and its wines have won several international prizes. Some of the best Portuguese wines are: Vinho Verde, Vinho Alvarinho, Vinho do Douro, Vinho do Alentejo, Vinho do Dão, Vinho da Bairrada and the sweet: Port Wine, Madeira Wine, the Moscatel from Setúbal and Favaios. Port and Madeira are particularly appreciated in a wide range of places around the world. There is no better way to discover Portuguese wine than by actually visiting their places of origin.</p> <p>Many of Portugal's leading vineyards are open to visitors: many are hundreds of years old, some boast an extraordinary architectural richness, and others even include interesting collections of art relating to the wine culture.</p> <p>It is a real privilege to enter this world accompanied by those who have such a deep understanding of it. They will show you how to fully appreciate it: they will take around the facilities, the vineyards, the production process; they will reveal the secrets of wine tasting and you will, of course, be able to sample the wines accompanied by typical local dishes. At tourist information centres you can get details of the vineyards and wine cellars, as well as times and conditions for visits. It seems to me to be the perfect way to explore the sheer cultural diversity of Portugal while sampling some of the finest wines in the world.</p> <p>My not-so-hidden vice from the world of Portuguese wines is...white port. This dry-yet-sweet concoction is a perfect aperitif with olives, nuts or cheese before a meal and best of all – you can now find it in the LCBO in Ontario!</p>
<p><b>Restaurants</b></p>	<p>So many that it's impossible to suggest just a few...but here's an attempt:</p> <p><b>Lisbon</b></p> <p>Populi, Ala Nascente Terreiro do Paço 85/86 1100-148 Lisboa. I enjoyed an excellent lunch here on my last visit to Lisbon – great food, and a perfect vantage point to watch Lisbon life go by...  <a href="http://www.populi.pt">http://www.populi.pt</a></p> <p>Largo, R. Serpa Pinto, 1200-445 Lisboa. Modern international cuisine against backdrop of historic arched ceilings &amp; tanks full of jellyfish. I had a tasty dinner here and they have the best selection of gins in town!  <a href="http://www.largo.pt">http://www.largo.pt</a></p>

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	<p>Eleven, Rua Marquês da Fronteira, If you really feel like splurging, this is the place. The restaurant was recently awarded a Michelin Star, although the basis on which the award was made are disputable.</p> <p>Il Gattopardo, Av. Eng. Duarte Pacheco, 24 (3rd Floor of the Dom Pedro Palace hotel). Lunch: 12:20PM - 3:30PM, Dinner: 7:30PM-11:30PM. An elegant restaurant serving fashionable gourmet Italian with a big price tag.</p> <p>Panorama, Rua Latino Coelho 1. Superb views over Lisbon and food with a good quality/price ratio.</p> <p>Chimera Brewpub, Rua Prior do Crato, 6 - Alcântara Superb tunnel from 1740 that is is now turned into a brewery/Portuguese craft beer/NY Deli PUB Restaurant. A must see for history and beer lovers.</p> <p><b>Porto</b></p> <p>Campo Alegre - Rua Campo Alegre 416. Traditional Portuguese food from the Alentejo region. Try the Bife de Café, or Steak with Coffee sauce!</p> <p>Kyoto - Praça Guilherme Gomes Fernandes. Some of the best Japanese sushi in town. Lunch menus available during weekdays.</p> <p>Marisqueira de Matosinhos - Rua Roberto Ivens,</p> <p>Matosinhos Another great restaurant; if you like shellfish this is one of the best places in Porto.O Filipe - Avenida Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco 36-r/c 4450-110 MATOSINHOS. One of the best restaurants to eat fresh fish. Small but cozy, it can be expensive but depends on what you order. Parking is difficult to find in this area but you may park in front of the restaurant and they will take care of the car when needed</p> <p>O Papparico - Rua Costa Cabral A great restaurant serving food using best quality Portuguese ingredients.</p>
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<b>MORE INFO</b>	
<b>Websites</b>	Website: <a href="https://www.visitportugal.com/en">https://www.visitportugal.com/en</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Visitportugal/">https://www.facebook.com/Visitportugal/</a> Pinterest: <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/visitportugal/">https://www.pinterest.com/visitportugal/</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/visitportugal/">https://twitter.com/visitportugal/</a>
<b>Personal Experience</b>	I have travelled extensively throughout Portugal and its islands: Lisbon, Estoril and Cascais Porto and Northern Portugal

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	<p>Algarve Madeira Azores My best piece of advice when planning a trip to Portugal is to book at least one night in one of the Pousada hotels – hotels built in historic buildings or beautiful natural settings. You can check them out here: <a href="http://www.pousadas.pt/en">http://www.pousadas.pt/en</a></p>
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