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## **Portugal in brief**

A quick guide to Portugal

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## Portugal in Brief A quick guide to Portugal

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## Introduction

It could be because of its rich history and heritage. It could be because of its people, famously welcoming to outsiders, and how it's consistently chosen by expats as one of the best places to live and work in the world.

It could be because of the way ancient traditions live side by side with modernity, the way its old cobblestone streets and shiny new urban areas seem to blend into a single experience that presents visitors with a unique mix of contemporary and traditional.

It could be because of the pristine beaches, the amazing coastline, the wonderful cuisine and the beautiful hotels and golf courses that make it one of Europe's most sought after tourist destinations.

Or it could be simply because it is one of the safest places on the Planet to raise your children, with virtually nonexistent crime and a stable political and economic environment, a member of the European Union for over 35 years, and part of Euro and Schengen zones.

It doesn't really matter if there is a single reason for it or because the mix is irresistible, but the fact remains that nowadays Portugal is undeniably one of the leading destinations for those who seek a new place to live or invest in this globalized World.

**It's time you learned what all the excitement is about. Join us in a path that will change your life.**



## History and Influence

Portugal was founded in the early 12th century (the first official recognition of the country's independence dates to 1143) and has the oldest standing national border in Europe, with virtually no significant changes since the late 13th century.

For an old country that has long been united by a common language and culture, with a geography that, before air travel shortened distances and brought the world together, made it somehow isolated from the rest of Europe, Portugal has always been surprisingly open to outside influences and culture.

When, in the under a century, from the mid 1400s to mid 1500s, Portuguese navigators opened the first maritime trade route between Europe and Asia, and brought a host of new and unknown food and delicacies from the Americas to the World, including staples such as tobacco, tomatoes or chillies, what in fact happened were globalization's early days, the foundations for the mix of cultures, products and experiences that make today's globalized World.

But the Portuguese weren't just influencing World history, they were also laying the foundations for what is Modern Portugal, a unique blend of influences from around the world that can be seen in all aspects of its culture, from cuisine to architecture to the typically Portuguese curiosity and openness to other cultures.



Portuguese is the 6th most spoken language in the World, and is the official language to Brazil and six African countries (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé e Príncipe), former colonies with whom Portugal still keeps considerable economic and cultural ties. But Portugal's influence goes beyond Portuguese speaking countries, due to both its historical ties and ties to immigrant communities.

As the first European country to establish maritime trade routes to Asia, Portugal has a common history with countries such as Sri Lanka, India, China (where it held Macau, an offer by the Chinese emperors to thank the Portuguese for assistance in fighting piracy, until 1999) and Japan, where the Portuguese were the first Europeans to establish commercial and diplomatic ties.

Contemporary Portugal is a country of immigrants and the Portuguese have also established communities in over 100 countries in the World, and some estimates place the number of Portuguese immigrants around the World around 5 million (adding up to the 10 million permanent residents in the Country), with important communities in countries such the US, Canada and Brazil, as well as several European countries, particularly France, Switzerland, Germany, the UK.

## The country: Present and Future

A member of the European Union since 1986, Portugal has seen a remarkable development trajectory since 1974, when its current democratic system was established.

Before democracy and joining the European Economic Community (European Union's predecessor) the country lagged behind its current EU counterparts in human development in areas such as health and literacy rates.

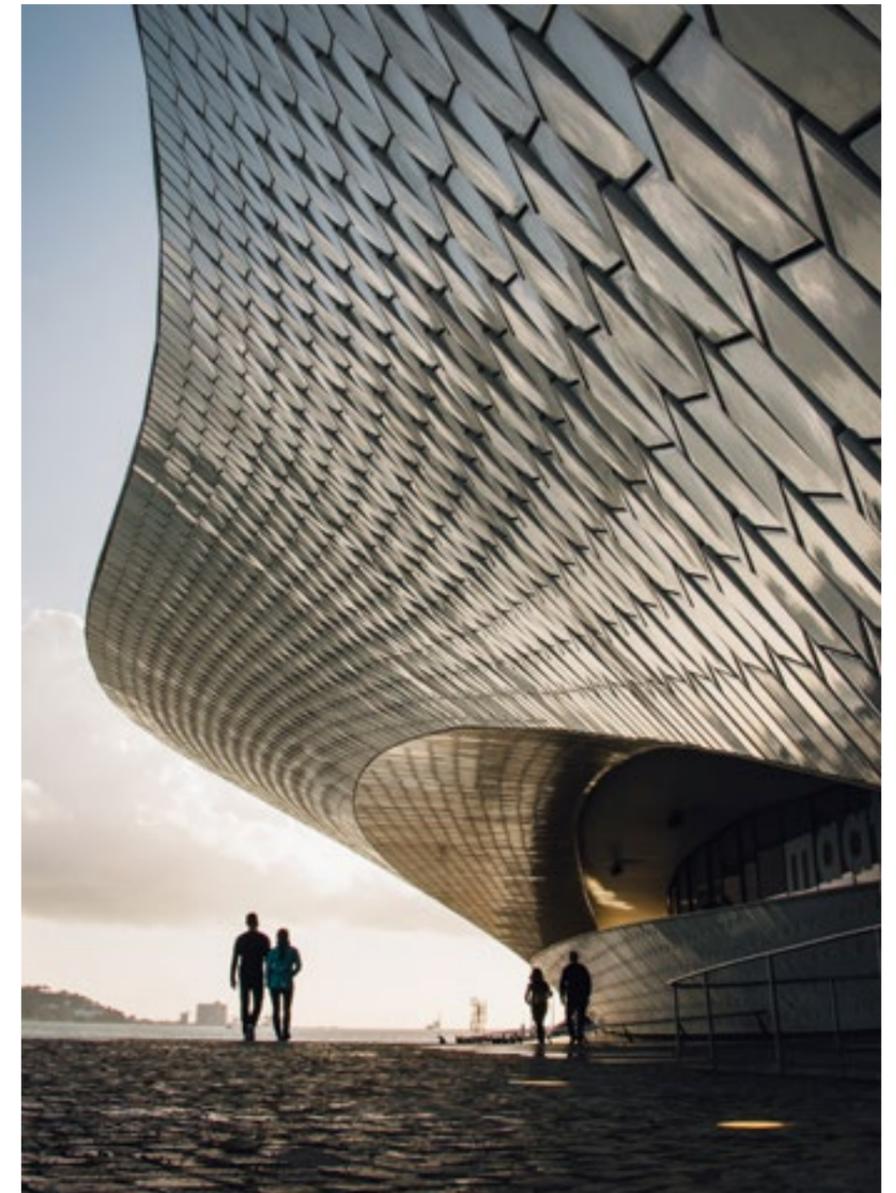
From 1986 to the present day Portugal's status has clearly progressed to a country with modern infrastructure and considerable progress in human development, with a highly educated population and one of the best public healthcare systems in the World, that earned the country a regular spot in the top 10 of lower infant mortality rates in the globe, a field where it lagged behind almost every other OECD country a mere 40 years ago.

This development has happened in a context of remarkable social harmony and security, with one of the lowest crime rates in the world. For the past few of years, Portugal's ranking in the Global Peace Index, published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), has been firmly established in the Top 5, being considered the 3rd and 4th most peaceful countries in the world for the past two years, surpassed only by Iceland, New Zealand and Denmark in last year's ranking.

The Portuguese have always been open to outside influences and welcoming to outsiders, and in the past decade or so the country has benefited from the trend in work globalization, with a growing number of high value professionals choosing a nomadic lifestyle and

companies making remote work easier, to attract a growing community of highly educated professionals and investors.

The good quality infrastructure, peaceful environment, the fact that the majority of Portuguese are comfortable with the English language and the affordable cost of living have also led both multinational companies to establish regional or international offices in Portugal and entrepreneurs to choose the country, particularly Lisbon and its vibrant startup scene, to launch new businesses.



## Geography

One of the most surprising and amazing discoveries Portugal has in the waiting for newcomers is the country's diverse landscape. While it is a relatively small nation, with under 900 Km (around 550 miles) from its Northern border in Minho to Algarve's coastline in the South, Portugal presents an unexpected variety of landscapes and possibilities for residents and travellers alike.

While a trip along Portugal's coastline can uncover literally hundreds of beaches, including some that aren't easily accessible by normal roads or vehicles and provide the kind of postcard image of pristine stretches of sand you'd more likely expect to find in tropical or exotic destinations, Portugal has a lot more to offer than its seaside areas.

