



CHARMING PORTUGAL: 13 DAYS TO DISCOVER WITH YOUR OWN TRANSPORT

Type of travel: Longer trips
Number of days: 13

Portugal from Lisbon to Porto and all charming places in between

Charming Portugal is one of the special tours we had mapped out. Unfortunately, due to global events, we cannot offer this trip as a service to you any longer. But, this 13-day trip is simply too wonderful and unique to sweep under the carpet. Therefore, we are happy to offer you this information for free.

This trip will introduce you to the charm and character of Portugal. From Lisbon, you head north to discover numerous sights, beautiful natural landscapes and delicious culinary locations. The trip ends in Porto.

Do you love an intense holiday experience and do you want to see a lot in a short time? Then this trip with your own car or a rental car is ideal for you!

The journey starts at Lisbon airport and ends at Porto airport. You will cross half the country and visit the most charming places. So don't forget your camera! Also bring your most comfortable pair of walking shoes, because wandering through many charming, cobbled streets, which can sometimes be quite steep, is part of the experience. Choose this unforgettable tour and absorb the era of the Knights Templar, the age of exploration and the echoes of the ancient maritime spice routes first-hand.

Charming Portugal itinerary in summary

Below you will find a summary of the unique itinerary for this charming tour. Each day includes time for lunch and dinner, and we propose a location to stay overnight. You choose and book the restaurants and accommodations yourself. The restaurant and accommodation scene changes constantly. So do your own research on the internet and choose your favourites!

Read and discover our tips for your special 'Charming Portugal' trip.

Programme

Day 1

Arrival at Lisbon airport, hotel transfer and short visit to Lisbon district



On this first day of your special 'Charming Portugal' trip, you arrive at **Lisbon airport**. Pick up your rental car and head to your hotel. Depending on the arrival time of your flight, you can still visit one of Lisbon's city districts.

Put on your walking shoes, stretch your legs and enjoy this beautiful city. Lisbon is built on seven hills so some of the streets can be quite steep. Also bear in mind that most of the streets are cobbled and have narrow pavements.

Summary of the day

- Arrival at Lisbon airport
- Pick up rental car and drive to your hotel. Alternatively, you can take a taxi and only continue on day 3 with a rental car.
- A short visit to one of the city districts, depending on your arrival time
- Overnight stay in Lisbon



Day 2

The different districts of Lisbon



After a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast, your special journey through charming Portugal really only begins with a further exploration of the **capital city of Lisbon**. By the end of the day, you'll comprehend why Lisbon has won several awards as **best travel destination**. Lisbon is always very busy and finding a parking space is not always easy. Therefore, we suggest you take public transport or a hop-on/hop-off bus, depending on your personal preference.

Below you will find a list of sights we think are definitely worth visiting.

The urban district of Belém

- Belém Palace: the residence of the Portuguese president since 1910.

- Pasteis de Belém: on the way from the palace to the monastery, you will see people lining up in the streets for the popular and delicious Pasteis de Belém, the local delicacy.

- Mosteiro dos Jerónimos: This monastery is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The church houses the resting place of Vasco da Gama, the famous Portuguese explorer and the first European to reach India by sea (15th century).

- Monument to the Discoveries: the Padrão dos Descobrimentos is located opposite the Jerónimos Monastery on the north bank of the Tagus. It was built in 1960 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of Prince Henry the Navigator, an important figure in the history of Portugal and the Age of Discovery.

- Belém Tower: this monument, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located further along the riverbank. The fortress was built in 1515 and guards the entrance to the Lisbon channel. It was the starting point of many voyages of discovery and for many sailors the last sight of their homeland.

- Palácio Nacional da Ajuda: This palace is one of Europe's most romantic buildings with a rich interior. In our opinion, one of the most beautiful palaces we have ever seen.





The Baixa district

The Baixa district begins on the northern bank of the Tagus River with the Praça do Comércio, Lisbon's ceremonial entrance. This square is surrounded by classical buildings with the triumphal arch as the gateway to Rua Augusta, a popular shopping street with lively side streets. One of these side streets houses the Elevador Santa Justa, a wrought iron industrial Art Nouveau wonder.

Between all the visits, there are plenty of opportunities and places to eat something. A snack, tapas or a sumptuous lunch? The choice is yours!

Alfama

Before dinner, you can freshen up at your hotel. Then, the city tour continues to Alfama, Lisbon's oldest district. Here you will find the São Jorge castle and the Sé (cathedral) and many other historical buildings. But the most adorable facet is the labyrinth of narrow streets with a surprise around every corner.

