

Discovering Our Planet Together



# Hidden Portugal: Mountains, Vineyards & Villages

*Discover Old World Traditions in Alentejo & Serra da Estrela*

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### Trip Details:

**Days**  
9 Days /  
Apr–Jul,  
Sep–Oct

**Price**  
From \$9995

## Hidden Portugal: Mountains, Vineyards & Villages

### Discover Old World Traditions in Alentejo & Serra da Estrela

This journey well off the tourist track offers a rare insider's immersion in the enduring traditions and rugged beauty of Portugal's interior. From the hill towns and castles of Alentejo to the high peaks, alpine pastures and shepherding culture of Serra da Estrela, find a tableau of rural Portugal few visitors see. Wander among cork and olive orchards, learning about ancient and modern production methods, and sample some of the world's finest olive oil — "Portuguese green gold." Taste acclaimed table wines from family vineyards. Stroll cobbled lanes in well-preserved villages showcasing architectural heritage from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, from whitewashed homes adorned in azulejos to magnificent palaces and convents. Hike in the Zezere Glacier Valley in Portugal's largest natural park, threaded by one of the country's wildest rivers. Make personal connections with artisan cheesemakers, bread bakers, weavers and wool producers as we discover the delights of local gastronomy and mountain culture in little-visited sectors of Portugal where tradition prevails.

### Trip Highlights

Discover Portuguese gastronomy, from baking bread in a village oven to private tastings in Alentejo vineyards and farm-to-table meals in Serra da Estrela

In an intimate context, experience traditional mountain culture as we meet shepherds and weavers and make cheese and pottery alongside local artisans

From a former 14th-century monastery to a classic farm and 5-star mountain hotel and spa, our unique lodgings are rich in history and distinctive architecture

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### Itinerary At A Glance

#### Day 1

Lisbon, Portugal—Tour of Belem / Private Fado Performance

#### Day 2

Alentejo—Tapestry Workshop / Evora Walking Tour / Cork Plantation / Crato

#### Day 3

Tapestry Museum / Hiking in Serra de Sao Mamede / Private Wine Tasting

#### Day 4

Castelo de Vide/ Marvao / Olive Grove Tour & Tasting / Pottery Workshop

#### Day 5

Vila Velha de Rodao / Videmonte —Mondego River Walk / Wood-Fired Dinner

#### Day 6

Discovering Local Food & Traditions in Serra da Estrela

#### Day 7

Manteigas / Casa de Sao Lourenco —Wool Production Workshop

## Hidden Portugal: Mountains, Vineyards & Villages Itinerary

Discover Old World Traditions in Alentejo & Serra da Estrela

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### Day 1: Lisbon, Portugal—Tour of Belem / Private Fado Performance

Arrive in Lisbon by 1 PM, where our representative meets you at the airport or train station and accompanies you on the transfer to our hotel. Lisbon is Portugal's vibrant capital and one of the world's oldest cities, with 3,000 years of history. Founded by the Phoenicians, the coastal metropolis at the mouth of the Tagus River has been shaped by centuries of maritime exploration, Moorish and Roman influence. The city became a global hub for exploration wealth and trade during its zenith in the 15th and 16th centuries, when seafarers like Vasco da Gama and Bartolomeu Dias set off to discover new sea routes around Africa to India. Rebuilt after a devastating earthquake in 1755, Lisbon is known for its seven hills, cobbled streets, yellow trams, pastel-colored houses and Fado music.



At 3 PM, we set out with our guide on a walking tour of the historic riverfront district of Belem. Not far from central Lisbon on the Tagus River, Belem is famous for its monuments celebrating the Age of Discovery, including the UNESCO-listed Jeronimos Monastery and fortified Belem Tower, and the sail-shaped Monument to the Discoveries. Belem is also home to the original Pasteis de Belem custard tarts that have been made here on the same site since 1837. This evening, gather for a welcome dinner and private Fado performance, a Portuguese musical genre that dates to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and features evocative, often mournful, melodies and lyrics. Early Fado singers told stories of fishermen and poor laborers, infused with a sense of fate and resignation, and those traditions continue today.

