

Portugal and the Azores

Departs 1st
September 2023

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





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Twin-share, excluding
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PORTUGAL AND THE AZORES

Portugal is a traveller's dream. You'll find fortified towns with cobblestoned streets, well-preserved castles dating back to the medieval period, glorious beaches, food and wine to die for and magnificent coastal and inland scenery. It has no less than 15 UNESCO-listed cultural and natural sites.

On our small group tour to this fascinating country, you will not only visit the best on offer on the mainland, but you'll also visit the isles off the coast – Madeira, Sao Miguel, Faial, and Pico in the Azores. The scenery on these volcanic islands will take your breath away, as will the fresh seafood at the numerous fishing villages on the coast. All-the-more fascinating when you consider this tiny country is just 92,000 square kms - meaning it can fit into Australia over 82 times. The fact that it is a small country, means getting around and seeing the core sites is easy. In the morning you can be on a beach, by lunchtime in the mountains and in the afternoon, a vineyard! Plus, Portugal is relatively inexpensive in comparison with some of her European neighbours – especially the wine.

Once a medieval superpower due to its superior navigational skills, Portugal has history at every turn. It was occupied by the Romans, the Celts, The neighbouring Moors and Christians. Today, the country is primarily a Catholic society with over 80% of the 10.5 million inhabitants, identifying as Catholic. Portuguese is the 6th most spoken language in the world, mainly due to the colonisation of countries like Brazil, Angola, Mozambique and even parts of India and the sub-continent.

On our small group tour to this fascinating country, you will not only visit the best places on the mainland, you'll also visit the Isles in the Atlantic - the Azores. The scenery on these volcanic islands will take your breath away, as will the fresh seafood at the numerous fishing villages on the coast.

Grab your camera, hat, sunglasses, bathers and appetite!



**Day 1, Friday 1st September
IN TRANSIT**

Depart Australia for our flight to Lisbon (flights to be confirmed but likely to be in the evening). Most likely arrival will be around lunch time on the 2nd September). *Meals in flight*



**Day 2, Saturday
2nd September
LISBON**

Welcome to the sunniest city of Europe – Lisbon. On arrival, transfer to the hotel for a rest after your long journey.

Then, we're off for a brief tour of the city and its environs. We'll visit the Belém district for afternoon tea where we can admire the Jeronimos Monastery a fine example of the most characteristic style of Portuguese architecture. After trying the famous "Pasteis de Belém" custard tart, we will stop to view Belém Tower and the Monument to the Discoveries. Tonight, we will enjoy a welcome dinner near the hotel. *D*

**Day 3, Sunday
3rd September
LISBON – SINTRA –
CABO DA ROCA –
QUELUZ – LISBON**



We'll begin the day with early breakfast and departure for Pena Palace, an astonishing castellated building of the 19th century. Next we'll take a tour around the fairytale village of Sintra, with an opportunity to wander the streets of the picturesque town and enjoy lunch in one of the local cafés. After lunch we'll head to Roca Cape, the western most tip of continental Europe. We continue towards Queluz to visit Queluz Palace, a prime example of a style in which appearance and open spaces were revered. The Palace is sometimes compared to Versailles, because of its elegant facades, its beautiful gardens and baroque fountains, statues and secluded location. Queluz Palace is nevertheless uniquely Portuguese in its scale and artistic spirit. We return to the hotel in Lisbon late in the afternoon and freshen up before meeting for dinner. Overnight in Lisbon. *B/D*

 **Day 4, Monday 4th September**
LISBON – EVORA – SAGRES

After breakfast we'll make our way through the world's largest cork tree region, for a journey into the past. In Evora, capital of the province of Alentejo, we'll visit to the ruins of the Roman Temple, the Romanesque Cathedral, the St Francis church with its Bones Chapel and the university. A walk around the streets is a wonderful way to enjoy this UNESCO-listed town. Enjoy a lunch in a café of your choice in the quaint shopping precinct. After lunch we'll travel south to the Algarve region, the southernmost region of Portugal where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic. We arrive into Sagres late in the afternoon and will have dinner at the hotel. **B/D**

 **Day 5, Tuesday 5th September**
SAGRES – LAGOS – COIMBRA


After breakfast the group will visit "Cabo de São Vicente" with its lighthouse, then Sagres Fortress where reality and myth merge in the memories of Infante D. Henrique dating from the time of his navigational school. Classified as a national monument, the original fortress of the Infante D.



