



Discover Portugal 2025

Uncover Portugal's true essence as we journey from vibrant Lisbon to the cinematic Douro Valley and beyond – taking in world-famous pilgrimage sites, sumptuous local cuisine and staggering landscapes as we go. Weave your own travel tale as you discover cosy hole-in-the-wall eateries along cobblestone alleys and seek out the perfect *pastel de nata* in medieval cities, sip on distinguished wines among lush olive groves and feel the power of the Atlantic Ocean fill up your lungs. It's all here, waiting to become a part of your story.





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Turim Terreiro do Paço @ 18:00

R. do Comércio 9, Lisbon, 1100-016

Vila Gale Porto Ribeira @ 13:00

Cais das Pedras 17 a 22, Porto, 4050-465



Expertly crafted small-group tours



Tour highlights

- Cruise along the Douro River on a traditional rabelo boat and experience the region's majestic beauty up close
- Discover the secrets behind the delicious flavours of locally-produced cheeses near Viseu
- Uncover the world-famous university and charming medieval centre of Coimbra

More inclusions

- 9 breakfasts, 5 dinners
- 9 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

Portugal - EUR



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

Expertly crafted small-group tours



Your itinerary

Day 1 | Lisbon

Welcome to Lisbon! Portugal's vibrant capital and our home for the first two nights of our adventure. After meeting your small group of fellow explorers, we'll kick off our journey with a group dinner in the historic Alfama district – Lisbon's oldest neighbourhood. It's a nest of cobblestone alleys, pastel-coloured homes, and hidden bars and eateries just waiting to be discovered with every turn. As we weave through, spot clotheslines criss-crossed on narrow streets, potted plants perched on wrought-iron balconies and hear friendly chatter drift out from windows – it's easy to imagine what local life must be like here.

At dinner, we're in for a real treat as our meal will be accompanied by a traditional Fado performance. Prepare to be moved by this passionate artform that dates back to the early 1800s: typically a combination of atmospheric guitar and haunting, soaring vocals whose lyrics tell melancholic tales of love, loss and nostalgia. The evening's soulful folk songs are sure to leave a lasting impression.

What a start to our journey! And here's to an incredible ten days ahead.

Included today



Accommodation

Turim Terreiro do
Paço Hotel (or
similar)



Meals

Dinner



Day 2 | Lisbon

Have you noticed the intricately-patterned tiles on the facades of Lisbon's buildings? These ornate *azulejos* are a defining characteristic of Portuguese architecture, dating back to the 13th century. Their striking blue-and-white designs immortalise Portugal's history and culture, from biblical tales to maritime journeys. This morning, it's your turn to add to the tradition and get those creative juices flowing! We'll visit a local atelier where you can paint your own one-of-a-kind tile. What story will you capture in your design, making it uniquely yours?

Next, it's on to medieval Sintra where we'll enjoy a fascinating tour of the village's National Palace with a knowledgeable local guide. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is straight out of a fairytale with its iconic, canonical chimneys and Moorish arched windows. Imagine yourself at a royal banquet in the *Sala dos Cisnes* where gilded frescoes line the ceiling, or cast yourself back to the Middle Ages, cooking up a storm in the palace's vast kitchen...

We'll catch a glimpse of the glittering Cascais Coast on our way back to Lisbon where the afternoon is yours to uncover more of the city's secrets. Why not take a ride on the iconic, yellow Tram 28 to really get to the heart of it all? (Be sure to grab a window seat!). Or, hunt down the city's best *pastel de nata*. This egg custard pastry is a real classic (best enjoyed warm with a sprinkle of cinnamon), and you've sure earned one (or two) after today's adventures.

Our top tip? Seek out one of the many viewpoints, or *miradouros*, for sunset. Known as the 'City of Seven Hills', Lisbon's lookouts offer stunning panoramas over the city's terracotta roofs and Tagus River as day gives way to night.

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Turim Terreiro do	Breakfast
Paço Hotel (or	
similar)	



Day 3 | Alvados

Onwards to Óbidos! Where medieval castle walls embrace the historic centre like a warm hug, whitewashed houses pop with accents of brightly-coloured stripes and the scent of freshly-baked *pão com chouriço* (a moreish bread filled with rich chorizo sausage) drifts from the local bakery. We'll take it all in on an orientation tour. And, while you're here, don't miss the *Ginja de Óbidos* – a local cherry liquor whose sweet and sour flavour zings on the tastebuds.

Then, we're off to the charming fishing town of Nazaré, where you'll have free time to explore this world-renowned surfing mecca. You could simply stroll along the town's golden beach and feel the sand's warm glow beneath your feet. Or, why not take a walk to the hilltop, Sanctuary of Our Lady Nazareth? This hilltop church is home to the famous wooden carving of the Black Madonna.

