

Culture Vulture PORTUGAL

# DISCOVER THE FLAVOUR OF PORTUGAL

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**R**amalho Ortigão the distinguished Portuguese writer and traveller wrote in the 19th century: "There's nothing in the world more pleasant to a Lusitanian heart than travelling in Portugal". Undoubtedly there are innumerable cities, small villages, rivers, landscapes, gardens, across the country worth a visit by people looking for new experiences.

Portugal is a country with a rich patrimony and heritage inspired by many different cultures over the centuries as result of the maritime discoveries. It is natural therefore that a wide

variety of aesthetic influences can be seen in our civil, religious and military architectural. With so much choice we recommend a visit to the old quarters of the historical towns and country villages to obtain a glimpse of the most interesting manifestations of our culture.

Anyone with a sense of history and a desire to discover the real Portugal cannot fail to be captivated by the treasury of experiences offered by the Solares de Portugal, 100 manor houses, stately Homes (Casas Antigas), country and farmhouses (Quintas e Herdades and Casas Rústicas), certified with the ERS 3001,

guarantee of quality. From the moment you walk through the entrance there is a magic in the air and a tranquillity that will make the stress of everyday life seem a million miles away. They are family homes as opposed to hotels, offering a very different kind of holiday experience with that's personal touch.

Such simple, carefree pleasures make you feel that this is the place where you belong: a home from home. A place where you will always want to return. Special places to stay...

## PORTO DE LIMA - HISTORICAL CENTRE AND CELLARS

Overlooking the Douro River, Porto is one of the most ancient European cities. It was born and developed from the northern bank of this river during the Middle Ages. One of the most significant aspects of Porto and its historical centre is its landscape, combining harmony with the urban structure and presenting a frame of rare beauty. The city was classified as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1996. When discovering Porto, you will find many surprises. Besides its welcoming and conservative environment, Porto is also contemporary and artistic. This is shown not only in the streets, architecture, monuments and museums but also in the terraces, restaurants and leisure and shopping areas. Port Wine, a symbol of Portugal in the world, holds the history of a country and its people and has become through the years a cultural landmark of the work, experiences, knowledge and art gathered through generations.

Enclosed in itself years and years of history and tradition, and it is attached to a region - The Douro Region - whose beautiful landscapes, source of attraction since the first moment for never to be forgotten, were influenced by it. The Port Wine cellars are the right place to discover this Portuguese wine and all of its history. Open to the visitors, they give you the opportunity to taste this precious nectar, to meet its evolution through the years, the region where it is produced and the way it is obtained. Ponte de Lima - Historical Centre Our journey starts in Ponte de Lima which is often described as "The Garden of Portugal" due to its enormous beauty. Throughout the valley between Santa Maria Madalena and Santo Ovídio flows the Lima river with green and blue tones bathing the sandy banks of the oldest village in the country. Near the riverbank extensive and fertile valleys, rich in agricultural and botanical species are a great location for long walks.

Walking around this area has been described by many poets born in the region: the landscapes of the Arga Mountain, the ascent to the Vacariça belvedere, the chapels that harbour historical memories of the crusaders, the evening fragrances of the Lima river or the excitement of the fortnightly trade fairs. Ponte de Lima is Portugal's oldest town

and one of its most beautiful. It takes its name from the Roman bridge. A Romanesque bridge with 22 arches was built during the reign of D. Pedro I along with a wall surrounding the entire village. What remains are the S. Paulo tower and the old prison tower which today is an art gallery. In the Luis de Camões square, the 16th century baroque fountain once provided water to the villagers who had to pay a tax in order for their animals be allowed to drink. Ponte de Lima exudes hospitality and is endowed with great character and architectonic wealth. You can wander the narrow streets and admire gothic, manue-line, baroque and mannerist facades. The Matriz church shows a strong Romanesque influence and in the centre of the town you will find beautiful 16th century facades. The Plátanos Avenue leads to the Diogo Bernardes Theatre and the Archaeology and Sacred Art Museum housed in

