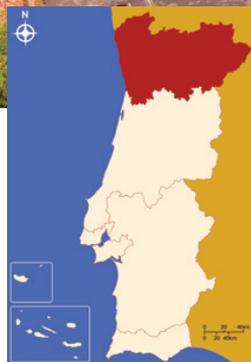


Porto and North of Portugal:

a breath-taking experience

The northern capital of Portugal has all it takes to give you the warmest welcome you could have waited for. The city combines tradition and modernity in a unique way and it is a triumphant entrance to visit one of Portugal's most beautiful regions, its northern one, a luxurious territory where all your senses will be heightened.



Porto is the country's northern capital, its second-largest city with a history that goes even further back than Lisbon's. Beyond all its emblematic oldest area, classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, with the river commanding the pace, there are houses and neighbourhoods crowded throughout the slopes, and Rabelo boats on the Douro River. The city is now also made of modernity and arts, design and contemporary architecture, offering a vibrant nightlife and a wide range of cultural activities for all tourists. In addition to the fame that arrives from Port Wine, the Invicta as it is known by the Portuguese has also gained recognition by its School of Architecture, from which names such as Álvaro Siza Vieira and Souto de Moura, both Pritzker Prize winners, have emerged. Walking through its streets, visitors can admire the way the new and old art live together, in a superb combination that gives a special atmosphere to the city. A heritage that knows how to blend the ancient churches and monuments, such as the Cathedral

or the Church of São Francisco, with contemporary landmark buildings, like Casa da Música and Serralves. Porto has a lot of attractions such as Gaia's ancient wine cellars, Douro River spanned by several impressive bridges, the many elderly houses and the groovy bars and restaurants. For the culture and art lovers, the Serralves Foundation is a compelling site. Serralves is one of the most important spots to discover modern art, being a museum that offers a multitude of different exhibitions. The city also reveals a new face in the various art galleries that have grown out of a very dynamic cultural movement. Check out Miguel Bombarda Street, the city's commercial hub. At night, Porto's many clubs and discotheques attract hundreds of people from all over the country. In a nutshell, Porto is a city full of history where everyone is busy looking into the future.

UNIQUE ALLURE

One of Porto's districts not to be missed is Ribeira, one of the oldest and most traditional places in the

city, part of the World Heritage Site that is the Historic Centre. This is one of the main spots for a lively nightlife with trendy bars and old traditional restaurants, as well as typical shops. It rises as a unique balcony overlooking the Douro

River and Vila Nova de Gaia with its magnificent buildings. There is in fact more to this region than Porto, being that the city isn't the only capital of this Portuguese region. There is a special charm experienced only in the North.

Ponte de Lima



- Ponte de Lima is known as the "Princess of the North", being a city of flowers with a plethora of beautiful and well nurtured gardens;
- It is located in the valley region of the Lima River, which grants it a set of unique landscape features that always gave to this village a very particular originality;
- This is the home of Manor houses, the Loureiro grape variety that distinguishes the delicious Green Wine and of the Sarrabulho Rice

Guimarães



- Guimarães is considered the birthplace of Portugal, since Dom Afonso Henriques, who went to be the first Portuguese king, was born here;
- The Historical Centre within the city walls is associated with the evolution and identity of Portugal, classified as World Heritage Site by UNESCO;
- The meaningful heritage of Guimarães is visible in graceful iron verandas, granite balconies and porticos, marvellous mansions, arches connecting narrow streets, towers and cloister;

Chaves



- Chave's Castle is located in the highest part of the town, in its Historic Centre and pedestrian area, where one can find magnificent views over the entire city;
- Chaves has the bucolic Tâmega River at its feet, flanked by gardens and bridges, such as the Roman bridge of Aqueae Flaviae, built by the Trajan emperor;
- The city's houses are of pure Portuguese architecture and make for an authentic visual pleasure.

Predominantly green, the region has in its main city one of its most magnificent entrance doors, due to the growing connection with its sister city, Vila Nova de Gaia, just separated by the no less famous Douro River.