Henrique, from the 15th Century, was destroyed during the raids of Sir Francis Drake from the southern coast of Spain. It was rebuilt during the 17th and the 18th Centuries.

Then head to Vila

do Bispo to enjoy the Southeast coast, before departing for the township of Lagos, an historical city, fishing port and important tourist centre. The walls and bulwarks of the city date from the 13th century to the 15th century and are the longest in the Algarve and there are still remains of the first slave market. After visiting the "Santo Antonio" Church (16thC -18thC), magnificently covered in carved Gold and Baroque woodwork we'll head due north towards the centre of the country. Dinner and overnight in Coimbra. **B/D**

 **Day 6, Wednesday 6th September**
FATIMA – COIMBRA – DOURO VALLEY


Coimbra has many things to see including one of the oldest Universities in Europe. We'll take a tour of the city including the famous Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas. The setting of this remarkable hotel is a wooded, lake-strewn estate, where the romantic memory still lingers of the tragic love affair between Royal Prince D. Pedro and the beautiful Inez de Castro, put to death by order of King and, to this day, mourned and sung by the poets. After lunch transfer to the Douro Valley, one of the country's main port production regions. Check in to our hotel for dinner. **B/D**

 **Day 7, Thursday 7th September**
DOURO VALLEY

After breakfast in the hotel, we'll enjoy a visit to the Gardens of Enoteca with a muscatel (sweet style of wine) and music. Then, we'll drive to the vineyards to see the wine making processes before having a tasting and lunch at the Quintra da Avesada winery. Then, you'll be able to participate in the grape crushing treading on the grapes to the sound of the locals singing. Later, the group will enjoy a short cruise on the Douro river. Dinner – if you can fit it in – will be at your leisure tonight. This promises to be an unforgettable day! **B/L**

 **Day 8, Friday 8th September**
DOURO VALLEY – BRAGA – GUIMARAES – PORTO

After breakfast, we make our way to Amarante and then the historic city of Braga. Founded by the Celts in 300 B.C. Braga later became a Roman administrative centre in 27 B.C. Bracara Augusta, as the Romans named it, is a bustling city which combines religious importance with modern commercial and industrial prosperity. We will take a walking tour of the historic township to visit the Cathedral, built over the period between the 12th-18th centuries), the Treasury and the Sacred Art Museum; the Museum at the Biscainhos Palace. We then visit the sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte, which features fabulous views of the city and boasts the spectacular monumental Baroque staircase to the sanctuary. After lunch and some time to wander the Braga shopping precinct, we visit the medieval Palace of the Dukes of Bragança (15th century) in Guimaraes. Guimaraes is reputedly Portugal's birthplace, with a medieval castle and walls housing a magnificently well-preserved historic centre. After our tour of the historic centre we will continue to Porto for dinner at the hotel. **B/L/D**

 **Day 9, Saturday 9th September**
PORTO

Today we'll discover Porto which will include a boat ride on River Douro.



Stroll around Porto's typical quarters including the "zona ribeirinha" and its bustling downtown. We'll visit the Stock Exchange Palace, the Roman-Gothic Cathedral, the Romanesque Church of Cedofeita, the Clérigos Tower, Oporto's exlibris, Church of São Francisco of Romanesque origin and with its gilded carvings, and the Church of Carmo, with its tiled facades. (Note, we will enter a selection of churches only). In the afternoon, enjoy the local "World of Wine" experience. Dinner will be at your leisure tonight. **B/L**



