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18 days
Duration

Portugal
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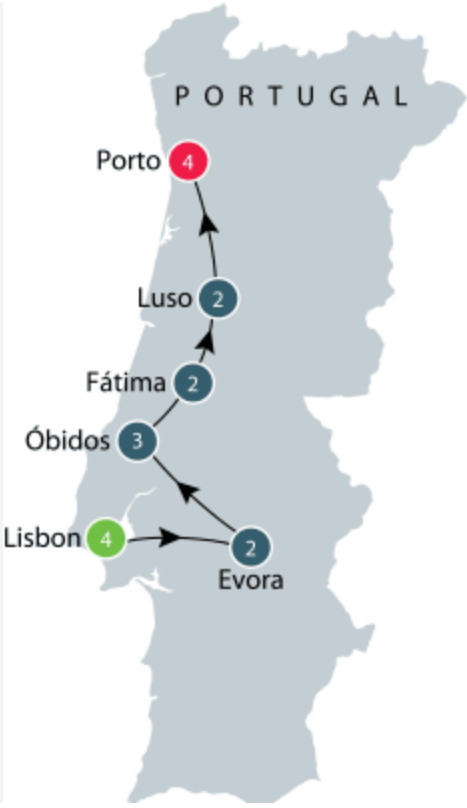
Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

# Discover Portugal

Apr 23 2024 to May 10 2024

## Discover Portugal

Join Odyssey Traveller on an immersive 18-day small group tour of Portugal, a multi-sensory experience taking us through Portugal's many historic sites, natural wonders and scenery, charming villages and hidden gems. "Discover Portugal" is especially designed for mature-aged or senior travellers and offers a rich sampling of the culture and history of this European country. We will be accompanied by a Program Leader and a local guide or tour guide based in the destinations we will visit.









## Our tour itinerary:

As we wind our way up the coast of Portugal, we visit a number of fascinating cities and towns, including:

### Lisbon:

Steep hillsides overlooking the Atlantic; cobbled streets and buildings covered in vivid blue and white *azulejos* (tiles); grand Renaissance monuments: few cities are as picturesque as Portugal's capital, Lisbon. During the European Age of Discovery, Lisbon was the 'Queen of the Sea', as trade from around the world made Portugal one of Europe's richest and most cosmopolitan countries. We explore the legacies of Lisbon's Age of Discovery at the Jerónimos Monastery and Torre de Belém, each built in ornate and exuberant 'Manueline' style. Beyond this, we also uncover Lisbon's Arabic history in the warren-like Alfama and the city's Moorish castle, while giving you plenty of time to explore this extraordinary city for yourself with our travel notes on Lisbon. Whilst based in Lisbon we travel out early one morning to visit the colourful Pena Palace in the Sintra mountains.

### Évora:

With a history going back 5000 years, the hillside town of Évora is one of Portugal's best preserved medieval landscapes. As the home of the Portuguese royal family in the 15th century, the UNESCO World Heritage listed historic centre is packed with spectacular buildings, from Manueline convents and churches to Portugal's second university, the azulejo-covered and Jesuit-run University of the Holy Spirit. Our tour delves into Évora's Roman history with a visit to the Roman Temple, the best preserved on the Iberian peninsula, and reflects on the universality of life and death at the *Capela dos Ossos* (Chapel of Bones), a *momento mori* with walls and columns decorated in the bones of over 5000 people.

### Óbidos:

Nicknamed the *Vila das Rainhas* (City of the Queens), because of a medieval tradition in which the Portuguese king gave the hilltop town of

Óbidos to their queen, Óbidos today feels like a trip back to the Middle Ages, a charming warren of cobblestone streets and whitewashed houses. Make sure to visit the medieval castle and view (or – depending on your tolerance of heights – walk) the city's preserved Moorish walls.







## Fátima:

In the summer of 1917, the Virgin Mary is said to have visited three children while they were caring for their family's sheep on the farmlands outside Fátima. Claiming to have seen the Virgin five times, the children predicted that they would see her one more time, on October 13, 1917. Following the children's prediction, a crowd of over 70, 000 pilgrims gathered in Fátima – and aftewards claimed that they had seen a miracle, as the sun performed zig zags in the sky, and moved dramatically toward the Earth. After investigation, the Catholic church declared that the conditions for a miracle had been met, and Fátima became a major destination for Catholic pilgrims from around the world. Today, this small town receives more than 6 to 8 visitors each year. Our visit will take you to the heart of Portugal's Catholic religion: whatever your beliefs may be, it's hard not to be awed by the devotion that brings visitors here from every part of the world.