The Northern part of the country is made of predominantly mountainous terrain, with one of its northernmost districts appropriately named "Trás os Montes" (that translates literally to beyond the hills).

It's in the high hills along the Douro river that you can find vineyards that are used to produce the famous Port wine, along with some with some world class red and white wines, where a unique combination of altitude, humidity and heat has helped establish one of the world's most ancient wine producing regions.

Apart from wine production, where Douro is a shiny example, most mountain ranges in Portugal are also natural preserve areas, and in places such as Gerês or Serra da Estrela you can find Nature in its purest form, with stunning landscapes with very low human presence that make this region a dream destination for all those looking for an immersion in nature, far from the noise and stress of urban areas. As you descend to the South the terrain becomes gradually closer to sea



level, and the mountains mutate into plains and lower hills, usually lavishly covered with a green mantle made either out of trees or agricultural areas.

When you cross the Tagus river, which is also seen as the division between the Central and Southern parts of the country, the landscape morphs once again, and the green of the trees and fields is progressively mixed with



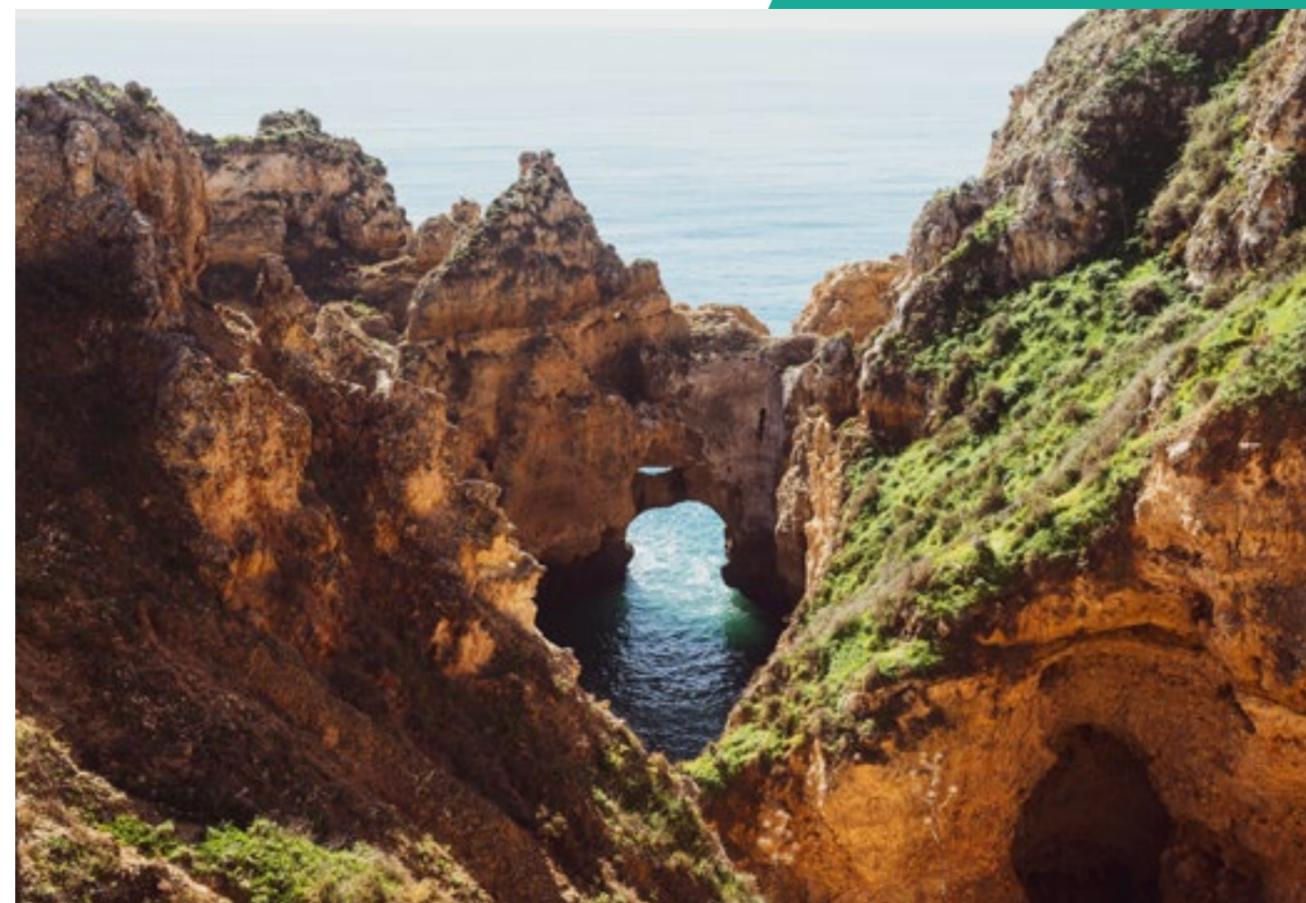
tones of yellow and light brown of wheat fields and oak tree forests, as hills become smaller and your eye can reach farther into the the horizon.

In Alentejo, the region between the greater Lisbon area and the Algarve, you'll find a different climate, much drier and warmer than in the North, and also a different ecosystem, with extensive fields of olive and oak trees, contributing to Portugal's status as one of the World's major olive oil producers and the world leader in cork production.

This very particular ecosystem, known as the montado, is also the breeding ground for the Iberian Pig, the species that makes possible one of the world's most appreciated delicacies, Iberian Ham, or pata negra.

After the vast plains and wide horizon of Alentejo that will remind seasoned travellers of some African landscapes, and after crossing yet another mountain range (Caldeirão or Mu), you'll arrive at the Algarve, one of the world's most well known tourist destinations.

In the Algarve it's hard not to come across the things you'd usually associate with vacations in Portugal, including pristine beaches, excellent golf courses and all-year long sunny weather, but if you move away from the main tourist attractions and areas it's easy to discover quite a few additional layers of interest, whether you are looking for historical and cultural landmarks, for traditional cuisine or to immerse yourself in nature.



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## Food and Agriculture

This huge variety of landscapes and ecosystems in such a small country also helps Portugal to have an enormous variety and wealth of food and agricultural products, and each region has its own brand of local cuisine that makes the most of local products, providing an unbelievable variety of choice for such a small country.

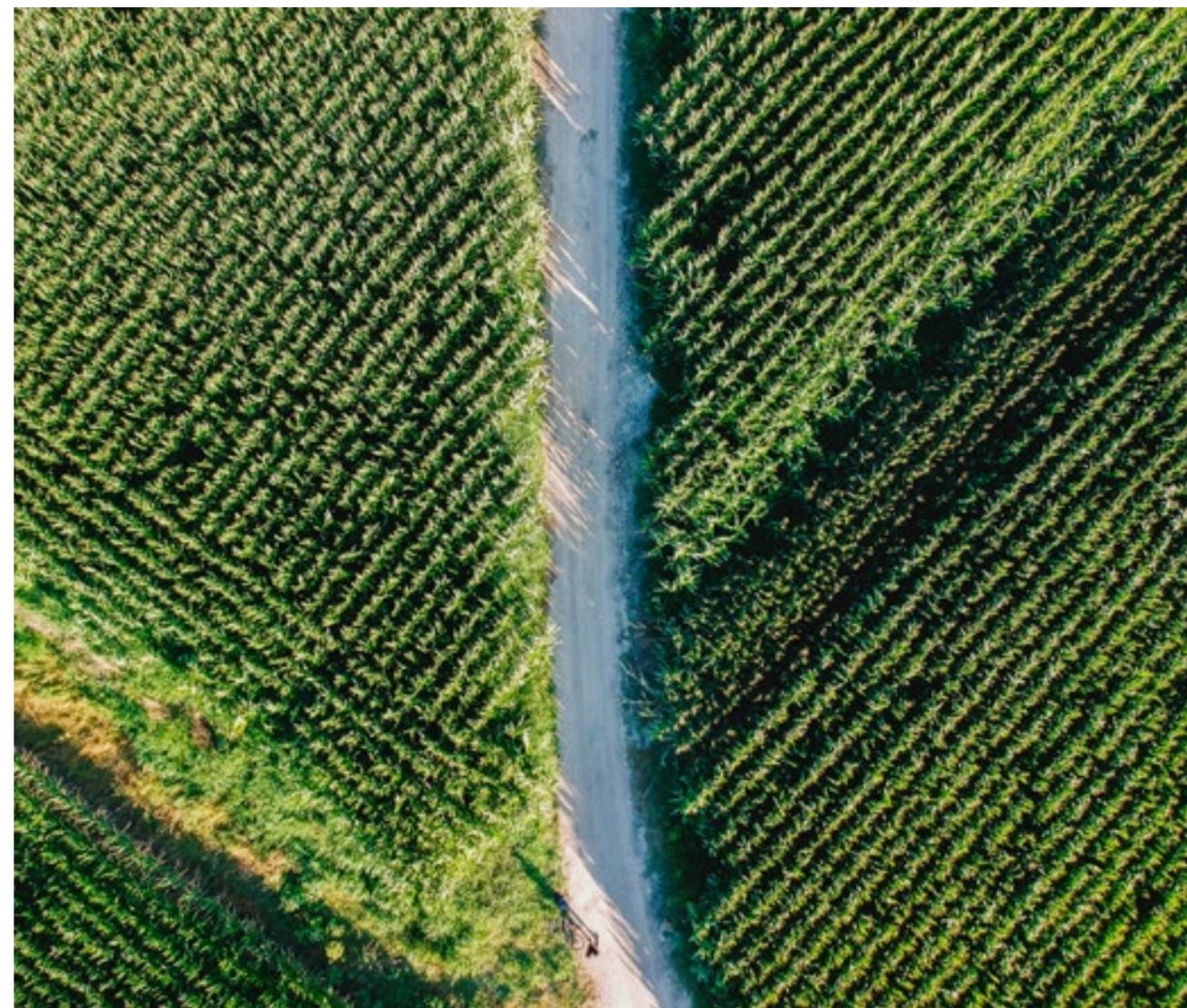
It should be noticed that the wealth of local products has been smartly combined by the Portuguese with the delicacies their sailors and tradesmen brought home along the centuries, creating a mix of mediterranean food and exotic ingredients and seasoning that is uniquely Portuguese.