## PORTUGUESE WAY TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

The royal Oporto-Barcelos-Valença road has a particular importance, as here almost all the others roads come together, reinforcing this road as the main Portuguese Way to Santiago de Compostela. So why this was the route chosen by most of the Pilgrims going to Santiago, at least from the beginning of the 14th century. This is well evidenced in the numerous reports kept in the Compostela Archives and in the known references to its most distinguished Pilgrims: Santa Isabel, Queen of Portugal, Leon of Rotzmital, Jerome Münzer, King Manuel, Confalonieri, Albani and probably also St. Francis of Assisi, Blessed Francisco Pacheco and many other eminent Pilgrims not chronicled. In effect, after the completion of the Barcelos Bridge in 1325 and the renovations to the one at Ponte de Lima at the same time, it



the Ordem Terceira Convent. The Avenue ends at the Nossa Senhora da Guia chapel after which the new bridge was named. The Roman bridge was built by the Romans to connect the military road from Bragato Astorga. Traditionally known for their hospitality Limianos - the people of Ponte de Lima - have many splendid SOLARES to offer as accommodation. Ponte de Lima is the main office of Solares de Portugal and Europe of Traditions networks.

was possible to follow a straight route without having to skirt around Braga and to cross dangerous rivers either by fording them or by boat. Rates, Barcelos, Ponte de Lima, Valença, Tuy, Redondela, Pontevedra and Caldas de Reis defined the new medieval route from Oporto to Santiago, having in common with the ancient Roman military via the odd urban stretch and the bridges, still used to span the more turbulent streams. This road



was also the one commonly used by the population which moved from South to North in the province of Entre-Douro e Minho, encouraged by its speed, safety and comfort. Along here went multitudes of the anonymous, vagrants, travellers, mule-drivers, peddlers, market-goers and local pilgrims. It was also used by the regular army, the Ordnance Company and common soldiers, by gangs of adventurers, bandits and smugglers.

It was the scene of skirmishes, assaults and ambushes, it saw all sorts of people pass by and witnessed five centuries of tumultuous relations between two brother peoples. Destiny did not wish to unite. Sout's squadrons used it in 1809 and in the fratricidal conflict, which deeply marked the change of regime in the second quarter of the 19th century, it made its last contribution to the precarious communications system available at the time. It was the stability, which began to be es-

tablished during the "Regeneration" that brought about the end of the old royal highway. The development of a new road network profoundly altered the status quo, and brought into being a drive towards modernisation, which could not accommodate the relics of an obsolete and archaic past, completely out of temper with the new ideology. In this period and particularly in the province of Entre-Douro e Minho, Fontes Pereira de Melo's modernisation policy acquired an extraordinary importance.

At the beginning of the fifties (that is, in 1850), a new road was built to Viana, crossing the River Lima over a superb steel bridge and extending as far as Caminha and Valença. Another was built from Braga to Ponte de Lima, to the jubilation of the local population who, for a journey of six leagues, used to spend an unforgettable day going through narrow passes and marshes, sometimes jumping

from log to log. At the same time, the Railway network was expanding, as far as Valença in 1882 and into Spain four years later. Barcelos and Ponte de Lima ceased to be obligatory transit points on North-South journeys and Viana, already additionally titled "do Castelo", assumed hegemony as well as political and administrative leadership for the Alto Minho. In this new context, there was no justification for the creation of new alternatives, not even reinforcing or improving the old road, nominally the

Ponte de Lima-Valença stretch, an undoubtedly difficult and onerous project, when Braga and Viana claimed priority from the Royal Munificence for access to the border. For this reason, this road lost interest, it was abandoned and quickly forgotten, the old narrow passes cursed by William Kinsey, lying under dense brushwood and shrubs. The manifest disinterest in the Barcelos-Pon-



te de Lima-Valença route, overtaken by more viable accesses to the border, ensured, all the same, a certain degree of preservation, given that other routes on which renovations were permitted retain little more today than a vague outline of the original road. In the tranquillity of a landscape unspoilt by time, the road slowly disappeared under the muddy riverside pastures and the skeletal slopes of Labruja, where even the brushwood can not withstand erosion.

However, the outline was there, reasonably well preserved, revealing itself here and there in a large stone cross, in shrines, in the remains of a causeway ingrained with deep ruts and almost always well recorded in the memory of the local people. Paço de Calheiros – Solares de Portugal, Ponte de Lima – "A Touch of Magic" The manor house by the name of Calheiros is situated in a large farm, which the old day

was known as "Pinheiro" farm. It is in the heart of the Lima valley, in the parish of Santa Eulália Eufémia de Calheiros, Ponte de Lima. King D. Afonso V in Santarém confirmed the Calheiros family as the owner of this fine manor house on February 5th.