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### Itinerary At A Glance

**Day 8**

Relaxing at Casa de Sao Lourenco  
& Optional Hiking

**Day 9**

Transfer to Porto / Depart

### Day 2: Alentejo—Tapestry Workshop / Evora Walking Tour / Cork Plantation / Crato

Drive this morning to Alentejo, a large region stretching east from Lisbon to the Spanish border. Though it's not far from the capital, lesser-known Alentejo feels a world apart, characterized by its rural landscapes, cork forests, vineyards and traditional villages. We make several stops en route to our destination of Crato in the Upper Alentejo, first in the small town of Arraiolos, famed for its exquisite tapestry rugs that are an important part of Portuguese cultural heritage dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Meet a local artisan at carpet workshop where we learn the history and origin of these rugs, including the intricate Arraiolos Stitch, a unique hand-embroidery technique from this area. Observe the various stages of production, from treating the wool and dyeing the yarns, creating the designs, then embroidery and final finishing. The months of manual labor required to complete a single rug highlight the value and mastery involved in this art that has been passed down between generations and resists extinction.

Continue to Evora for lunch and a guided walk. This ancient city's historic center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, dates back more than 20 centuries to Celtic times, before it was dominated by the Romans. Evora reached its golden age in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when it became the residence of the Portuguese kings. Its many monuments, especially convents and royal palaces, had a notable influence on Portuguese architecture in Brazil. The town is also famous for its low whitewashed houses decorated with blue-and-white azulejo tiles and wrought-iron balconies, the preeminent residential architectural style from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Evora remained mainly undamaged by the great earthquake of 1755 that destroyed many towns in Portugal, including Lisbon, giving it "living museum" status today.

This afternoon we visit a cork plantation to learn about this most Portuguese of enterprises. Cork is a natural product of high economic and ecological value, and more than half the world's cork comes from Portugal, with Alentejo the country's prime cork-producing region. On a private tour, walk among the trees, touch the bark, and watch the cork-making process as we hear about the cultural and industrial heritage of cork production. Continue to our accommodation at Pousada Mosteiro do Crato, originally a 14th-century convent, then a castle and a palace before becoming a modern luxury hotel. Gather on the terrace for drinks and dinner as we settle in to a most distinctive base for exploring more of Alentejo.

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### **Day 3: Tapestry Museum / Hiking in Serra de Sao Mamede / Private Wine Tasting**

Our day begins with a drive to the hilltop town of Portaelgre for a walking tour among the many historic monuments and whitewashed houses with red tile roofs. A highlight is a visit to the Tapeçarias de Portalegre museum for a look at how modern artists are keeping local tapestry arts alive in contemporary renderings. The tapestries produced here incorporate more than 7,000 different colors of thread, creating vibrant, intricate handwoven show pieces.

Continue to Serra de Sao Mamede Natural Park where a network of trails leads us into this wild mountainous area. With the mountain barrier trapping more humidity here than in neighboring regions, the park is covered in rich and varied vegetation, from oak and chestnut trees to traditional cork oak and holm oak groves. Look up to search for rare birds of prey, including vultures, kites and the Bonelli eagle. Deer and wild boar also roam the park, and while they are elusive, we might see them, with current efforts to restore more of their natural habitat.

Following our afternoon hike, head for Quinta da Fonte de Souto for a private winery tour and tasting. The estate is part of Portugal's well-known Symington family winemaking enterprise, the first of its properties outside the Douro region. Its high-altitude location near the Sao Mamede range creates a cooler microclimate in contrast to the rest of Alentejo's typically hot and dry conditions, producing notable white and red table wines. After sampling some impressive vintages, return to our hotel to unwind in the pool and lounge spaces, which were once medieval cloisters.

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### **Day 4: Castelo de Vide/ Marvao / Olive Grove Tour & Tasting / Pottery Workshop**

Our day begins with a tour of Castelo de Vide, a prominent medieval fortress commanding a high point far above the vast Alentejo landscape. The views from the castle walls are stunning, while the town below holds a well-preserved Jewish Quarter with cobbled streets and a synagogue. Then head to nearby Marvao, a small village perched on a quartzite crag that marks the highest crest of the Serra de Sao Marmede. Just a stone's throw from the border with Spain, the picturesque town offers a 360° panorama of the surrounding countryside into both countries. Given its elevation atop a mountain marked by steep slopes on three sides, Marvao held strategic importance in the region for centuries, with a castle of its own for defense. Inside the town walls are narrow lanes lined with houses that exude centuries of architectural heritage, from Gothic arches and Manueline windows to wrought-iron balconies and other embellishments in the nooks and crannies of the buildings made from local granite.