To close today's chapter, we journey to Alvados, where you'll settle into our stunning, nature-inspired hotel, that's nestled in the Serra de Aire and Candeeiros Natural Park. Admire the lush olive groves from your room's window and get ready for a peaceful sleep... But not before we roll up our sleeves for a cookery class and dinner. Be sure to make note of your favourite recipes for a taste of Portugal back home!

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Cooking and Nature	Breakfast
Emotional Hotel (or similar)	Dinner



Day 4 | Alvados

Tomar's *Convento de Cristo* beckons! As we explore this magnificent UNESCO World Heritage Site this morning, imagine the echo of footsteps from knights and monks of centuries past, gaze up at intricately-gilded frescoes and seek out the *azulejos* that adorn its hushed cloisters. Your in-the-know local guide will have plenty of tales to share about this 12th-century jewel, founded by the Knights Templar.

Before returning to Alvados, there's a treat in store for the foodies among us. We'll pay a visit to a charming, family-run olive oil producer to learn all about what makes each golden drop of their local produce so delicious. We'll start off with a guided tour of the estate, featuring a visit to the historic mill, to gain an insight into both traditional and modern production processes – from harvest through to pressing. Then, it's time to awaken your senses with a guided tasting – you'll learn how to smell, sip and analyse the oil's aroma, flavour profile and texture. You'll also get to sample more regional delights like artisanal jams, cheese and local wine. This premium, extra virgin oil is too good to leave behind – we won't blame you for buying a bottle (or three) to take home!

This evening is yours to relax and soak up the serenity of our surroundings back at the hotel. You could set out on one of the nearby walking trails or take a dip in the outdoor pool and listen to the breeze gently tickle olive tree branches. The perfect way to end the day.

Included today

● **Accommodation**
Cooking and Nature
Emotional Hotel (or
similar)

● **Meals**
Breakfast



Day 5 | Viseu

Our journey north continues with a visit to Coimbra, home to its famed hilltop university. Founded in 1290 (yes, really!), it's one of the oldest universities in the world; imagine yourself as a student as we wander through its historic grounds. The showpiece has got to be the legendary Joanina Library. Spot the trompe l'oeil fresco, gilded mouldings and intricately-carved wood whose lavish details solidify the library as a Baroque masterpiece. Before we descend back to the medieval centre for some free time, don't miss a glimpse of the Mondego River from one of the university's viewpoints, and seek out a *Pastéis de Santa Clara* (almond and egg-yolk pastry) for a local sweet treat.

We're heading into mountain territory this afternoon as we journey on to Viseu. But not before a visit to a traditional working farm. The farm's cheesemakers will spill the secrets behind the unique flavour of their artisanal produce, and you'll soon see why the local Queijo Serra da Estrela cheese is so celebrated. Following a fascinating overview of the cheese-making process, from milk curdling to mould maturation, we'll even get to enjoy a private tasting session. You'll try three distinctive types of Serra da Estrela cheese, *Pão de Ló* (traditional sponge cake), *Broa Doce* (sweetcorn bread) and more. *Bom appetite!*

Once in Viseu, the evening is all yours. With plenty of dining options within walking distance of our centrally located hotel, you'll have no shortage of places to choose from.

Included today

● **Accommodation**
Hotel Palacio dos
Melos (or similar)

● **Meals**
Breakfast



Day 6 | Douro Valley

Where terraced vineyards are etched into undulating hillsides like the raked sand of a Zen garden and a golden river meanders through the landscape like an unfurling ribbon – this is the Douro Valley. Drink it all in from the windows of the luxury minicoach as we thread our way through this soul-stirring region towards Lamego: a historic town nestled deep within the valley.

Lamego is home to an astonishing, tree-lined Baroque staircase that features a formidable 686 steps, blue-and-white *azulejos*, and ornate sculptures that lead up to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Good Remedy. We'll enjoy an included visit to this 18th-century wonder before taking time to explore the city at our own pace.

Later, we'll turn our attention to Pinhão, where a private cruise on a traditional wooden *rabelo* boat awaits. These flat-bottomed boats were historically used to transport cargo along the river (including wine barrels, of course!). But, today, it's our turn to hop in and get a front row seat of the valley's cinematic scenery. How many wine estates can you spot along the way?

Back on dry land, we'll journey to our hotel, nestled within a stunning vineyard, for another sumptuous dinner. Trade fun facts you've learnt today about the region's wine and port and raise a glass to another day of discovering Portugal!

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Quinta da Pacheca	Breakfast
(or similar)	Dinner

Day 7 | Douro Valley

The patchwork quilt of the valley's rolling hills makes a serene backdrop to your free day. So, what takes your fancy? Will it be a guided tour and wine tasting followed by a stroll through the hotel's vineyards? Or, perhaps a day spent relaxing by the glistening pool with a picnic has your name on it. Decisions, decisions... Whatever story you choose to write today, this evening, we'll reconvene with the group for a delicious dinner once again and share what we've been up to. Be sure to catch the sunset later – where a cotton candy sky gives way to the sapphire blue of night.

