

Discovering Our Planet Together



Portugal: The Douro & Mountain Villages

An Intimate Encounter with Old World Portugal

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Trip Details:

Days
9 Days /
May, Oct

Price
From \$9495

Portugal: The Douro & Mountain Villages

An Intimate Encounter with Old World Portugal

This unique journey well off the tourist track offers a rare insider's immersion in the enduring traditions and rugged beauty of Portugal's interior. From terraced vineyards along the quiet upper reaches of the Douro River to the high peaks, alpine pastures and shepherding culture of Serra da Estrela, find a tableau of rural Portugal few visitors see. Sample acclaimed Ports and table wines in the UNESCO World Heritage landscape of the Alto Douro region, where wine has been produced for 2,000 years. View 30,000-year-old rock art in the Coa Valley archaeological park. 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 and wool producers as we discover the delights of local gastronomy and medieval mountain villages in a little-visited sector of Portugal where tradition prevails.

Trip Highlights

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

In the intimate context of our small group, experience traditional mountain culture as we meet shepherds and weavers and make cheese alongside local artisans

From a stylish guesthouse on a 300-year-old Douro wine estate to a classic farm and 5-star mountain hotel and spa, you'll relish our distinctive lodgings

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Itinerary At A Glance

Day 1

Porto, Portugal

Day 2

Train to Ferradosa / Private Douro Boat Trip / Quinta das Mos / Casa do Rio

Day 3

Exploring the Coa Valley & Archaeological Park

Day 4

Quinta do Vallado Wine Tasting / Private Douro River Cruise

Day 5

Trancoso / Videmonte—Mondego River Walk

Day 6

Discovering Local Food & Traditions in Serra da Estrela

Day 7

Manteigas / Casa de Sao Lourenco —Wool Production Workshop

Portugal: The Douro & Mountain Villages Itinerary

An Intimate Encounter with Old World Portugal

Day 1: Porto, Portugal

Arrive in Porto where our representative meets you and accompanies you on the transfer to our hotel. Flanking the mouth of the Douro River on the Atlantic Ocean, Porto blends layers of culture and architectural heritage in a striking setting. There is much to do and see in the historic city center of Porto, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Stroll the narrow cobbled streets and waterfront promenade of the medieval Ribeira District, admire the jumble of multicolored houses stacked on steep hillsides, walk across the famous Dom Luis I bridge to Vila Nova de Gaia with its famous Port lodges lining the riverfront, and wander the newly renovated Mercado de Bolhao, Porto's two-story open-air public market in operation since 1837.



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Itinerary At A Glance

Day 8

Optional Hiking & Relaxing at Casa de Sao Lourenco

Day 9

Transfer to Porto / Depart

Day 2: Train to Ferradosa / Private Douro Boat Trip / Quinta das Mos / Casa do Rio

Transfer this morning to Porto's 1916 São Bento railway station, famous for the exquisite azulejo murals in its main hall that depict historical scenes from Portugal in more than 20,000 blue-and-white painted tiles. Here, we board our small local train to Ferradosa, located far up the Douro Valley where other visitors are few. The journey upriver takes us east toward Spain, offering our first sights of the world's oldest demarcated wine region, dating to 1756. Once we reach our destination, board a boat to cruise one of the most scenic stretches of the Douro, from Ferradosa to Freixo do Numao, offering close-up views of the terraced vineyards on the stone mountainsides and possible sightings of raptors gliding overhead. Heading ashore, discover the peaceful pace of remote village life in the upper reaches of the Douro Valley. A lavish home-cooked lunch and wine tasting await at Quinta das Mos, a small, highly acclaimed and rarely visited family-run winery that has also received accolades for its olive oils.

After a leisurely repast and good conversation with our local hosts, continue to our intimate luxury accommodations at Casa do Rio. Designed by renowned architect Francisco Vieira de Campos, this stylish guesthouse is built into a rocky mountainside between terraced vineyards of Quinta do Vallado and the Douro River below. The guest rooms, open-air dining terrace and infinity pool all have 180° views over the river. Later this evening, enjoy welcome drinks followed by a special dinner prepared by the inn's talented chef.

