

The country's quiet charm hides its importance in history, but with active days and lazy evening strolls, you'll create your own history. Take this Inside Scoop with your travel documents.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Tip: while the predominant language is Portuguese, some people speak Spanish. English is spoken in areas with tourism. Like all countries, people often go out of their way if you try to speak even a bit of their language; go online for pronunciations or download an app. Good ones to know: The basics of *please, thank you, excuse me (I am Canadian...)*.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details:

- advance seats & upgrades
- booking excursions ahead
- long stay vacations
- insurance coverage.

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A Maritime Travel Company

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Inside Scoop: PORTUGAL

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

Maybe not the first destination that comes to mind when you think of a trip, let yourself be wooed by the country...once you've dawdled at a Portuguese café with a *bica* (coffee), you'll wonder why you waited. Some helpful tips:

- Plan a transition day before and after—with a longer travel time than some destinations, jet lag and transfers, you'll be rested.
- Be realistic: we know you want value for money in balancing choices and amenities but no matter what your budget, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are only requests. Unless you've paid for an ocean suite, upgrade fees apply.
- Climate varies considerably from coastal areas to inland, the latter hot and dry in summer. With mild winters, the sea is pleasant year-round given the Gulf Stream. From October to June, temperatures range from 10°C/50°F to 22°C/72°F depending on the area. In summer? 19°C to 29°C (84°F), sometimes higher, so think layers and take a sweater and a hat.
- Electricity is 230-400 volts, 50 hertz with sockets on European standards. You will need a 230 volt transformer and adaptor.
- Telephone, internet and cell phone service is available almost anywhere but be aware of roaming/calling fees. Check with your provider for options before you leave.
- Currency is the Euro. Change funds at banks, airports and hotels. ATMs take major and debit credit cards. Inform credit card companies and your bank of the dates you'll be away. Tax on purchases depend on the area and item: 6% to 23%.

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags: put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery, over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers, pen/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg), maybe a change of underclothes.

Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in a clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often at the start of airport screening). Also permitted in carry-on: laptops, cell phones, disposable razors, umbrellas and canes. You can't take on corkscrews (for *vinho verde*?) and sports gear such as golf clubs. Most hotels provide hair dryers so save that room for souvenirs. You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years (0-24 months).

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority controls security; see www.catsa.gc.ca/home and check with your airline for restrictions. Particularly where one might require specialty services such as translation for medical issues, we strongly recommend LeGrow's Travel medical and cancellation/interruption insurance.

Tips: Ditch the high heels (lots and lots of cobblestones). Be careful crossing streets as cars often won't stop for you. If bread/olives are brought to your table in a restaurant and you don't want them, decline—otherwise that will be added to your bill.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

Sample Food and Wine Specialties

Besides **Santarém's** National Gastronomy Festival, food and wine is celebrated with seafood fresh off the boats, small "snacking" snails, fantastic soups, port wine cellars, *vinho verde* (green/young wine to drink the bottling year) and excellent value red Douro Valley wines www.taste-portugal.com. The saying "**Lisbon** shows off, **Braga** prays, **Coimbra** studies and **Porto** works" gives clues, the latter the centre of the port industry (not so much working by visitors). **Óbidos**, on a hill encircled by a fortified wall, hosts a two-week long medieval market with grilled meats. If not your style, perhaps you'd like the annual chocolate festival? www.festivalchocolate.cm-obidos.pt

Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email/text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and **contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).**” Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket is for one airline, you travel on another’s plane. **Check-in and carry-on baggage,** check with your airline as size/weight restrictions vary. **Entry & Departure:** You must have a valid passport that will not expire within 3 months www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp. Keep a separate photocopy or a picture of its ID pages on your cell phone.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips at www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops
☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

Before Leaving

Items to consider bringing home include colourful handpainted and unique kitchen pottery and tiles, found particularly in the Azores and surrounding regions. Hand-milled soaps are lovely. Packaged food stuffs always make a great gift (and a reminder of your trip when you cook...). Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you at customs: drugs, plants, meat/animal products or endangered species parts. Know your limits and exemptions, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html. With connections, unless it’s in checked luggage (that special bottle of port), buy duty free alcohol before your last flight home.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? The embassy is in Lisbon tel 21-316-4600. Or contact Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, sos@international.gc.ca, www.canadainternational.gc.ca/portugal/contact-contactez.aspx.

