
HUNGARY

Situated at the south-western tip of Europe, Portugal is a country that faces towards the Atlantic Ocean and this long border with the sea has had a decisive influence on its history.

In 1415, the Portuguese launched themselves upon the great Maritime Discoveries, an epic adventure that gave their culture a universalistic appeal. This contact with other civilisations was to have a profound effect on the Portuguese identity, turning them into a hospitable nation who were open to the world and people from outside their country.

Nature has endowed Portugal with a variety of landscapes that surprises all those who visit the county, whilst its inhabitants have acquired the genuine art of welcoming people from outside, universally recognised as one of their great charms.

A highly popular tourist destination with short distances between all its attractions, the country offers a wide range of different holiday settings: sea or mountains, plains or islands, or the cosmopolitan atmospheres of its cities.

Portugal has shown itself to be an excellent organiser of major international events, having already had great success with EXPO 98, the Tennis Masters Cup in 2000 and the 2003 World Gymnaestrada.

Each people that have passed through the territory, that comprehends the actual Portugal have left their mark in terms of culture. From Roman times, and even from before then, as a result of the long Arab presence and their own maritime voyages to Africa, the Far East and the Southern Atlantic, the Portuguese have built up a unique culture and a different art.

Especially in the south, Portuguese architecture is a knowledgeable blend of Arab features and European styles such as the Renaissance. Of them all, the **Manueline style** (16th-century), an exaltation of the Portuguese overseas expansion, is perhaps

the most original. Some of these masterpieces are considered World Heritage, and Portugal, a small country, is proud of having no less than 12 classified sites!

The art of the '**azulejos**', the glazed decorative tile, inherited from the Moors, was used in Portugal in a very different way from all the other European countries. The most distinctive tiles are the blue and white azulejos of the baroque period. They are used to line the walls of churches, cloisters and palaces, forming a kind of graffiti that tells us the stories of saints or recounts profane themes, such as... the fables of La Fontaine.

Kept at Portuguese Museums are magical pieces that teach people about our art and history and show us the works of art that were born from the artistic inspiration of the Portuguese in their encounters with other peoples. More.

But culture is also the reflection of a lifestyle. Calm and tranquil (except when behind a steering-wheel) and endowed with an innate sense of politeness, the Portuguese have a melancholic side to them, that they refer to as "saudade" and which finds its most moving expression **in Fado**

Fado – To sing it you must feel it

Fado is the most beautiful poem in Portuguese music. It is destiny put into words and music and it is sung by everyone in Portugal. Composed of loosely connected four-line stanzas, constructed around a story, written about an impossible love or sung as a poem, Fado expresses a state of soul. It is accompanied by the 12-string Portuguese guitar and the classical guitar.

Whilst the Fado de Coimbra, sung by students wrapped up tightly in their gowns, allows us to sense more about the song's troubadour origins, the Fado de Lisboa has a bolder tone that is more expressive of pain and suffering. Even those who do not speak our language cannot help being moved by the sentiments expressed in the melody and voice.

World Heritage – Portugal's Contribution to the World

In the westernmost part of Europe, discover all about the memory of Portugal, the identity of its people marked by the Atlantic Ocean and their invaluable contribution to the world's cultural heritage.

Why not turn the twelve Portuguese sites classified as World Heritage by UNESCO into a pretext for travelling around the country, reading its secrets set in stone and in the landscape, or even hopping over to the islands of Madeira and Terceira in the Azores?

1983 – Historical Centre of Angra do Heroísmo, Azores
 1983 - Mosteiro dos Jerónimos and Torre de Belém, Lisbon
 1983 - Mosteiro da Batalha
 1983 - Convento de Cristo, Tomar
 1986 – Historical Centre of Évora
 1989 - Mosteiro de Alcobaça

1995 – Cultural Landscape of Sintra
 1996 – Historical Centre of Porto
 1998 – Prehistoric Rock Art of the Côa Valley
 1999 - Laurissilva Forest, Madeira
 2001 – Historical Centre of Guimarães and the Alto Douro Wine Region

Nature

Portugal is indeed a small territory: 89,000 km² in mainland Portugal, 2,305 km² in the archipelago of the Azores, 797 km² in the archipelago of Madeira. And yet there are few countries with such an unexpectedly diverse range of natural features. It is not surprising that UNESCO has recognised three World Heritage sites in the Portuguese landscape: The Alto Douro Wine Region, in the north, the Cultural Landscape of Sintra, close to Lisbon and the Laurissilva Forest, on the island of Madeira.