## Luso:

For the Portuguese, *agua di Luso* is synonymous with good quality water. Historically, Luso brought visitors from all over Portugal to 'take the waters', which were held to cure ailments ranging from kidney failure to skin conditions. Today, Luso remains a spa town, with a medical centre specialising in the treatment of arteriosclerosis, an arterial disease occurring mostly in the elderly. However, even those in good health will enjoy Luso's historic buildings, ranging from the 18th century to the age of Art Nouveau. The highlight is the nearby Buçaco Palace, a 17th century monastery turned into a grand hotel in the late 19th century, built in an elaborate style recalling the Manueline buildings of the Renaissance.

## Porto:

The city that gave its name to port wine, Porto's historic centres is one of the best preserved in Europe, with buildings dating back to the 14th

century. Here we explore the city's prosperous – and delicious – trade in port wine on a tour through the hillsides where port grapes are grown (including a tasting in a cellar), and take a cruise down the Douro to see the city at its best advantage. Fans of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series will enjoy the beautiful, neo-Gothic *Livraria Lello & Irmão* (Lello & Irmão Bookstore), which is said to have inspired her writing during her time in Porto in the 1990s.







**We also visit several destinations in Portugal listed by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites**, including the historic centre of Sintra, a fairy tale of quirky and gothic castles built in the 19th century; the Convent of Christ in Tomar, once a stronghold of the Knights Templar; the impressive Monastery of Batalha, built to commemorate the 1385 Portuguese victory over the Castilians; and Alcobaca's monastery and church, the first Gothic buildings built in Portugal.

## Local Traditions & Unique Experiences

As part of our tour, we will delve into local Portuguese traditions, giving you an authentic experience of this extraordinary country. We will be the audience for a stunning Fado performance at a local restaurant. Fado ("fate") is a uniquely Portuguese expressive and melancholic musical performance, dating back to the 1830s. Developing in the port districts of Lisbon that were home to Portugal's maritime working class of sailors and fishwives, fado is believed to take influence from medieval *cantigas* (songs), Moorish traditions, and the chants of Africans singing at sea. The mournful tunes tell the stories of Portugal's seafarers and urban poor, with a sentiment of resignation to fate from which the genre takes its name.

In Nazare, we will have a guided half-day tour to learn more about the town's fishing traditions. Even as the town has attracted surfers from around the world, you can still see fisher women wearing traditional clothing: skirts with seven petticoats, wooden clogs and a black scarf. While various reasons are offered for the seven petticoats – the seven days of the week, the seven colours of the rainbow – it is likely that the tradition originated in the old days, when women waited by the shore to see fishermen – sons, boyfriends, husbands – return from their time at

sea. In order to keep warm, they would wear seven petticoats to wrap around themselves in protection from the cold Atlantic winds.

Much like the rest of southern Europe, **gastronomy is at the heart of Portuguese culture**. We will have plenty of opportunities to sample Portugal's unique cuisine, including a visit to the Fabrica dos Pasteis de Belem in Lisbon, which has been baking Portuguese custard tarts according to a top-secret recipe since the 19th century. We will stroll through the beautiful café-factory and taste the creamy tarts. On our day trip to Sintra, we will try the *travesseiros* (puff pastry filled with almond cream) from the Piriquita, a famous local cafe and bakery. While in Obidos, we will have a chance to taste a favourite local drink: *ginginha* (cherry liquor native to Portugal). After finishing the liquor, make sure to eat the cup, which is made of chocolate! And of course, a trip to Portugal would not be complete without a visit to its wine cellars to sample port wine and sweet Moscatel.

Our tour also allows you to take in the natural beauty of Portugal's Atlantic coast. We will enjoy spectacular views of the cities from famous viewpoints: Santa Luzia and Portas do Sol over Lisbon, Miradouro do Suberco over Nazare, and Cape Roca – the westernmost point of mainland Europe – which provides a panoramic view of the Atlantic.

