

TIMELESS PORTUGAL & MADEIRA



20 DAYS

TOUR OVERVIEW

Starting and finishing in Lisbon, this is the ultimate tour of Portugal and Madeira. We travel the scenic country roads of the Alentejo region for our 3 night stay and visit Evora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

From this convenient base, we will visit Monsaraz to taste some of the famous full-bodied Alentejo red wines. We continue with visits to Marvao, Castelo de Vide, Almourol Castle and Tomar, the old headquarters of the Knights Templar in Portugal. Join us for a cruise through the Douro Valley followed by visits to Guimaraes, Porto and Barcelos, a town with a famous legend. Exploring Aveiro and its colourful Moliceiros boats is a must and the same goes for Coimbra with its old university and library.

The tour finishes in a leisurely fashion taking on the island of Madeira, known for its flower festivals and typically shaped houses. Located east of Casablanca and north of the Canaries, it is comprised of 4 islands off the north west coast of Africa. Well known for its namesake wine and warm, subtropical climate, the main island is volcanic, green and rugged, with high cliffs and pebbly beaches. Madeira is blessed with the trade winds, giving the island its temperate climate year round, which many describe as the 'eternal spring' reflected in the abundance of flowers.





TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

PORTUGAL: Evora • Monsaraz
Herdade do Esporao • Vila Vicosa • Estremoz
Elvas • Marvao • Castelo de Vide • Tomar
Abrantes • Castelo Branco • Monsanto
Piodao • Belmonte • Douro Valley • Vila Real
Chaves • Guimaraes • Barcelos • Porto • Ilhavo
Praia da Barra • Aveiro • Coimbra • Batalha

MADEIRA: Funchal • Porto Moniz • Cabo Girao
Camara de Lobos • Curral das Freiras • Santana

(B/L/D) Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner included



DAY 1 - ARRIVAL LISBON

Central Alentejo Region (3 nights)

In Lisbon, our modern coach and tour director will be awaiting you at the airport for transfer to your hotel for a 3 night stay in the Alentejo region. After check-in, the remainder of the day is at your leisure to settle in, relax or explore the local area. At night a welcome dinner is planned offering typical regional cuisine and wine. Bem Vindo or welcome as we say in Portugal! (D)

