

Exploring Portugal

A Leading European Destination

May 18 - 29, 2022

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Experience the Old World Charm of Portugal. Be fascinated by the culturally rich cities of Lisbon and Porto, relax on it's sandy beaches at Europe's "Land's End". Historic sites of settlements dating from 2000 B.C to modern times. Magic of the Medieval castles & monasteries of an eclectic style of architecture: Moorish, Gothic, Baroque, Roman in it's medieval villages. The terraced vineyards, renowned Port Wine in the lush Douro Valley. Delicious & unforgettable Portuguese cuisine specialties. Portuguese art form of Azulejos (blue tiles) and Fado, Portugal's authentic folk music.



There are so many "Must See" sites in Portugal. The challenge has been to make this trip comprehensive, magical, unforgettable yet unrushed. We are traveling off-season so expect to miss the high tourist crowds.

Wed. May 18: Arrive in Lisbon. For those who have difficulty with jet lag, I suggest arriving a day earlier. I can give you the contact of our lodging. 3 nites in Lisbon at Lisboa Central Park, centrally located, across from Eduardo VII Park, It is close to the metro, no climbing & has a restaurant where we will meet for our "get acquainted dinner".

Thurs. May 19: In the am, our guide will meet us at the hotel for a walking tour to get acquainted with Lisbon's central area. Baixa is the flat, historical downtown area, rebuilt on a grid after the earthquake of 1755, which includes the waterfront former royal palace, now center for commerce. The medieval streets of Alfama date back to the Moorish period. In the afternoon, we will visit the National Tile Museum. Tiles are a national art form in Portugal, especially known for the iconic Blue Tile. The remaining day will be free to explore on your own. I will give you a list of recommended restaurants.

Fri. May 20: Our guide will pick us up in a van at our hotel for Belem & Sintra.

Belem: The Gulbenkian Museum is the best of Lisbon's museums, covering 5,000 years of European, Islamic & Asian art, beautiful & educational. The Garden is a lush 18 acre park; The construction of the Monastery of Jeronimos, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, began in 1501, taking 100 years to complete. It is one of the most prominent of the Portuguese Gothic Manueline style of architecture in Portugal which is a lavish ornamentation reflecting the wealth of those times and the cultural influences of the Age of Discovery.

Sintra is the home of Portugal's aristocracy, filled with palaces and the summer getaway for kings. We will tour several of the palaces.





Sat & Sun. May 21 & 22: Departing Lisbon after this busy schedule & a 3 hr drive, we spend two nights relaxing on the Algarve Coast, lodging in Sagres, a charming small fishing village where Prince Henry the Navigator established a school for navigators in 1402 & known as the “end of the world”. A few minutes further down the coast, we visit the actual most southwestern tip of Europe marked by a desolate lighthouse. A relaxing alternative to busy Lisbon.

Mon. May 23: We travel to Alentejo, 3 ½ hr drive to the rural heartland of Portugal & the medieval walled city of Evora, another UNESCO World Heritage site.

Considered to be one of the most timeless cities in Portugal, it is a wealth of old world charm with the cobblestone streets & Roman, Gothic, Manueline & Baroque architecture dating back 5,000 years. Conquered by the Romans in 57 BC, it began the growth that led to a major trading and religious center.



The Evora Cathedral is a fortress containing wonderfully sculpted depictions of the Apostles. The Gothic-style Church of St Francis, built between 1475-1550 is renowned for the Bone Chapel, decorated using the bones of 5,000 bodies exhumed from the city's graveyards. They are displayed across all walls & all 8 columns of the chapel. This may be a “choice” for some visitors.

The Roman Temple built by Roman emperor Augustus, known as Temple of Diana, was built in the 2nd century & is still in remarkably good shape. Outside of the city, another Roman structure, the Aqueduct of Silver Water was built in 1530. The city is now vibrant with students attending one of the world's oldest universities.



Our visit to the Cork Farm includes a guided walk into the forest of Cork Trees, learning how they are harvested, stored & manufactured as well as how to determine quality of Cork items you may want to purchase in Portugal. There are olive groves & vineyards and wine tasting!

Tues. May 24: A 2 ½ drive takes us to Obidos, Fatima & Alcobaca Monastery.