The boundaries remained unchanged until November 12th 1566. When King D. Sebastião rectified them on behalf of Diogo Lopes Calheiros. Therefore, everything within these boundaries today belong to the Calheiros family by Royal right, being handed down through the generations to the eldest son. The old manor tower was destroyed at the end of the 17th Century; when the eldest son, Francisco Jácome de Lopes Calheiros ordered the construction of the two towers, which still exist today. At the end of the tee-lined drive is a large iron gate with stone pillars, which bear the following Gothic style inscription from 1450

*From this old noble house  
Precede the Calheiros family*

Noble people of this manor. This was written at the time when Diogo Lopes de Calheiros was Lord of the manor. His father, Garcia Lopes de Calheiros, fought for D. Afonso V's kingdom, in wars with Castella and Africa, and was rewarded by D. João II. A blasonery can also be seen. Five silver shells and three golden stars are scattered on a blue background. In 1568, a curious collection of poems and notes called the "Memorial of Calheiros", which contains a full history of the family. Throughout the Centuries, the manor house always remained with the Calheiros family name. Today the present Lord of the manor, and representative of the title Conde de Calheiros is Sr. Eng.º Francisco de Calheiros e Menezes. Located on a high hill of vineyards with won-

derful views of the Lima Valley below, Paço de Calheiros is considered to be one of the most beautiful examples of 17th century manor houses in Portugal. It is set in splendid gardens and is noted for its impressive entrance and tree-lined drive leading to an ancient stone fountain shaded by a wonderful magnolia tree. Horse-riding and wine-tasting are among the attractions of the house owned by the Count of Calheiros' family for more than 600 years.

### GUIMARÃES - HISTORICAL CENTRE

The historical centre of Guimarães, where Portugal began, is UNESCO classified. Its rich heritage and cultural diversity makes for a fascinating visit. Before entering the centre we suggest heading up the hill to see and climb the towers of the old Castle and visit the nearby chapel. According to legend D. Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal was baptized here. Also worth a visit is the Paço do Duques de Bragança which today is a museum. It is in the medieval centre of Guimarães that the true soul of the city is hidden. Charming narrow streets, 16th century houses, taverns, restaurants, and meeting houses provide a colourful and lively backdrop which contrasts with the slow pace of daily life. Starting at Toural square there are a number of important sightseeing spots. The church and chapel of St. Francisco are typical Portuguese baroque, the Paço Ducal, the chapel of Senhora da Guia, and above all the Alberto Sampaio Museum.

This is where the Condessa Mumadona established a convent in the 10th century that later became the Collegiate Church. The magnificent cloister connects large rooms to the Oliveira Church and here you can see a collection of religious gold artefacts of great beauty and historical value as well as 16th century wood statues and paintings. Take a trip on the tram to the city park and to the Penha Sanctuary. Casa de Sezim - Solares de Portugal, Guimarães Casa de Sezim became the ancestral home of the present family in 1376. The original vellum documents still exist and record that Maria Mendes Serrazinha gave Casa de Sezim to Afonso Martins a descendant of D. João de Freitas a companion of D. Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal. The document states that Casa de Sezim was given to

Afonso Martins in recognition of "As boas graças que dele recebeu e espera receber e por crença que lhe fez", the good works received from him and hope to receive and for his trusting belief. The beauty of Casa de Sezim is not only in its harmonious lines or the impressive façade of its majestic entrance, as within its walls hang early XIX century panoramic wallpapers, scenes from both of the new and old world, of sufficient rarity to have become a motive of international curiosity in recent years. Casa de Sezim sits in the heart of the Minho, the Garden of Portugal, near Guimarães, Portugal's first capital. The Minho is a region of great natural and artistic beauty as well as being one of both historic and prehistoric interest. Guimarães is linked to Oporto and the Dr. Francisco Sá Carneiro airport by motorway.

It is within easy reach of the city of Braga - The Brachara Augusta of the Romans - The National Park of Peneda - Gerez, and the seaside resorts of Vila do Conde and Póvoa de Varzim, the later served by a modern links golf course. Casa de Sezim is opened all the year round to tourists and offers a choice of eight spacious and comfortable bedrooms, two en-suite and permits the use of two lounges, one exclusively for tourists and the other used for conferences, meetings and exhibitions. Our visitors can make use of the Swimming Pool, as well as enjoying walks through the surrounding hills in the summer, or simply relax and enjoy a glass of our noted estate bottled wine, but that is another story... There are hunting trips during the winter season to the mountains nearby.