There are three great rivers that have their sources in the Spanish hinterland and end their long journey in Portugal, having shaped the landscape in their different ways along their courses: the Douro, in the north, the Tagus, in the centre, the Guadiana, in the south.

The banks of the River Douro are quite unique. Successfully extracting from its rocky terraces one of the world's most excellent wines, Port, and redesigning the landscape through the sheer strength of human arms, this is one of the miracles that happen in Portugal.

Greener in the Minho region, harsher and drier in the inland Trás-os-Montes region, the north of Portugal is above all an impressive, mountainous area. Between the Douro and the Tagus rivers, there is an infinite range of different landscapes. The Atlantic coast is sandy and low-lying, whilst inland the terrain climbs ever upwards. This is where you will find the Serra da Estrela, with its peak at 1991 metres, the highest point in mainland Portugal. Steeply sloping vineyards, deep valleys and granite villages give the countryside its unusual decoration.

Quite different is the vast, fertile basin of the River Tagus, where bulls and horses can be seen grazing peacefully. This region marks the transition to the immense plains of the Alentejo, interrupted only by the Serra de São Mamede, which rises to as high as 1000 metres. The Alentejo coastline, with its imposing cliffs, stretches to the headland of Cabo de São Vicente (Cape St. Vincent), the south-western tip of Europe. By now, you are in the Algarve, with its gentle hills and extensive orange-groves. Here you will find some of the most beautiful beaches and cliffs in Europe, which take on the colour of fire itself when the sun sets in the west.

From the peaks of Peneda-Gerês to the island barriers that separate the nature reserve of Ria Formosa from the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal has many Protected Areas for you to discover, as well as an ecological and cultural heritage that over the years has determined the shape of the Portuguese landscape.

Entertainment

The Portuguese love to talk and enjoy themselves by getting together in a group on the pretext of celebrating family birthdays, weddings and baptisms, or even without any excuse at all. Preferably outside the house, because Portugal's mild climate encourages this.

The Portuguese people's natural taste for conversation has its own privileged setting: the Café. Here, gathered together around a small cup of coffee, the famous "bica", people discuss such subjects as politics, work, women, men and the day's news.

In the summer months, under the pleasant warmth of the sun, or at night, when the music becomes confused with the rhythmic sound of the breaking waves, the small beach bars provide an excellent and original alternative for having a good time. The climate is particularly helpful: in Portugal, the temperatures stubbornly refuse to break records for either the highest or the lowest.

Old spaces have been intelligently redesigned and are now extremely popular leisure areas. These are places with great charm, offering entertainment designed to suit all kinds of tastes and for people of all ages.

In the summer, there is a great wealth of cultural events. Mingle with our friendly and hospitable inhabitants at the festivities held in honour of the so-called Popular Saints, held mainly in the month of June, and enjoy the lively street entertainment. Music and dancing are to be found at internationally famous festivals, bringing excitement to the hot summer nights. Make the most of your stay!

As places that are regularly used for meeting friends and for taking part in animated discussions, cafés already enjoy more than a century of tradition in Portugal. Even today, a time when everything is done at great speed and in a hurry, to sit calmly sipping a cup of coffee is more than just a habit, it's a religion. You'll find cafés everywhere, but above all don't forget to visit those where our poets and artists have left their distinctive marks.

Festivals

In Portugal, the excitement that is felt at the country's traditional festivals is so great that you will be tempted to join in. From north to south of the country, as well as in the Azores and Madeira, Portuguese folklore has a wealth of original costumes – many of them extremely beautiful - popular music and dances of pagan origin.

In Lisbon and Porto, the festivals held in honour of the so-called Popular Saints are famous worldwide. The festival of Santo António (Saint Anthony) in Lisbon is celebrated on the night of the summer solstice, from the 12th to the 13th of June, with lots of music, flower-pots containing basil plants, grilled sardines and red wine. A traditional competition is held of different musical parades performed by the city's various neighbourhoods, attracting thousands of spectators. And it can also be said that Porto never sleeps on the eve of São João (Saint John), which is the night from the 23rd to the 24th of June.

Sun and Sea

With a coastline measuring 850 kms long, Portugal is a country that is most definitely turned towards the Atlantic Ocean. Proving to be a decisive factor in the history of both the country and Europe, this maritime frontier was crossed and explored by the Portuguese during the great Discoveries of the 16th century, providing new sources of wealth and opening up routes to global communication with other Oceans.