**Our tours in Portugal mix guided tours with plenty of free time**, and the small group setting affords travellers focused attention and flexibility. For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right-hand side of this page.

If you're interested in this tour, you may also want to look at our Spain and Portugal tour and our in-depth tour of Barcelona.







## Articles about Portugal published by Odyssey Traveller.

- History of Lisbon

- Travel notes for Lisbon
- Discovering Spain (and Portugal )

## External articles to assist you on your visit to Portugal

- The culture of Portugal
- A brief history of Portugal
- Portugese Colonial War
- Seaside Traditions in Portugal's Nazare

## Other Odyssey Tours:

Our tour of  Portugal  is only one of the many Spain and Portugal tours offered by Odyssey Traveller. For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

## Highlights

1. Explore Lisbon's Belem district, which has many of the city's iconic monuments.
2. See the colourful Pena Palace, located at the top of the hill in the Sintra Mountains and celebrated as the grandest example of Romantic architecture.
3. Enjoy a river cruise on the Douro River and explore the hillsides where Portugal's port grapes are grown.
4. Explore Portugal's oldest university, the University of Coimbra, and walk through its historic buildings.
5. Visit the Fabrica dos Pasteis de Belem, which has been baking the world-famous Portuguese custard tart since 1837.







# Itinerary








### Day 1

**Locations:** Lisbon

**Overview:**

Upon arrival in Lisbon, we will make our own way to our hotel. The Odyssey Program Leader will greet the group late afternoon for a tour briefing followed by welcome dinner. (D)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Florida or similar

### Day 2

**Locations:** Lisbon

**Overview:**

Lisbon is the capital and largest city of Portugal, sitting on the Atlantic coast and serving as the country's chief port. It is also distinguished as the westernmost capital city in continental Europe. The city's name is a variant of Olisipo, which may have been derived from the pre-Roman name for the Tagus River (Lisso). Located at the mouth of the river is the Belem district, which we will be exploring today. Many of the city's iconic monuments are located here. We will have a special visit to the Fabrica dos Pasteis de Belem, which has been baking the Portuguese custard tart since 1837. We will have chance to taste this creamy pastry–its secret recipe guarded since the 19th century–and stroll inside the beautiful café-factory.

We will move on to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites–the Jeronimos Monastery, a former monastery of the order of St. Jerome that has since been secularised; and the Tower of Belem, a 16th century fortification that played a significant role in Portugal during the European Age of Discovery. This era of exploration is celebrated by the Monuments of the Discoveries (Padrão dos Descobrimentos) on the northern bank of the river where ships used to depart to the East, which we will also view today. We will stroll through the cobbled streets of Alfama, one of Lisbon's oldest districts, and enjoy spectacular views of the city from the

viewpoints in Santa Luzia and Portas do Sol. We will end the day's tour in the area of the São Jorge Castle (no internal visit) to view the Moorish castle overlooking Lisbon and the Tagus River. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Florida or similar

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Lisbon - Sintra - Cape Roca - Cascais - Lisbon

**Overview:**

Today we will have a full-day trip to Sintra, Cape Roca, and Cascais. From Lisbon, we travel to the city of Sintra, famous for its 19th century Romantic architecture. Its historic centre is listed as a World Heritage Site. It has many royal palaces and gardens, and early today, to avoid the crowds, we will explore the colourful Pena Palace, located at the top of the hill in the Sintra Mountains. It has a mix of styles running the architectural gamut from neo-Gothic to neo-Renaissance, and is celebrated as the grandest example of Romantic architecture. From the hilltop palace, we will transfer to Sintra Town, where we can try the *travesseiros* (puff pastry filled with almond cream) from the Piriquita, a famous local cafe and bakery.

Still in Sintra, we will visit the magical Quinta da Regaleira, a palace and a chapel set on a hillside, which also showcases an eclectic mix of architectural styles. The property also has fountains, grottoes, statues, caves, and ponds connected above-ground through pathways and below-ground through tunnels lit with fairy lights. We will transfer to Cape Roca, the westernmost point of mainland Europe, to enjoy a panoramic view of the Atlantic.