While visiting this part of Lisbon you can choose to dine in a typical Portuguese restaurant and then enjoy an evening of Fado in one of the intimate local Fado bars.



Summary of the day



- Tour of Lisbon: walking alternated with public transport or hop-on/hop-off bus
- Visit to the **Belém** district
- Visit to the **Baixa** district
- Visit to the **Alfama** district (in the evening)
- Overnight stay in Lisbon

Day 3

Estoril and Cabo da Roca

Today, you will continue by car. Perhaps you can have the rental car brought to your hotel.

After breakfast, you will leave the city of Lisbon and continue your journey of Charming Portugal towards Sintra. To do so, you'll follow the Tagus River as much as possible to its estuary in the Atlantic Ocean. Continue and drive through Estoril, famous for its casino, and then on to Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of mainland Europe. Here, by the incessant surf, you can literally feel how the Portuguese at the time wondered what they would find across the sea. Another country or an abyss?



Quinta da Regaleira



After a short stop, the journey continues inland to Quinta da Regaleira. This house with a somewhat frightening architecture was built in the 20th century. The gardens surrounding it are enchanting and contain hidden tunnels and symbolism of ancient secret orders.

On the way to the next sights, we suggest having lunch at a 5-star hotel that used to be a palace and where you can still enjoy idyllic views accompanied by delicious food and wines.

Palace of Monserrate

After lunch, we continue to the Palace of Monserrate, a 19th-century mansion with Islamic-inspired architecture. The fine details of the palace are simply perfect thanks to the inspiration of Sir Francis Cook, an English merchant who had his ideal palace built. The quiet, peaceful gardens contain exotic plants from Sir Cook's personal collection.

After this visit, drive to your hotel in Sintra, where you can freshen up before dinner. Please note that in the city centre of Sintra it's not easy to get around by car due to busy streets and one-way traffic. So inform yourself very well in advance where you can park!



Summary of the day



- On route to Sintra, you'll pass through Estoril and stop at Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of mainland Europe.
- Visit Quinta da Regaleira and the Palace of Monserrate with in between the two visits, a lunch at a 5-star hotel.
- Overnight stay in Sintra

Day 4

Palácio Pena

One of the highlights of this special tour of Charming Portugal is undeniably the fairytale-like city of Sintra. As mentioned, due to busy streets and one-way traffic, it is difficult to drive around and park in and around Sintra. Therefore, after breakfast, it is best to take a city bus to visit the **Palácio da Pena** and the **Castelo dos Mouros**.

The **exterior** of the **Palácio da Pena** is painted in vibrant colours and offers a fusion of all kinds of artistic styles and architectural influences. The **interior** is an equally interesting profusion of styles. The woods surrounding the palace have a variety of unusual plants, hidden paths and great viewpoints.

Did it make you hungry? At the end of the palace visit, there is a cafeteria where you can have something to eat.



Castelo dos Mouros



Continue your special tour and visit the **Castelo dos Mouros**, a **Moorish castle built in the 9th century** as a fortified observatory. Its hilltop location amidst dense woodland is excellent for spectacular panoramic views of Sintra and far beyond!

Free afternoon and evening

After this visit, you have the whole afternoon and evening to enjoy the city centre of Sintra. Perhaps you want to have lunch, do some shopping or visit the **Palácio Nacional de Sintra** with in the evening an intimate dinner in a restaurant of your choice?





Summary of the day

- Visit **Palácio da Pena** and **Castelo dos Mouros** by city bus
- **Afternoon and evening** in the city centre of Sintra
- Overnight stay in the same hotel in Sintra

Day 5

Palace of Mafra

You will leave Sintra after breakfast and continue this Charming Portugal journey to another spectacular monument. The Baroque neoclassical **palace of Mafra**, built in the 18th century, was clearly influenced by the Italian style. This palace houses a monastery and a basilica. The palace has **1200 rooms** and the part where the monks stayed is huge. The palace could accommodate 300 monks, the royal family and their entourage and sometimes very many guests. The north tower and its wing were for the king, the south tower and wing for the queen.

A must see is the **library**, considered one of the most beautiful in the world and containing rare books, including the Chronicle of Nuremberg. As with the Joanina Library in Coimbra, which you will visit later during this trip, bats help preserve the books.

Tip: After your visit to the palace, you could visit a local vineyard, where you can enjoy a guided tour, wine tasting and gastronomic lunch.