Day 10, Sunday 10th September
PORTO – FÁTIMA – ALCOBAÇA – ÓBIDOS
– LISBON

After breakfast the group will head south back to Lisbon, stopping at some must-see destinations along the way. Visit Fatima the Holy Marian Shrine, world famous pilgrimage site, where the Virgin Mary appeared to the three little shepherds for the first time on the 13th of May 1917. Proceed to Alcobaca where you will admire the Monumental Cistercian Abbey of Santa Maria, founded in 1152 (UNESCO Heritage listed). The next stop is Obidos, a small village completely surrounded by ancient defence walls with some precious monuments, fine towers and its medieval castle. Arrive back in Lisbon and check in to your hotel before heading out for dinner. Enjoy an evening to the sound of the melancholic music Fado. *B/D*



Day 11, Monday 11th September
LISBON – MADEIRA

Transfer to Lisbon airport to fly to Funchal airport on Madeira Island. Year-round sunshine and the warm spring temperatures make Madeira an exceptional retreat. The charm of the small villages and the cosmopolitan rhythm of the capital, Madeira, provides plenty of good reasons to set off and explore every corner of the island. You'll have a half-day tour planned which includes passing through the gardens of Sta. Catarina's Park and the city centre, visiting the Cathedral dating from the 15th century. Also visit the interesting farmers market, where flowers and fruits are in abundance. We will leave the Old Town in cable car up to the town of Monte, often compared to Sintra, as it has some of the most beautiful palaces of other centuries, its bucolic surroundings exude the charm of other epochs. Dinner is at leisure tonight so you can enjoy one of the many local restaurants on your own timetable. *B*



Day 12, Tuesday 12th September
MADEIRA

After breakfast, depart for the capital of Madeira: Visit of the Quinta Vigia, a 17th century house in Burgundy where Queen Adelaide of England and Empress Sissi stayed. Since then, it has been the "Matignon" of Madeira. Tour an embroidery factory where you'll see the work that is carried out in the workshop. Then on to the Funchal market where you will discover the stalls of vegetables, exotic fruits (mangoes, passion fruits, guavas, papayas, etc ...), beautifully arranged around the central patio. Note the women in traditional Madeiran costume offer an assortment of beautiful Madeira flowers at the entrance. Then visit the fish market where tuna takes pride of place. Finally, the group will visit a winery to taste the different varieties of Madeira. Lunch today is included in a local restaurant. Then, for those up to it, this afternoon comprises a fabulous walk! The route begins in Boa Morte, among the terraced cultivation

grounds, along the Levada do Norte, while enjoying magnificent views of the southwest coast. Your guide will provide further details at the time so you can determine if this is for you. In short, it's about 10km's and will take about 3-4 hours depending on the fitness of the group. (Good walking shoes and clothes required). *B/L*



Day 13, Wednesday 13th September
MADEIRA – WHALE WATCHING – LEVADA WALK

After breakfast you'll be transferred (without guide) to town for a brief presentation on dolphins and whales before reaching the port and leaving for an extraordinary experience! Accompanied by a marine biologist, you will go out to sea for about 2 hours aboard a fast boat to observe these wonderful marine mammals. Then, you'll take a walk of about 2 hours (easy to medium level) along the "levadas", irrigation canals, winding the mountain for more than 2000 km, to irrigate agricultural land. (Good walking shoes and clothes required). You'll return to your hotel in the afternoon with any down time at leisure. A "farewell to Madeira" dinner is planned at a traditional restaurant with traditional singing and dancing. *B/L/D*



Day 14, Thursday 14th September
MADEIRA – SAO MIGUEL

After breakfast we transfer to Madeira airport for our flight to Ponte Delgado on the Island of Sao Miguel in the Azores Archiplego (flight to be advised). The Archipelago of the Azores is composed of nine volcanic islands situated in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean, which is approximately 1500 km from the European coast and 3900 km from the North American coast. Depending on our flight arrival, we will take a brief walking tour of Ponta Delgada and its main attractions. The tour will include visits to the main church, market, the Senhor Santo Cristo Church, São José, and Praça Gonçalo Velho. Overnight in Ponte Delgado. Dinner at the hotel. *B/D*