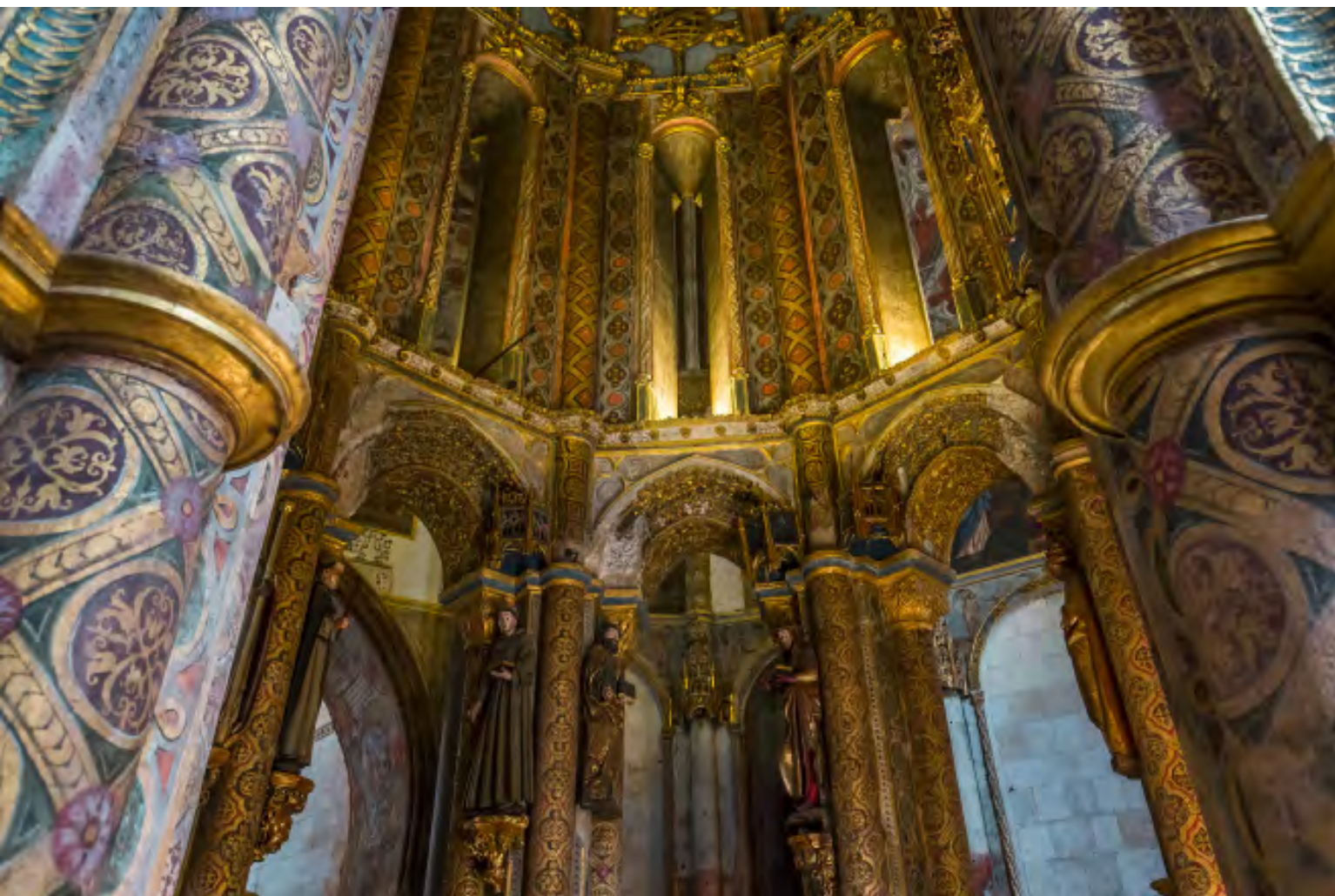
DAY 2 - EVORA

Enjoy a sleep-in and a relaxing breakfast as the morning is at your leisure. Nicknamed 'Land of bread', the Alentejo is the largest and flattest of the Portuguese regions. It has a distinctive character and beauty with vast plains dotted with cork and olive trees. This area is also rich in handicrafts, rustic pottery with native colourful designs, rugs and tapestries.

After lunch and now settled in, we start with a walking tour of Evora with its long and rich history, taking in the fortress-like Cathedral, Roman temple, St. Francis Church and the Chapel of Bones. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

DAY 3 - MONSARAZ - HERDADE DO ESPORAO

Today we visit the charming village of Monsaraz, visible from miles around, arguably one of the most attractive fortified hilltop villages in Portugal and explore the best on offer. We continue with a visit and wine-tasting to a local vineyard in Herdade do Esporao. With its many sun hours, this part of Portugal produces typical full-bodied red wines and the name Borba comes to mind. At night dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



DAY 4 - VILA VICOSA - ESTREMOZ - ELVAS

Northern Alentejo Region (3 nights)

After hotel check-out we venture north and break the journey in Vila Vicosa to visit the Royal Palace with its impressive facade followed by free time. Upon arrival in Estremoz, an elegant town of startling whiteness, thanks largely to its extensive use of high grade marble, we visit the nearby quarries. The town is also famous for its pottery, markets, preserved plums and goats cheese.

After free time for lunch, we continue our day with a visit to Elvas, a fortified frontier town close to the Spanish border, boasting the most sophisticated 17th century military architecture in Europe with well-preserved moats, bastions and gates. Dinner tonight at the hotel. (B/D)

DAY 5 - MARVAO - CASTELO DE VIDE

Relax and enjoy as we drive through the Sao Mamede mountain ranges to Marvao, a seemingly picture perfect hilltop village offering immaculate little houses with Manueline windows, Renaissance doorways and cobbled streets. Around lunchtime we visit Castelo de Vide, sitting high above the surrounding olive plains, this ancient spa town with narrow lanes offers true character and charm.

We visit a 14th c. castle during a walking tour and have a panoramic stop at the Belvedere. For all who have a passion for horses, in the afternoon, we will visit the 'Coudelaria de alter do Chao', one of the most famous stables in Portugal. At night we sample some of the local cuisine during dinner at the tables of our residence. (B/D)

DAY 6 - TOMAR - ABRANTES

Perfect for a morning wander and historically outstanding, Tomar is best known for its Convento de Cristo, former headquarters of the Knights Templar, one of the most significant religious monuments in the country, it also happens to be home to one of Portugal's few remaining medieval synagogues.

