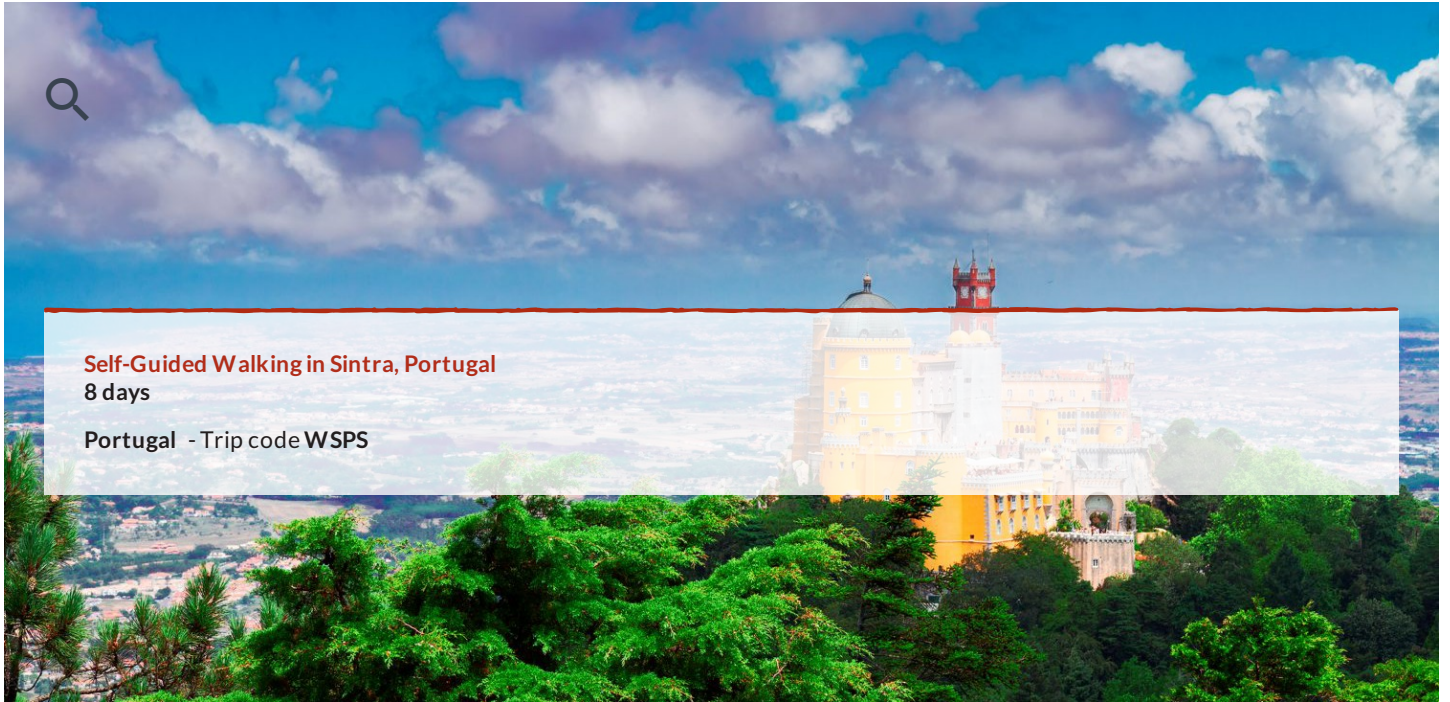


EXPLORE!



