

PORTUGAL: A MONOCLE TRAVEL GUIDE

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A Monocle
Special Edition



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Itinerary

We select a few final ideas to round off your visit, including sampling some regional delicacies, belting up for a picturesque coastal drive and stocking up on souvenirs at a few choice markets

Welcome

Portugal's beaches may be the carefree face it shows to the world but there is more to the Iberian nation than just sun and sea. Our take on the country focuses on its often-overlooked strengths, from its impeccable service culture to the scrummy regional fare and hearty hospitality. We chart a course beyond the nation's gilded beach-lined frame and inside find a country with character and charm.

The urban hubs of Lisbon and Porto are alive with that uniquely Portuguese blend of modernity and old-world grandeur. Nowhere is this more evident than in the architecture, which runs the gamut from medieval to modernist. The global financial crisis has been tough here; the economy grew 1 per cent in 2014 (the first increase since 2008). Despite this, the nation's young entrepreneurs are harnessing the potential of passing trade and seeding businesses built to weather the financial storm. Bars, restaurants, shops and galleries are popping up every day and breathing new life into the nation's old towns.

Travelling beyond Portugal's main cities – whether you are passing clusters of whitewashed fishing villages along the Atlantic coast or ancient settlements in the rural north – can be like stepping back in time. Stops like the historic university town of Coimbra and medieval Évora in Alentejo are an old but never staid reminder of the country's storied past. So, charge your glass with a crisp *vinho verde* and let us take you on a tour of the best Portugal has to offer. *Boa viagem!*

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AROUND THE COUNTRY

MAP

Essential knowledge

Population:

About 10.5 million call Portugal home and around one third of them live in the two main cities of Lisbon and Porto.

Coastline:

If you include the offshore territories of Madeira and the Azores, Portugal has a total of 2,586km of coastline.

Hours of sunshine per year:

Depending on where you end up, the country enjoys between 2,200 and 3,000 hours of the stuff per year.

Airports:

The mainland has three international airports: one each in Lisbon and Porto and another in Faro to the south.

Currency:

Portugal adopted the euro in 1999, which replaced national currency the escudo.

Language:

Portuguese is the fourth-most-spoken language in the world with over 250 million speakers worldwide.

Unesco World Heritage sites:

Fifteen in total, including the Alto Douro wine region, the tower of Belém in Lisbon and the historic centre of Porto.



WHERE TO GO

PORTO



Shops and restaurants here are opening at a steady clip to complement the rich collage of independent retailers that already call the city home. Porto's historic downtown area of Ribeira has narrow alleyways, riverfront cafés, lively markets and varied architecture, from classic tile-clad mansions and not a few art deco gems.

Beachfront strolls and the picturesque Palácio de Cristal gardens are within easy reach, as are views of the Vila Nova de Gaia cellars where the city's famous port wine ages gracefully.

Getting there

By air
Sá Carneiro Airport has regular services to over 40 European cities; long-haul destinations include Toronto and Rio de Janeiro.

By rail
Alfa Pendular trains do daily runs between Porto's Campanhã Station and Lisbon in less than three hours.

By metro
Light-rail services cover downtown, cross the Douro and run north to outlying suburbs.

Cosy guesthouse

Rosa Et Al
In 2012, siblings Emanuel and Patrícia de Sousa (pictured) turned a 19th-century townhouse in the city's Cedofeita area into a smart six-suite hotel. Refurbished wooden floors, furniture from Eames, Prouvé and Wegner and clawfoot bathtubs share space with comfy bedding and modern amenities (each room has a Revo Heritage radio). There are in-room shiatsu massages to fight jetlag and a garden to soak up the sun while enjoying a leisurely breakfast. rosaetal.pt



Food and drink

Taberna dos Mercadores
Opened this summer in the Ribeira neighbourhood, this bijou bistro seats 18 and offers an impressive overhead wine rack. The chefs cook in plain view from behind the bar and prepare plates including baked cod and Arouquesa veal. Rua dos Mercadores 36



Retail

La Paz
Locals André Bastos Teixeira and José Miguel Abreu set up clothing label La Paz in 2011. Inspired by the sea – their new shop in Ribeira is a former pharmacy used by sailors – the duo do nautical-themed knitwear in Shetland wool, casual shirts and coats, all made in the north of Portugal. lapaz.pt

SLIPPERY CUSTOMERS
Famous Portuguese soap maker Claus Porto's 1887 founders were in fact two German immigrants, who fled after the First World War.

VEGGIE LOVERS
Porto's São João festival is a pagan celebration made Catholic. The party sees revellers thump loved ones with leeks: a fertility symbol.

Affordable rooms

Favorita
The Favorita inn has rooms bathed in natural light, new and vintage furnishings and a homely vibe. Complimentary port is offered in the lounge and a downstairs dining room with garden patio serves hearty fish and meat dishes, tasty soups and a delicious apple torte. pensaofavorita.pt



THE FAVORITA INN'S LOCATION IN CEDOFEITA MEANS IT IS A PERFECT BASE FOR EXPLORING THE CITY



Retail

Chocolateria Equador
In 2009, graphic designer Celestino Fonseca and sculptor Teresa Almeida (pictured) decided it was time to channel their creative energy into starting a confectionery company making mouthwatering artisanal truffles, bonbons and chocolate bars. Sold in 1940s-style wrappers, their products are for sale in their two Porto shops in Rua Sá da Bandeira and Rua das Flores. Their dark chocolate Torrié flavour made with a blend of Arabica coffee beans is not to be missed. chocolateriaequador.com



Q&A

Fernando Santos
Owner, Galeria Fernando Santos

How has the city's art scene changed?