After lunch in Marvao, continue to Galegos for a foray into the history and contemporary production of Portuguese olive oil. Take a journey through the entire process, from cultivating olive trees (some thousands of years old, others new plantings) to harvesting the olives and the evolution of extraction methods, contrasting the old lever presses with the modern technology of today's industrial presses. Hear about the central role of "Portuguese green gold" in the Mediterranean diet and in Alentejo culture as we learn the difference between the various types of olive oil (virgin, extra virgin, etc.) and the factors that influence their flavor and quality. During a tasting, we'll learn to identify different sensory attributes (fruity, bitter, and spicy), similarly to a wine tasting.

Return to Crato to participate in a pottery workshop, offering firsthand insight into a centuries-old craft that is a vital part of Alentejo's cultural identity. The use of earthenware vessels in the region dates back to Neolithic times, with elements of the craft passed down through generations of master potters. We'll learn traditional techniques for working with the area's characteristic red clay, including how to use a potter's wheel; shaping various items like mugs, bowls, and pitchers; firing in the kiln; and applying glazes. Come away not only with your own creation, but a deep appreciation for the heritage and expertise of local artisans who keep traditional Portuguese ceramic-making alive as a form of durable and functional art.

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### **Day 5: Vila Velha de Rodao / Videmonte—Mondego River Walk / Wood-Fired Dinner**

Today we transition from Alentejo to the Serra da Estrela region for an in-depth encounter with Portuguese mountain culture. Stop en route in Vila Velha de Rodao, a medieval village on the Tagus River, for a guided walk and lunch. Continue into Serra da Estrela Natural Park, Portugal's largest protected area, which contains the country's highest mountain peaks. Our scenic drive takes us through centuries-old sheep-herding communities to our ultimate destination today, the high-country village of Videmonte, located in the heart of the Serra da Estrela conservation area. The region is very important to Portugal's biodiversity, with its altitude and geographic isolation resulting in a wide variety of distinctive flora and fauna. The lower slopes of the granite mountains are forested in oak, pine and chestnut trees with the occasional rare yew, along with junipers, laurel and bellflowers, while the glacier-scoured valleys hold heather, rosemary and brooms. And though we won't see these larger species, it's exciting to know these mountains shelter wildlife, including wolves, boars, otters, foxes and more.

Explore our wild environs on a scenic amble over the Mondego Walkways—a 7-mile network of wooden boardwalks and bridges along and above the Mondego River through the UNESCO Estrela Geopark. One of the most fascinating aspects is the old water mills that dot the riverbanks, some of which date back centuries. They were once vital to local communities as the primary means for grinding grain into flour, and many of these charming old structures have been beautifully preserved.

Nearby, a very special accommodation awaits: Terra Sense Retreat & Farm, a property comprising two modern luxury villas constructed of local materials built on a family-owned farm surrounded by lavender fields. A boutique property like this, where we feel as though we are guests at a private home, is only available to a small group like ours—you won't find big bus tours anywhere in the Serra da Estrela region, for that matter. This evening, gather for a traditional wood-fired dinner with our hosts.

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### Day 6: Discovering Local Food & Traditions in Serra da Estrela

Tucked into a river valley surrounded by Portugal's tallest mountains, Videmonte is a small community known for its legendary hospitality. According to local lore, the village was formed when a rich nobleman, whose land was called Monte, welcomed the struggling people of the nearby hamlet of Vide, where he attended Sunday mass, to come share in his bounty. Today, the rules of a good host in Videmonte dictate that there is no shortage of water or bread for those who visit the village. Flowing fountains are found throughout the cobbled streets, and breadmaking—from the growing and harvesting of rye, to the flour milling and baking in a wood-fired oven—continues the ancestral traditions of this place, along with the cultivation of chestnuts and potatoes.