Self-Guided Walking in Sintra, Portugal
8 days

Portugal - Trip code WSPS

Self-Guided Walking in Sintra, Portugal

A diverse walking holiday exploring UNESCO heritage landmarks in the Sintra Hills and time on coastal trails. The hilly and slightly cooler climate enticed the nobility and elite of Portugal to the area, who constructed exquisite palaces and extravagant residences with decorative gardens. Most of the walks are designed to take in the monuments in the morning, when it is still quiet, and then you 'head for the hills' for peaceful walks on dirt trails, woodland tracks and trails with coastal views.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Castle of the Moors and Pena Palace** - UNESCO heritage landmarks in the Sintra Hills
- ★ **Sintra - Cascais Natural Park**- Mystical Mediterranean woodlands
- ★ **Sintra National Palace** - Considered the finest example of Portuguese romanticism
- ★ **Cabo da Roca** - the westernmost point of the European continent

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts Sintra

Your accommodation for the first four nights of this trip is in Sintra. The picturesque Portuguese town is set amidst the pine-covered hills of the Serra de Sintra, where kings and noblemen built extravagant summer palaces during the 18th and 19th centuries.



Accommodation: Hotel Nova Sintra (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Walk to and around Castle of the Moors, Pena Palace and Sintra National Palace

Today you take in the three most prominent monuments of Sintra: Castle of the Moors, Pena Palace and the Sintra National Palace. You start with a steep ascent to the Moorish castle and the colourful dream palace of King Ferdinand, followed by a walk in the vast palace grounds and finally a steep descent via Vila Sasseti to the town centre of Sintra, where the National Palace stands.

Today's 9 km walk is expected to take approximately 4 hours and you will ascend and descend 535m.



Accommodation: Hotel Nova Sintra (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Walk in the mystical forest of the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park

Today you leave the crowds behind and take an included taxi to the Convent of the Capuchos, a classic 16th-century Franciscan monastery which you can visit before starting your walk. Your walking route leads you through mystical Mediterranean woodlands past hillside menhirs (standing stones) and the shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Peninha. Then you descend to Azoia and take the bus back to Sintra.

Today's 11km walk is expected to take approximately 5 hours and you will ascend 400m and descend 500m.



Accommodation: Hotel Nova Sintra (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Bus and walk to Quinta da Regaleira and Montserrat Palace

Within a few square kilometres you will find extravagant palaces and mansions built by nobles and wealthy merchants, most of which are still occupied or in use as luxury hotels. Today you can buy a return ticket for bus Line 435 (about 2.50 euros) and begin with a short ride to Quinta da Regaleira; a slightly sinister palace from the early 20th century, built by an eccentric Brazilian coffee farmer and Freemason who constructed spectacular initiation wells seven storeys underground connecting them to the palace via tunnels. Then walk to Seteais Palace; this neoclassical palace was built for a Dutch Consul in the late 18th century. Now a hotel, the gardens are open to visitors. Then you walk along the road (1km) and hike through the forest to reach Montserrat Palace; a Romantic building with Indian and Arabic influences, built by a Portuguese-English Viscount and industrial magnate. When you have finished sightseeing take the bus back to Sintra.

Today's walk is expected to be between 2 and 5km.



Accommodation: Hotel Nova Sintra (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Walk through fields, vineyards and forest to the Atlantic Coast

Today you leave the wealth and romance of Sintra behind as you walk north through fields, vineyards and pine forests toward the rugged coast. In the pretty fishing village of Azenha do Mar, you pick up the GR-11 and follow it south along the coast to Praia Grande and your hotel for the next two nights.

Today's 15km walk is expected to take approximately 4.5 hours and you will ascend 150m and descend 150m. It can be shortened by taking the tram to Azenha (runs Thursday to Sunday) and walk just the last few kilometres.



Accommodation: Arribas Sintra Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Rest day or walk to Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of the European continent

Today you can choose to relax on one of the beautiful nearby beaches or go for a walk. If you decide to walk, from your hotel you pick up the long distance walking path the GR-11 which follows the Atlantic coast, going south along fishermen's trails to reach the village of Ulgueira. There you can decide to walk to Cabo de Roca, the westernmost point of the European continent there-and-back or loop back to Praia Grande via a different route. Along the way you pass a few small bars and the village of Ulgueira.

Today's 12km walk is expected to take approximately 4 to 5 hours and you will ascend 575m and descend 575m.