These 850 kms are comprised of beautiful sandy beaches alternating with formidable cliffs and headlands where the land stretches out into the Ocean, reaching as far as the westernmost point of mainland Europe, Cabo da Roca, close to Lisbon.

Under Portugal's blue skies and radiant sun, there are many supervised beaches whose quality has been guaranteed by the award of the European "Blue Flag" status. Some of them still revel in the atmosphere of picturesque fishing villages, whilst others have become large tourist centres where there is a perfect blend of sun, great liveliness and entertainment, and water sports facilities. Yet, they all reflect the same prodigious variety with which Nature has blessed Portugal.

In the far North West of the country, where the waves are rougher, small seaside resorts still retain the atmosphere of a time when they were frequented by the well-to-do inhabitants of Northern Portugal.

In the centre of the country, the landscape is predominantly a romantic blend of sand dunes and lagoons. Amongst all the European capitals, Lisboa has the unique privilege of enjoying easy access to the beach. The preserved landscape areas of the Alentejo coast have resulted in great stretches of sand, gradually giving way to narrow coves between steep cliffs until one reaches the headland of Cabo São Vicente (Cape St. Vincent), marking the southernmost tip of Europe. In the Algarve, where the sea is much warmer, all the beaches are surrounded by blue skies and clear fresh air. Here both the cliffs and the bodies of sunbathers turn golden brown in the light of the setting sun, whilst at night the bars, discos and restaurants are invaded with a lively and contagious atmosphere

Tradition

The heirs to the ancient ancestral knowledge acquired from the most varied civilisations, our craftsmen bring perfection to the most beautiful pieces of traditional art.

And how can we best give you an idea of the great wealth of our traditions of eating and drinking? Anyone travelling around Portugal will immediately delight in our tasty and highly skilled cuisine, where there is no skimping on the spices of imagination. Perhaps it is because the Portuguese enjoy eating well, or because they are close to the sea, that they have such excellent fish and seafood, such tasty and succulent meat, such splendid fruit and vegetables, the best olive-oil, marvellous wines, high-class brandies, excellent cheeses, and coffee that is second to none. Just like Rossini,



whose name is forever linked to the famous tournedo, Bulhão Pato invented his own dish of clams and Gomes de Sá invented a particular dish from amongst the 1,000 recipes that we have for preparing bacalhau, the dried and salted codfish that is so beloved of the Portuguese. Our sublime, celestial sweets and desserts were first created many centuries ago in our convents and monasteries. It is surely from heaven that such dishes as papos d'anjo, toucinho do céu, barrigas de freira and pudim do Abade descended. And, of course, there are many others.

In addition to the two magical wines, Port and Madeira, whose pride of place is guaranteed in any wine-cellar in the world, Portugal is becoming very serious about the quality of its table wines, which already compete with the world's best. Like the landscape, they vary greatly from region to region.

Tradition

Arraiolos Carpets

Hand embroidered in wool, these carpets display patterns that were inspired by Oriental tapestries. Arraiolos, a small town in the Alentejo, is the centre for their production, although they are sold in many shops throughout Portugal.

Castelo Branco Bedspreads

Traditionally manufactured for several centuries, the bedspreads from Castelo Branco, a city in the Beiras region, are embroidered with silk, in subtle shades of different colours. They are widely used as wall hangings.

Ceramics and decorative pottery

All over the country, you will find small potteries, working in different styles depending upon the region.

In the north of Portugal, there are the brightly-coloured small figures from Barcelos, the black ceramics of Bisalhães, from the villages around Vila Real.

In the centre, the Moorish tradition is to be noted in the hand-painted earthenware from Coimbra, and then there are the highly original ceramics from Caldas da Rainha and the pottery from Alcobça. In the Alentejo, the eccentric clay dolls from Estremoz are particularly interesting, as is the hand-painted pottery from Redondo. The Algarve brings us the ceramics from Porches, which recreate Iberian and Moorish patterns in blue, green and turquoise.

Gold and Silver

Extremely beautiful gold and silver filigree pieces are woven from threads of these two metals that are no thicker than a horse's hair. They date back to roughly 4,000 years ago, originating in the Middle East and later being introduced into the Iberian Peninsula by the Arabs. In Portugal, this is a tradition that is firmly implanted in the north of the country (Porto, Gondomar, Póvoa de Lanhoso, Viana do Castelo), where such pieces are widely used as personal ornaments.

The art of woodcarving

From musical instruments to furniture, whether or not these are painted, from toys to religious statues, all over the country you will find craftsmen and designers, driven by a heavily internalised tradition, creating and recreating wooden pieces that display extraordinary harmony in their