### DOURO VALLEY

Following the river Douro upstream, you reach the Douro Wine Region. This is a land of traditions, a place of enchantment and mysticism, a great stretch of land where Nature reigns in perfect harmony with the inhabitants that have shaped the valley slopes and organised the land into vineyards. Each of these vineyards can be accessed by winding roads that pattern the landscape. There has been evidence of wine production for more than two thousand years in the region but it was only in 1756 that the Demarcated Douro Region was created and wine production in the region was organised and became internationally recognised. It was the first region in the world to be demarcated and it is a land where traditions and modernity go hand-in-hand. This combination is still evident today in the traditional harvest that is still done by hand

and the squashing of the grapes by foot and the most modern vinification processes that accompany these traditions. With the beginning of wine production, the nobility moved to the region, building grand manors and palaces that today open their doors to tourists and visitors. Many of the vineyards that produce the most succulent fruit in the valley are found on the valley slopes and they also offer accommodation to passersby. Any of these would be ideal for a romantic getaway, offering new sensations for all the senses. In the quaint villages you can also find wonderful examples of rural tourism with a local and unique character. Despite the changes that the famous Port wine brought to the region, the Douro Valley has maintained its rural character and traditional roots with its handicrafts and religious customs. The Valley is renowned not only for its beauty but also for its friendly inhabitants who work the land and welcome those they find there exploring the region. Quinta da Veiga - Ferrão, Sabrosa Quinta da Veiga is located on the right bank of Douro. Nearby the Ferrão's train station, the privileged stretch between Régua and Pinhão, and characterised by schist slopes with excellent sun exposure at an altitude of 170m-220m. This area, known as Veiga do Donelo, was formed by smallholdings in past times (XVI century), which formed in our days one single property, named Quinta da Veiga a producer winery of Port and Douro wines. Situated inside of the classified Douro World Heritage Area, this Estate of 50 ha was reconverted into a country tourism Manor House "Turismo de Habitação". At the main house there are 7 doubles rooms for welcoming guests, decorated with comfort and stylishness. The restoration of this elegant farm house was very conscientious to keep the original building architecture and materials, and to maintain its traditional characteristics. Inside and outside of the Manor House you can experiment the strong identity and a sense of aesthetic of the owners. The Quinta da Veiga surrounding by wine terraces, the gardens and the swimming pool, benefits from a fantastic landscape over the River Douro. The Quinta is a splendidly restored 18th century house that forms part of the net-



work of the 94 Solares de Portugal, which are stately rural homes and houses of noble origin, many dating back several centuries and still in the ownership of the founding family. They offer accommodation with a highly personal touch and to stay in one of these houses is to be treated like one of the family. The Quinta da Veiga estate comprises 50 hectares of which 25 hectares are used to cultivate the grapevines, producing mainly Touriga Nacional, Touriga Francesa and Roriz. The quinta produces five labels - three reds and two whites. They are known for their fruitiness and elegant structure. Much to their enjoyment, guests are always treated to a tour of the adega with free wine tasting. You cannot fail to be impressed by the surrounding landscape while the charm and beauty of the interior of the house was unforgettable.

### CENTRO DE PORTUGAL

Portugal is a mountainous country with an unpolluted environment. Its pure and well preserved landscape boasts dense forests and rocky outcrops. In the Centro de Portugal you will find a huge variety of nature, history and culture. First there are glacial lakes, spring waters and all kinds of outdoor sports: on land, in the sky or on water. The Serra da Estrela Natural Park is worth a visit because it boasts clear spring waters at the sources of the rivers Zêzere and Mondego. If you're feeling energetic, go to Linhares where you can have a go at paragliding. For natural swimming pools try the Serra da Lousã and the Serra do Açor. And for peaceful footpaths visit the Serra do Caramulo. All of this is in the Centro de Por-

tugal, where you will also find opportunities for canoeing and rafting, rock-climbing, abseiling and many other adventure sports. And be sure to spend some time on the Atlantic coastline with its white sand and high waves. Also in the Centro de Portugal is Coimbra, where Portugal's oldest university is to be found, with its fabulous baroque library. The region is filled with the history of fierce battles and stories of Portugal's roots before it became a nation. Get to know the historic villages such as Monsanto. Get to know the cities too, such as Guarda or Viseu, dominated by the traditional stone architecture of Centro de Portugal. The Centro de Portugal is a region of warm hospitality, offering visitors genuine village tourism. The charm of the people is to be seen in the authenticity of their rituals, and



their popular religious festivities, such as Easter. But it is also found in their cuisine, with its cheeses, sausages and mountain honey.