To this day, the picturesque town of some 500 residents is known for its hospitality and communal nature. We experience these values ourselves as we meet local people and gain uncommon insight into their daily lives and enduring traditions in a highly personalized context. Join a baker for a bread-making lesson using the communal oven, and enjoy a cheesemaking workshop, including tastings of some of the famous cheeses for which the Serra da Estrela region is known. Following a tour of the village, with its schist and granite houses and red-tile roofs, sit down for lunch with community members at the Videmonte Residents' Association. Then return to our luxurious farm stay for some free time—take a swim in the pool, read on a lounge chair with a fabulous view of the valley, or visit the resident donkeys and goats. Then, it's time to head to Linhares—an ancient town surrounded by an 11<sup>th</sup> century Templar castle—to explore both before a dinner featuring fine local farm-to-table fare.

### Day 7: Manteigas / Casa de Sao Lourenco—Wool Production Workshop

Following a last fresh breakfast on the farm, depart for Manteigas, a small town in the heart of the Serra da Estrela known for its long history rooted in wool production. Our destination is the 5-Star Casa de Sao Lourenco, our luxury hotel and spa where we spend the next two nights. The property is owned by one of the town's most prominent burel wool producers, and we stop by his factory and workshop to gain up-close insight into the history of this special mode of wool-making. Burel is a traditional Portuguese boiled wool fabric, particularly known for its use by shepherds in the Serra da Estrela region. It's durable, water-resistant and warm, often described like heavy felt. Burel is made through a unique process of washing, spinning, weaving and then felting the wool, resulting in a dense and robust fabric. After a brief tour (and the opportunity to purchase some of these products yourself), we arrive at the hotel. The interior was crafted by one of Portugal's most famous designers, and the influence of the local wool-based economy is immediately visible in the furniture and decor. In the evening, enjoy a private reception with welcome drink overlooking the glacial valley below, followed by a group dinner prepared by the hotel's acclaimed chef.

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### **Day 8: Relaxing at Casa de Sao Lourenco & Optional Hiking**

A full day is yours to spend as you desire at our elegant hotel and spa retreat. Those who wish can join a guided hike this morning to explore the surrounding area, one of the most remote and beautiful landscapes in all of Portugal. If you'd rather take it easy, you'll have ample time to enjoy the panoramic mountain views from the pool or book a massage at the spa. In the late afternoon, we take a drive through the Zezere Valley, formed by glaciers more than 20,000 years ago. A stop at Covao da Ametade at the head of the valley offers a dramatic view of a trio of imposing peaks known as the Three Cantaros, or three pitchers. The site was originally a glacial meltwater lake, though it was long ago filled in with vegetation as the ice receded. A small stream flowing through the silver beech forest here is the starting point of the Zezere River.

This evening, gather under the stars at the fine restaurant at the hotel for our farewell dinner. Known for the exceptional quality of its dishes and Chef Figueira's exclusive use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients, the restaurant's hallmark is traditional local fare with a contemporary twist. Enjoy a last chance to share stories of our time together in rural Portugal before tomorrow's return to a bigger, busier world.

### **Day 9: Transfer to Porto / Depart**

An early-morning group transfer back to Porto is provided, where we say our goodbyes and begin our journeys homeward, rejuvenated and enriched from our immersion in traditional Portuguese life.

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### Accommodation Details:

**Pestana Palace Lisboa**

**Pousada Mosteiro do Crato**

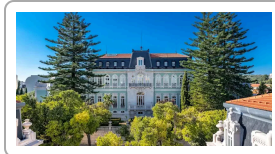
**Terra Sense Retreat & Farm**

**Casa de Sao Lourenco**

For detailed descriptions, visit [nathab.com/cultural-journeys/hidden-portugal-cultural-journey/accommodations](http://nathab.com/cultural-journeys/hidden-portugal-cultural-journey/accommodations)

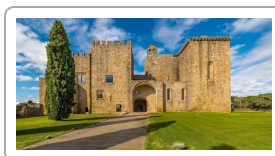
## Hidden Portugal: Mountains, Vineyards & Villages Accommodations

Discover Old World Traditions in Alentejo & Serra da Estrela



### **Pestana Palace Lisboa**

A restored 19th-century palace and honored by The Leading Hotels of the World for exceptional service and sustainability, this five-star hotel offers a distinctive blend of heritage and luxury.