While still produced mostly in small quantities, with low supply limiting its potential international reach, Portuguese wine is recognized as world class by knowledgeable wine insiders, with an unbeatable price-to-quality ratio.

Wine production follows a set of strict rules and regulations to ensure quality, including the mention of its producing region in the bottle. Amongst the Portuguese regions we'd highlight Douro and Alentejo, in the North and South of the country, respectively, but we encourage you to explore portuguese wine as a whole, as it's not hard to find hidden gems from other producing regions, including Bairrada, Dão and Estremadura.

The Portuguese also excel in the production of top-of-the-line olive oil, particularly in Alentejo and Trás-os-Montes regions.

Fruit and vegetables are plentiful and it's customary for locals to take pride in their region's typical productions, be it the oranges



and figs from Algarve, the world-renowned cherries from Beira, in the Northeast of the country, the unique Rocha pears from the Western region or the several region-specific varieties of apple that start filling grocery shops' shelves when the summer nears its peak.

And we're not even mentioning the quality and freshness of the fish you can find in any Portuguese restaurant or local market. The experience of eating charcoal grilled fresh fish in a small traditional

restaurant in one of Portugal's coastal towns or villages, where it's not uncommon for the owner to be a former fisherman, is certainly something no one should live without experiencing at least once in their lifetime.

## Cities and Regions

Portugal is a country of 10 million people with most of the population living in coastal areas and cities.

The greater Lisbon area concentrates around 20% of the country's population, and the North is more densely populated than the South. The largest region in the Country, Alentejo, which has the same territory as Belgium, is sparsely populated, with a population of under 500.000, less than the residents in Lisbon's main district.

Good roads and infrastructure also means that it isn't hard to find isolated rural areas or small villages that provide a quiet lifestyle with a major city within an hour or less. In terms of cities some of Portugal's main highlights are:



### Lisbon

**Population: 547.000 (aprox.)**

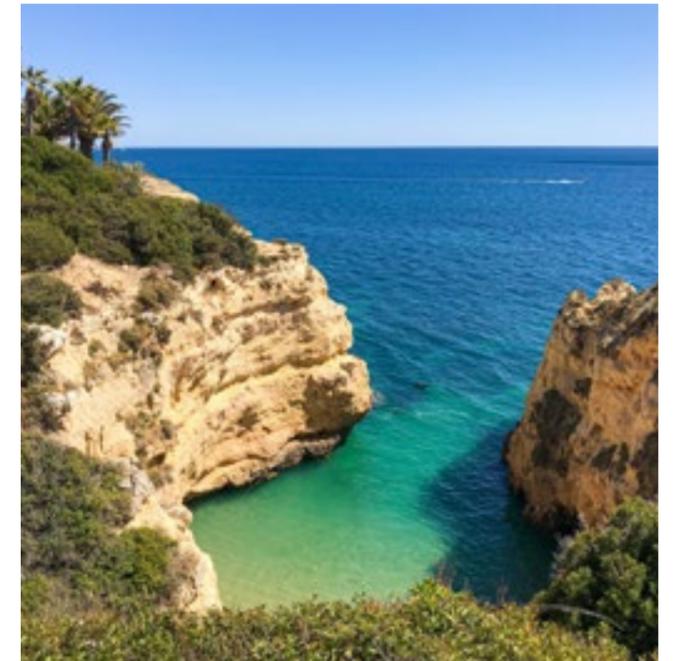
Lisbon is one of the most ancient cities in the world, and historians believe that early human settlements most likely began even before civilization itself. The city's history has always been part myth and legend and part historical evidence. The most common mention in Lisbon's mythology is that it was founded by none other than Ulisses, the greek epic Odissey's main character.

The first archeological finds of civilized settlements are from the Phoenicians, a Southern Mediterranean people from what is nowadays Lebanon and Syria, around 1200 years before Christ. During the Roman era a settlement called Olisipo (which incidentally you might find sounds a bit both like Ulisses and the city's current name) was created where Lisbon now stands.

From the 8th to the 13th century Lisbon was, as most of the Iberian Peninsula, part of the Arab empire, and by the turn of the first millennium the city was a thriving trade and military hub with a population of over 100.000, at the same time when London or Paris had under 10.000 souls within their walls.

After being taken in the 13th century by Afonso Henriques, independent Portugal's first king, Lisbon took its place as the new country's capital, and would be the heart of Portuguese naval expansion, that brought to the city's shores people, culture and goods from all over the world, as 16th century Lisbon was the epicenter of the changes that would ultimately lead to modern globalization.

If there is one thing we can all say about Lisbon is that it is anything but dull. From the maze of narrow streets near the castle which reminds you of an old Arab medina to the classical 18th century architecture of Baixa (downtown) area, from the early 20th century neighborhoods in central Lisbon to the avant garde Eastern part of the city, built from the late 20th century on the back of the 1998 International Exhibition, the city blends history and modernity, tradition and innovation, local and global in its own unique way.



## Porto

**Population: 237.000**

The history of what is now Porto begins in the late Bronze age, with a small Celtic settlement known as Cale, where the Roman empire later built a port (portus in Latin) that ultimately led the village to become known as portus calle.

This name lasted throughout time and helped name the County founded in 1096 by Afonso VI of Castile, with Porto as its capital. The territory was then given to Henry of Burgundy, a French noble and former crusader that had married the King's daughter, Teresa.

It was their son, Afonso Henriques, that conquered the county's independence and saw it recognized by the king of Castile and Leon, in 1143, therefore becoming Portugal's first king. Throughout the times Porto would solidify its status as Portugal's North main city, and would give birth to many of the country's major historical figures.

Amongst many illustrious Portuguese in Portugal's history a name comes first and foremost, Prince Henry, son of King John I of Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster, the English King's daughter, whose wedding in the Porto Sea with the Portuguese

monarch sealed the Windsor treaty, still to this date the longest standing alliance between two sovereign states. The prince is known worldwide by historians as The Navigator for his pivotal role in laying the foundations for Portugal's maritime discoveries.

From the Celtic little village to the modern city of our days Porto kept evolving at a pace dictated by the expansion of its walls. Historians believe what is now seen as the city's initial wall, or *cerca velha* (old fence) was built on top of an older Roman wall, and some residual parts have remained to this day.

The next wall, concluded in 1370, and known as *Cerca Nova* (new fence) or *Muralha Fernandina* (because it was finished while King Fernando I sat in the throne) reportedly had around 9 meters high and a perimeter of 2,5 Km, protecting an area of over 44 hectares (around 110 acres)

From its inception a city of trade and business, the name Porto (Port) is known worldwide as the name of the fortified red wine that is Portugal's oldest and most well known export, and along the centuries the city always followed closely the world's progress, first of the flourishing trade during the Discoveries era and later, after the harsh times of Napoleon's invasion and the civil war of the early 19th century, as the stage for a wave of modernization in construction and infrastructure, that gave

the city iconic buildings and structures such as the Luis I and Maria Pia bridges across the Douro, the Campanhã train station or the first electric tram line, open to the public in 1895.

