

Portugal - Practical information



Portugal is situated at the south-west point of Europe and also includes the Madeira and Azores archipelagos in the Atlantic Ocean. Mainland Portugal occupies an area of 88,889 km². It is 218 km wide and 561 km long. It has 832 km of Atlantic coast and a 1,215 km border with Spain.

The Azores are situated in the Atlantic Ocean between Europe and North America. They have an area of 2,355 km² and consist of nine islands - São Miguel and Santa Maria in the Eastern Group, Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico and Faial in the Central Group and Flores and Corvo in the Western Group. It takes about two hours to get from the Azores to mainland Portugal by plane.

The Madeira Archipelago has an area of 741 km² and lies in the Atlantic Ocean about 500 km from the African coast and 1,000 km from the European continent (1½ hours flying time from Lisbon). It consists of the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo and the uninhabited Desertas and Selvagens islands, which are nature reserves.

Population of Portugal (2009) 10,707,924



Population by city:

1	Lisbon (proper)	LIS	489,562	6	Almada	LIS	116,000
	Greater Lisbon	LIS	2,700,000	7	Agualva-Cacém	LIS	109,500
2	Porto	NOR	216,080	8	Queluz	LIS	100,300
3	Vila Nova de Gaia	NOR	193,100	9	Setúbal	LIS	97,600
4	Amadora	LIS	172,110	10	Funchal	MAD	95,300
5	Braga	NOR	117,400	11	Coimbra	CEN	92,100



Official time

During winter time, i.e. from 1 a.m. on the last Sunday in October to 1 a.m. on the last Sunday in March, the official time in mainland Portugal and Madeira is the Universal Time Coordinated (UTC).

The rest of the year (between 1 a.m. on the last Sunday in March and 1 a.m. on the last Sunday in October), summer time is in effect and the official time in mainland Portugal and Madeira is Universal Time Coordinated plus one hour.

In the Azores, the time is one hour earlier than in the rest of Portugal and therefore one hour earlier than the Universal Time Coordinated during winter time and two hours earlier during summer time.



Electrical Voltage Conversion/Adaptor

Voltage 220-240 Volts (US and Canada are 110-120 Volts)

Electrical sockets (outlets) in Portugal (República Portuguesa) are one of the two European standard electrical socket types: The "Type C" Europlug and the "Type E" and "Type F" Schuko. If your appliance's plug doesn't match the shape of these sockets, you will need a travel plug adaptor in order to plug in. Travel plug adapters simply change the shape of your appliance's plug to match whatever type of socket you need to plug into. If it's crucial to be able to plug in no matter what, bring an adaptor for all three types.



Electrical sockets (outlets) in Portugal (República Portuguesa) usually supply

electricity at between 220 and 240 volts AC. If you're plugging in an appliance that was built for 220-240 volt electrical input, or an appliance that is compatible with multiple voltages, then an adapter is all you need.

But travel plug adapters do not change the voltage, so the electricity coming through the adapter will still be the same 220-240 volts the socket is supplying, so you may also need a converter (step-down). North American sockets supply electricity at between 110 and 120 volts, far lower than in most of the rest of the world. Consequently, North American appliances are generally built for 110-120 volts.

That being said, generally speaking, most modern "digital-age" appliances (especially ones that run on batteries) are being built to be compatible with all worldwide voltages, from 100 volts in Japan to 240 volts in the United Kingdom. This usually includes things like laptops, PDAs, cell phones, digital cameras, digital camcorders, many portable video game devices, digital music players, etc. More and more personal grooming items like hair dryers curling irons, shavers (especially cordless ones) and such are being built to be compatible with multiple voltages as well, but most of them aren't.

Weather



Portugal has a moderate and pleasant climate much like southern California in the U.S. The mean annual temperature of Lisbon is around 63° F (17° C), making it the second-hottest capital in Europe (after Athens, Greece).

Lisbon also averages the most daily hours of sunlight in Europe per year, and temperatures often surpass 30°C in the high-summer months of July and August. Autumn and winter (especially from late October to early April) can be rainy and windy, but sunny days are not unusual and the temperatures will always stay above freezing (often stabilizing at around 10°C).