Accommodation: Arribas Sintra Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Taxi to Azoia then Coastal walk from Guinchos to Cascais

Your last day of walking begins with an included taxi to Azoia, where you pick up the GR-11 and follow it along the coast to the 17th-century fortress of Fortaleza de Guincho, now a luxury hotel with views over Praia do Guincho. You can stop off part-way to take the bus directly to the popular fishing town of Cascais where you spend the night or walk an additional 9.5km all the way to your hotel on a footpath between the road and beach.

Today's 17km walk is expected to take approximately 6 hours and you will ascend 350m and descend 435m. This walk can be shortened to 10.5km taking approximately 3 hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Baia (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

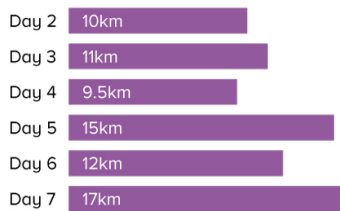
DAY 8 - Trip ends Cascais

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



 Optional Walks

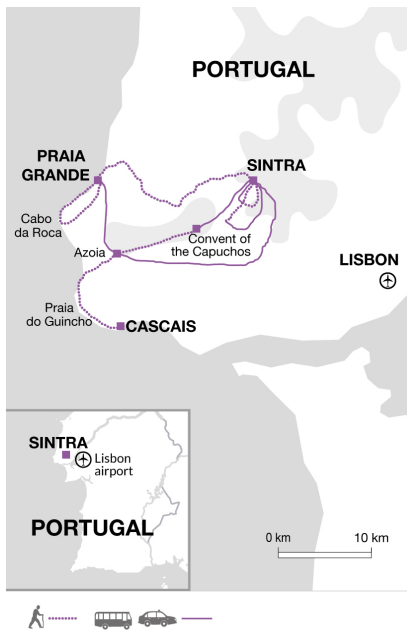
Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

On this journey you walk 74.5km over 6 days (an average of 12.5km a day). Walking routes are generally 4 to 5 hours with one long walk of 6 hours on day 7 with a maximum ascent of 575m on one day. We have graded this trip as moderate.

WSPS Distance Chart



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

On Foot
Public Bus



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

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

0

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

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.

The entrance fees for the monuments vary from 7 euros to 14 euros per site. Combination tickets are available offering a discounted rates for visiting multiple sites.

Clothing

Light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, and a warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights early and late in the season.

Footwear

Well worn, sturdy walking boots with good ankle support are essential for the walks. Sandals and trainers are recommended for relaxing in the evenings.

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you may need to carry your luggage at times so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport/ a ferry you should always take your luggage with you.

Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunhat and sunscreen are all essential and you may wish to bring a light torch. Walking poles recommended.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

General Map

Grupo Anaya, Portugal, Madeira y Azores, 1:340.000 (2008)

Tipping

Local fees

There are no local fees on this holiday.

Country Information

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

£15

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

Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

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

On Foot, Public Bus

Recommended airport

Lisbon

Flying to your destination

We'd recommend flying into and out of r Lisbon. Lisbon is served by budget (including Easyjet and Ryanair) and scheduled airlines (including British Airways and TAP) from UK airports.

Arrival and departure information

For this trip you can fly into and back from Lisbon airport

From Lisbon airport, you take the shuttle to Rossio train station (3.50 euros, every half an hour, travel time approximately 20 minutes).

Then you continue by train for another 40 minutes (departures every fifteen minutes, 2.20 euros). Timetable information can be found on the website of Comboios de Portugal

https://www.cp.pt/taticFiles/CP/PDF/Passageiros/Horarios/lx/resumo_azambuja_sintra.pdf

At the end of the tour, you take the train from Cascais to Lisbon 'Cais do Sodre' station (departures every fifteen minutes, 2.20 euros). There you get on the bus (line 1) to the airport (aprox 6 euros).

Essential Information

FCO 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 Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

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

Portugal: Visas are not required by UK, E.U nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying 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 now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. 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.

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.