After the visit to the monastery, we will view Almoural Castle, set on its own small island in the Tagus River, one of the most romantic and surrounded by myths. It is said there are 101 castles in Portugal, most of which were built or rebuilt between the 12th and the 14th centuries. At night dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



DAY 7 - CASTELO BRANCO - MONSANTO Central Portugal Region (2 nights)

After hotel check-out, we cross the Tagus Gorges and arrive in Castelo Branco to visit the Bishop's Palace gardens in true 18 c. Baroque style. We continue with a visit to Monsanto, built around and atop a steep rocky mass and once declared the most typical village of Portugal to enjoy lunch. We finish the day visiting charming Idanha a Velha. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

DAY 8 - PIODAO - BELMONTE

Driving through the Acor mountain ranges while taking in incredible views, springs and pasture land, we arrive in Piodao to enjoy free time followed by lunch. The historical village is reminiscent of a crib because of the harmonious way in which its houses are arranged in the form of an amphitheatre.

At night, when the lights are turned on, this picture is particularly magnificent. The distinctive feature of this mountain village with its narrow winding streets is schist, a stone found in great abundance in the region and used to build the houses and pavements. Dinner is planned at the hotel. (B/D)



DAY 9 - CRUISING THE DOURO VALLEY Northern Portugal Region (1 night)

After hotel check-out, we set out to start our river cruise, sit back and relax and take in the best of the stunning Douro river district. The Douro is one of the major rivers of the Iberian Peninsula, flowing from its source near Duruelo de la Sierra in Soria Province across northern-central Spain and Portugal to its outlet in Porto. Along the way you will admire breathtaking landscapes and view vineyards, towns and villages. In the evening, dinner in the elegant dining room of the hotel. (B/D)





DAY 10 - VILA REAL - CHAVES
Northern Portugal Region (2 nights)

In the morning we visit the gardens and home of the famous Casa de Mateus. Built in the first half of the 18th c., the palace, set in beautiful gardens, is considered to be one of the finest examples of Baroque civil architecture in Portugal. Its interior decoration includes intricately carved wood ceilings, furniture from several periods, 17th and 18th century paintings, silverware, ceramics and an impressive library.

After lunch, we drive to Chaves for a walking tour and free time. Dinner at the tables of our hotel. (B/D)

DAY 11 - A DAY AT YOUR LEISURE

Enjoy a late start and a relaxing breakfast as today is at your leisure. Take in the unique atmosphere of your hotel and reflect on the many interesting visits to date. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



DAY 12 - GUIMARAES - BARCELOS
Northern Portugal Region (1 night)

UNESCO listed and birthplace of King Afonso Henriques, first king of Portugal, the historic town of Guimaraes is best known as the cradle of the Portuguese nation.

Today we visit the well-preserved former Duques Palace and the old centre during a walking tour followed by free time. Located in the Minho region, a visit to Barcelos, famous for its iconic cockerel motif to be seen all over Portugal, especially in pottery form, is a must. Enjoy the best of this famous town. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



DAY 13 - PORTO

Central Portugal Region (2 nights)

After hotel check-out, we explore the town of Porto taking in the city's most important landmarks including a visit to the church of San Francisco and the Bolsa de Porto. A visit to this enchanting town is not complete without a tasting at a port wine cellar on the banks of Vila Nova de Gaia. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

DAY 14 - ILHAVO - PRAIA DA BARRA - AVEIRO

Today we set out to Ilhavo for a visit to a fascinating museum dedicated to the history of fishing and continue with a drive to Praia da Barra to view the fishermen's colourful painted wooden houses. We stay at the seaside to visit Aveiro, once an important fishing port, these days salt is the mainstay of its economy.

The town offers a picturesque setting with pastel-coloured houses bordering the canals and narrow lanes around the fish market. Best known for its high prowed 'Moliceiros' boats, we naturally have to set sail and enjoy a tour on the canals. Dinner at the hotel tonight. (B/D)



DAY 15 - COIMBRA - BATALHA

Lisbon Region (1 night)

A visit to Coimbra, located between Porto and Lisbon, once the country's capital is one of the highlights of this part of Portugal. Perched high above the Rio Mondego, the city is best known for its ancient university, founded in 1290, a visit to the impressive library with its 300,000 mostly leather bound books will help you understand why.