Portugal tends to be cool and rainy in the north; warmer and drier in south.

Note**Summer temperatures in the Algarve can top 30°C, and the mercury climbs in the Alentejo and Alto Douro too, with temperatures recorded as high as 47°C (116°F!) in the Alentejo.



Travel Visa

A travel visa is not necessary for citizens of the European Union, Bulgaria, Croatia, Norway, Romania, Switzerland, Israel, Canada, USA, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Australia, South Korea and Japan. Other nationalities should check well in advance the need for a Visa. The Organizing Committee will send upon request an official letter confirming the participation.



United States Embassy
Avenida das Forças Armadas
1600-081 Lisboa or
Apartado 43033
1601-301 Lisboa



Phone: 351-21-727-3300
Fax: 351-21-726-9109
E-mail: lisbonweb@state.gov

Canadian Embassy
Avenida da Liberdade, 198-200, 3rd Floor
1269-121 Lisbon
Portugal



Tel.: 21-316-4600
Fax: 21-316-4693
E-mail: lsbon@international.gc.ca

For other country residents, ask your government for information before departure.

Currency

The currency in Portugal is the euro, which makes it a very worry-free destination for many other Europeans to visit when it comes to money matters (it is the currency of 13 European countries, used by 315 million people).



In order to recognize the euro symbol, look for an "E" crossed by two parallel horizontal lines (€).

The euro started with a circulation of seven bank notes and eight different coins: bank notes of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5 euros, and coins of 2 and 1 euros and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cents. Coins and notes both have a common European side, along with a specific national side, but can be used in all countries that accept the euro.

Before the euro was introduced, Portugal's national currency was the escudo, and many Portuguese still use the escudo when talking amongst themselves, particularly when describing a large sum of money. 1 euro = 200.482 escudos.

Note that in Portugal, the decimals are written after a comma and units of thousands are written before a point. For example 5.000 would be FIVE THOUSAND and 30,54 € would be 30 EUROS AND FIFTY FOUR CENTS (the euro sign is placed after the numbers).

You may also hear people talking about "contos". A conto is equivalent to 1000 escudos (approximately 5 euros) and is also used often for large quantities, for example house prices (e.g. that house is selling for 30 thousand "contos" = 150 thousand euros). Conto comes from conto de réis, an expression used many years ago in Brasil and Portugal to mean 1000 reais (from real, the old Brazilian and Portuguese currency)



Twenty-four hour ATMs (called "multibanco") are everywhere in Portugal, from the largest towns to small villages. In Lisbon, there is always one around the corner, often several down the same street or avenue. Maximum daily withdrawal is € 400, with the most being € 200 at a time. All have onscreen instructions in English and other languages.

Banks are the easiest places to exchange money, charging around € 3 to € 5 commission. Debit and major credit cards (especially Visa and MasterCard) are widely accepted.

Traveler's Checks are a safe way to carry money as they will be replaced if lost or stolen, but are less convenient than ATMs and credit cards. Amex, Thomas Cook or Visa are most widely recognized. It's best to get checks in Euros, and keep a record of the ones you've cashed in case you do mislay them. However, although travelers checks are easily exchanged, with better rates than for cash, they are poor value because commission is so high.

**Contact information for your major credit cards:
American Express: 707 50 40 50 / 21 427 82 05**

Mastercard: 800 811 272

Visa: 800 811 107

Safety tips

Use a secure method of transporting your money and documents. A money belt works great, you could also keep the paper money in “Ziploc bags” inside your money belt to avoid any damage by rain for example.



If the belt does not appeal to you, try to use bags that can't be pulled easily from your shoulder – try a backpack for example. Nowadays, backpacks come in so many shapes, sizes and colors you will surely find one to your liking.

Secure in the safe box of your hotel or in your suitcase locked: your passport, airplane tickets, train tickets, part of your money / traveler checks, etc...

