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NEW

Highlights of Portugal - Private Tour

PORTUGAL - TRIP CODE PTHOP

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

This private tour crams in so much in just eight days. As well as exploring Lisbon and Porto, you'll see some of Portugal's less-explored and fascinating UNESCO sites in the small medieval towns of Alcobaca, Batalha and Coimbra. With guided walking tours in Porto and Lisbon, included wine tastings in the Douro Valley and a visit to a port lodge in Porto, the trip really gets to the heart of Portugal's gastronomic and cultural heritage.

- **Lisbon** - Try the local sour cherry liqueur and get the chance to jump on a ferry for a seafood lunch on the docks
- **Porto** - Stroll down the cobbled streets to Cais da Ribeira and along the characterful quayside
- **Douro Valley** - Stay at a winery in Pinhao and explore the Baroque city of Lamego



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 7



TRIP STAFF
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Car
Train



ACCOMMODATION
7 nights
comfortable hotel



TRIP PACE:
Moderate

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip begins in Lisbon

Arrive in Lisbon. This remarkable place, boasts over twenty centuries of history - indeed, legend states that Ulysses himself founded it!

You will be met on arrival at Lisbon Portela Airport (LIS), by a driver who will take you to your hotel, around a 15 minute drive away. There are no activities planned today, so feel free to arrive in Lisbon Airport at any time. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than three weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.

For those arriving early in the day, you may want to orient yourself by strolling through the historic city, taking in the historic Se de Lisboa Cathedral which dates back to the 12th Century, or visiting the Baixa District and taking the unusual 32-metre wrought iron lift, the Elevador de Santa Justa, which links Baixa (the low district) to the Bairro Alto (the high district).



ACCOMMODATION:
Residencial Florescente (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Explore Lisbon and Belem on foot

Resting on seven hills overlooking the estuary of the River Tejo, Lisbon has gazed down upon centuries of change - the Phoenicians and Romans both inhabited the city, but it did not become the capital of Portugal until its conquest from the Moors in 1147. It was the hub of global trade and the heart of the maritime 'age of discovery' - boats from every nation would dock here, and riches from trade and exploration worldwide would pass by the city's harbours. Indeed, Lisbon was described as the eighth wonder of the world.

Today Lisbon has all the looks of an elegant and carefully planned 18th-century city, and you'll be exploring on foot with a local guide. In the morning, take a walking tour through the different bairros (districts) of the town. Old trams negotiate the undulations of Lisbon's cobbled streets, and the varied and interesting buildings throughout the city never fail to impress, both architecturally or for the history they contain. Walk up Alfama Hill where there is time to nip into local neighbourhood shops for a snack. In the course of the day your guide will also find a place to try Ginjinha, a very local liqueur made from sour cherries, which is an acquired taste. In the afternoon, take the tram to Belem, where you'll find the 500-year old Jeronimos Monastery and the Discoveries Monument - remember that Lisbon was the centre of the age of discovery, and the starting point for many early explorers' great voyages around the world including Vasco de Gama.

Returning to Lisbon by tram, the evening is free for you to enjoy. If you're a music lover, you may wish to ask your guide if he knows of any live Fado performances taking place this evening. Stemming from the word 'fate', the music of Fado can be deeply personal in its expression. Said to have been born from the songs of African slaves, the sentiments behind this soulful music are deeply linked to the heritage and hearts of the people, and as such is quintessentially Portuguese.



ACCOMMODATION:
Residencial Florescente (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Free time in Lisbon; option to take the ferry to Cacilhas for lunch or visit Sintra

Today is at your leisure in Lisbon. You may wish to head to Lisbon's central Rossio Station (an impressive building in itself) for the short train ride to the hills and palaces of Sintra - inspiration to poets, artists and travellers alike. Lord Byron claimed the village of Sintra 'perhaps in every aspect the most delightful in Europe; it contains beauties of every description... palaces and gardens rising in the midst of rocks, cataracts and precipices; convents on stupendous heights, a distant view of the sea and the Tagus'. The air is noticeably cooler and the views dramatic.