After a walking tour in the centre to enjoy time for lunch, we drive further south and continue our day with a visit to Batalha, known for its World Heritage listed Gothic Manueline style monastery and abbey. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)





DAY 16 - FLIGHT FROM LISBON TO FUNCHAL

Madeira (4 nights)

After breakfast we are heading for Lisbon International Airport to board our flight into Madeira. Funchal's history goes back over five centuries when early Portuguese settlers colonised the coast of a bright and sunny bay where fennel (funcho) grew in abundance, giving its name to the new town of Funchal. Madeira, an autonomous region of Portugal, has long been known as 'The Pearl of the Atlantic' or the 'Floating Garden'.

Located east of Casablanca and north of the Canaries, it comprises 4 islands off the north-west coast of Africa. Known for its namesake wine and warm subtropical climate, the main island of Madeira is volcanic, green and rugged, with high cliffs and pebbly beaches. Blessed with the trade winds it results in a temperate climate year round which many describe as the 'eternal spring' which is reflected in Madeira's abundance of flowers. The island is well known for its folklore, typically shaped houses, traditional flower festivals and dramatic coastline offering magnificent viewpoints. The remainder of the afternoon is free to explore. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

DAY 17 - FUNCHAL - CURRAL DAS FREIRAS

Funchal's botanical garden is perhaps the most famous of all parks on the island with over two thousand species of exotic plants. Madeira has long been called the 'Garden Isle' and it seems that almost anything will grow in its fertile soil. In Funchal, the island's capital, many tropical plants have found a home and the visitor can see Hibiscus and Bougainvillea in flower almost all year round along with Jacaranda, Spathodeas, Erythras and Bauhinias in their season.

We continue with a walking tour of Funchal's centre including a visit to the local market and Cathedral and we finish the tour with a tasting of the famous Madeira wine. Curral das Freiras ('Nuns Valley') is a small village nestling between almost perpendicular mountains in the heart of the island. The village is very isolated and the community mainly live off what they can grow. The local chestnuts are delicious and are used in everyday cooking. Today includes an organised lunch so the evening is at your leisure. (B/L)

DAY 18 - CAMARA DE LOBOS - CABO GIRAO

Today offers more panoramic highlights of this captivating island, a scenic drive passing banana plantations giving way to vineyards. Nearby Camara de Lobos, a traditional fishing village, inspired Sir Winston Churchill to paint its lovely surroundings. Camara de Lobos is also home of 'poncha', a mixture of lemon juice, honey and sugarcane spirit, available at the many local taverns.

Further along the road and up into the mountains we arrive at Cabo Girao, the second highest cliff face in the world, the view is incredible. Porto Moniz seems to have fallen from above into the northern sea and has long been famous for its natural swimming pools and pure beautiful scenery. With an organised lunch included on tour, the evening is at your leisure. (B/L)

DAY 19 - SANTANA

Get ready for a relaxing day out taking in the remote, northern side of the island. The lush mountainous island of Madeira was once totally covered with 'Laurissilva' forest, a relic from pre-historic times and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This region lives essentially from agriculture, craftwork and tradition. Characterised by small thatched triangular houses, Santana is a beautiful village on the north coast. These tiny houses built of natural stone and thatched with straw have served the locals for centuries as stables and dwellings. There will be time to relax in the afternoon leading up to a typical folklore evening including dinner at night. (B/D)





DAY 20 - FUNCHAL AIRPORT - LISBON

All good things come to an end, after breakfast and hotel check-out, we head for Funchal International Airport for airline check-in covering our flight back to mainland Portugal. Upon arrival at Lisbon airport, your tour director will wave goodbye. (B)



Due to the heritage nature of the Pousada hotels included, this tour may undergo hotel renovations throughout the year. In this instance a hotel may be replaced with a property of the same standard in the same region. The content of the tour itinerary/inclusions will not change (or as little as possible).



TOUR PRICE INCLUSIONS

Meet and greet Lisbon Humberto Delgado International Airport. Return airport transfers in Europe. Economy class return flights from Lisbon to Madeira.

19 nights in charming heritage accommodation (Pousadas or similar style hotels) including daily buffet breakfast, 3 course dinner (or lunch) with beverages based on typical traditional regional cuisine where indicated.

Private coach travel in Europe, entry fees covering sightseeing and entertainment, hotel service charges, city taxes, most tipping, baggage handling (1 bag pp), services of a full-time professional tour director and local city guides.

DEPARTURE SCHEDULE LAND ONLY - 20 DAYS

2025 touring dates to be confirmed