Only take with you what you need for the day: keep only a photocopy of your passport on you, 1 credit card, some traveler checks and some cash.

Try to get used to the currency in a safe place like your hotel room and don't show a lot of cash in the street.

Be prudent when you withdraw cash at ATM machines, do not let anybody you don't know distract you.

Tipping

If you're satisfied with the service, tip 5% to 10%. Bills at pricier restaurants may already include serviço (service charge). It is also normal to tip taxi drivers 5-10 % or rounding up the amount paid to the nearest euro.



Couvert: there's one essential commandment regarding Portuguese dining etiquette: whatever you eat you must pay for, whether or not you ordered it. Waiters bring bread, olives and other goodies to your table the moment you sit down. This unordered appetizer is called couvert and can cost anywhere from €1 per person to over €12. If you don't want it, you can send it away, no offence taken. There's also no shame in asking the price – ‘quanto e isso?’



Portugal Value Added Tax (VAT)

In most cases, VAT in Portugal is 21%.

There is a reduced rate of 12% that applies, in the main, to restaurant services etc.

There is a further reduced rate of 5% that relates mainly to basic food products.

The VAT rates for the Azores and Madeira are lower (14%, 8% and 4%).

VAT is payable on assets and services in Portugal as well as on imports into Portugal.

Exports from Portugal are exempt from VAT.

Visitors to Portugal who are not resident in any of the European Union member states can be reimbursed for the VAT (Value Added Tax) paid on purchases that they have made in Portugal and are being transported in their personal luggage. Only private individuals can benefit from this reimbursement.

In order to obtain repayment of the tax, the minimum value of purchases must be € 49.88 (net amount without VAT), and, depending on the VAT rate charged, the minimum value of the receipt for goods purchased must be as follows:

- € 60.35 - VAT rate of 21% (general goods)**
- € 57.36 - VAT rate of 15% (Madeira and the Azores)**
- € 56.36 - VAT rate of 13% (Wines)**
- € 52.87 - VAT rate of 6% (books, lenses...)**



When you make your purchases, you must ask the shop to provide you with a receipt, itemizing the amounts paid, the goods that were purchased and the amount that is due for reimbursement.

You can receive the repayment of your tax in cash at the main European airports or in the centers of major European cities, or by credit card or international check, provided that the goods in question have previously been shown and declared at the customs.

Drinking water in Portugal



Tap water in Lisbon and elsewhere in Portugal is perfectly safe to drink. It may taste slightly different from the water you drink back home, but it's nothing to worry about -- it's merely because its mineral content is not what you're used to. However, bottled water is available everywhere, from tiny kiosks to all supermarkets. When ordering water at a restaurant, you don't need to specify that you want it bottled, since they don't serve tap water like it is often done in other countries such as the United States.

The most common Portuguese water brands are "Luso," "Caramulo," and "Sete Fontes."

Crime

Compared to other European countries, Portugal's crime rate is low, but it is rising. Crime against foreigners is of the usual rush-hour-pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and theft-from-rental-cars variety. Take the usual precautions: don't flash your cash; keep valuables in a safe place; and, if you are challenged, hand it over – it's not worth taking the risk.



Telephone

Public phone booths abound in Lisbon, with the options to pay by coin, phone-card, and in some cases, credit card (although most are now phone-card only, on sale at any newsstand).



You may also choose to call from your hotel, but it can be fairly expensive.

Also, if you have agreed with your mobile phone company to allow roaming or international calling, you will have no problem using your mobile phone in Portugal.

Portugal's telephone system has achieved a state-of-the-art network with broadband, high-speed capabilities.

The international country code is 351 and all Lisbon land lines start with 21. Mobile numbers start with a 9.



Cell Phones

In Portugal, as in most countries in the world, the cell phone standard used is the GSM standard.

If your current cell phone does not have this capability, you will need to either rent or purchase a cell phone that will work on the overseas networks. Your current cellular provider can give you what is known as a SIM card, which is the brain of the phone and you can easily slip into the GSM phone. This way, you will be able to retain your current phone number in the US or Canada. If your phone isn't equipped to work in Europe, you might want to rent a phone.