Buddha Eden Garden

Your next stop is the **Buddha Eden Garden** which, at 35 hectares, is the largest oriental garden in Europe. Large Buddha statues, ornate pagodas, a real terracotta army and other intriguing sculptures can be admired here. A surprising encounter with the far east in the far west of Europe.

Óbidos

After enjoying this vast spectacle, you continue to drive to a town that time has forgotten. **Óbidos** is a medieval walled town known as the Villa das Rainhas (the town of the queens). With its charming, narrow cobbled streets, traditionally painted houses and robust castle, Óbidos offers a unique window into Portugal's past.

Soak up the atmosphere and wander in and out of interesting shops on the main street. Taste a Ginja (a cherry liqueur) served in a delicious chocolate cup. Delicious!

Afterwards you drive via **Foz do Arelho** to **Nazaré**, where you can have dinner and stay the night.



Summary of the day



- Visit to the Palace of Mafra
- Visit to the Buddha Eden garden
- Visit to Óbidos
- Overnight stay in Nazaré

Day 6

Alcobaça

No need to pack your bags yet, because tonight you'll sleep in the same hotel. After breakfast you leave for **Alcobaça**, where you can visit the **Santa Maria Cistercian Monastery**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Since the 12th century, the monastery has been a centre of learning and was known for its excellence in agriculture. The church, one of the largest in Portugal, has 2 royal tombs with an intriguing story!



Sítio of Nazaré



After this visit, and perhaps a cup of coffee or tea at one of the outdoor terraces in the main square around the monastery, you drive to **Sítio**, the district that towers above Nazaré. There, you can enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of the city, the beach and the Atlantic Ocean. The church is also worth a visit, if only for the **black Madonna** and the legend that accompanies it.

Nazaré is synonymous with extreme surfing. At the infamous North Beach (Praia do Norte), world records for surfing the highest waves are still being recorded. Do you know who holds the world record? Just surf it! On the internet, of course.

São Martinho do Porto

The healthy sea air must have made you hungry, so high time for lunch and combine it with a visit to São Martinho do Porto. While enjoying your dishes and maybe some wine, you'll have a nice view of the sandy, horseshoe-shaped bay, which attracts thousands of tourists every year during the summer.

After lunch, you can drive back to Nazaré via the coastal route. The road is narrow at times, so be careful. Making a stop to admire the ocean views is a very good idea here!

Of course, you can also choose to stay in Nazaré, have lunch there, stroll along the promenade, do some shopping or have a drink at an outdoor café. Be sure to take a walk along the coastline, where you can still see **women in traditional clothing**, drying locally caught fish in the sun.



Summary of the day



- Visit the Monastery of **Alcobaça**
- Visit to the **Sítio** of Nazaré
- Possible lunch in **São Martinho do Porto**
- A lazy afternoon in Nazaré
- Overnight stay in Nazaré

Day 7

Batalha

Pack your bags, because after breakfast you will drive to **Batalha** to visit the **Santa Maria da Vitória Monastery**, another monument that belongs to the **UNESCO World Heritage** List and a stunning example of Portuguese and European architecture. Its construction lasted more than 150 years and even after so much time, the church was never fully completed. Through 15 decades, you will recognise different architectural styles in the building, including Gothic, Manueline (the typical Portuguese style) and even Renaissance.

After this visit, this wonderful tour of Charming Portugal continues inland to Fátima, where you can have lunch.



Fátima

Fátima is a well-known Catholic place of pilgrimage. Admire the huge square with the original church where the shepherd children were buried, the open chapel with the statue of Mary and the modern cathedral.

Tomar

You then continue to **Tomar**, the land of the Knights Templar, to visit the **Convento do Cristo**, again a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Afterwards, you can take a short walk in the historic city centre and the park.





Summary of the day

- Visit to the Monastery of **Batalha**
- Visit to **Fátima**
- Visit to **Tomar** and the **Convento do Cristo**
- Overnight stay in **Tomar**

Day 8

Conímbriga

Today, you drive north to **Conímbriga** to visit the **Roman ruins**. Excavations only started at the beginning of the 20th century and the entire Roman city has not yet been mapped out. However, you can already enjoy the many beautiful mosaics, city walls that have largely remained intact, ruins of Roman villas, the Castellum Divisorium, the forum and more.