Alternatively, jump on a local ferry across the Tejo River to Casilhas which has a working port feel and excellent views back across to Lisbon proper. Here you can sample a traditional slow paced fish lunch (vegetarian options are available) near the docks.

It's worth noting that Lisbon's museums are closed on Mondays. You may wish to take this into account when choosing which dates to travel on, if there is a particular museum that you'd like to visit.



ACCOMMODATION:
Residencial Florescente (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Private transfer to Coimbra via Alcobaca and Batalha Monastery UNESCO sites

This morning, leave Lisbon with a driver and set off to Coimbra. En route, pass through two of Portugal's most impressive UNESCO-listed sites. First, visit Alcobaca, a gem of a small medieval town in the centre of the country featuring one of Iberia's great monasteries. Hiding behind the imposing Baroque facade is an austere monastery with a forest of unadorned 12th century arches. Your visit will be unguided but do make time to visit the atmospheric refectory, vast dormitory and the many other spaces that bring back the Cistercian life, which, according to sources, wasn't quite as austere here as it should have been. After some free time for strolling around, continue to Batalha. Again, you'll take time here to see the UNESCO-listed Gothic monastery, Mosteiro de Santa Maria da Vitoria, built to commemorate the Battle of Aljubarrota, which was fought just south of here. The construction of the monastery was never fully completed and you'll see the unfinished chapels.

In the evening, reach reach the old university town of Coimbra. Although it has a beautiful historic centre it also has one foot firmly planted in the present. It has an attractive modern riverside park and is home to a large university.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Vitoria (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Private transfer for the Douro Valley; wine tasting at a local vineyard

With a couple of hours free in Coimbra this morning, we heartily recommend a visit to the university area with its startling collection of centuries-old buildings and famous library. Coimbra was once the medieval capital of Portugal, and the university itself was started in the 12th Century. The town is often a surprising highlight to a Portugal visit so it's worth getting up early to make the most of your time here.

Later this morning your driver will take you into the Douro Valley, to Lamego. This picturesque Baroque city is nestled among the terraces of the wine growing region of the Douro Valley. After free time here for lunch, continue to Pinhao, where your hotel for the night is part of one of the region's wineries. Enjoy an included wine tasting of two local wines, and then take in the views of the entire valley from the hotel terrace.



ACCOMMODATION:
Dois Lagares (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Train to Porto for a walking tour and port tasting; free afternoon

Today we're aiming for a 12pm train journey to Porto, and you'll be taken to the train station in the late morning. The journey lasts around 2.5 hours so we recommend taking some lunch or snacks on the journey with you. You'll be met on arrival by a local guide, who will help you to check in before setting out on an orientation walk. Stroll down the cobbled streets to Cais da Ribeira - undoubtedly the most picturesque spot. This characterful quayside is dominated by the tall outline of the two tiered Dom Luis I

Bridge, built in 1886 by an assistant of Gustave Eiffel. Here, ancient houses with laundry-draped balconies stand high above the waterfront looking out over the river, where several old boats lie moored at the water's edge. Despite the decline in the use of this harbour, with its fish market and restaurants, it continues to have character and bustle reminiscent of its lively past. Following the tour, visit one of the town's famous port lodges. The history and processes involved in making these white, ruby and tawny delicacies are most interesting, and afterwards there will be, of course, a port tasting.

The rest of the day is then free to further explore the city that has a surprise around every corner - churches clad in finely illustrated blue and white azulejo tiles; bustling food markets selling everything from fruit and vegetables, to bacalhau (traditional salted cod), fresh chickens' feet and tripe; and peaceful squares with small friendly coffee bars hidden away, where you could sit back and watch the world go by.



