

Lisbon, Porto & The Douro Valley

With Mill Hill U3A Travel Group



10 to 17 September 2024

Portugal's principal cities Lisbon and Porto have a rich maritime heritage, old world charm and delicious local specialities. The cosmopolitan city Lisbon, on the north shore of the River Tagus is one of the oldest cities in Europe with a wealth of cultural and historical sites to explore. Porto in the North is a more compact city and famous for its Port wine trade, it is here that the Douro River flows into the sea and the city is packed with port wine lodges. Highlights of our trip include a relaxing cruise up the Douro Valley, taking in spectacular landscape of vineyards, hills and villages and we also visit the magnificent Royal Palace at Sintra and the Monastery of the Jeronimos in Belem. This holiday really does offer an opportunity to sample the very best of this wonderfully diverse Mediterranean country.



Tuesday 10 September - Travel to Porto

We board our afternoon flight from London Gatwick airport to Porto, where we are met on arrival by our English speaking guide who will accompany the group throughout our stay in Portugal. From the airport we transfer by coach to the Catalonia hotel, our base for the next 4 nights. After settling in to our rooms, dinner will be served in the hotel.

Wednesday 11 September - Porto

After breakfast we have a guided tour of historic centre of Porto including the São Bento train station with its 20,000 ceramic tiles and the spectacular neoclassic former Stock Exchange, the Palácio da Bolsa, which has a magnificently decorated interior. After some free time for lunch, we cross the river for an afternoon visit to Gaia, where there are more than fifty companies making world famous Port wines. We pay a visit to one of them and see the aged wooden barrels in which the port is slowly matured and of course there is some time to taste the Port before we return to the hotel.

Thursday 12 September - Douro Valley

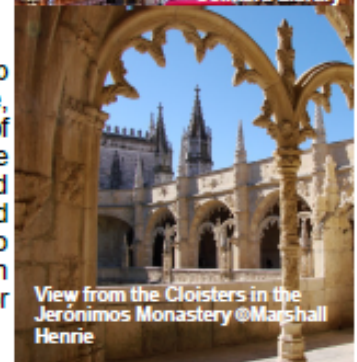
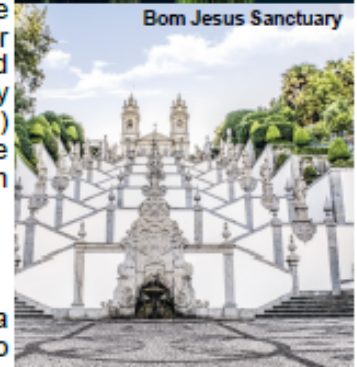
Today we explore the beautiful Douro valley on a boat cruise through the spectacular scenery of this wine growing area. The valley has perfect climate for growing port wine grapes and the area is now a World Heritage site. Breakfast and lunch are served on board the boat as it glides past vineyards clinging to steeply terraced hills, several locks and the white painted country wine estates ('Quintas') belonging to the most prominent port producers. On arrival in the late afternoon, we visit a hacienda and enjoy some delicious local fare before returning to our hotel in the evening.

Friday 13 September - Guimaraes

We start the day with a guided tour of Guimaraes, the first capital of Portugal with a well preserved historic centre which is another World Heritage site. Alfonso Henriques I proclaimed himself Portugal's first king in 1139 and chose Guimarães as his capital, and the distinctive outline of its proud castle appears on the Portuguese coat of arms. We see the castle and the narrow streets of the medieval quarter, lined with old houses embellished by ornate balconies. These streets lead to the beautiful main square Largo da Oliveira and our next visit- the Ducal Palace. Built in the 15th century, the Palace blends Gothic architecture with Burgundian influences and is furnished with antique furniture and sumptuous tapestries, evoking aristocratic life in 15th century Portugal. After some free time for lunch, we continue to Braga and visit the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus, one of Portugal's most important pilgrimage centres which has a distinctive monumental Baroque stairway climbing 116 metres to the neoclassical church above.

Saturday 14 September - Coimbra

Today we say farewell to Porto and make our way South towards Lisbon with a stop in Coimbra and guided tour of its spectacular University, one of the oldest in Europe, founded in 1290. The library, recognized as one of the world's finest, was a gift of King John V of Portugal. He was one of Europe's richest monarchs, amassing huge wealth from taxing precious metals from the Portuguese colonies of Brazil and Maranhão. The gold-covered library is filled with 40,000 books, and is accessed through a room that was the Academic Prison from 1773 to 1834. In order to preserve the books from insects, the library has two small colonies of bats, which come out at night. We then continue to Lisbon, arriving at our hotel in time for dinner, which is included.



Sunday 15 September - Lisbon

Today we enjoy a guided tour of the historic city centre of Lisbon by the River Tagus. We visit the Monastery of Jeronimos, in the Belem district, commissioned by King Manuel I in 1501 following Vasco da Gama's historic voyage and financed largely by monies made from the spice trade. The monastery was entrusted to the Order of St Jerome until 1834, when all religious orders were disbanded. The Afternoon and evening is free to explore Lisbon at your own pace.

Monday 16 September - Sintra

Our excursion today takes us to the fairy-tale town of Sintra. Now a UNESCO World Heritage site, Sintra was once the summer residence of the royal family, who were attracted by the cool summer climate and the beauty of the town's setting. We visit the National Palace, built by John I in the late 14th century as a summer retreat for his family. Later additions echo the Moorish traditions but gradual rebuilding has resulted in an unusual amalgamation of various different styles. We continue to the delightful seaside town of Cascais for a farewell lunch before returning to Lisbon for final sightseeing or relaxing.

Tuesday 17 September - Travel home

After breakfast we check out of the hotel and transfer to Lisbon airport for our return flight to London Heathrow airport.

