



Tour Information



Almond Blossom and the Gardens of the Douro Valley Tour





Passports

Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 3 months or more left on it) and has at least 3 months validity remaining from the date of travel.

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#).

Visas

If you're a tourist, you do not need a visa for short trips to Portugal. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

Portuguese consulate: 3 Portland Place, London W1B 1HR; Tel: 020 7291 3770

Email: consulado.londres@mne.pt

Open Mon-Fri 08:30-16:00 (except Portuguese National holidays).



Tickets

You will be sent an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number, with your final departure documents. EasyJet have now replaced all of their airport check-in desks with EasyJet Baggage Drop desks. Therefore, you **must** check-in online and print out your boarding passes before travelling. Checking in online also provides the opportunity for you to pre-book seats, if you wish, at an additional cost.

Online check-in is available any time prior to travel using the flight reference number provided.

For more information, please visit: www.easyjet.com

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

Your EasyJet ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag that can fit under the seat in front of you, (maximum size 45 x 36 x 20cm, including any handles or wheels). If you book an upfront or extra legroom seat you can also take an additional large cabin bag on board.

<http://www.easyjet.com/en/planning/baggage>

Transfers

On arrival in Porto, coach transfer to Vila Gale Hotel in Porto (approx. 30 minutes).

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Border Control

At border control, you may need to show a return or onward ticket, show you have enough money for your stay, use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

Taking food into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.



Accommodation

Vila Gale Hotel, Porto

Porto's tallest building, the modern, centrally located four-star Vila Gale offers a rooftop spa with wonderful city views and indoor pool, two bars, two restaurants and very comfortable bedrooms with all modern amenities including en-suite bathroom, TV, telephone, wifi, air-conditioning, minibar, safe and hairdryer.

For more information, please visit the hotel's website:

<https://www.vilagale.com/br/hoteis/porto-e-norte/vila-gale-porto>

Casas do Coro, Marialva

An unusual four-star hotel being a collection of houses of Beira architecture grouped around a central "Casao do Largo" which houses the hotel restaurant. Founded 23 years ago, the houses are a mixture of old and new offering very comfortable accommodation with all modern amenities including en-suite bathroom, TV, telephone, air-conditioning, safe and hairdryer. The hotel also offers a spa with sauna, Turkish Bath, indoor pool and aqua gym (at extra cost).

For more information, please visit the hotel's website:

<https://www.casasdocoro.pt/>

Hotel Vila Gale, Braga

Part of the Vila Gale "Collection" of superior hotels, the traditional four-star hotel was formed and expanded from the renovation of the hospital of Sao Marcos, dating from 1506. This characterful hotel, located in the heart of the city offers a beautiful courtyard, two bars, two restaurants and very comfortable bedrooms with all modern amenities including en-suite bathroom, TV, telephone, wifi, air-conditioning, minibar, safe and hairdryer.

For more information, please visit the hotel's website

<https://www.vilagale.com/pt/hoteis/porto-e-norte/vila-gale-collection-braga>



Food

The roots of Portuguese food lie in both native peasant cookery and the ingredients obtained through trade routes established many centuries ago. Bread, rice, spices, pastries, sausages, and seafood —

especially cod — remain the staples of many Portuguese meals. Wheat bread has been a standard of the Portuguese table since the eighth century, though you'll find a lot of cornbread, acorn bread, and carob bread in Lisbon, too. Portugal is also Europe's largest consumer of rice. The short-grain *carolino* is the best for runny rice stews like *arroz de tomate* (tomato rice) and *arroz doce* (rice pudding with milk, eggs, and cinnamon).

At a time when honey was still the dominant sweetener in Europe, Portugal's sugar rush started early, with expensive sugar arriving from the Portuguese island of Madeira in the 15th century, and later, from Brazil. Convent cakes and desserts — including the *pastéis de nata*, or egg tart — were developed by nuns with skill and patience, and certainly wouldn't be the same without sugar. For an introduction to this important part of Portuguese culture, there's nothing like visiting a traditional *pastelaria*.