In Porto you will find a unique blend of tradition and modernity: a city that stands at the heart of an ancient country's History and national identity while at the same time is the center of a Portuguese region that has always excelled in entrepreneurship and openness to ideas from abroad, a place where a vibrant and cosmopolitan culture lives side by side with a special kind of pride for local history and traditions.

## Algarve

Portugal's most well known tourism destination, the Algarve is usually associated with sunny holidays at the beach, but there is much more to it when you look more closely.

Although the whole region has a shoreline, its coast is anything but monotonous. On the Vicentine Coast, to the West, the landscape is dominated by high cliffs, with a few beaches here and there, some of which turn out to be well-kept secrets due to how difficult it is to gain access.

From Sagres, where the famous naval school was established in the 14th century, and served as a base for the Portuguese Discoveries, the coast becomes progressively less rugged, cliffs start making way for gentle hills, small bays begin to appear and the sand sections gradually increase in size.

When you get to the Ria de Alvor and further west to the Ria Formosa, there are wetlands whose ecosystems constitute a Natural preserve, where there is almost no construction or human presence and it is still possible to live surrounded by the overwhelming beauty of nature in its pure and untarnished state.



When the Western part of Algarve (Barlavento) gives way to the Eastern part (Sotavento), on the edge of Albufeira, a well know hotspot for those seeking fun and nightlife, the shoreline has already left behind the memory of the cliffs and ridges that mark the coastal line around Sagres, and is dominated by extensive stretches of fine and clear sand, where it is still possible to discover wide strips of beach without a single occupant.

Since the 1960s, the Algarve has experienced a great development of tourism, benefiting from its favorable geography, the undeniable natural beauty and the climate, with many hours of sun and few days of rain throughout the year, of its water always at an inviting temperature, usually between 21 and 25 degrees Celsius (high 60s-mid 70s Fahrenheit), and also from how over the last 50 years the region has been endowed with excellent tourism infrastructures in the form of hotels, golf and sports and leisure.

### Algarve's History

The earliest historical records of occupation of the Algarve date back to the Roman Empire: the first permanent inhabitants were the Conii, a tribe that was ethnically and linguistically close to Celtic and Lusitanian people, with strong links to the Tartessians, Iberian natives that lived in the area that spans from the Mediterranean coast of Andalusia

(near Cadiz) to the east of the present Algarve.

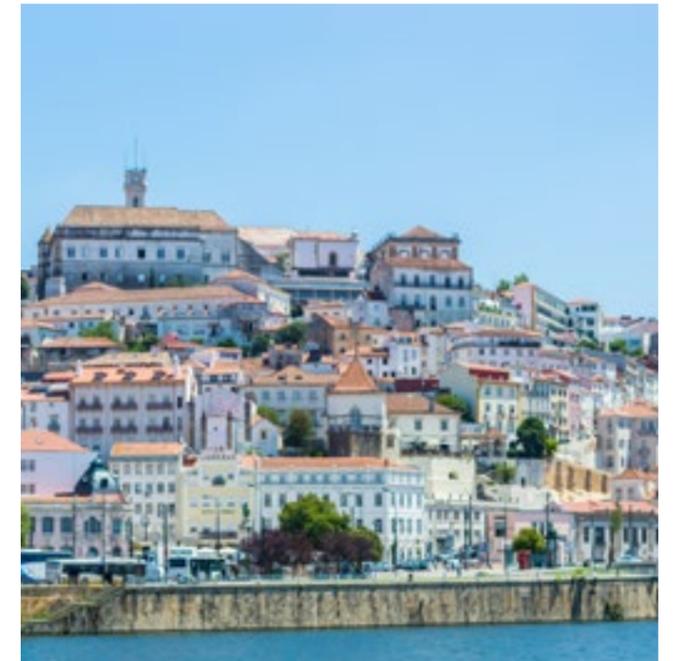
The geographical situation and the closeness to the sea led to the region being linked to the Mediterranean civilizations, such as the Greek or the Carthaginian. With the rise of Rome the occupation of Hispania took place, but the Conii managed to maintain a reasonable degree of autonomy and a good relationship with the new occupants, but that peace would end in 141 BC when an attempt of revolt against Rome was defeated by the legions of Fabius Maximus Servilianus, leading to the definitive assimilation of the territory and its occupants by the Roman Empire.

With the fall of Rome the Iberian Peninsula was also invaded and occupied by northern and central European tribes such as the Vandals, Alans, Suevi and Visigoths, but centuries as part of the Roman Empire and the increasing force of Christianity, which arrived in this region around the fourth century of our era, led to the region's culture of not being greatly altered by the new wave of occupants.

But it would be history's next wave, with the arrival of the Arabs in 715, whose stay lasted for over 500 years, that would leave the deepest mark, starting with the name we now call the Algarve, which derives from the Arabic 'Al Gharb ', or 'the West '(used to designate the western part of Al Andalus).

Throughout the five centuries of Arab presence the region varied between periods of conflict and economic development, and there were reports that when Silves, the main Arab town in Algarve in this period, was conquered in 1189 by the Portuguese king D. Sancho, the city was "ten times greater" and more fortified than the city of Lisbon, which even discounting some of the chronicler's possible exaggeration is impressive, because at the time of its conquest by the first Portuguese King, D. Afonso Henriques, in 1147, Lisbon would have about 100,000 inhabitants, some 10 times more people than Paris or London at the time.

Arab rule would end in 1249, when King Afonso III took possession of Faro in a relatively peaceful manner, but five centuries of presence have influenced Portuguese language, architecture, gastronomy and culture in general, contributing to make the Algarve in what has always been through the ages, a crossroads of people and cultures that has always managed to maintain its very own identity and mentality while remaining welcoming to outsiders.

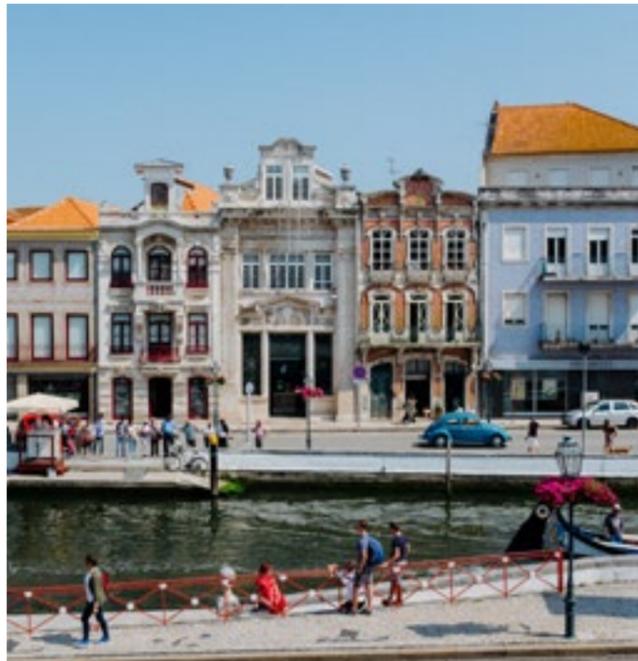


### Coimbra

**Population: 143.000 (aprox.)**

The main city in Portugal's central region, Coimbra is generally seen as Portugal's 3rd most important city and was the national capital until the mid 13th century, before Lisbon took its place.

Located about 200 Km (around 120 miles) from Lisbon and 100 Km from Porto, Coimbra is home to one of the oldest universities in Europe, founded in 1290. The University has naturally been a major influence in shaping Coimbra's culture, architecture and personality to this day making it at the same time a place of tradition and culture and also a city that celebrates youth and irreverence. Its ancient and traditional side, with the old churches and buildings, and narrow cobblestone streets in its old quarters, live side by side with a modern and youthful city, with it's busy riverside cafés and nightlife and vibrant culture.



## Aveiro

**Population: 78.000 (aprox.)**

Known as 'Portugal's little Venice', due to its waterways and canals, Aveiro is a symbol of how old and new live in harmony in Portugal. Located in the northern coast, just 70 Km (45 miles) South of Porto, Aveiro has always had a close relationship with the sea, with its traditional fishing communities and delicious seafood cuisine, as well as ovos moles, an egg-based sweet delicacy that is popular throughout the country. Side by side with these ancient traditions you will find one of Portugal's main technological hubs, as the local University has long been recognized as one of the country's main innovation centers in technology-related fields, particularly computer science.