ACCOMMODATION:

Moov Hotel Porto Centro (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Free day in Porto

Today is free for you to further discover Porto. There are a number of fascinating buildings to visit whilst walking in the heart of the city. You may choose to climb the tower of the 18th century Baroque Igreja dos Clerigos, which affords superb views across the city or see the Palacio da Bolsa - built to house Porto's stock exchange. The interior design is outstanding - particularly the building's Arabian room, inspired by Granada's Alhambra Palace. You may consider venturing further afield and taking the train or a local bus the short distance to the attractive towns of Guimaraes or Braga.

This evening you might like to visit the nearby city of Matosinhos where you can sample a barbecued fish dinner on the seafront.



ACCOMMODATION:

Moov Hotel Porto Centro (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Porto

Your trip ends today, and you will be taken to the airport to meet your international flight. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from at any time - it's approximately 30 minutes from the hotel. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Portugal

Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a trip to Portugal - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The northern high plains has both extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. The islands have very different weather patterns due to their positioning and can have sudden rain falls throughout the year so waterproofs are recommended even in the summer.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Portuguese

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

While this trip includes a great selection of Portugal's highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from some of the excursions, museums and sights that this area has in abundance, or take time to relax, the choice is yours. An idea of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your holiday. You will not have time to do all of them, but the list will give you an idea of what is possible.

Lisbon:

Fado concert in the Baixa District €5.00.

Tram return from Belem €1.50 per way

Sintra:

Pena Palace entrance €14.50 or gardens only €7.50.

Quinta Regaleira entrance €7.50.

Coimbra:

University tour (€12). The university opens at 8.30am and the first tour is at 9am. If you'd like a guided visit, this is the tour you should take in order to transfer in the late morning to the Douro Valley.

Porto:

Guimaraes by train €14.00 (journey time is approximately 1 hour 15) or Braga by train €11.00 (journey time is approximately 1 hour).

Dinner in Matasinhos approximately €20.00 plus transport by metro approximately €1.20 per way.

Clothing

Lightweight cotton clothing is best from June to September, light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, but especially after the start of September, and a warm fleece/light jacket is recommended for cooler evenings.

Footwear

If you wish to do any walking in the Douro Valley, we recommend walking shoes, ideally waterproof just in case. Otherwise comfortable shoes for walking around the cities are perfect.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a daypack. We recommend a bag you are happy to wheel and lift as we use a variety of public transport and taxis on this tour. A daypack is essential for walking in the cities. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage - so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

During the summer months we recommend you bring a sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen. A water bottle is recommended.

Tipping

Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. As a guideline, we suggest around 5-8 euros per day for drivers, and 8-15 euros per day for local guides. These amounts are of course at your own discretion and subject to the service that you receive.

Portugal

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£18

Beer price

£2.00 - 3.00 depending on your location, well touristed areas are usually slightly more expensive.

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euro. Take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Cash-point machines are available in all major towns. Bankcards with the Cirrus logo are accepted.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be exchanged in all major towns but are not recommended due to the high rate of commission.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

This trip is designed to acquaint you with the highlights of Portugal in just 8 days. We make the most of our time by using a mix of public transport and charter vehicles to travel between the cities and in order for you to experience the journey like the locals do. Once we're in the cities our explorations are mostly done on foot, the terrain can be hilly and uneven so please bring sensible footwear.

Portugal

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information

Explore Staff

Unlike our group tours our private journeys do not have a Tour Leader. However, you are still in safe hands as we work closely with our expert local suppliers on the planning and organisation of your holiday to ensure that you have a fantastic time. On your first day in Lisbon you'll have a tour with a local guide, and they will be able to answer any questions you may have about the rest of your itinerary. The guides in Lisbon and Porto are excellent and will really help to bring the destination to life. At times you may travel unaccompanied (for example on the train to Porto), or with just a driver (rather than a guide), but you will have all the information that you need to explore and there is always the reassurance that you have someone on hand with our 24/7 emergency contact number.

Reviews



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