

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Walking tour of Lisbon, Trip Orientation and Welcome Dinner

Our first meeting as a group will be at noon at our hotel in Lisbon, where we will also enjoy lunch on the patio. After greetings, introducing ourselves, and having a brief orientation to the trip we will set out on a walking tour of the older and more interesting neighborhoods in Lisbon. Get ready for the stairs and hills! Starting in Bairro Alto we walk down to Baixa-Chiado, the heart of the city center. We continue to Alfama, known for its warren of small winding streets as befits the oldest neighborhood in Lisbon. Last but not least on our tour we visit the ancient castle Castelo de Sao Jorge, recently restored to its former glory. We return to our hotel in time to clean up and relax before sharing our first dinner together.

Walking: approximately 5 miles. Overnight: Maxime Hotel, Lisbon (L,D)

DAY 2

Transfer to Sintra, Visit Castelo Dos Mouros and Pena Palace

After breakfast we head to Sintra, name of both the town and the Natural Park, and our home for the next three nights. It is one of Portugal's best known and most beloved sites, past and present, as evidenced by the castles and palaces built here over the centuries. We will hike from the Valley of the Lakes to the Chalet of the Countess of Edla, in the Pena Palace Park. We will then reach the High Cross, highest peak of the "Serra" and from here we walk through gardens that were inspired by the Romantic poets to the lovely grounds of Pena Palace and the palace itself, a multihued castle full of both quirks and history. We will go down to the town of Sintra through the Castelo Dos Mouros (Castle of the Moors), originally built as a defensive outlook when Portugal was part of the Moorish Empire. We will tour the castle before descending the hill to the town of Sintra, with time to wander through the town on your own before dinner.

Walking and hiking: approximately 5 miles. Elevation gain: 600 feet, Loss: 900 feet. Overnight: Nova Sintra (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Hike from Magoito Beach to Cape Roca

Driving to the west coast of Sintra and Magoito beach, we start our hike on top of the cliffs. Passing through the crib-shaped village of Azenhas do Mar, we reach Praia das MaÃ§Ães beach known for its white sand and surfable waves. In the distance we see our destination, the lighthouse of Cabo da Roca (Cape Roca), the westernmost point of mainland Europe and once thought to be the edge of the world. Along the way we descend to Adraga beach, where we can enjoy a bowl of traditional soup. Depending on our desire and energy level we will head up and then down close to Ursa Beach, a much wilder and less visited beach with striking rock formations, along with very steep trails in both directions before we reach the Cape. There are several endemic species of plants here found nowhere else in Portugal. From Cape Roca we take a 30-minute ride back to Sintra for our second night there.

Hiking: approximately 10 miles. Elevation gain: 1570 feet, Loss: 1200 feet. Overnight: Nova Sintra (B, L, D)

DAY 4

Hike from Peninha to Guincho Beach, Transfer to Milfontes

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Starting from Peninha, a former sanctuary and pilgrimage site with amazing views of the Nature Park and surrounding area, we descend through the forest until we reach the coast. The ground changes from a deep orange to a tinge of red as we get closer to Guincho Beach. Guincho Beach is internationally famous for surfing, windsurfing, and kitesurfing due to the steady and strong northern winds. After wave-watching we head south to the lovely town of Milfontes, our home for the next two nights.

Hiking: approximately 6 miles. Elevation gain: 266 feet, Loss: 1,700 feet. Overnight: Villa Eira, Vila Nova de Milfontes (B, L, D)

DAY 5

Start Fisherman's Trail

Today will be our first introduction to the Fisherman's trail or Rota Vicentina. The trail's charm derives from the sand dunes, a vast array of amazing colors, aromas, and shapes. The trail takes us to wild beaches, towering cliffs, and spectacular wildflowers. This area is known as the home of many Swifts: Alpine, Pallid and Common Swifts all nest along the coast. We should also see storks which love to make their nests in high remote spots along the trail. Does the ocean call you? There will be time to enjoy the beach and even take a dive if you feel like it.

Hiking: approximately 7.5 miles and elevation gain/loss ~300 feet. Overnight: Villa Eira, Vila Nova de Milfontes (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Hike on Fisherman's Trail from Milfontes to Monte do Papa-Iãguas

We will hike on top of high cliffs that are the nesting site for over twenty species of birds, admire small fishing harbors, cross reddish sand dunes, and smell the scent of pine tree forests. At times large agricultural fields stretch right down to the ocean. We will also see plenty of recreational fishermen and small Stone Age quarries amongst the dunes, a reminder that humans have been shaping this coastline since time immemorial.

Hiking: approximately 10 miles. Elevation gain: 660 feet, Loss: 650 feet. Overnight: Monte João Roupeiro, Odeceixe (B, L, D)

DAY 7

Hike on Fisherman's Trail from Zambujeira do Mar to the beach of Odeceixe

Our day will start south of Praia da Amália, named after the famous Portuguese Fado singer, Amália Rodrigues, who used to spend her holidays there. Continuing toward the natural fishing harbor of Azenha, we'll enjoy outstanding views at Ponta em Branco, the border between the regions of Algarve and Alentejo, until we cross the shallow Seix River and reach the beach of Odeceixe for a picnic. We will continue on the coastline towards our "Monte", a type of construction that has its origins at the beginning of the Iron Age, 7th century BC. We will need our water shoes today!

Hiking: approximately 7 miles. Elevation gain: 850 feet, Loss: 725 feet. Overnight: Monte João Roupeiro, Odeceixe (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Visit Belém and the Monument to the Discoverers, Eat Amazing Pastries

This morning, we will walk from our accommodation across agricultural fields until we reach the coast for a last splendid hike. We will witness what is called "Barranco" (a kind of ravine that doesn't allow us to hike coastally anymore) and is very characteristic of this area. After a quick lunch, we will head back to Lisbon. The remainder of the day can be spent visiting one of the many museums in Lisbon, walking around Alfama, or along the river, shopping or relaxing.

Walking: 3 miles. Overnight: Maxime Hotel, Lisbon (B, L, D)

DAY 9

Farewell Portugal!

Sadly, we have to say goodbye today. You can plan to leave anytime today. The hotel can help book taxis to the airport.

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