From Cape Roca we will travel the coastal road to Cascais, where we will have free time to explore the seaside town on our own, and transfer back to Lisbon. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Florida or similar

**Day 4**

**Locations:** Lisbon

**Overview:**

After our excursion yesterday, you will now enjoy a free day to spend at leisure. You can spend the day retingt or exploring the area further, and in the evening we will gather together to enjoy dinner and a Fado performance at a local restaurant.

Fado (“fate”) is a type of Portuguese expressive and melancholic musical performance traditionally associated with pubs and cafes. The Lisbon style of Fado dates back to the 1830s and we will have experience this tradition tonight. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Florida or similar

**Day 5**

**Locations:** Lisbon - Evora

**Overview:**

From Lisbon, we will travel to the historic town of Evora, capital of Portugal’s Alentejo Province. Evora has roots in Roman times, and today we will visit the Roman Temple (circa 1st to 3rd century) located in the town’s historic centre. We will enter the Capela dos Ossos, or the Chapel of Bones, with a design based on the ossuary of San Bernadino alla Ossa in Milan, Italy. More than 5,000 bodies are interred here, taken from the cemeteries around Evora and displayed in the chapel in the 16th century to serve as a place to meditate about death and the meaning of life. We will then visit the Cathedral of Evora, completed in the 18th century. In the evening we will have dinner at a local restaurant. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel M’Ar de AR Aqueduto

**Day 6**

**Locations:** Evora - Cartuxa - Evora

**Overview:**

Our morning is free, and in the afternoon we will visit the Cartuxa Winery, located on the Quinta de Valbom estate, for a tour and wine tasting. We return to Evora later in the afternoon and the remainder of the day is at leisure. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel M'Ar de AR Aqueduto

**Day 7**

**Locations:** Evora - Obidos

**Overview:**

Today we will leave Evora to move to Obidos, where we will enjoy a half-day sightseeing tour. Obidos grew from a Roman settlement and a Moorish fortification, until it was extensively remodelled under Dinis I. Dinis I offered the town to his wife, Isabel, in the 13th century, and its architecture was enriched in the following centuries.

While in Obidos, we will also have a chance to taste a favourite local drink: ginginha (cherry liquor native to Portugal) in a chocolate cup, which means after drinking you can eat the cup! In the evening, we will have dinner at a local restaurant. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

The Literary Man Obidos Hotel or similar

**Day 8**

**Locations:** Obidos - Nazare - Alcobaca - Obidos

**Overview:**

Today we will have an excursion to the town of Nazare and Alcobaca. On the way to the fishing town of Nazare, we will stop en route at the spa town of Caldas da Rainha to view the factory that produces the

traditional ceramic of Caldas.

In Nazare, we will have a guided tour to learn more about the town's fishing traditions and view the beach famous among surfers the world over for its giant waves. It is not unusual to see fisher women here still wearing traditional clothing: skirt with seven colourful layers (said to represent the days of the week), wooden clogs, and black headscarf. We will be afforded a beautiful view of the sea from the famous lookout point, Miradouro do Suberco. We will stop for a fish lunch at a local restaurant before transferring to Alcobaca.

We will visit the Monastery of Alcobaca, established in the 12th century by the first Portuguese king, Afonso. The monastery and the church were the first Gothic buildings built in Portugal and are listed as a World Heritage Site. After the monastery visit, we will have some free time to explore the town on our own before we return to Obidos. (B, L)

**Accommodation:**

The Literary Man Obidos Hotel or similar

**Day 9**

**Locations:** Obidos

**Overview:**

Today is a free day in Obidos, which you can spend by resting in our accommodation or taking a stroll in the area. (B)

**Accommodation:**

The Literary Man Obidos Hotel or similar

**Day 10**

**Locations:** Obidos - Batalha - Fatima

**Overview:**

Today we will be leaving Obidos to go to Fatima. En route we will stop at Batalha to visit its impressive monastery built in the Gothic and Manueline (Portuguese Gothic) styles. The Monastery of Batalha was built to commemorate the Portuguese victory over the Castilians at the 1385 Battle of Aljubarrota, ending the Castilian plan to capture the

Portuguese throne.