### **Pousada Mosteiro do Crato**

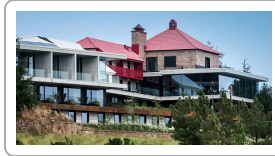
A 14th-century monastery transformed into a modern hotel, featuring preserved stonework, bright rooms and bucolic views for a stay rooted in history, simplicity and legacy.



### **Terra Sense Retreat & Farm**

Set on a lavender farm in a quiet valley, this retreat features two modern villas built with stone, timber and glass, with valley-facing windows, seasonal meals and calm, minimalist interiors.

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### **Casa de Sao Lourenco**

This modern mountain hotel features panoramic views, spacious suites with burel wool details, a minimalist spa, and interiors that highlight local materials, craftsmanship and clean architectural lines.

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# A Deeper Connection to Portugal's Countryside and Culture

Portugal has become a favorite among travelers to Europe. But most flock to busy cities and crowded beaches. With Terra and Tu, you'll discover a very different side of Portugal, where traditional and authentic ways of life still flourish in more remote areas. From the quiet rural reaches of Alentejo to the country's highest mountains in Serra da Estrela, come with us to experience a Portugal most visitors miss.

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**1**

### Explore Portugal Beyond the Tourist Trail

Most travelers rush between the busier cities and sites without slowing down or going farther afield to experience the essence of rural Portugal. On this Terra & Tu cultural immersion, you'll go deeper. As the only operator offering a multi-day stay in Serra da Estrela, our guests get to experience personal encounters with this land and its people, to experience a type of travel that is authentic, meaningful and rooted in the local way of life.

**2**

### An Intimate Connection to Place, People & Culture

In our small-group context, you'll enjoy exclusive access to Portugal's lesser-known traditions—stay on generations-old family farms, spend time in local shepherding communities, and meet with village elders who open their homes and stories to us, sharing decades, even centuries, of heritage.

**3**

### A Small Group for Authentic Exploration

With no more than 12 guests, we take you where big tours can't go—artisan workshops, small family-run restaurants, and boutique farm retreats. Our small group size fosters deeper conversations, personal connections and a more meaningful bond with the people and traditions that define Portugal's rural heritage.

**4**

### Exclusive Experiences Designed for the Curious Traveler

This trip isn't a generic tour. It's a unique opportunity for those who deeply value cultural context, story and surprise. Every moment is thoughtfully designed to give you rare access to the heart of rural Portugal. You'll meet winemakers reviving ancient techniques, shepherds in remote mountain highlands striving to protect their traditional way of life, and artisans preserving centuries-old traditions. Enjoy private wine tastings, locally guided walks, and hands-on sessions with local artisans, like learning to make the mountain cheese Serra da Estrela is famous for. Our partnerships with local communities open doors to behind-the-scenes experiences few travelers can access.

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### Luxury That's Rooted in a Deep Sense of Place

Forget generic resorts or cookie-cutter hotels—our accommodations are meticulously chosen for their history, atmosphere and quality: restored villas, thoughtfully designed boutique hotels and countryside retreats that reflect the heritage and traditions of the region. Each accommodation is handpicked not just for comfort and aesthetics, but for its sense of place and cultural authenticity.

6

### Food & Wine That Reflect the Land

This isn't a trip where food is an afterthought. On the contrary, here, it is the heartbeat. You'll savor multi-course meals creatively prepared by regional chefs, learn the stories behind each wine you sip, take traditional cheese and breadmaking classes, and enjoy dishes crafted from ingredients grown just steps away. We celebrate Portugal's rich culinary heritage with every bite.

7

### Thoughtfully Led by Regional Experts

Your journey is guided by locals—historians, artisans and guides who know Portugal not just as a destination, but as home. With Terra & Tu, interpretation comes from lived experience, offering layers of context, tradition and storytelling that deepen your understanding of the region around you.

8

### Rooted in Respect & Sustainability

In an age where "overtourism" besieges too many vulnerable places, every element of this trip is designed to support local communities and minimize environmental impact, while bringing an economic infusion into rural areas that need it. We partner directly with family businesses and local nonprofits, support regenerative agriculture, and avoid heavily visited spots. When you travel with us, you're contributing to the preservation of Portuguese nature and its authentic cultural heritage.