## Caldas da Rainha

**Population: 52.000 (aprox.)**

Located around 95 Km (60 miles) to the North of Lisbon, Caldas da Rainha is one of the main cities (along with Leiria, the district's capital) in the Portuguese Western region. What the locals simply call "the West" is an area that includes some of Portugal's best agricultural terrain, and a good part of the country's production of fruit, vegetables and animal products, as well as some of its main agro-industrial companies.

But Caldas da Rainha is not just the typical urban heart of an agricultural region, it has also a rich cultural and historical heritage of its own, including landmarks such as the Bordalo Pinheiro museum, where you can find beautiful pottery and handcraft works that are both unique to this region and an integral part of Portuguese culture as a whole.

Caldas da Rainha is a mere 10 Km from the beach (Foz do Arelho), and also a short distance from the Obidos lagoon, where you can find the beautiful medieval village of the same name, meaning it has to offer a range of different possibilities for those who consider living here, from an old country farm to a modern design villa in a golf resort to an apartment in a traditional urban setting.



## Setúbal

**Population: 121.000 (aprox.)**

Setúbal is the main city in the region to the South of Lisbon. In a valley under the beautiful Arrábida mountain range (that you can see in the horizon to the South in most popular Lisbon sightseeing spots) the region has a proud history made of its special relationship with the Sado river and the nearby Sea.

The locals like to say that there is nowhere in the World where you can find better fish than in Setúbal, and many of the local restaurants have elevated charcoal grilling to an art form, something no one should live without experiencing.

Moving up the Sado river to the Arrábida range you'll find a beautiful landscape of beaches and hills with nature in its purest form, a natural preserve that has in great part been shielded from the effects of human presence.

If you decide to cross the river heading South, you will find the Troia peninsula, where over two thousand years ago, the Romans established one of their empire's main salted fish production plants. Nowadays Tróia, along with nearby Comporta, is one of the country's main destinations in terms of high end tourism and living.

Troia and Comporta have a well balanced mix of traditional high end tourism, with its modern hotels, casino and marina and a more environmentally friendly offer of eco-resorts and other properties designed with sustainability in mind.

From Troia to nearby Sines, 70 Km (45 miles) to the South you will find the largest continuous strip of sand in the whole of Europe, so if you are willing to go off road by car, or simply use a boat, It's easy to find yourself in a deserted beach with no one on sight.



## Braga

**Population: 181.000 (aprox.)**

As it's common in Portugal, Braga is a city that blends contrasts and makes something new out of the old ways, being at the same time ancient, respectable and serious and young, modern and vibrant.

One side is what you'd expect from Portugal's oldest city, established over 2000 years ago by the Romans under the name Bracara Augusta. The old stone buildings, the multitude of beautiful churches (Braga was under direct administration of the Roman Catholic church for a period during the 11th and 12th centuries, and due to that is known to this date as the City of the Archbishops) around the city, the weight of history and tradition that you can almost feel in the air.

But cities are above all living organisms, and Braga is no exception, and there is one factor that influences what the city is nowadays, even more than its rich history, specifically its particular demography: Braga may be the oldest city in the country, but it is also the one with the youngest population, with an average age that is lower than anywhere else in Portugal

This is partly due to the fact that the local University has managed to attract outside students with a high quality offer, particularly IT and Technology, that in turn helped make Braga into a vibrant entrepreneurial hub, creating a virtuous cycle that allows young people to establish roots in the region and attract recruits from other parts of the country and abroad.

This wave of innovation didn't appear spontaneously or without warning though: before the advent of IT and even before Braga had a cutting edge university, the region was already one of Portugal's main industrial hubs. After some hard times in the 1970s and 1980s, after Portugal joined the EU, a new generation of industrialists also helped renew traditional sectors, such as shoemaking, where factories took advantage of local production know-how to establish Portugal as one of the world's leading producers of high end shoes, second only to Italy.



# Infrastructures

Since the establishment of democracy in 1975 and joining the former European Economic Community, nowadays known as European Union, Portugal experienced an amazing development in its main infrastructure, which is now second to almost no other country in Europe.

A modern network of over 3000 Km (1600 miles) of highways connects the entire country, allowing for fast and comfortable travel by car or bus, and although the train network doesn't cover the whole territory with the same efficiency it is easy to find modern and comfortable trains to link most major cities, particularly between Lisbon and Coimbra, Braga and Porto, in the Center and North, or Algarve, in the South, that have an express train several times a day.

As a relatively small country domestic air travel isn't common but the choice exists: apart from the international airports in Lisbon, Porto and Faro (in the Algarve) a network of smaller airports and companies allow you to travel by air to most of the country.

In terms of healthcare you can find a good network of both public and private Hospitals, with world-class facilities and doctors in places such as Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra, with the Medical School an integral part of the local University, providing a steady supply of well trained specialists and general practitioners.

Portugal also has some cutting edge medical research facilities. The Champalimaud foundation, that specializes in the areas of Cancer and Vision treatments is one of the world's best research and treatment centers in these fields, and its iconic building in Lisbon's river-front houses some of the world's best researchers and scientists.



When the 1980s started Portugal was behind most Western European countries, but what could be a disadvantage ended up being one of the country's main assets, as it was able to enjoy the late adopter advantage of starting with the latest technology and possibilities in several fields.

That means that, amongst other things, Portugal has one of the world's most advanced ATM networks — not only ATMs are ubiquitous but the network is unified (you can use any card in any machine) and mostly free to use, but also allow for an enormous range of other services, such as paying utility bills, buying train or concert tickets or charging prepaid mobile phones — and one of the highest mobile phone usage rates in the world, with an excellent voice and data coverage throughout its territory.

#### Useful contact information

**ACP** - Portuguese Automobile Club

**Brisa** - Portuguese Highways

**CP** - Portuguese Trains

**SATA Airlines** (domestic)

**TAP** - Air Portugal

**Buses** - Express Network

**SEF** - National Immigration Service

All numbers local, add **(+351)** if dialing from outside Portugal



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# Cost of Living

Portugal offers excellent quality of life and a safe and stable environment while maintaining a really affordable cost of living. Portuguese average income is amongst the lowest within European Union, so if you have either a well paid job in the Country or earn your income outside you will find a good life is less expensive than in most comparable countries.

Within Portugal there are regional differences to consider. The greater Lisbon area is where you will find the highest cost of living, particularly in some areas of Cascais, Estoril and the parts of the capital itself.

In the Algarve you will also find some more expensive areas, particularly in high end resorts like Quinta do Lago, Vilamoura or Vale do Lobo, but it's also possible to live a simpler (and cheaper) life in one of the many villages or cities in the Region:

Oporto, Portugal's second largest city, is around 10% cheaper than Lisbon, as average incomes are also slightly lower. The further away from Lisbon or the coastline, the lower the cost of living, so if your plan is to embrace a simpler life in a rural environment, or at least away from a major city, you'll be happy to know it's possible to do so while spending very little money on your daily expenses.

As it's common in most Western countries, housing is responsible for the largest single share of expenditure for the Portuguese, averaging 35-40% of their monthly income, but because average income is relatively low, this means that housing can be cheap compared to most countries.

