



## Discovering Portugal

*From Lisbon to the north of Portugal, through the Alentejo region and south to the Algarve, our small group navigates the gentle charms of this country rich in history, blessed with natural beauty, and well-versed in hospitality. Complementing our discoveries: stays in two unique pousadas, Portugal's famed historic lodgings.*

### Itinerary

Created on Feb 29, 2024

# Discovering Portugal

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### **DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Lisbon, Portugal**

### **DAY 2: Arrive Lisbon**

We arrive in the Portuguese capital and transfer to our hotel. Late this afternoon we meet our fellow travelers and Odysseys Unlimited Tour Director at a briefing about the journey ahead, followed by a welcome dinner at our hotel.

*Accommodations:* Eurostars Das Letras

*Meals:* Dinner

### **DAY 3: Lisbon**

Highlights of our tour of one of the world's oldest cities include the ornate 16<sup>th</sup>-century Jerónimos Monastery, where Vasco da Gama spent his last night ashore before sailing to the Far East; Belém Tower, a masterpiece of Manueline architecture; and the iconic Monument to the Discoveries commemorating Portugal's Age of Discovery. Next, we step back in time as we walk through the Alfama, Lisbon's oldest district that was spared destruction in the earthquake of 1755 (in 2023 there will be no bus access in Alfama, instead guests will visit the Baixa District, one of Lisbon's liveliest neighborhoods). We stroll the maze of cobbled streets lined with colorful homes and see the local people as they go about their daily lives, and then we return to our hotel and have the remainder of the day at leisure. Tonight we visit a local restaurant for dinner and a performance of *fado*, the traditional melancholic music of Portugal.

*Accommodations:* Eurostars Das Letras

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

### **DAY 4: Cascais/Sintra**

The first stop on today's discoveries: Pena Palace, the colorful architectural extravaganza boasting double chimneys and multiple design styles. Following our tour here, we continue on to the nearby coastal resort of Cascais, where we visit the Citadel of Cascais, built between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Once a summer retreat for royalty, today the citadel houses a museum (which we tour) and a deluxe hotel. Then, we walk through Cascais' Old Town. Dinner tonight is on our own in Lisbon.

*Accommodations:* Eurostars Das Letras

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 5: Lisbon/Oporto**

Traveling north today, we stop in the classic fortified town of Obidos, where we take a walking tour through its medieval streets. Then, we continue on to the historic town of Oporto, our home for the next three nights. We dine tonight at our hotel.

*Accommodations:* Pestana Douro Riverside

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Oporto**

Today we explore Oporto, the country's second largest city known for its rich history, multiple bridges spanning the Douro River, and as the home of port wine. Highlights of our panoramic city tour include the medieval city center – a UNESCO site – and the baroque Clérigos Church with its signature bell tower. Then, we enjoy a private “six-bridge” cruise on the Douro, upon whose banks the Romans planted grape vines millennia ago. Our tour ends with a visit to a port lodge for a tasting of the fortified wine exclusive to this region. The remainder of the day is free to explore this fascinating city as we wish, perhaps to wander the narrow cobbled streets of the medieval Ribiera (riverside) district – or to stroll the broad boulevard and public square of Praça de Liberdade, flanked by imposing buildings and trendy boutiques. We dine together tonight.

*Accommodations:* Pestana Douro Riverside

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Guimaraes/Braga**

We travel to the lovely city of Guimaraes, considered the “birthplace” of Portugal for being the birthplace of Afonso Henriques, the country's first king. With its well-preserved historical center (a UNESCO site) and harmonious design, Guimaraes is closely tied to the Portuguese national identity. We get a taste of the unique atmosphere on a walking tour through the medieval streets and squares lined with period houses and past such landmarks as the castle, Chapel of St. Michael, Palace of the Dukes of Bragança, and graceful Oliveira Square. After lunch on our own, we depart for nearby Braga, a 2,000-year-old city (and Portugal's third largest) made young by the presence of university students. Known for its religious festivals, Braga is an elegant town laced with narrow lanes, plazas, and an abundance of baroque churches. Highlights of our walking tour include the fortified Torre de Menagem, Largo do Paco square, and the impressive Cathedral, Portugal's oldest – and one of the country's most important – buildings.

*Accommodations:* Pestana Douro Riverside

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 8: Oporto/Coimbra/Estremoz**

Today's travels bring us first to historic Coimbra, where we take a walking tour of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century university, a UNESCO site. We also visit the Santa Cruz Monastery to see the medieval tombs and ornate sacristy. Then, we continue our journey south to Estremoz in the Alentejo region, Portugal's agricultural center with its bountiful fields of wheat, fragrant vineyards, and stands of olive, citrus, and cork trees. Late this afternoon we reach our *pousada* set in a 13<sup>th</sup>-century castle in the historic city center.

*Accommodations:* Pousada Castelo Estremoz

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 9: Evora**

This morning's walking tour of the walled city of Evora introduces us to the charms of this architectural gem – a university town, prosperous regional capital, and UNESCO site, thanks to the many relics from its Roman and Moorish past. We see a Roman temple, the 12<sup>th</sup>-century cathedral, central Giraldo Square, and the Church of St. Francis, home of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Chapel of Bones adorned with human skulls and bones. Then, we have free time to explore this Golden Age city independently. Mid-afternoon we depart for Estremoz and our *pousada*; dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

*Accommodations:* Pousada Castelo Estremoz

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 10: Estremoz/Sagres**

As we continue our journey south, we visit a cork factory and then arrive late morning at a country estate lush with vineyards, olive groves, and forests of cork oak. Here we learn about olive oil and wine production and enjoy a tasting, followed by lunch in the lovely surroundings. Later, we continue on to the picturesque fishing village of Sagres and our intimate *pousada* overlooking the Atlantic and the Sagres promontory. Dinner tonight is at our *pousada*, whose restaurant specializes in local seafood.

*Accommodations:* Pousada Sagres

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 11: Sagres/Lagos**

Today we encounter this region that launched Portugal's Age of Discovery, when in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, explorers went out to sea, sailed along the coast of Africa, and eventually reached the Cape of Good Hope and beyond. It was Prince Henry the Navigator who sponsored these expeditions; much of our touring in the historical town of Lagos and in Sagres today celebrates his legacy. Our explorations begin with a cruise along the limestone coastline, featuring the dramatic rocks of Ponta da Piedade. Next, we visit the Antonine Museum inside the Church of St. Anthony, see the statue of Prince Henry the Navigator, and stop at the Ponta da Piedade and Cape St. Vincent viewpoints to witness the dramatic Atlantic as it nears shore at mainland Europe's southwesternmost point. Then we visit the charming village of Sagres.

*Accommodations:* Pousada Sagres

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 12: Sagres/Lisbon**

We embark on a leisurely drive back to Lisbon today, stopping for lunch on our own along the way. After reaching our hotel in a restored 19<sup>th</sup>-century palace mid-afternoon, we have time at leisure until we gather to celebrate our discoveries at tonight's farewell dinner.

*Accommodations:* Pestana Palace Lisboa

*Meals:* Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 13: Depart for U.S.**

We transfer to the airport this morning for our connecting flights to the U.S.

*Meals:* Breakfast

This tour itinerary was generated for Discovering Portugal on Feb 29, 2024. Please visit the Discovering Portugal page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/europe/discovering-portugal/> for the latest and most accurate information.