Salt cod has been part of Portuguese culture since the Vikings came to trade cod for salt. This convenient relationship was a powerful asset for Portuguese navigators — ships armed with supplies of salt cod could travel further with a source of protein that didn't spoil. Since then, the Portuguese have fished — or rather, overfished — this national staple and today the country is the world's largest consumer of cod. Portuguese cooking honours this tradition in hundreds of recipes: grilled, baked, stewed, as part of rice dishes, and deep fried as fritters or cakes.

Portugal's love for fish doesn't stop with cod — Portugal is one of the top countries in the world when it comes to seafood consumption. Nothing makes a Portuguese person happier than a barbecue full of grilled fish, especially during the popular June festivals dedicated to Santo António and São João that turn Lisbon and Porto into sardine central, filled with smoke, loud music, sangria, beer, caipirinhas, and pork sandwiches known as *bifanas*. Once a poor man's food, sardines are now so in demand that they've become expensive and harder to procure. Overfishing in the past didn't help, nor does climate change, which is pushing the fish to colder waters in the northern European sea.

Some restaurants will offer a set meal at a fixed — *menú do dia* — at lunchtime, generally good value for money. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, but it is customary to leave small change for good service.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in Portugal are similar to the UK. Lunch is normally taken around 1300: dinner is very often eaten any time after 1930.



Drink

Portugal is essentially a wine-drinking country. Port (*vinho do Porto*), the famous fortified wine or *vinho generoso* (“generous wine”), is produced from grapes grown in the vineyards of the Douro valley and mostly stored in huge wine-lodges at Vila Nova de Gaia, facing Porto across the Rio Douro. Portugal’s wine regions – notably Alentejo, Bairrada, Dão, the Douro and the historic regions of Estremadura and Ribatejo – have acquired a strong

reputation in recent years. Most wines are made in small cooperatives with local grape varieties, many peculiar to Portugal.

Portuguese wine lists (ask for the *lista de vinhos*) don’t just distinguish between *tinto* (red), *branco* (white) and *rosé*, but between *verde* (green), meaning young, acidic and slightly sparkling) and *maduro* (mature, meaning the wines you’re probably accustomed to). You’ll find a decent selection from around the country in even the most basic of restaurants, and often in half-bottles, too.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily **Lunch** – 1 lunch included

Dinner – 3 dinners included



Destination

The Douro Valley is a picturesque region surrounding the Rio Douro as it meanders across northern Portugal. This beautiful region is known for its terraced vineyards. Grapes grown here are used to produce Port wine. The area is steeped in history and tradition and boasts stunning scenery, delightful villages. This tour covers Porto and the Douro Valley, taking in the extraordinary almond blossom vistas, beautiful gardens and manor houses, ancient towns and cities. You'll embark on a railway journey, a boat trip along the Douro and sample excellent local cuisine.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Porto

Porto is Portugal's second largest city. It has held the proud title of European City of Culture and contains a UNESCO World Heritage Site at its centre. Its connection to the port wine trade and riverfront location on the Douro add to the city's great charm. Port wine, one of Portugal's most famous exports, is named after Porto, since the metropolitan area and the cellars of Vila Nova de Gaia were responsible for the packaging, transport and export of fortified wine. City highlights include the Estação de Sao Bento – Porto's main train station, with its ornate interior of 20,000 tiles, the Torre dos Clerigos, the symbol of Porto dating back to the 18th century, the famed Lello bookshop with a neo-gothic façade and Carmo church. The 19th century double decker Dom Luis I Bridge connects the old town with the wine cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia. The city boasts superb river views out to the sea and then along the Douro river.

For more information about Porto, please visit: [visitportugal](https://visitportugal.pt)

Vila Nova de Gaia

Situated on the far bank of the Douro from Porto's Ribeira district is Vila Nova de Gaia - a city in its own right and known for port. This where all the port wine in the world originates and has done since the 17th century.

For more information about Villa Nova de Gaia, please visit: [Vila Nova de Gaia](https://www.vilanova-de-gaia.pt)

Vila Nova de Foz Coa

Vila Nova de Foz Coa, the "Capital of Almond Trees", has the highest density of almond trees in the Douro. The tour is timed to be at the peak of the extraordinary beauty of the almond blossom, which decks the hills and valleys in a glorious palette of white and pink.