## Day to day prices

### Eating out and transportation

	Low end	Medium Quality	High end
Lunch or dinner at restaurant (per person)	8-12€	20-35€	60-150€
Beer in bar or cafe	1€	2€	10€
Espresso Coffee	0,65€	1€	2€
MdDonald's Big Mac Menu w/ large fries	6,90€	-	-
Subway/bus ticket (cheaper presale exists)	1,5€/2€	-	-
Monthly free pass for public transport (Lisbon)	30€-40€	-	-
Uber ride from airport to central Lisbon (5-10 Km)	6-10€	-	-
Train Ticket - Lisbon-Oporto (1 way, 1st class)	22-27€	-	-
Train Ticket - Lisbon-Algarve (1 way, 1st class)	18-26€	-	-

### Groceries (average supermarket prices)

	Price range
Milk (1 liter package)	0,50-0,80€
Loaf of bread (small)	0,20€
Rice (1 Kg package)	0,60-2€
Regular Cheese or Ham	10-12€/Kg
Beef - average quality cut	10-15€/Kg
Beef - top graded cut	16-35€/Kg
Pork	2-15€/Kg
Chicken	2-8€/Kg
Fish (fresh, prices change according to species)	8-35€/Kg
Fresh Fruit (apples, oranges, etc)	0,6-4€/Kg
Spirits - 750 milliliter bottle	8-15€
Bottle of wine (medium quality)	5-10€
Bottle of wine (good quality/special reserve)	15-50€

## Housing - rentals

	Low end	Medium	Prime
3 bedroom Apartment, city center	500-800€	1000-1500€	2000-5000€
3 bedroom Apartment, suburban	400-700€	800-1100€	-
Short rental (ex. AirBnB) - City Center (cost/day)	40-50€	100-200€	100-400€

## Utilities

	Monthly cost (range)
Electricity + Gas/Heating	60-120€
Water	40-60€
Cable TV+Internet	25-50€
Mobile plan phone with no call limit	10-25€

## Healthcare

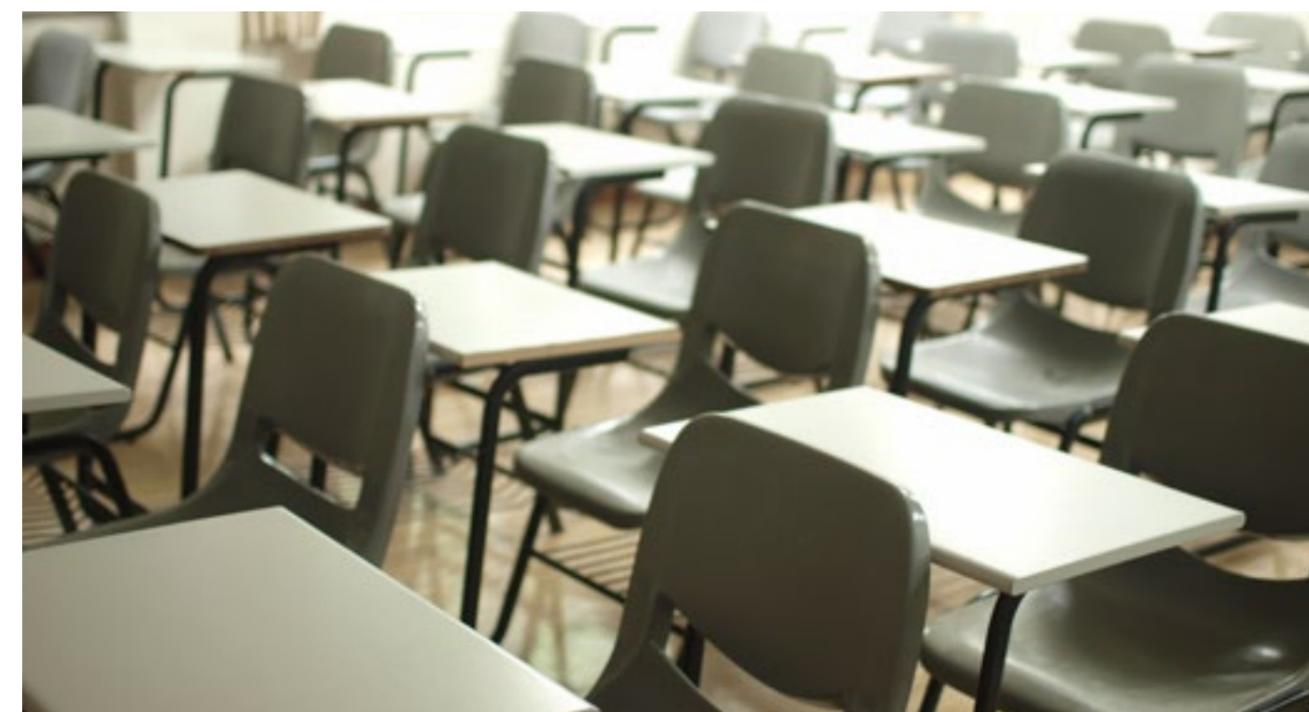
	Monthly cost (range)
Admission to public hospital (emergency)	20€
Consultation with public doctor (can prescribe exams for free)	5-10€
Consultation in private hospital/doctor (no insurance)	80-120€
Common tests in private doctor (ex. radiology) (no insurance)	150-300€
Surgery, private hospital, including stay at the hospital (no insurance)	2500-6000€
Private health Insurance (average for 45-55 year old)	60-180€/month
Private health Plan (lower coverage) - any age group	12,5-45€/month
Consultation in private hospital/doctor (with insurance)	0-35€
Common tests in private doctor (ex. radiology) (no insurance)	20-50€
Surgery, private hospital, including stay at the hospital (no insurance)	2500-6000€

All prices are average or estimated as of August 2021, specific prices may vary according to hospital and patient's medical conditions.

## Education

	Monthly cost (range)
Kindergarten/preschool - private, Portuguese	250-600€/month
Kindergarten/preschool - private, international	500-900€/month
Basic or secondary (6-18 years of age), private, Portuguese	250-900€/month
Basic or secondary (6-18 years of age), private, International	600-1200€/month
College/University - public	1000€/year
College/University - private	40-700€/month

Schools in Portugal usually paid in 10 monthly installments throughout the year, may vary from school to school. For more information on the Portuguese school system please refer to the Family Life: Schools section later in this book.



A good way to put Portuguese cost of living in perspective is by comparing it to how much it costs to live in other countries. Even if adjustments to cost of living always have to be made while doing this comparative analysis, the comparisons give you a good idea of how much it actually costs to be a Portuguese resident.

Rent or housing costs are always a major component of families' monthly expenditure in any developed country, but its specific weight can differ significantly from country to country, so as usual in this kind of analysis, below you can find the differences with and without rent.

### Portuguese prices compared to other countries

(how higher is the cost of living in each country compared to Portugal)

	USA	UK	Spain
Consumer prices excluding rent	28%	41%	12%
Consumer prices including rent	5%	43%	10%
Rent Prices	48%	50%	5%
Restaurant Prices	40%	80%	33%
Groceries prices	42%	41%	16%
Purchasing Power	+57%	+93%	+45%

Source: Numbeo



As we mentioned earlier, within Portugal prices for some categories can change significantly according to the location. Lisbon is the most expensive city to live with (with some specific areas in its vicinity, in designated areas of Cascais, Estoril and Sintra even more expensive than Lisbon city center), followed by the Algarve and Porto. Let's find out in detail how living in Portugal's capital compares to the cost of living of other cities in the World, and also the difference in cost of living between the country's two main urban areas.

We chose not to include the Algarve in this comparative analysis simply because the available data are naturally focused on the Region's cities and urban areas, that wouldn't accurately represent the cost of living in resorts and other special development areas that are usually expats' first choice. These areas usually have a higher cost of living, with higher quality shops, supermarkets and restaurants, that are higher than in normal urban areas.

### Lisbon cost of living compared to other cities

How much lower the cost of living in Lisbon compared to each city. In blue if it is lower than in Lisbon