Day 3: Exploring the Coa Valley & Archaeological Park

After a relaxing breakfast overlooking the Douro River, explore the layered history and cultures of the Coa Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that holds one of the world's most important prehistoric rock art sites, dating back more than 20,000 years. A visit to the Coa Museum and Archeological Park introduces us to the region's history as we learn from archaeology experts about the extensive Paleolithic drawings discovered in the late 1980s. The park contains some 5,000 engraved drawings of horses, bovines and other animals, plus human and abstract figures, documenting continuous human occupation from the end of the Paleolithic Age. The entire site was slated to be inundated by a dam under construction at the time of discovery, but after intense public pressure, the project was halted to preserve the extraordinary discovery.

Following lunch at the museum's stylish terrace café overlooking the wine-making landscape of the Douro, return to our hotel where the afternoon is free to relax, enjoy a massage at the spa, or join our staff for a guided kayak outing on the tranquil river. Early this evening, head to a local olive grove for a tour and tasting, followed by a group dinner at a restaurant in the nearby town of Vila Nova Foz Coa.

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Day 4: Quinta do Vallado Wine Tasting / Private Douro River Cruise

After yesterday's adventures, today strikes a more leisurely tone. Following breakfast at Casa do Rio, we head to our hosts' nearby vineyards that surround our small hotel for a private tour and tasting. Established in 1716, Quinta do Vallado is one of the oldest and most famous *quintas*, or wine estates, in the Douro Valley. Founded by the legendary Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira, it remains to this day in the hands of her descendants. Its main activity until 1987 was the production of Port wine sold by the family's Port house, Casa Ferreira. After an ensuing sale of the Port house to another family member, production languished until the early 1990s, when the new owners decided to expand the business into making, bottling and marketing its own private-label wines. Restructuring the vineyards with new growing methods and expanding through the acquisition of an organically farmed vineyard nearby, Quinta do Vallado positioned itself as a vital presence to continue its venerable heritage into the 21st century. After our tasting, follow up with lunch on the terrace at Casa do Rio. This afternoon, enjoy another languid cruise on the river, exploring one of the Douro's most scenic sections by private boat with a local guide. And tonight, gather once more for aperitifs and another memorable dinner on the terrace under the stars, before preparing to depart tomorrow.

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Day 5: Trancoso / Videmonte—Mondego River Walk

After breakfast at Casa do Rio, depart by van for 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 en route to lunch in Trancoso, a well-preserved medieval town barely altered since its 13th century zenith and the site of an important Portuguese fortress. Before we sit down for lunch, take a brief guided tour with a local resident who offers an introduction to the town's history and traditional Portuguese mountain culture.

Our ultimate destination today is 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.

In Videmonte, 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. Once we're checked in, it's time to explore our wild environs via 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. Return to Terra Sense 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 11th 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: Optional Hiking & Relaxing at Casa de Sao Lourenco

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

A 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. If you are departing Porto today, please book your flight or train for after 12:00 PM.

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Accommodation Details:

The One Monumental Palace

Casa do Rio

Terra Sense Retreat & Farm

Casa de Sao Lourenco

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/portugal-douro-river-serra-estrela/accommodations

Portugal: The Douro & Mountain Villages Accommodations

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The One Monumental Palace

Set in a restored 19th-century palace on Avenida dos Aliados, this five-star Porto hotel pairs grand architecture, Michelin-starred dining and a serene spa with light-filled, marble-appointed guest rooms.



Casa do Rio

Part of the Quinta do Vallado wine estate in Portugal's Upper Douro Valley, Casa do Rio offers new luxury accommodations in six stylish suites, surrounded by vineyards with 180-degree views over the river below.



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 upper reaches of the Douro Valley to the country's highest mountains in Serra da Estrela, come with us to experience a Portugal most visitors miss.

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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5

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 \$9495

Group Size:
Limited to 12
Travelers

Portugal: The Douro & Mountain Villages Dates, Pricing & Info

An Intimate Encounter with Old World Portugal

2026 Departures

| Departure | Return | Notes |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| May 31, 2026 | Jun 8, 2026 | \$9795 USD |
| Oct 3, 2026 | Oct 11, 2026 | \$9795 USD |
| Oct 10, 2026 | Oct 18, 2026 | \$9795 USD |
| Oct 20, 2026 | Oct 28, 2026 | \$9495 USD |

Pricing

See <https://nathab.com/cultural-journeys/portugal-douro-river-serra-estrela/dates-fees> for the latest pricing details.

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Included

Accommodations at luxury hotels, all meals throughout itinerary, some wine and liquor at meals, private wine tastings and vineyard tour, train transportation from Porto to Douro Valley, 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 stretches of the upper Douro River, 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 Porto 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 Porto 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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