Foz Coa is also listed as a World Heritage Site by Unesco. The Foz Côa Valley is considered to be "the most important open air Palaeolithic rock art site". Like a vast open-air gallery, Foz Côa Valley has over one thousand rock with rupestral marks, identified in over 70 different places. They are predominately Palaeolithic engravings, dating back to around 25.000 years ago.

For more information about Foz Coa, please visit: [Foz Coa](https://www.fozcoa.pt)

Barca d'Alva and Marialva

Barca d'Alva is a village situated in a beautiful valley on the left bank of the Douro, near the Spanish border within the Douro National Park. It is also renowned for its blossom. The area around the Barca D'Alva is very rich in agricultural activities with crops such as olives, grapes and almonds.

Marialva, with its ruined castle perched at an altitude of 613 metres, offers a delightful panoramic view of the landscape. Within the village walls its ancient, cobbled streets are flanked with interesting buildings including the 15th century granite pillory, Casa da Camara, the keep, the Church of Santiago with its magnificent painted ceiling and the Chapel of Misericordia and also renowned for its carved masterpiece.

For more information about Barca d'Alva and Marialva, please visit: [Barca d'Alva and Marialva](https://www.barca-d-alva.pt)

Casa de Mateus

Casa de Mateus is a fine 18th-century manor House with beautiful baroque architecture and lovely gardens, set in the estate that produces the famous Mateus Rose wine in its distinctive bottle.

For more information about Casa de Mateus, please visit: [Casa de Mateus](https://www.casa-de-mateus.pt)

Braga and Casa dos Biscainhos Gardens

Braga was founded by the Romans and is both one of the oldest Portuguese cities and one of the oldest Christian cities in the world, with a 2000+ year history. It is known as the "Portuguese Rome" for its concentration of religious architecture, including the oldest cathedral in the country and Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte. The latter boasts a famous Baroque staircase that climbs 116 metres and beautiful gardens accessed by the Bom Jesus do Monte Funicular.

Casa dos Biscainhos Gardens are an example of landscape design from the height of the Baroque period, with numerous rococo references and terraces of balustrades that create a superbly scenic effect.

For more information about Braga, please visit: [Braga](#)

Quinta da Aveleda, Guimaraes and Camelia Park Flavius

Quinta da Aveleda is an elegant vineyard estate that is an integral part of the famous Vinho Verde region. Aside from its important architectural heritage, the Quinta da Aveleda estate is also

appreciated for its parks and gardens and rare tree species.

Guimaraes is a medieval city and UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also the birthplace of the first king of Portugal. The city is enchanting not only for its castle and imposing Palacio Ducal but also for the characterful town houses and ancient stone squares - a stroll through the historic centre here truly takes you back to medieval times.

For more information about the Estate, please visit: [Quinta da Aveleda](#)

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions, please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

Grading

This tour has been graded as **Moderate**: Walking between sites, lots of standing for viewing.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in the Douro valley at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +1 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Portuguese

Religion – Roman Catholic

National holidays – New Year's Day (01 Jan); Good Friday; Easter Monday; Freedom Day (25 Apr); Labour day (01 May); Corpus Christi (second Thursday after Whitsun; Portugal Day (10 Jun); St Anthony Day (13 Jun); St John the Baptist Day (24 Jun); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); Republic Day (05 Oct); All Saints' Day (01 Nov); Restoration of Independence (01 Dec); Immaculate Conception (08 Dec); Christmas Day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Some shops and restaurants do not accept credit cards so it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink, although some complain it has a strange taste, so it is generally recommended to drink bottled water, readily available in supermarkets and shops.

Shops and Museums – Shops are open Mon-Sat 10:00-14:00 and 17:00-20:00. Supermarkets and department stores tend to open 09:30-21:00/22:00, and may open on Sundays in large cities.

Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you've got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country.

For further information about the GHIC please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 09:00-17:00), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807 or 00 44 7441 343850

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate

Rua de São Bernardo 33

1249-082 Lisbon

info.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Telephone enquiries: 808 20 35 37 (if calling from within Portugal)

Consular phone lines are open 09:00-13:00 and 14:30-17:00.

Travel Editions Group Ltd

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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