Where to Go

Lisbon: The annual **Festivities of Lisbon** encourages discoveries in the oldest neighbourhoods, celebrating food, music and dance You’ll see grilled and roasted sardines throughout the country; besides being a truly local dish, they’re spectacularly flavourful (and healthy)...maybe just not after a visit to the oceanarium, **Oceanário de Lisboa**. If you love puppets, the **Museu da Marioneta** at the **Convento das Bernardas** reflects all cultures includes designs and construction, props and scenery. In July, **Oeiras Cool Jazz Festival** holds open air performances in unique locations close to Lisbon. Otherwise, it’s a city to explore with discoveries around every bend such as **Casa Independente** and tours with **Lisbon Walkers**. For a fun (and cheap) way to see it, take #28 tram from east to west: it climbs through narrow cobbled streets and steep gradients of the districts **Bairro Alto** (great nightlife), **Baixa** and **Alfama** (listen for fado music from the bars, Thieves’ Market anyone?). These small vintage trams turn tight past markets, restaurants and churches; get off in the **Graça** area, then taking #37 bus to **Castelo de São Jorge** for gorgeous views of the city. Hang out in any of the *miradouros* (wonderful viewpoints) such as **Miradouro da Graça**.

Azores: This ocean archipelago of 9 volcanic islands in 3 groups west of Lisbon has easy access with 9 airports and boats. An ideal destination for geotourism, diving and hiking, religious events are popular; the major **Carnival** usually in February. In June over several days, **Sanjoaninas** is the festival of culture on **Terceira Island**.

Algarve; At the southern end over to the **Iberian Peninsula**, this region is famous for beaches, hand-painted pottery and tiles, also the site of the **Algarve Cup** invitational annual women’s soccer tournament. **Ponta da Piedade** is enormous formations the sea has carved into rock. From the city of Faro, the **Eastern Algarve** to the Spanish border is a true find—less crowded with all the attributes you need (and a little hip). Head to Olhao’s chic fishing port, take a ferry to **Culatra Island** for strolling beachy sandbars. Crave solitude? Up the coast then to the 11km long **Barril Beach** on **Tavira Island**, **Tavira** with restaurants and bars. Many shops closer over the lunch hours.

Madeira Islands: With first rate hotels and tradition of elegance, this tropical getaway is a perfect romantic spot with spas, sunsets and scenery (and New Year fireworks in **Funchal**) that will make you forget you have to go home. There’s terrific diving, rock climbing, horseback riding, museums and heritage sites, but you might just want to wander **Laurisilva Forest** or **Porto Santo**, an island in the archipelago. And, do sample the famed Madeira wine.

Estoril: A seaside resort where original forts line the coast, its historical importance is also from being the refuge of certain personalities. For more than 40 years, **Estoril International Handicrafts Fair** has showcased artisans. Restaurants showcase gastronomy with music and folklore performances, a major music festival in July.

All across the country there’s no lack of attractions: medieval fairs, extreme sailing, surfing and bodyboarding—for golfers the **Portugal Masters** in **Vilamoura** (on a course designed by Arnold Palmer), film festivals, **Ponte de Lima’s** annual **Horse Fair** and **Sintra’s Dance Festival**. In **Oporto**, wander around the **Serralves em Festa** arts celebration—a solid 40 hours of arts activities (perfect for a family) primarily held in an art deco museum and gardens, spilling out to the streets. Perhaps a boat cruise on the **Douro River**? For something unusual, the **Festival of the Trays** (Festa dos Tabuleiros) in **Tomar** is held every four years (2019!) where females carry tall decorated headdresses of trays (*tabuleiros*), on their heads of 30 loaves of bread, in a tower that must be as tall the women...walking in a procession...without dropping anything... www.tabuleiros.org. See www.visitportugal.com/en.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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