When I opened in 1993 in Rua Miguel Bombarda it was a residential area; now over 20 galleries are here. It was a catalyst as design shops and hotels have also begun to appear. During the year galleries co-ordinate to open shows on the same day so visitors can see many new works in one go.

What do you like most about Porto?

It's small in scale; I go everywhere on foot. It's safe and people are friendly. It is attracting more visitors and creative types; culturally it's blossoming. galeriafernandosantos.com

Bookshop

Livrario Lello
Opened in 1906, the Lello bookshop itself can distract readers browsing its 120,000 titles. Its façade hints at art nouveau but inside there is a neo-gothic feel thanks to a stained-glass skylight, ornate floor-to-ceiling plaster and a grand sweeping staircase, which leads to an upstairs café.

"We carry everything from the works of Camões to today's Nobel Prize-winning authors," says Antero Braga, who has been the general manager of the shop since 1994. Rua das Carmelitas 144



Culture hotspots

01 Casa das Artes
Cinema and exhibition space designed by architect Eduardo Souto de Moura and set in the gardens of a neoclassical mansion. casadasartes.pt

02 Maus Hábitos
Fourth-floor restaurant in a 1930s art deco garage with a terrace that houses a mini art gallery and is a venue for live music. maushabitos.com



Sophisticated dinner

Vinum
Set on a hill on the Douro's south bank, Vinum's dining room, which includes a tapas bar, is part of the 19th-century cellar in which producer Graham's ports are aged in oak casks. Patrons get great views of downtown Porto while they tuck into grilled *alheira* sausage. vinumatgrahams.com



Culture

Coliseu do Porto

A 1940s landmark, the art deco Coliseu theatre is a multi-use venue that hosts concerts, opera and even circus acts. Its foyer includes luxurious marble and the interior décor features stucco and copper. coliseudoporto.pt



Food and drink

Cunha

Comfort food in Porto comes in the form of the *francesinha*, a super calorific croque-monsieur sandwich of *linguiça* (cured pork sausage), ham and other meats served in a tomato-and-beer sauce. Recipes vary but the dish is best sampled while sitting at a counter in one of the city's many diners, such as Cunha. confeitariacunha.com

Two more top tables

01 **Cafeina**
cafeina.pt

02 **Casa Aleixo**
216 Rua da Estação



OPPAL SITUATION
Natives are known as 'tripeiros' (tripe eaters). It dates back to 1415 when soldiers got the best meat and locals made do with the leftovers.



Food and drink

Champanheria

A chic new bistro and after-hours bar that caters to connoisseurs of bubbly who like a club sandwich on the side. Set in the 1950s-era Palácio do Comércio, its low half-moon mezzanine makes it a stylish setting to sip sparkling wine from one of Portugal's top cellars. champanheriadaibaixa.com



Food and drink

Mercearia das Flores

Located downtown, this well-curated grocer serves *petiscos* – Portugal's take on tapas – all day next to its selection of cured meats, bakery-fresh breads and wines by the glass (craft beer is available, too). Customers can choose to nibble on strips of salt-dried tuna from the Algarve and Azorean cheeses with piri-piri jam or embark on a tasting of extra-virgin olive oils from organic producers found in the northern Trás-os-Montes region. merceanadasflores.com

Culture

Casa da Música

Porto's concert hall by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas has been an attention-grabber since opening a decade ago. Its white concrete shell houses an auditorium with glass walls and inside there are hand-painted tiles from Viúva Lamego. Visit the restaurant and terrace, too. casadamusica.com



WELL-SCHOOLED

University students in Porto wear black capes, said to have inspired former Porto resident JK Rowling's Hogwarts uniforms.



Seaside getaway

Matosinhos

Located 10 minutes' drive west of central Porto, Matosinhos is a key seaport. Near its fish auction, streets are chock-a-block with seafood restaurants where, during the summer months, outdoor grills appear. You can also take a dip in Álvaro Siza's 1960s-designed concrete saltwater



Food and drink

Casa de Chá

Reopened in 2014, the half-century-old Casa de Chá is perhaps Pritzker prize-winning architect and local legend Álvaro Siza's best work. Conceived as a teahouse, it now hosts a gourmet restaurant by Porto chef Rui Paula. Set on a rocky beach, its beauty comes from its mix of materials:

terracotta tiles on the roof, white masonry, concrete and a warm interior of red Afzelia wood; Siza designed everything down to the dining carts. Patrons can opt for modern tasting menus and wine pairings or simpler dishes such as lobster-stewed rice. The window panes sink into the floor to allow for alfresco dining. ruipaula.com

Retail

Garrafeira Augusto

In 1954, Augusto began life as a neighbourhood grocer in the Foz district. The store later added a *garrafeira* (wine cellar) and has since become a key purveyor of hundreds of Portuguese wines. That includes vintage ports to whites from the Azores and labels from Douro wineries big and small. augustofoz.com



Culture

Serralves

This modern-art museum consists of an exhibition gallery by Álvaro Siza, a pink-hued art deco mansion with interiors covered in blue limestone and a private chapel. There is also a sprawling 18-hectare park with a rose garden, fountains and sculptures by contemporary artists. serralves.pt