Accommodation - Hotel Catalonia, Porto (4 star) and Novotel Lisbon (4 star) or similar

The **Hotel Catalonia** is a charming 4 star hotel in an 18th century listed building located in the heart of Porto, next to the bustling Batalha square with its restaurants, cafes and shops. There is a pleasant garden in the inner courtyard with a beautifully restored fountain and pool which is open in the summer months. Bedrooms are decorated in colours and tiles typical of the Porto region. Our stay includes a buffet breakfast daily and dinner on the first night only.

The **Novotel Lisbon** is a 4 star hotel in the city centre of Lisbon, close to restaurants, cafe and with good public transport links to other parts of the city. There is a restaurant, bar, outdoor pool, and lift to all floors. As this hotel requires an immediate deposit to confirm accommodation, it is subject to availability. A similarly located 4 star hotel would be offered if the hotel is no longer available, which would be approved by the group leader. Our stay includes bed and buffet breakfast with dinner on the first night only.



Tour Price per person	£ 1871.00
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Deposit per person	£ 550.00
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Single Room Supplement	£ 444.00
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(The final balance is due not later than 2 July 2024)

Travel insurance

If you have not already arranged cover, please visit <https://normanallen.b2ctravel.co.uk> who offer travel insurance.

For any travel insurance purchase, you should check the individual policy wording provided to you carefully to ensure this meets the specific needs for your chosen holiday.

Your tour includes:

- Outward flight from London Gatwick to Porto (10 Sept)
- Return flight from Lisbon to London Heathrow (17 Sept)
- Airport departure taxes and carrier charges
- Checked baggage on airline (1 pieces / 23 kg weight)
- Return transfers from Porto & Lisbon airport to the hotel
- 4 nights' accommodation on a bed and breakfast board basis at the Hotel Catalonia, Porto (4 star) with dinner included on 10 Sept
- 3 nights accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis at the Novotel Lisbon (or similar 4 star hotel) with dinner included on 14 Sept
- Services of a tour manager in Portugal
- Half day guided tour of Porto including admission to the Stockmarket
- Visit and tasting at Port wine cellar, Porto
- Full day Douro Valley Cruise including breakfast, lunch and visit to wine hacienda
- Half day official guided tour of Guimaraes including admission to Braganca Palace
- Admission to the University and Library, Coimbra
- Half day official guided tour of Lisbon including admission to the Monastery of the Jeronimos in Belem
- Guided tour of the National Palace, Sintra
- Farewell lunch including water and wine in Cascais

Your tour excludes:

- Travel Insurance
- Visa (not required for UK passport holders)
- Additional entrance fees to places of interest other than those detailed in the itinerary
- Dinner, lunches and refreshments, other than those detailed in the itinerary
- Gratuities
- Porterage

The price of this tour is guaranteed against alteration due to exchange rate fluctuations.

The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 require us to provide security for the monies that you pay for the package holidays booked from this brochure and for your repatriation from abroad in the event of our insolvency. We provide this security by way of a bond held by ABTA (W9928). Air tours are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3683. Please see our booking conditions for more information.

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information see www.gov.uk/travelaware.

Due to the way in which the airline reservation systems and schedules operate, the air fares, taxes and airports cannot be guaranteed until the flights are booked, paid for in full and tickets issued. In view of this, the final brochure may include an estimate of the likely air fare and taxes. This may result in the final tour price being varied from the advertised price. In the event that the air fare is lower than estimated, we will pass on the saving by reducing the tour price. However, if the air fare is higher than estimated or if we have to use an alternative airline at a higher fare, we reserve the right to increase the tour price accordingly. In the event that the air fare is higher than estimated, the tour price may be increased by a maximum of 10%. Should the increase in tour price exceed this amount, then you will have the right to cancel without penalty as per our standard booking conditions. If however the price alters within the stated parameters (above) and you still wish to cancel, our normal cancellation charges will apply. If a change of airport is necessary, we will agree it with the Group Organiser before booking the flights. If the proposed change of airport is "significant", as defined by clause 10 of our Booking Conditions, you will have the right to cancel your booking and receive a full refund.

The European Economic Area countries and Switzerland, may provide free or reduced cost medical assistance provided that you are the holder of a valid GHIC (Global Health Insurance Card). Further information and an GHIC application form can be obtained free of charge from your Post Office or online at the NHS website <http://www.nhs.uk/>. If you travel without an GHIC and then claim against your medical travel insurance, it could adversely affect your claim. A GHIC is not a replacement for adequate travel insurance.

At the time of printing this information, there are no mandatory health requirements for visitors to Portugal (covid-19 requirements may apply). British Nationals will require a full 10 year passport. Requirements governing passport validity vary and we would therefore recommend that you consider early renewal if your passport is due to expire within 6 months of the tour's return. A visa is not required for British Nationals. ***If you are not a British National, please ask us for advice.***

At any time prior to the tour departure, we reserve the right to make changes (of equal value or difference will be refunded) to attractions, visits and excursions should such suppliers' requirements and/or unforeseeable circumstances make it essential to do so. During the tour, details in the itinerary may be subject to alteration at the discretion of the tour manager and in accordance with the wishes of a clear majority of the passengers. We reserve the right to cancel this tour not later than 8/10 weeks before departure, if insufficient bookings have been received to justify its departure.

You can obtain Booking Forms and Booking Conditions from your Group Organiser. Please send completed booking forms and payments (cheques payable to Norman Allen Group Travel Ltd) to your Group Organiser, name address below:

Mrs Liz Driscoll
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6 Lyndhurst Avenue
London, NW7 2AB
Tel: 07941 076101
Email: travelmhu@gmail.com

Alternatively, go to group-travel.com and enter 24/MIH01 in the box labelled "Please enter your unique tour code:" to make your booking online.