We recommend Phone Rental or Cell Hire, who makes it convenient since they deliver the phone to your home before your departure:
www.cellhire.com

www.phonerentalusa.com/discover/services.htm#

EMERGENCY

In case of emergency call 112, the international emergency services number.

For safety/Police concerns:

While in **Faro**:

PSP Faro: 289 822 022

PSP Lagos: 282 762 930

GNR Albufeira: 289 590 790

GNR Faro: 289 887 603

GNR Vilamoura: 289 381 780

GNR / Traffic: 289 598 730



While in **Lisbon**:

PSP/ Lisbon Metropolitan Police Command: 21 765 42 42

Esquadra de Turismo / Lisbon Tourism Police Station: 21 342 16 23

Esquadra de Turismo / Cascais Tourism Police Station: 21 486 39 29

GNR de Sintra: 21 924 49 25

GNR - General Command: 21 321 70 00

PSP Trânsito / Traffic: 21 750 12 00

For Health concerns:

While in Faro:

Algarve Private Hospital: 282 420 400

Faro District Hospital: 289 89 11 00 / 289 802 555

Lagos Hospital: 282 770 100 / 282 770 116

Santa Maria de Faro Private Hospital: 289 892 040



While in Lisbon:

Amadora Sintra Hospital: 21 434 82 00 / 21 434 84 44

Cascais Hospital: 21 482 77 00

British Hospital: 21 394 31 00 / 21 721 34 00

Santa Maria Hospital: 21 780 50 00 / 21 780 51 11 / 21 780 52 22

São José Hospital: 21 884 10 00

S. Louis Hospital: 21 321 65 00

CUF Hospital: 21 392 61 00 / 21 002 52 00

SAMS Hospital: 21 842 20 00

Healthcare and Medical Assistance



Tourists requiring urgent medical care should go to the nearest hospital emergency room (airports and many train stations also have medical teams and first aid facilities). Those with serious illnesses or allergies should always carry a special note from their physicians certifying in detail the treatments in progress or that may be necessary.

Pharmacies (Farmacia) keep normal business hours (9-1:30 and 5-8), but every mid-size town (or city neighborhood) has a duty pharmacy that stays open 24 hours. The location of the duty pharmacy is usually posted on the front door of all pharmacies.





Internet Cafes

No matter how responsible you try to be with your phone card, you can run up quite a bill when you call your parents/your kids/your significant other. E-mail may be an alternative and less expensive mean of communication. Whatever e-mail service you use in your daily life, we recommend setting up web-access mail for your trip (like the mail offered by Yahoo! Hotmail, etc.). It is the easiest to use abroad since the only software and configuration you need are built right into the browser. Set this account up before you leave home, so you don't waste valuable time abroad.

Insects, Scorpions, Jellyfish, Sea Urchins



Mosquitoes are found in most parts of Europe. They may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites.

Sand flies are found around Mediterranean beaches. They usually cause only a nasty itchy bite.

Scorpions are found in Portugal and their sting can be extremely painful but is not considered fatal.



 Stings from jellyfish are painful but not dangerous. Douse the wound in vinegar to deactivate any stingers that haven't 'fired'. Applying calamine lotion, antihistamines or analgesics may reduce the reaction and relieve the pain.

Watch for sea urchins around rocky beaches. If you get their needles embedded in your skin, immerse the limb in hot water to relieve the pain. But to avoid infection visit a doctor and have the needles removed.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

National holidays

New Year's Day - 1 January

Freedom Day - 25 April

Worker's Day - 1 May

Portugal Day - 10 June

Feast of the Assumption - 15 August

Implantation of the Republic - 5 October

All Saints Day - 1 November

Restoration of Independence - 1 December

Immaculate Conception - 8 December

Christmas Day - 25 December



Moveable public holidays:

Good Friday

Corpus Christi

Arrive early for flights



International flights require you to be at the airport 2 to 3 hours in advance of your flight. Also, for return flight, the airlines prefer that you confirm 72 hours in advance of your flight. This is not critical, but good information to ensure your preparations to meet your flight time.