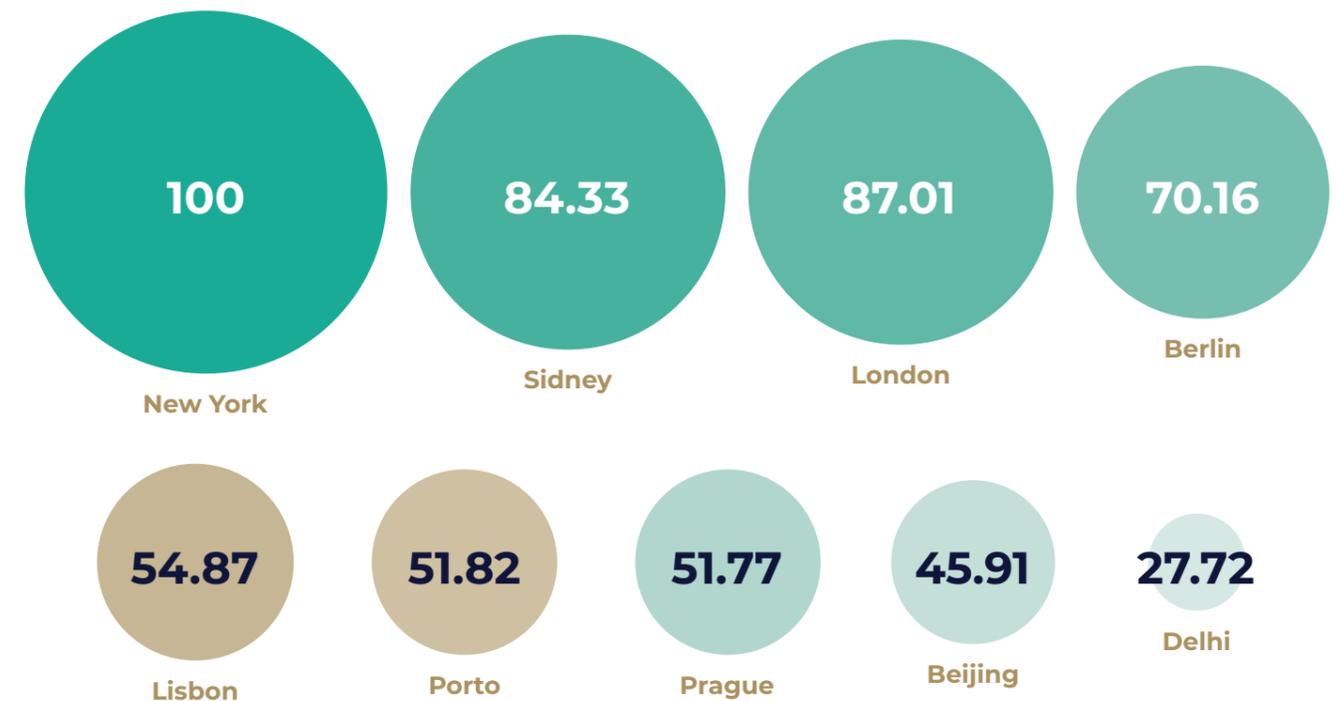
	New York	London	Madrid	Porto
Consumer prices excluding rent	45%	59%	13%	6%
Consumer prices including rent	55%	83%	9%	12%
Rent Prices	67%	130%	0,2%	23%
Restaurant Prices	40%	77%	27%	12%
Groceries prices	42%	53%	17%	5%
Purchasing Power (% higher)	57%	102%	53%	6%

Source: Numbeo (all figures rounded)

To put Portuguese cost of living in perspective, here's how Lisbon and Porto rank in the Cost of Living Index, which calculates relative differences in cost of living in some of the world's major cities,

based on the average cost of dozens of different expense categories, including rent, using New York as its baseline city.

### Cost of living Index



Source: Numbeo

## Family Life: Schools

Portugal offers a wide range of options for those who have children at school age. You can either choose one of the dozens of international schools available in the country or enroll your children in a Portuguese school, either private or public.

### Portuguese education system

The school year in Portugal runs from September to June, with a summer holiday period of close to 3 months after the end and smaller holiday periods around Easter and Christmas, and usually a few days off during Carnival (usually February or March).

Schooling in the country is organized in 4 stages, or cycles, with an additional preschool system that begins at age 2, or even earlier when the parents need to. The 1st cycle is from ages 6 to 10, cycle 2 is from ages 10 to 12, the 3rd cycle is from 12 to 15 and the 4th and last cycle is from 15 to 18 years of age, after which children can join University.

The system includes both public and private schools. Private schools charge a fee (see cost of living form more details) and have the reputation for higher quality education than public schools, that are universally accessible to all residents, including foreigners, but since the public system is organized based on students' permanent address, quality can differ greatly from one school to the other in the public system, with schools located in urban, more affluent areas, usually providing a better service, with higher average scores in national exams, than schools located in poorer or less developed areas.

As to higher education, the logic is somehow reversed, and apart from a few elite private universities (such as Universidade Católica, or

Instituto Superior de Gestão, that focuses on Management courses) usually the Public universities are regarded as having the highest quality, including some universities (such as Nova and its school of Economics) with international standing, that attract students from abroad.

The reasons for this are actually quite simple to understand: on one hand Public universities charge much lower fees than private ones, and since the admission process ranks students mainly based on their grades, final and admission tests, the best students end up in public colleges.

On the other hand, apart from a short list of elite colleges, most of private universities in Portugal were established from the 1980s on, so the public system, where institutions' histories are measured in decades, when not in centuries, always provided a more prestigious career path in Academia, concentrating the best and most established teachers, including figureheads in other areas of society (the current Portuguese president is a Law Professor, for instance, that only suspended his teaching activity when he was elected).

### International Schools

There are a few dozen international schools available in Portugal, most of them concentrated in the

areas (Lisbon, Porto and Algarve) where expatriates are more common, so if your choice is to enroll your children in one of these schools it shouldn't be too difficult to find a good option.

While searching for a school you should bear in mind that the Portuguese system is organized in cycles, as we mentioned earlier, and some schools cover all the cycle while others focus on specific age groups, so we would advise you to check first if your children can actually apply to the school you are looking into.

All international schools are certified by the Portuguese Education Ministry, even in the case of national schools that mirror their country's local school year and system. Here are some of the main types of international schools you can find in Portugal:

### International Baccalaureate

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs are common in many countries around the world. Key elements of IB include a focus on essay writing, projects exploring creativity, activity, and service. Of course, along the way, students also take courses in science, math, the arts, language, and literature. Finally, at the end of secondary school, students must take a rigorous exam to earn their IB Diploma.

The IB program is attractive to parents because the IB Diploma is widely recognized almost anywhere in the globe, granting students access to countless universities worldwide. Portugal currently has 13 schools that offer the IB program.

#### **American international schools and Advanced Placement**

American international schools follow the same system that is used within the US, usually dividing students into elementary, middle, and high schools. Students take courses in math, English, science, social studies and usually a foreign language and receive a final diploma after having completed all their classes and passed all exams.

Graduating from an American school can be a particularly appealing option if the student wishes to enroll in an American University after graduating, as its degrees are recognized by any University in the US or Canada (provided the Portuguese school is recognized by the State Department).

While harder to find than their British counterparts, American schools in Portugal include the Carlucci American International School of Lisbon (the only school in Portugal recognized by the US Department of State) and the International Christian School of Cascais, just outside of Lisbon.



#### **British international schools**

Schools that follow England's national curriculum, British schools are common around the world, and are amongst the most common international schools in Portugal, that had close ties to its British ally (the two countries have the longest standing alliance treaty in the world) with a sizable British community residing in Portugal literally for centuries.

An excellent option for those considering University in the UK or another commonwealth country, British Schools' classes are obviously taught in English and main subjects include science, math, history, English, and foreign languages. The focus is problem-solving, confidence building and student growth.

One important highlight is that most of these schools offer students International General Certificates of Secondary School (IGCSE), allowing easier access to university. Amongst the most well know British Schools in Portugal are the British School of Lisbon, St. Julian's School (Carcavelos, 20 Km from Lisbon), Oporto British School, the Nobel International School Algarve and St. Peter's International School, in Setúbal, 45 minutes to the South of Lisbon.

#### **International GSE Schools**

The International General Certificate of Secondary School (IGCSE) is a certificate program that follows the British curriculum. Usually, students take the IGCSE in the first two years of secondary school,

through the Cambridge International Examinations Board. Then, in their final two years of secondary school, they usually take the A-Levels. More often than not, A-Level scores are a critical part of university applications for those looking to study in the UK. Most British curriculum schools will offer IGCSEs.

#### **Other national curricula**

Portugal has a growing expat community so we can expect the available options in international education to continue to grow over time. Some local schools offer an international curriculum or have a bilingual or foreign language curriculum (such as Park International School, that has more than one location, or Red Bridge, that opened in Lisbon in 2017) and some offer national curriculums from their country of origin.

Amongst the oldest and most reputable national schools you can find the French Schools (Lycée Charle Lepierre in Lisbon and Lycée Français International in Oporto) and the German Schools of Porto and Algarve.

#### **Other types of schools**

One of the most common types of private schools in Portugal are religious schools, usually catholic. While there schools teach mainly in Portuguese,

they include some of the best private schools in the Country, usually with excellent infrastructure that provide the ideal environment for cultural or sports activities while following each student's development as closely as possible.

Some of these schools will be mixed, with boys and girls studying together, and some cater exclusively to a single gender.

Depending on your needs and location it's not hard to find a good religious school that covers your children's cycle and age group, even if enrolling isn't always guaranteed, as these schools are usually in high demand and usually have to reject potential candidates in the beginning of each school year.

Amongst the most well known schools are Colégio São João de Brito and Salesianos - Oficinas de São José in Lisbon, Salesianos in Estoril, Colégio Rainha Santa Isabel in Coimbra and Colégio Nossa Senhora do Rosário in Porto.