9

### Community Is at the Heart of Everything

Our strongest partnerships are personal ones—with local families, artisans, community leaders and farmers. These relationships are the soul of our itineraries, and they're what make your experience feel intimate, grounded and unforgettable. We've partnered with Aldeias de Montanha, a local nonprofit dedicated to preserving Portugal's mountain villages, to bring guests opportunities for cross-cultural exchange in communities where traditional ways of life are threatened.

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## Dates & Pricing Summary:

**Prices:**  
From \$9995

**Group Size:**  
Limited to 12  
Travelers

## Hidden Portugal: Mountains, Vineyards & Villages Dates, Pricing & Info

Discover Old World Traditions in Alentejo & Serra da Estrela

### 2027 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
Apr 16, 2027	Apr 24, 2027	\$9995 USD
May 12, 2027	May 20, 2027	\$9995 USD
May 22, 2027	May 30, 2027	\$9995 USD <a href="#">Habitat Club Pricing Available</a>
Jun 19, 2027	Jun 27, 2027	\$9995 USD
Jul 17, 2027	Jul 25, 2027	\$9995 USD

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## Dates & Pricing Summary:

**Prices:**  
From \$9995

**Group Size:**  
Limited to 12  
Travelers

Departure	Return	Notes
Oct 7, 2027	Oct 15, 2027	\$10295 USD
Oct 16, 2027	Oct 24, 2027	\$9995 USD
Oct 25, 2027	Nov 2, 2027	\$9995 USD

## 2028 Departures

Departure	Return	Notes
! Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
May 1, 2028	May 9, 2028	\$10495 USD
May 11, 2028	May 19, 2028	\$10495 USD
May 21, 2028	May 29, 2028	\$10495 USD
May 30, 2028	Jun 7, 2028	\$10495 USD
Jun 9, 2028	Jun 17, 2028	\$10495 USD
Sep 2, 2028	Sep 10, 2028	\$10495 USD
Sep 12, 2028	Sep 20, 2028	\$10495 USD
Sep 22, 2028	Sep 30, 2028	\$10495 USD
Oct 6, 2028	Oct 14, 2028	\$10495 USD
Oct 16, 2028	Oct 24, 2028	\$10495 USD

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### Pricing

See <https://nathab.com/cultural-journeys/hidden-portugal-cultural-journey/dates-fees> for the latest pricing details.

### Included

Accommodations at luxury hotels, all meals throughout itinerary, some wine and liquor at meals, private wine tastings and vineyard tour, all van transportation within itinerary, services of Terra & Tu guides and staff, all other guided activities.

### Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

### Important Information About This Trip

This special journey offers far more than typical sightseeing and cultural activities. It's an authentic, in-depth experience in parts of Portugal rarely seen by travelers. By venturing first into the quieter region of Alentejo, we step away from tourist crowds and into a world where traditional lifestyles flourish. But that's only the beginning. Our route continues deep into the stunning Serra da Estrela mountains, a region untouched by typical tourism, where Terra & Tu is the only tour operator offering overnight stays. Here, you'll share memorable meals with local residents, stroll with shepherds tending their flocks, and truly immerse yourself in Portuguese rural life. This itinerary is thoughtfully curated through our meaningful connections within these communities, ensuring a unique encounter with Portugal's living heritage.

Given ample notice, our team can accommodate most dietary needs and restrictions.

### Getting There & Getting Home

**We recommend arriving in Lisbon the night before Day 1** so you can rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. Guests arriving on Day 1 should arrive in Lisbon no later than 1 pm to participate in the group welcome orientation and activities.

**You may depart Porto any time after 12 pm on the final day.**

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel arrangements, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help organize the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

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### Extension Details:

Discovering Portugal's River of Wine  
\$9295

## Hidden Portugal: Mountains, Vineyards & Villages Extensions

Discover Old World Traditions in Alentejo & Serra da Estrela



### Discovering Portugal's River of Wine

Savor a little-traveled slice of Old World Europe as we explore rugged mountains, nature reserves, olive orchards and ancient vineyards, paddle scenic stretches of the Douro River, and stay on historic wine estates

**\$9295**



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