Our first stop is the walled medieval village of Obidos, known as the prettiest town in Portugal with its cobble streets & colorful traditional houses adorned with flowers. It was founded by the Celts in 300 BC then ruled by Romans & the Moors, who leave behind a Castle now a Hotel. In



1282, King Dinis gave Obidos to his bride, Queen Isabel as a wedding gift, thus it is known as the “Wedding City” & popular for weddings. In 2015, it was named the “City of Literature” & carries the theme through-out the town.

The Alcobaca Monastery is the largest church in Portugal & the finest Gothic building which began in 1178. The Cistercian monks arrived in 1228 & made this the most powerful abbey & cultural center of 13th century. By the 16th century, a town had grown around the monastery. The abbey was closed in 1834 and the town declined. It is now sustained by tourism. The tombs, carvings & sculptures are exquisite.

The Shrine of Fatima, renowned Pilgrimage site & one of the most renowned Catholic shrines in the world. Putting aside any religious affiliation, it is a cultural splendor, it's fame attributed to the Apparitions of Our Lady of the Rosary that appeared to three children tending sheep near an oak tree in 1917 during WWI. With the threat & fear of the regime of atheistic Russia approaching Portugal, the apparition of Mary appearing to these 3 children on the 13th day for 5 months giving a message of peace. On Oct 13, 70,000 people gathered near the oak tree. In the midst of a rainstorm, the sun came out & a bright light exploded spreading flower petals everywhere. The rain stopped, the sun shown & it has been a place of pilgrimage ever since.



Our last stop for the day is Coimbra where we overnight. Once Portugal's capital for 100 years, it is a well preserved medieval home to the historic & awe-inspiring, University of Coimbra, one of the world's oldest universities. In 1537 the Alacova Palace was donated by King Joao III to the university. It is famed for the baroque library, the Biblioteca Joanina containing 200,000 books & a colony of bats to protect them from insects. There are over 20,000 students attending. Coimbra is a city full of legends, a flourishing artisans scene & Fado performances of

which we will attend. You will find inspiring concerts of Fado on YOUTube. Check out the group Serenata Monumental in Coimbra.

Wed. May 26: A tour of the scenic lush Douro Valley, the birthplace of port wine. The Douro River is lined with farms, villages, rock terraces of vineyards & Quintas. It has the nickname, “River of Gold” due to the golden-brown silt. The history of the port wine began in the 17th century by the British during a trade war with France. Since we are arriving in the fall, hopefully we will enjoy the red & gold colors! Our activities include wine tasting of course, and a cruise on the Douro River.

Thurs. May 25: Depart for Porto, a two hour drive. After checking into our lodging, we finally get to stay put for 4 nights. I know, what a relief! Via the city's panoramic bus, we get an introduction to Porto.

Fri. May 27: City tour including Food & Wine tasting. 3 ½ hours in the heart of downtown, over 1.9 miles. This includes tastings of 11 authentic traditional Portuguese dishes, 6 tastings of regional wines, local pastries & a



mini-masterclass in port wines. On a visit to Port, Anthony Bourdain experienced this very food tour & rated it tops!

Sat. May 28: A free day to visit your own chosen sites: Train Station, renowned for Blue Tile, Church of St Francis, Stock Exchange, Dom Luis, the first Bridge, Port Cathedral with Blue Tile walls.

Sun. May 29: Depart for home. Shuttle provided to the airport.

TRIP DETAILS: Covid Vaccine Required

FEE: \$1830/DbI occupancy. Sgle/ \$2320. Deposit: \$300. Balance due Mar 1. Last date for refunds unless space is filled, minus deposit. 10 Persons Max

*See toursbysierra.com for Travel Insurance & Cancellation Policy

Includes: All Ground tour transportation. We will have a private drive with a Sprinter van for travel between cities. Personal taxis are not included. Transportation from Lisbon airport to hotel is not included. Shuttle from Porto hotel to airport IS included.

Lodging: 11 nights lodging, 11 breakfasts included.

Tours: Lisbon itinerary tours, all museum admissions; Algarve coastal tours; Evor tours; Coimbra: Fado concert with dinner.

Douro wine & boat tours; Porto food & city tour, Cable car & Tram.

Payment Methods: Checks to Joyride SW Tours, P.O. Box 912, Green Valley, AZ 85622.
Zelle or (credit card add 3 %.)

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