With the recovery of the riverside area of the two cities, both won a very special feature and both have gained fame as greatest tourist attraction in recent times. Gaia more than a modern and dynamic city is also known for its numerous Blue Flag beaches like Miramar, Granja, Aguda, Valadares, Francelos,

Madalena and Canidelo. In fact, Gaia is a small town but will all sorts of offer. It has centuries-old history, wine and amazing food, pure and deserted beaches and a nightlife to remember.

HOME OF LAVISHING VEGETATION

Portugal was born in the North. Originally inhabited by populations developed in the Paleolithic, there are still witnesses of these primitive communities known as Pinturas Rupestres de Foz Côa (engravings).

Here have also lived Celts, Swabians, Romans and Muslims until the Portuguese entity was founded, as nation and people.

Of all these experiences there are details that endure and provide a unique wealth to the entire region. Here the geography is made of mountains and natural parks, a tight country among the ravines and inland mountains, with castles, such as Guimarães, or shrines and churches where pilgrimages take place every summer, in Viana do Castelo, Braga, Lamego, Chaves and Vila Real.



OUR VERY OWN GOD'S NECTAR

There are plenty of good and great wines in Portugal, differing in taste from region to region, but it is in the Douro Valley where grow the grapes of our most famous wine. Port Wine is our very own God's nectar, a fortified wine that is typically sweet, red and served with dessert. It is no common wine, having rich, intense and very persistent aromas and flavours. Port is produced from grapes grown and processed in the demarcated Douro Region. The wine produced is then fortified by the addition of a neutral grape spirit in order to stop the fermentation. The wine is then stored and aged at the famous wine cellars of Vila Nova de Gaia, before being bottled and ready to drink. <

The charming landscapes at Douro River Valley

Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, since 2001, the Douro Valley is the birthplace of the Port Wine and some of the best table wines of the country. This region has a lot to offer and the landscapes of the valley are no less than unforgettable. A lush green valley that runs through the North of Portugal until it meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Dozens of warehouses emblazoned with company names line the south bank of the Douro River, being that most of them have guided tours and tastings available. The Rabelo sailboats, once ferried in barrels of wine from the vineyards upstream, now offer short trips usually accompanied by a glass of Port. The river has some kind of magic in every curve, at every twist and turn where a new pallet of colours emerge.

To fully experience the Douro Valley you should head upstream to the Alto Douro wine region enjoying all the beauty of the scenery, the upper reaches of the river valley where Port Wine grapes grow. The Alto Douro is the world's oldest formally demarcated wine region. Its limits were delineated in 1756 by the reforming minister known

to posterity as the Marquess of Pombal.

When traveling the Douro River by boat there are some experiences that remain unforgettable. The floodgate of Bagaúste is one of them. For those unaware a floodgate is a kind of hydraulic lift in a dam that allows a boat to pass the gap between the reservoir and the river. Doors close, the water rises, doors open at the other side. Unforgettable.

Enotourism has a special allure in this region. Visitors can contact the manors (quintas) directly for visits, tastings, dinners and accommodation, or ask the Port Wine Route to put together an itinerary just for them. At harvest time you can help pick grapes or even trample them, in a traditional activity that brings to the present uses and practices of the past.

Not only this but tourists can also discover the region on board of an ancient steam train that, in the summer, complements the regular service from Régua along the river to Tua with a stop at Pinhão, whose station is lined with 24 beautiful azulejo (tile) panels depicting the rural life connected to wine production. <



The North is also considered one of the most romantic regions because of its lush green landscapes, but also for the hotels and a gastronomy that makes everyone drool. A destination with four World Heritage Sites, in Historic Centre of Porto and Guimarães, Douro Valley and the engravings of Foz Côa, where history blends perfectly with the modern landscape endowed with an unmatched beauty composed of cities, rivers, sea and mountains, all at short distances and to which must be added the excellence of

the food and wine, the mild climate and the hospitality of the people.

THE NATION'S BIRTHPLACE

Minho, the northerner Atlantic shore of Portugal, is well known for its natural charms, the gastronomy being one of the most obvious ones. From sea to land a plethora of ingredients conjure a unique gastronomy, combining the best from the Mediterranean and Atlantic diets. Nevertheless, food is far from being the sole attraction of the region.