Jet Lag

When traveling to Spain from North America you will arrive the day after you left, generally in the morning. You will be somewhere between 6-9 hours ahead of North America. There are several methods to overcome the change and many suggestions. None may work for you, but trying to sleep on the plane will help you. Also, plenty of rest prior to departure will help. Upon arrival in Spain it will become difficult, as the first day goes on, to continue without sleep. If you cannot go



on, take a short nap, with emphasis on short! Then go to bed early. Upon return, you will no doubt remain jetlagged for a few days. You will arrive home (if you travel to North America) in the evening on the same day you leave Portugal (most commonly).

Insurance

Though not mandatory, insurance is strongly suggested when traveling. Check with your own insurance company for best deal or Pure Adventures recommends CSA Travel Protection Company they can insure all different aspects of your trip:



www.csatravelprotection.com

Credit cards can be useful insurance alternatives for rental cars. Also, double-check each insurance policy for lost or stolen luggage, airplane cancellation by airline, car rental (car rental companies offer their own insurance for an extra cost, though it is rarely the best deal).

Earplugs

Earplugs can be very useful, both on the plane and in a hotel at night. They are light and easy to carry. Every traveler should have some!



Pure Adventure Tips

#1. It is strongly recommended that you make 2 photocopies of your passport and other important documentation, including the list of phone numbers that Pure Adventures provides to you in your pre-departure package, before leaving home. Leave 1 copy at home with family or friends, and keep another with you, but separate from the actual documents.

#2. It is suggested, though not required, that passengers hold return or onward tickets and proof of financial means.



U.S. Regulations on Purchases Abroad

Each U.S. tourist may bring back to the U.S. duty-free \$400 worth of goods purchased abroad. The goods must accompany the traveler. A flat rate of 10% is assessed on the next \$1,000 worth of goods purchased. Parcels containing gifts may be sent from abroad to the U.S. duty-free, providing the total value of such parcels received by one person, one day does not exceed \$50. Each package should be marked "Unsolicited Gift". The amount paid and the contents of the package should be declared.

Traveling by train in Europe

You may have purchased rail tickets for use while in Europe. First check your "train package". Depending on the best deal according to your travel plans, you may have:

- Train tickets mentioning departure point and destination, traveling date and cost are usually on "regional train".
- General train tickets mentioning the departure and destination valid for about 2 months or more + "seat reservation" an extra ticket mentioning the precise date when you will have to use it / the departure time of the train / the number of the train / the 1st or 2nd class info / the number of the car and the number of your seat(s).
- Europe Rail Pass + Seat Reservation., if you are making several trips by train in Europe.



In large train stations, you must locate your train platform. If you have a Seat Reservation, don't forget to match the train numbers as there may be multiple trains bound for the same city, so check that you have your correct train number.

You are responsible for getting your luggage on and off the trains.

When you come into your "destination train station", be prepared to move quickly to get your bags off the train, as it may be only momentarily stopping.

Trains run on a tight schedule, so be sure to be on time!

CP - Comboios de Portugal (www.cp.pt), the Portuguese railway company, offers a vast rail network covering the whole of mainland Portugal and also offers international train services to Vigo, Madrid and Paris.

There are a number of options to meet your needs:

- The top-of-the-range "Alfa Pendular" trains offer the fastest and most comfortable rail link between Lisbon and the Algarve and, in the north, Oporto or Braga, with stops in Coimbra.
- The "Intercidades" or Intercity service covers the Lisbon-Oporto-Guimarães, Lisbon-Guarda, Lisbon-Covilhã, Lisbon-Évora-Beja and Lisbon-Faro routes.
- The international Sud-Express train and Lusitânia hotel-train leave from Lisbon.
- There is a vast network of regional, inter-regional and suburban trains covering the whole of the country.

Driving in Portugal



To rent a car you must:

- Be at least between 21 and 25 years old, depending on the company's rental policy.
- Show identification (identity card for EU citizens or a valid passport for other nationalities).
- Have had a driving licence for more than one year.