Coimbra



You then depart for **Coimbra**, home to one of the oldest universities in Europe. Here you will visit the **old university with its baroque Joanina library**, built at the beginning of the 18th century. To this day it remains one of the richest and most opulent libraries in Europe. Only small groups of visitors can enter the library at once. That way, the atmospheric and conservation conditions are not compromised. When buying your entry ticket, you will be given a time to enter the Joanina library. Be sure to be on time. If you are not there, your visit to the library will be cancelled.

After lunch, take a **stroll** through the lower and/or upper part of the city of Coimbra. And maybe before dinner, you might want to do some shopping!

Summary of the day

- Visit to the Roman ruins of Conimbriga
- Visit to Coimbra, the old university and Joanina library
- Overnight stay in Coimbra



Day 9

Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela



On the ninth day of this special trip through Charming Portugal, your feet can rest a bit, because after breakfast, you will drive to the Serra da Estrela region. So, enjoy and admire the beautiful Portuguese nature. On the way to this beautiful natural park, you'll pass some slate villages. If you wish, you can stop at a local farm for a wine and cheese tasting.

Along the way, stop whenever you want, so you can enjoy the sights, the sounds, the smells... and capture the beautiful surroundings in photos.

For the overnight stay, a Pousada in the Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela might be a nice idea. In this Pousada, you can also enjoy a delicious dinner. There are, of course, other options for an overnight stay.

Summary of the day

- Visit the Serra da Estrela region
- Optional: Wine and cheese tasting
- Overnight stay in the Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela, possibly in a Pousada



Day 10



Rio Mondego from its source in Serra da Estrela

Welcome to the Rio Mondego, the largest river flowing across Portugal from its source to its mouth. After breakfast, you'll cross Portugal from east to west. To do this, you'll follow the river from its source in the Serra da Estrela along the Serra do Buçaco to Aveiro.

Aveiro

Aveiro is sometimes called the Portuguese Venice because of its canals. Even though it is much smaller than Venice or Bruges, it is still fun to take a boat trip. After the boat trip and a lunch in a restaurant of your choice, you can continue exploring the town to your heart's content. Maybe you want to buy some souvenirs or just relax.

For dinner, there are plenty of restaurants with dishes that offer the true taste of Aveiro.



Summary of the day



- Drive along the **Rio Mondego** and through the **Serra do Buçaco**
- Boat trip in **Aveiro**
- Free afternoon in **Aveiro**
- Overnight stay in **Aveiro**

Porto

We hope you enjoyed a good night's sleep, because today, after breakfast, you will continue this special tour of Charming Portugal to the city of Porto. On the internet, you are sure to find numerous examples for walking routes in the city. Or plan your walk along all the highlights of the city you want to see. Perhaps you'll manage to visit the world-famous **Lello** bookshop, where according to insiders, J.K. Rowling found the inspiration for her Harry Potter books.



Port wines

In Porto, you can hardly avoid **tasting port wines**! This is perfectly possible across the Douro River where you will find many **adegas**. So, enjoy this opportunity for the rest of the day or do some shopping.

Summary of the day

- Walk along the highlights of the **city of Porto**
- Opportunity to taste **port wines**
- Overnight stay in Porto.



Day 12

Possibility of a cruise on the Douro river

Today you can choose to experience a cruise on the Douro River. There are various possibilities: from short trips to a full-day cruise with lunch included.



Admire the unique views of the valleys, the vineyards and the magnificent panoramas from the Douro. Be charmed by the typical steep terraces carved out of the green hills. You can almost feel the grapes ripening on the vines! And why not try some Douro wine?

A perfect ending to this special tour through 'Charming Portugal'.

Summary of the day

- Free day to enjoy a cruise on the Douro river
- Overnight stay in Porto.



Day 13

Porto Airport



Today, you might say goodbye to Portugal as you go to Porto airport for your flight home. Of course, you can choose to stay a bit longer ... and spend some time at the beach to rest after this fascinating trip.

Summary of the day:

- To Porto airport

Good to know

Services by Jinah Trans Portugal

Since we cannot offer the themed tours as a service any longer, we are happy to share all these tips for free!

The services by Jinah Trans in Portugal are:

- Airport transfers from Lisbon airport to the Silver Coast region, and back
- Day trips in the Silver Coast region and more inland

Book well in advance! Why?

Making your reservation in advance is always necessary! Jinah Trans' airport transfer service and [day trips with private driver](#) have become very popular over the years. Therefore, book well in advance so we don't have to disappoint you.

Airport transfers can be booked online. If you don't want to order online, send us an e-mail. Also contact us if you want to plan a day trip. We will be happy to assist you!

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