



# Centro – the heart of Portugal



Varied, historic, compact and accessible, the Centro region is a traveller's delight. Here you will find glacial valleys, lush green mountains, Manueline churches, urban canals and never-ending sand-dunes. Citadels perch on

hills and the black slate of village roofs distinguish this region.

Throughout the area, hidden villages nestle amidst green hillsides. Each season has its own character, cold and wet in winter, very hot in summer. In spring, magnolias blossom and there are a multitude of majestic linden trees.



## 1 Coimbra University

The oldest university in Portugal and a UNESCO World Heritage site is a must-see for any visitor. The Biblioteca Joanina, where bats protect the books from insects, is of exceptional interest.



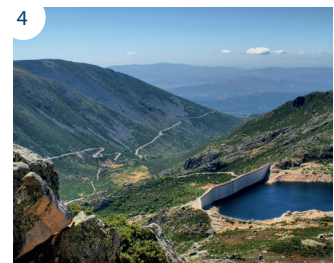
## 2 The schist village of Piodão

Hidden in the Serra de Açor, Piodão is one of Portugal's prettiest rural villages. Step back in time and learn about the history of the border communities.



## 3 Cheese-making

Learn the art of cheese-making at the historic Casa da Ínsua. Curdle the milk, separate the curds and whey, and package the finished product – including a final tasting.



## 4 Serra da Estrela Natural Park

Covering around 1000 sq.km, the park is home to the highest mountains in mainland Portugal and a patchwork of charming villages. Hike, cycle, climb or try kayaking.

# Hidden Gems

Discover the 'City of Water', Aveiro, with its criss-crossing canals and unique wooden boats 'Moliceiro'; Coimbra, a vibrant city, home to one of the oldest universities in Europe; and Óbidos, with its narrow cobbled streets and whitewashed houses draped with fragrant bougainvillea.

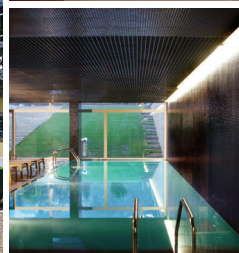
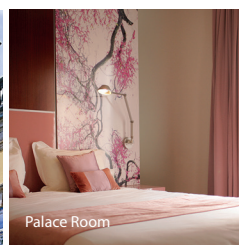
## Moliceiro Hotel, Aveiro

Perfectly located in the centre of Aveiro, bordering a park, this is an owner-managed hotel 'par excellence'. The property is meticulously looked after down to the smallest detail by its ever present owner Cristina Duraes. The themed bedrooms are a delight, with subjects like lemon, lavender, mint, and Manhattan and are creatively and artistically furnished. Views are to the main canal in Aveiro, the Rossio public gardens, over a small interior garden or to the fish market square.

**Accommodation:** 49 air-conditioned rooms including standard rooms, superior and deluxe thematic rooms and suites.

- Airports: 75km Porto / 250km Lisbon
- 4-star hotel
- Bed & Breakfast
- Complimentary WiFi
- Coastal city location

Guide price from **£780 per person\***



## Quinta das Lágrimas, Coimbra

This fascinating property, set in 20 acres of botanical gardens (including two trees planted by the Duke of Wellington himself) is steeped in history and tradition. The original building dates from the 18th century and has been in the current family for over 300 years. Although the property has been renovated, it has maintained many original features including high ceilings in the lavish public areas and fabulous frescoes.

**Accommodation:** 55 air-conditioned rooms located between three buildings (Garden wing, Spa wing and the Palace).

- Airports: 100km Porto / 198km Lisbon
- 4-star hotel
- Bed & Breakfast
- Riverside location
- Complimentary WiFi
- Restaurant
- Swimming pools
- Spa

Guide price from **£1,030 per person\***

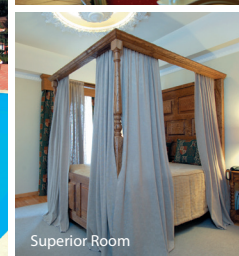
## Real d'Óbidos Hotel, Óbidos

This charming medieval-styled hotel is located just outside the walled town of Óbidos (c.20m) and enjoys stunning views towards the town's castle and over the surrounding countryside. Originally a 14th century residence, the Real d'Óbidos has been beautifully remodelled to offer a high standard of accommodation, whilst maintaining and enhancing many of the building's original features. This is a property that cannot fail to please, whether on a short break or a longer stay.

**Accommodation:** 18 traditionally furnished, air-conditioned rooms including standard rooms, superior rooms and a suite.

- Airport: 80km Lisbon / 252km Porto
- 4-star hotel
- Bed & Breakfast
- City location
- Complimentary WiFi
- Swimming pool

Guide price from **£745 per person\***



\* Guide prices based on 2-sharing a leading room type for 7 nights, flights from London to Porto or Lisbon (other airports on request) and car hire. Note: We cannot guarantee that any of our featured properties are suitable for all levels of disability so please ask if you have specific issues. Please visit our website for further information on these and other featured properties.

# The Interior

Throughout the region, hidden villages nestle amidst the green hillsides. To the east, the pine forests of Serra da Estrela are part of the highest mountain range in the country, laced with streams, waterfalls and lagoons, and are rich in wildflowers and birdlife.