We will continue our journey to Fatima and take a guided walking tour of the town. The city of Fatima became an important destination for Catholic pilgrims following the reported apparitions of the Virgin Mary to three children in 1917. The three children–Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta–were canonised in 2017, making them the Catholic Church's youngest saints. (Of the three, Francisco was the oldest, at age 10.) A collection of buildings called the Sanctuary at Fátima was built in the area where the Marian apparitions took place, and we will have time to visit the Basilica.  We will stay in Fatima for the night and have dinner at the hotel. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel D. Goncalo and Spa or similar

**Day 11**

**Locations:** Fatima - Tomar - Fatima

**Overview:**

From Fatima, we will travel today to the Convent of Christ in Tomar. The exquisitely designed former Roman Catholic convent was originally a stronghold of the Knights Templar (later the Knights of the Order of Christ) in the 12th century. The convent and castle complex was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983. After our exploration in the complex, we return to Fatima and the remainder of the day is free. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel D. Goncalo and Spa or similar

**Day 12**

**Locations:** Fatima - Coimbra

**Overview:**

Today we will take a trip to Coimbra, once a Roman settlement and the former capital of Portugal (12th and 13th centuries), to view the city's main sights. Coimbra declined as Portugal's political centre in the late Middle Ages but rose as a cultural centre with the settlement of the University of Coimbra in 1537 (initially established in Lisbon in 1290).

We will be exploring Portugal's oldest university and its historic buildings, including the Royal Palace, the Chapel of St. Michael, the Baroque Library (Biblioteca Joanina), and the College of Jesus. We will also visit Conimbriga, one of the largest Roman settlements excavated in Portugal. From Coimbra we will transfer to the small town of Luso, where we will spend the rest of the day. In the evening we will gather for dinner at the hotel. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas

**Day 13**

**Locations:** Coimbra

**Overview:**

Today is free to spend at our leisure in Luso. Luso is famous for its *agua* (water) as the location of Aguas do Luso, a mineral water company, and as a spa town. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas

**Day 14**

**Locations:** Luso - Porto

**Overview:**

From Luso we will transfer to Porto, famous for port wine (which is in fact named after the city) and its World Heritage-listed historic centre. We will view the 76-metre Clerigos Tower (no internal visit), the emblematic bell tower of the Clerigos Church. We will explore the beautiful, neo-Gothic Livraria Lello & Irmão (Lello & Irmão Bookstore), which is said to have inspired J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Rowling taught English in Porto in the 1990s. We will also view the double-deck Dom Luís I Bridge spanning the Douro River, and stroll around the lively Ribeira area on the riverbank. As port, Portugal's famous liquor export, originates in the city, we will also be treated to a tour and tasting in a port wine cellar. We will transfer to our Porto

accommodation and have dinner at the hotel. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

NH Porto Jardim

**Day 15**

**Locations:** Porto

**Overview:**

Today is free to spend at our leisure in Porto. (B)

**Accommodation:**

NH Porto Jardim

**Day 16**

**Locations:** Porto - Favaios - Porto

**Overview:**

Today we will enjoy a full-day excursion to the majestic Douro Valley. We will transfer by coach to the S. Bento train station and take the train to Regua. At Regua, we will transfer to Pinhao, where we will enjoy a one-hour cruise on the river and view the hillsides where Portugal's port grapes are grown. After the relaxing cruise, we will transfer to the vineyard village of Favaios and visit the gardens at Quinta da Avesseda. We will also have a chance to taste the sweet Moscatel produced here. After lunch at a traditional restaurant, we will visit Favaios' Bread and Wine Museum to learn more about the production of these two regional products. We will transfer to Porto by coach. (B,L)

**Accommodation:**

NH Porto Jardim

**Day 17**

**Locations:** Porto

**Overview:**

The day is free to be spent at our leisure. In the evening we will meet again for a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B,D)

**Accommodation:**

NH Porto Jardim

**Day 18**

**Locations:** Porto

**Overview:**

The end of breakfast marks the end of the tour and our services. (B)

## Inclusions / Exclusions

**What's included in our Tour**

- 17 nights of accommodation.
- 17 Breakfasts, 2 lunches & 8 dinners.
- Transport and field trips as indicated.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Services of an Odyssey Tour Leader.
- Service charges and gratuities.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

**What's not included in our Tour**

- International return airfares including taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature.

**Level 2 - Moderate**

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.