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Quinta da Pacheca	Breakfast
(or similar)	Dinner



Day 8 | Braga

Tear yourself away from the Douro Valley – our sights are set on Amarante this morning, a tranquil riverside town characterised by its striking arched bridge and 16th-century São Gonçalo Church. Hear the echoes of prayer and the hum of the organ reverberate through the walls as you admire the gilded Baroque altar, before you set off to explore the town's narrow, medieval streets at your leisure.

After lunch, we'll set a course for Penafiel where we'll indulge in a glass (or three) of the region's famous *vinho verde* (green wine) at a family-run winery. A specialty of the region, this unique wine is known for its crisp flavour and slight fizz. Its fresh taste captures the essence of the grapes harvested in Portugal's verdant northwest. Be sure to stock up on a bottle or two, that is, if you still have space left in your bags!

An evening of exploration awaits as we arrive in charming Braga, and your Tour Leader is sure to have a host of recommendations for regional dishes to try for dinner. To kick things off, we hear the *bacalhau* (dried and salted cod baked with potatoes) and the *pudim à abade de priscos* (a sweet crème caramel pudding) are favourites, even with the locals.

Our accommodation this evening? A 16th-century hospital-turned-hotel that's brimming with history and even features restored original features, including vaulted ceilings. If these walls could talk...

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Hotel Vila Galé	Breakfast
Collection Braga (or similar)	



Day 9 | Braga

Did you know, the medieval city of Guimarães was the birthplace of Afonso Henriques, Portugal's first king? Often called the 'cradle of Portugal', we'll get to know it a little better on a guided tour of the city's two highlights – the castle and Palace of the Dukes of Braganza. Then, for lunch, step back in time to the Middle Ages and roam the city's historic centre, where half-timbered houses and winding streets are steeped in centuries of stories.

With full bellies, we'll head back to Braga for an afternoon of exploring. While you're here, be sure to pay a visit to the Bom Jesus Sanctuary – it's one of Portugal's most famous attractions for good reason. Here, you can follow in the footsteps of pilgrims who climb over 570 steps to reach the church at the top. Or, simply hop on the funicular for a more leisurely experience! Along the way, look out for the fountains that represent the five senses and sculptures that portray Old Testament characters.

This evening, we'll tuck into one last dinner together. A traditional folk performance is tonight's grand finale, bookending our trip with another captivating experience.

Included today

● Accommodation	● Meals
Hotel Vila Galé	Breakfast
Collection Braga	Dinner

Day 10 | Porto

With its postcard-perfect waterfront, world-renowned port wine and friendly locals, our journey through northern Portugal ends in Porto. We'll stroll across the iconic Luís I Bridge and take a moment to reflect on the memories made over the past ten days. Soak in the spectacular panoramic views, spotting Porto's historic Ribeira district, port wine lodges on the Gaia side, and traditional rabelo boats floating along the Douro River. Before we say farewell, why not indulge in one last *pastel de nata* for good measure? The *Francesinha* (a decadent sandwich covered in a lavish, beer-based sauce) is also a must-try!

Included today

● Meals
Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● Sun hat | ● Long-sleeved tops | ● Light jacket |
| ● Sunglasses | ● Short-sleeved tops | ● Waterproof jacket |
| ● Sleepwear | ● Shorts/skirts | ● Trousers |
| ● Warm jacket | ● Socks | ● Swimwear |
| ● Underwear | ● Smart casual evening wear | ● Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| ● Sun hat | ● Long-sleeved tops | ● Light jacket |
| ● Sunglasses | ● Short-sleeved tops | ● Waterproof jacket |
| ● Sleepwear | ● Shorts/skirts | ● Trousers |
| ● Warm jacket | ● Socks | |



How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

Expertly crafted small-group tours



FAQs

What's the weather like?

The weather in Portugal varies depending on the time of year. Generally, summers are hot and dry (slightly cooler as you go further north), and from mid-June to the end of August temperatures can reach 40°C (104°F). Sun hats and sunscreen are essential!

Because of the summer heat, Portuguese culture includes *siestas* where businesses close their doors during the afternoon – something to embrace during this journey.

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant former monasteries, grand town centre hotels and even the odd palace! For this reason, rooms vary in size. Rooms in some cities may be smaller than you're used to, offering an authentic insight into the city's history. These carefully preserved buildings may have once been office spaces or people's homes, adding to their unique charm. Most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

Do many places in Portugal still enjoy siestas?

The tradition of taking a break or having a nap during the hottest part of the day still lives on in many parts of Portugal, so you might find shops and restaurants closed in some smaller towns during the afternoons.

Due to *siestas*, restaurants may only open for dinner after 8pm. Meaning? Later mealtimes are a completely normal part of the local culture.



That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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