## Casa da Insua, Penalva do Castelo

Casa da Insua is an impressive 18th century baroque manor house, located in Penalva do Castelo, and which reflects the architecture and decor of a bygone era. The guest accommodation is divided into three distinct areas: the palace, cloister and the arch wing. The property is well known for its magnificent 18th century gardens and for its production of wine, cheese, olive oil and jams. Guests are invited to take guided tours of the gardens and estate, as well as partake in wine and cheese tasting.

**Accommodation:** 38 air-conditioned rooms including single rooms, standard rooms, superior rooms, junior suites and executive suites.

- Airports: 169km Porto / 305km Lisbon
- 5-star hotel
- Bed & Breakfast
- Complimentary WiFi
- Restaurant
- Rural location
- Swimming pool

Guide price from **£770 per person\***



## Casas do Côro, Marialva

The setting of the historical village of Marialva, amongst wooded hills 30-minutes south of the River Douro and close to the Spanish border, is magnificent. Views for miles around can be enjoyed from the upper village where the Casas do Côro are located. This is also the historic heart of Marialva with its maze of narrow streets and the ancient walled citadel. There are nine delightfully decorated houses in the upper village and guests are welcomed as part of the small community.

**Accommodation:** Several houses converted into standard rooms, superior rooms, deluxe rooms, junior suites and 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom houses.

- Airports: 220km Porto / 371km Lisbon
- Rural Village Houses
- Bed & Breakfast
- Complimentary WiFi
- Restaurant
- Swimming pool

Guide price from **£950 per person\***

## Convento de Belmonte, Belmonte

After complete reconstruction and refurbishment, the hotel emerged from the ruins of the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Esperança (Our Lady of Hope Convent). The original features of a small 13th century chapel have been beautifully maintained and the modern interiors blend perfectly with the historical architecture. Intimate sitting rooms and elegant guest rooms offer comfortable accommodation of a high standard.

**Accommodation:** 24 air-conditioned rooms including standard rooms, superior rooms, a deluxe room and a duplex suite.

- Airports: 245km Porto / 291km Lisbon
- Historic Hotel
- Bed & Breakfast
- Complimentary WiFi
- Restaurant
- Rural location
- Swimming pool

Guide price from **£615 per person\***



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# Cultural Portugal by Train

## Porto – Aveiro – Coimbra – Lisbon

Itinerary: 10 days / 9 nights

Our suggested itinerary combines the UNESCO World Heritage site of Porto, the Art Nouveau coastal city of Aveiro, the university city of Coimbra and the capital of the country, Lisbon. The itinerary is not set and can be amended to suit individual requirements.

**Day One:** On arrival at Porto airport, you will be transferred to your hotel.

**Day Two:** Day at leisure. Take a cruise on the River Douro; visit the Igreja São Francisco, the city's finest church; climb the Clérigos Tower, and enjoy a tasting at a Port wine lodge.

**Day Three:** After breakfast, self-transfer to Porto train station for your journey to Aveiro (c.30-60 minutes). On arrival in Aveiro self-transfer to your hotel. Aveiro is a compact cobbled centre brimming with colourful Art Nouveau buildings, narrow waterways and excellent flea and food markets.

**Day Four:** Day at leisure in Aveiro. Take a canal cruise on board a 'Moliceiro' – a traditional narrow boat; visit the city's lagoon, the São Jacinto nature reserve, the beaches of Costa Nova and the Vista Alegre porcelain factory in Ilhavo.

**Day Five:** After breakfast, take the train to Coimbra (c.45 minutes). On arrival, take a taxi to your hotel.

**Day Six:** Day at leisure in Coimbra. Don't miss Coimbra University, its bell tower and the spectacular baroque Biblioteca Joanina. The city is famed for the Fado of Coimbra (the song of Coimbra), which tells stories of unrequited love, sweethearts and memories of student life.

**Day Seven:** After breakfast, take the train to Lisbon (c.2 hours). On arrival, take a taxi to your hotel. In the afternoon, take a stroll through the city to the grand Praça do Comercio (square) and the Rossio Square. For the more active, climb the steps and narrow hillside paths to the district of Alfama to see the Castelo de São Jorge which dominates the hilltop.

**Days Eight & Nine:** Days at leisure in Lisbon: Visit one of the city's excellent museums - the National Museum of Azulejo dedicated to the art of painted ceramic tiles or the fine art museum of Gulbenkian; head to Belém to seek out the Portuguese explorers' monument, Torre de Belém and the manueline Monastery of Jerónimos. A rail link connects Lisbon to the coastal towns of Cascais and Estoril and the hilltop town of Sintra.

**Day Ten:** After breakfast, you will be transferred to Lisbon airport for your return flight home.



Coimbra

\*Guide price based on 2-sharing includes:

- Flights from London Gatwick to Porto, returning from Lisbon (other airports on request)
- Private transfer on arrival and departure
- Rail transfers: Porto to Aveiro; Aveiro to Coimbra; Coimbra to Lisbon
- 2-nights Pestana Vintage Porto Hotel, Porto BB - Page 13
- 2-nights Moliceiro Hotel, Aveiro BB - Page 21
- 2-nights Quinta das Lágrimas, Coimbra BB - Page 21
- 3-nights Heritage Lisboa Plaza Hotel, Lisbon BB - Page 25

### Departures

Daily

### Duration

9 nights

### Guide price from

£1,102 per person\*



Piodão