If you are looking for a more unconventional approach to teaching, you also have a number of choices on what we'd call Method schools, that follow a non-traditional approach such as Montessori or Waldorf. These schools can be found mainly in Lisbon and Algarve, but the main thing to consider

is to do your research properly before considering a decision, since some schools work only with some cycles, others offer Portuguese-only curriculum, others offer a multilingual education, so you have to make sure the school fits your specific needs.

#### Portuguese schools

If you have children in school age, enrolling in an International school is clearly the easiest option, even if it's more expensive, but that doesn't mean there are no alternatives.

If you decide to have your child grow at ease with Portuguese language and culture, and are willing to make the initial effort it takes for them to learn the language, both private and public schools are open to foreign students, and both offer quality education, although if you choose a public school it is important to understand how good is the school in your area, as quality within the public system may differ greatly from one school to the other.

Usually, the better the neighborhood where you are living, the better the corresponding public school, so it's the kind of choice you begin to make when choosing a place to live.



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## Family Life: Healthcare

The Healthcare system in Portugal is based on two main pillars, the public National Health Service (Serviço Nacional de Saúde, or SNS) and private health insurance, that users can subscribe voluntarily, and allows for discounted prices in private hospitals, clinics and doctor's offices.

Additionally, some special healthcare schemes exist, usually covering certain professions or sectors, including police, military, civil servants and banking employees. The SNS is available to all residents, including foreigners, and is either free or charges low fees (known as moderator tax): an emergency consultation in a hospital costs the user 20 euros.

Health insurance is voluntary and is usually seen as a way to supplement the SNS and ensure cheaper access to private hospitals and clinics, which usually have more recent facilities, with several new units built in the last decade or so.

Public hospitals are seen by the Portuguese as the best place to go in case you have a serious problem or emergency, since they are usually equipped with all the necessary technical equipment and specialist doctors to treat emergencies and serious medical conditions, whereas private hospitals are better for planned surgeries or day-to-day medical issues, since they have more modern facilities, are perceived as being more attentive to customers' needs, provide private rooms for surgery recovery and aren't affected by the waiting lists public units have for some procedures.

Prices are still quite affordable (see cost of living in this book for more details) in private healthcare. The insurance premiums may vary according to age, as anywhere else, but copayments are usually low. A consulta-

tion with a specialist doctor will usually set you back around under €50.

### Access by foreigners

As mentioned earlier, access to the SNS is available to every Portuguese legal resident, regardless of nationality. This can include non working residents in some cases, meaning that if one of your family members is either unemployed, retired or dependent (i.e. a minor) access to the public healthcare system is guaranteed.

Non-residents or temporary visitors need to purchase private healthcare for their stay, but there are some exceptions: EU and Switzerland nationals can access Portuguese healthcare through their European Health Insurance Card, and some countries have reciprocal agreements with Portugal, that allow their citizens to use the Portuguese SNS. These countries include Andorra, Brazil, Cape Verde and Morocco.

### How to register for public healthcare

Expatriates that want to access public healthcare should register with the Portuguese Social Security to obtain a user number and a healthcare card (Cartão de Utente).

To obtain this you must first have a Fiscal Number,

or NIF, that can be easily obtained with the Portuguese IRS (if you had the assistance of an attorney in taking care of your residency the NIF was certainly part of the process, but it can be obtained easily either by yourself or your employer).

Once you have your healthcare card you should register in a local Health Center (Centro de Saúde), that will give you access to a family doctor, that can assist you in most common day to day medical problems, prescribe medicine or exams, usually allowing you to use private labs or exam facilities nearest you without paying (the cost for most exams is entirely covered by the Government if the prescription is issued either by a family doctor or a specialist).

### Private Healthcare

You can find private hospitals and clinics in most Portuguese cities, with a stronger presence in Lisbon and Oporto regions, but also Coimbra and the Algarve. Private hospitals trump public ones in terms of usually not having waiting lists, having more recent facilities and it is also most likely you will get english-speaking doctors and staff.

One main difference between private and public hospitals is naturally the cost, although Portuguese private hospitals and clinics are cheaper than in most countries. The SNS hospitals charge either

no fee or a small tax, private hospitals will demand payment on checkout, and you can either pay a discounted rate (depending on your specific insurance policy) or pay the total price and ask your insurer for a refund later.

Usually insurance companies have provider lists, that include all hospitals and doctors that will give you the discount up front. If you use a facility or doctor outside the list this means you will pay full price and the insurance company will later reimburse you of a percentage of what you paid. One piece of useful advice is to inform the hospital or clinic of your insurance policy when you first check in the hospital, because if you don't do so you might end up having to pay first and ask for reimbursement later, even if the hospital is in the insurer's provider list.

### General Practitioners and Specialists

In most common health problems you will first need to see a General Practitioner that will evaluate the need for a specialist doctor. If you go through the public system your family doctor is usually the general practitioner, who can prescribe tests or other measures and will recommend you see a specialist if needed. This referral by a GP to a specialist is the usual path if you want to be treated in the Public system. The quality of specialist doctors in the SNS is good, but the waiting time for a consultation can

be long, and that leads people to see specialists in their private practice or in a private hospital, where the waiting lists aren't a problem, and costs can be low if you have insurance.

### Dental care

Dental care is the one type of service that isn't widely available in the SNS, unless you have a favored status (i.e. too young, old or poor to pay for healthcare), so you are advised to either have a private insurance policy that covers dental care or do a specific insurance for dental (dental plans can be bought for as little as €10/month).

### Children's healthcare

Children's access to healthcare is free in Portugal. Children have access to regular consultations with GPs and Pediatricians and also access to services such as examinations, nutrition and vaccination. Portugal has a national vaccination program within the SNS, that includes vaccination for diseases such as Hepatitis, Polio, Measles and Rubella, amongst others. Although vaccination isn't mandatory there is a National Vaccination Plan that includes the shots that children must register, and are free, and others that are optional. Public schools (and most private ones) require up-to-date vaccination records when children are enrolled.



### Women's and prenatal healthcare

Prenatal care is one of the areas where the Portuguese healthcare system is more effective and well organized, allowing the country to have one of the highest rates of successful pregnancies in the world.

When a woman gets pregnant in Portugal she will receive a booklet (Boletim de Saúde da Grávida, or Pregnant woman's health booklet) where her doctor will register all relevant data about how the pregnancy goes. Prenatal care is centered in the hospital, and most major public hospitals have a maternity ward.

Some private hospitals also offer maternity wards and offer private rooms and a more high end service. The costs can be partially covered by private insurance but you should check your policy closely, as usually there are some limitations in coverage, particularly the time period that has to elapse from subscribing insurance to the pregnancy (that can be as much as 18 months).

## Facts and Figures

### 1143

Is the year generally seen as of Portugal's establishment as an independent country (de facto independence had been established earlier but this is the year of official recognition by what was then the highest authority in European diplomatic affairs, the Catholic Church)

### 1418

Discovery of Madeira, the first Portuguese territory outside mainland Portugal, to this date a part of Portugal. The Azores, in 1427, and Cape Verde, in the 1460s, were other previously uninhabited islands found by the Portuguese during the 15th century.

### 1498

Is the year the Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama arrived in India establishing the first maritime trade route between Europe and Asia

### 1999

Was the year that Portugal withdrew from the last piece of its colonial Empire, Macau, although technically Macau wasn't a colony, but a gift to the Portuguese by the Chinese emperor, for services rendered by the Portuguese sailors in fighting piracy in Pearl River delta.

### 10,5 millions

Is the approximate number of residents in the Portuguese territory, with around 500.000 of those being foreigners.

### 25,252 USD

Is Portugal's per capita income in 2019, according to the World Bank

### 22

Is Portugal's ranking in Numbeo's Cost of Living Index Europe that rates 40 European countries' cost of living using New York city as a benchmark (Portugal's has an index of 52,88, meaning life in the country costs on average 52,88% of the cost of living in New York). 350.000 euros is the amount of equity investment needed to obtain a special residency permit for non habitual residents (known as Golden VISA) that allows for all the rights of permanent residency while imposing just a stay of 7 days a year in the country on average.

### 4

Is Portugal's ranking in the Global Peace Index (GPI) in 2021. The GPI covers 189 countries, and being the 4th ranked means there are only 3 countries in the World that can be considered safer. Portugal's position in previous year's ranking was number 3.

### 65 cents

of the euro is the most common price for an espresso coffee in urban areas. Espresso coffee machines are as ubiquitous as beer in Portuguese restaurants and cafés, and the Portuguese are often heavy users of the drink. If you thought you had to go to Italy to find a world class espresso, think again.