Day 15, Friday
15th

September
SETE CIDADES

You'll be collected from your hotel after breakfast for a tour to vista do rei, where you'll have the

opportunity to admire one of the most well-known panoramic post cards from the Azores Islands, the above-view of Sete Cidades Green and Blue Lake. Descending to the village, you'll stop at Cerrado das Freiras with another breath-taking view of the Crater Lake. A brief stop at the bridge between the lakes before arriving in the Village centre. Located in the centre of a massive volcanic crater, this is the ex-libris of the island where is located the famous Blue and Green Lake. Before returning to P. Delgada, will



have the opportunity for a 1h kayak tour at Sete Cidade Lagoon. Lunch and your afternoon are free to stroll the town or enjoy as you wish. **B/D**

 **Day 16, Saturday 16th September**
FURNAS

This morning we head towards the village of Lago, stopping at one of the island's most beautiful viewpoints in the Azores at Pico do Ferro. Admire the panoramic view of the entire crater, including the village and the Furnas Lake before we continue to Gorreana, the only industrial tea plantation in Europe. We'll visit the factory and store where we can taste (and purchase) the famous Azorean black or



green tea. Next we'll head to Lagoa das Furnas observing the traditional "cozido das furnas", the furnas casserole, made in the underground hot steaming geysers. Having seen how it is cooked we will move to the restaurant 'Cozido das Furnas' in the village to enjoy the fabulously generous feast that has just been cooked in the 'furnas'! Later in the afternoon, free time to walk off lunch before returning to Ponte Delgado for the evening and a dining at a café of your choice in the old town. **B/L**

 **Day 17, Sunday 17th September**
PONTA DELGADA – FAIAL ISLAND – PICO ISLAND

Today you'll transfer back to the airport for the flight to Faial Island (flight to be advised). On arrival to Horta airport, you'll be taken to the hotel for check-in and then you'll discover this magnificent island! We begin our tour by driving through the city of Horta. We'll stop at the scenic point of Espalamaca to view the harbour and all its



surroundings, followed by a visit to the Caldeira. The Caldeira is a large crater in the central part of the island, where we view the beautiful natural landscape. Our tour's next destination is the Capelinhos volcano area, where the volcano last erupted in 1958. Lunch will be served at a local restaurant then after, the group will take a walking tour of Horta - most famous for its cosmopolitan yacht harbour. Transfer to Pico by boat (about 30 minutes). Dinner is at your leisure tonight. **B/L**

 **Day 18, Monday 18th September**
PICO ISLAND

This morning the group will visit the whale factory and Adega da Buraca for an explanation of the local wine making process processing and crafts. There is also a cooper workshop, a blacksmith's tent, workshops linked to straw, wool and wicker with the aim of showing the visitor some activities related to wine. In addition, it has a traditional/industrial kitchen where jams and jams are made, produced from fruits from the winery itself. The cake and cornbread made here are served in another building where, in addition to these products, we have sausage, black pudding, cheese, yam, foods that are part of traditional Azorean dishes, which the visitor can taste. Lunch included at Adega da Buraca then in the afternoon, you will visit Lajes and the whale Museum (closed on Mondays – entry included), passing by Lagoa do Capitão. Return to Madalena by way of the south road. Visit the local cheese factory where we will have the opportunity to learn how to make/taste the cheese. Dinner at your leisure. **B/L**

Day 19, Tuesday
19th September
PICO ISLAND – LISBON

After breakfast, time permitting depending on flights, the group will have the opportunity



to observe some 24 species of cetaceans. This beach side activity is led by a team of professionals including biologists and watchmen. You'll fly back to Lisbon where you'll stay for your final night of the tour (flights to be advised). There's a farewell dinner planned at a local restaurant. **B/D**

Day 20, Wednesday 20th September
LISBON – LISBON AIRPORT

After breakfast you'll enjoy an early walking tour of Alfama and admire the outstanding Belvederes. Visit the lovely castle of São George and then transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**

Day 21, Thursday 21st September

In transit.

Day 22, Friday 22nd September

Arrive home.



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.