### CASA DE MOGOFORES

Anadia Casa de Mogofores is a manor house from the 19th century related to the agricultural development of the Bairrada region and to the creation of the Thermal spa of Cúria. The owners produce the famous Campolargo Wines and they had carefully restored and decorated the house, to welcome guests. Casa de Mogofores provides a restful staying and a contact with Portuguese history, as the house biography is linked to this particular period of transition from the

monarchy to the republic. Casa de Mogofores is strongly connected to Portuguese XIX century history; a period in which political instability sprouted from liberal revolts a new bourgeois elite increasingly influent in public administration and in economic circles.

This background explains the decision of Albano Coutinho Son, to move to Mogofores in 1876, after starting a brilliant career as political journalist, devoted to the democratic and republican causes and as a well-recognised talented writer. With his peculiar urbanity, Coutinho pursued his fight for republican and regionalist ideals, standing up to the monarchic forces of the region that "didn't keep up with the proper movement of his time".

Casa de Mogofores holds architectonic traces that reveal a strong connection to the Masonry movement. Over the door of the noble floor there is an entaglio engraving with round arms dated 1867 with the saying " *For political liberty, for religious and conscience liberty. – Albano Coutinho*". This house was bought, reconstructed and recovered to be the residence of its owners and wishes to open its doors to those who seek to enjoy from the broad relaxing space of its surrounding property, disposing of a set of activities and attractions that can be discovered around the Village of Mogofores. The project of Casa de Mogofores sprouts mainly from this narrative and wishes to provide its clients and guests, together







with a restful staying, a contact with Portuguese history, in particular with this period of transition from monarchy to the republic. This charming house is an ideal place to discover the region, and visit the Curia Spa, to taste the rich gastronomy and wines, to play golf, to relax and to be surprised by the amazing surrounding landscapes.

### CASA D'ÓBIDOS - ÓBIDOS

Dating back to the 19th century, Casa d' Óbidos was built by Mr. Garrelon, an engineer from the Eiffel team, who established here to lead the railway construction. It is located in an environmental protected area, which allows guests to enjoy a quiet natural environment and magnificent views of the Óbidos Castle. Casa d'Óbidos has the characteristics of the great farming houses of the region

and it is a welcoming manor house with a private swimming pool, an outstanding tennis court and pleasant gardens. The property is situated in a region of great beauty, near from the beaches of Peniche, Baleal and Foz do Arelho. The proximity of the medieval town of Óbidos also allows discovering this gorgeous village.

### LISBON - PORTUGAL'S BRIGHT CAPITAL

Lisbon, Portugal's bright capital, spreads along the north bank of the River Tagus, which meets the ocean here. One of the few European capitals with both a river and a coastline, Lisbon has Praça do Comércio square as its main meeting area. The city has always been ready to welcome new visitors and to bid a fond farewell to those departing, something

that was never more true than when saying goodbye to sailors at the time of the great Portuguese maritime discoveries. This is why there are many important Manueline monuments shining in the light of Lisbon and its surrounding region, such as the Torre de Belém and the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos. The modern leisure area of the Parque das Nações proves that Lisbon still maintains its close links with the river today.

Here, for example, you will find the distinctive mark of Álvaro Siza Vieira on one of the buildings that hosted the last world exposition of the 20th century, dedicated to the theme of the oceans. In contrast to this, do not miss the picturesque mediaeval quarters of Alfama and Mouraria, above which stands the castle. This castle, matched by Bairro Alto on the other hill, leads down to the downtown



city centre known as the Baixa pombalina. Lisbon is also at the centre of a region rich in diversity. Just outside the city are the seaside resort of Estoril and the romantic hills of the Serra de Sintra, where the perfect bond between palaces and nature led to the area being classified as a world heritage site. It is the sea, the climate and the stunning nature that give this region its peculiar energy. Its many parks and nature reserves encourage visitors to spend time in the open air, enjoying the peace and quiet of a round of golf or the adrenaline buzz of surfing. Perhaps this is why Lisbon is a city that is full of life. Here people have an exuberant party spirit, doing things spontaneously for the sheer pleasure of spending time in the company of others. To end your day you could experience the traditional and relaxed atmosphere of a Fado House.