Santa Maria da Feira: a medieval town

The Land of Saint Mary, as it was previously known, has a privileged geographic location that has, since ancient times, been inhabited by many. It is an open air museum with the epicentre in its medieval castle and in the many examples of religious architecture, with convents, churches and chapels from the Romanic to the Baroque.

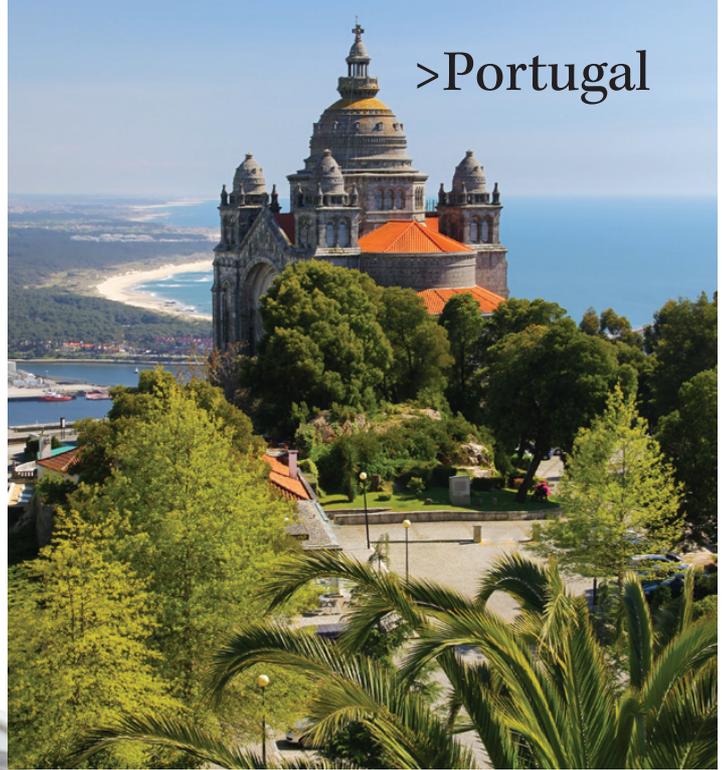
In Santa Maria da Feira you can still feel the vibe of the Middle Ages, transparent in its architectural heritage and brought to life every August with a magnificent event. From August 2nd to the 13th the Medieval Journey to Santa Maria da Feira will fill the town with knights in heavy armour, wielding long swords and taking part in jousting tournaments. The Historical Centre is transformed into a medieval fair, with merchants, artisans, blacksmiths, bakers, mule drivers, liqueur sellers and many, many more. <

Porto's fantastic restaurants

Matosinhos is a coastline city near Porto and the place with more restaurants per square meter in all of Portugal. There are plenty of spots to choose from but the specialty in the majority of them is one and one alone: the freshest fish and shellfish you will ever find. From taverns to top restaurants you are sure to find the best of what the sea has to offer and other delicious food, always accompanied with good wines.

The restaurants in the Capital of the North have been reinventing themselves in recent years. The traditional ingredients, flavours and cooking techniques are cherished, but brought to the present with modern twists of contemporary cuisine. In Porto you can taste the best of Portuguese food, served in a new light with a new care.

This new line of gastronomy is not only visible in the food, but also in its presentation, the restaurants ambience and decoration and the attention of the staff. It makes for a true gastronomic experience that is sure not to disappoint. Just choose from one of the many new hip places in town and prepare to travel through the best Portuguese cuisine. <



Everything in Minho is intertwined, the food, the landscape, the people and its history. Everywhere you go you will meet historic buildings and sites, several of them pre-dating the Roman occupation, let alone the country's foundation. If Portugal is well known for its hospitality, Minho is probably the region where this particular trait is cultivated like in

no other place. In medieval buildings and squares all over the region you will be able to feel all history's weight in a country that is more than 900 years old. Leave the towns and face a majestic nature, sometimes rough but always beautiful. In few other places the alliance between man and nature is so striking. <