Vehicles drive on the right in Portugal. Unless otherwise indicated, vehicles coming from the right have priority in squares and at intersections.

At junctions with roundabouts, vehicles already on the roundabout have right of way.

Road signs comply with international rules.

Compulsory papers:

- Personal ID- Driving licence
- Motor insurance certificate
- Vehicle registration or equivalent
- Vehicle logbook (livrete) or equivalent

On the spot fines are issued.

Speed limits for cars without trailers and motorcycles:

50 kph - in built-up areas

90 kph - on normal roads

100 kph - on roads restricted to motor vehicles



120 kph - on motorways

It is illegal to drive with a blood alcohol level of 0.5 grams per litre or more.

All occupants must wear seat belts.

The Portuguese Highway Code forbids the use of mobile phones while driving, unless you're using hands-free equipment or an earphone.

For further information, go to the General Road Traffic Directorate site at www.dgv.pt

Lisbon – Getting around

METRO (Subway/Underground)

Lisbon's metro (subway or underground) is modern, clean, and efficient. It runs from 6:30AM to 1:00AM, and many of its stations are decorated with contemporary art, making it a tourist attraction in itself.

See a map of Lisbon's metro system to locate all of the stations (and www.metrolisboa.pt for additional information).

Some stops to note:

Cais do Sodré: For trains to Cascais and Estoril, trams for Belém, and ferries to the Monument to Christ.

Entrecampos: For trains to Sintra.

São Sebastião: For the Gulbenkian Museum.

Jardim Zoologico: For the Sete Rios bus terminal for express buses to all over Portugal.

Colegio Militar-Luz: For the Colombo shopping mall and the Benfica stadium.

Oriente: For national and international trains, city buses, and all the Parque das Nações attractions.

TRAMS

Riding tram 28 just for the experience is a must in Lisbon. Tram 15 is also the best way to reach Belem from downtown.

You can hop on 15 either at Figueira Square or Comercio



Square (getting off by Jeronimos Monastery).

For tram 28, the best place to get on board is by Miradouro das Portas do Sol (we suggest ending your journey by Estrela Basilica).

TAXI

To reach attractions outside the center or to get around late at night (after 1AM when the metro closes), take a taxi. It should not cost more than 10 euros to go between anywhere within the city and the center (Baixa).

BUS and AEROBUS

CarrisTur's "Aerobus" & "AeroShuttle" services travel between Lisbon city centre and the airport. They runs between 7:45AM and 8:45PM and the ticket is purchased on board.

The local Carris bus service also provides commuter buses between the airport and downtown (numbers 44, 45 and 83 cost 1,30 euro) and there are some destinations within the city that are best reached by bus.

Here are some useful bus routes:

#727 - Passes by Marquês de Pombal Square and goes all the way to Belém, via Estrela and Lapa.

#37 - From Figueira Square to Saint George's Castle via Alfama, if you don't want to climb up to the castle. But walk back down to the center, stopping at the viewpoints along the way.

#44 & 45 - From the airport via Saldanha, Avenida da Liberdade, to downtown.



EXPRESS BUSES

If you plan to travel outside of Lisbon, one of the best options is the Express Buses service. It connects Lisbon to any major destination across Portugal.

TRAIN

The nearest train station to Lisbon airport is Oriente in the Parque das Nações district, a short taxi ride away. There are links to several different destinations outside and also within the city. Prices are fairly cheap (although not as cheap as the buses), and the service is generally very prompt and of a good standard.

All trains going to destinations within Portugal also pass by Oriente Station, although they depart from Santa Apolonia Station, close to the city center by Alfama.

WALKING

Walking around is actually one of Lisbon's biggest pleasures and it is the best way to experience the old quarters, all the way to the castle. Several viewpoints offer refreshments, stunning views, and a break to sit down if needed. The hilly labyrinthine streets and their cobblestones can be physically demanding, but these viewpoints are your reward. In between walks, an old tram is never too far away.

