



Acorn Farm

in collaboration with *Villas and Vines*
presents

A Portrait of Portugal

*A Colorful Portuguese Adventure in the
Douro Valley, Oceanfront, and Captivating Countryside*

April 17th – 26th, 2020

Portugal is fast emerging as the perfect cultural, culinary, and adventure destination; few countries can claim as many appealing qualities as this intriguing country on the western wing of the Iberian Peninsula, at the edge of Europe. Influences from across the Mediterranean, Europe and from its globe-spanning empire over the centuries have meant that Portugal has developed its own specific culture. With stunningly diverse landscapes, delightful cobblestone and white-washed villages, countryside dotted with medieval castles, abundant seafood, bountiful vineyards, and captivating vibrant cities, our adventure in Portugal is full of extraordinary opportunities.

One of the best ways to truly experience a country is through its cuisine, so prepare to sample local dishes and delicacies from across the regions. Sitting down to table means experiencing the richness of Portugal's bountiful coastline and fertile countryside, including char-grilled fish, *cataplana* (seafood stew) and smoked meats. Pop into a small *tasquinha* (casual bar) to savor fish fresh from the sea, or sink your teeth into the delicate *pastels de nata* (custard tarts) which originated at medieval Catholic monasteries. And of course, Portuguese wines are known the world over – from crisp young *vinho verde*, to earthy reds, to classic ruby ports. Our quest has us indulging in Portugal's mouth-watering cuisine through carefully curated dining experiences ranging from family-run *tascas* (taverns) to fine-dining restaurants, sampling exquisite wines at traditional wine-houses, as well as wandering through scenic vineyards sipping the velvety ports of the *Douro Valley*.

We have created this 9-night adventure as the perfect escape, taking us on the ultimate journey through the captivating and striking country of Portugal. Of course, hand-selected hotels offering spectacular views, combined with remarkable Portuguese experiences, promise to deliver the true wonders of Portugal. Finally, we have also managed to afford some free time for shopping, visiting the lively cafes and restaurants, and generally absorbing the sunny skies and warm ambiance of Portugal and the Portuguese people.

We are fortunate to divide our time between the stunning *Douro Valley* and the captivating countryside village of *Evora*, with an overnight in the oceanfront surfing village of *Santa Cruz* in the middle. We discover the enticing and colorful cities of *Porto* and *Lisbon* on day trips from the Douro Valley and Evora, respectively, experiencing the best each has to offer.





Douro Valley

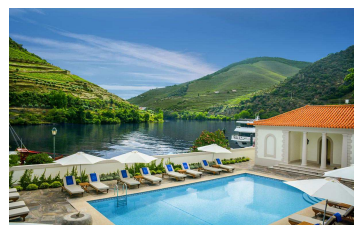
April 17th – 21st

The valley is home to the *River Douro*, which runs from Spain to the city of Porto, where it meets the Atlantic Ocean, snaking through terraced vineyards and traditional villages along the way. The river is the heartbeat of the region, famous for producing *Port*, a sweet brandy-fortified wine that must originate in this valley to be considered the genuine article. Half-way on its course through Portugal, the most stunning stretch of the river is flanked by a dramatic valley covered in bright green rows of grape vines. This is the *Alto Douro* where wine has been produced for over 2,000 years, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage protected landscape. The Douro is one of Europe's oldest and most beautiful wine regions, a breath-taking man made landscape that provides unforgettable vineyard experiences.

Our home for four nights is the 5-star *Vintage House Hotel*, offering rural luxury in the center of the Douro Valley. The Vintage House enjoys an idyllic and tranquil riverside location at *Pinhão*, in the authentic heart of the Douro Valley. All rooms have balconies providing breathtaking views over the Douro River, offering abundant sunlight and amazing sunsets. In addition to the spectacular views from every room, the hotel also features an exquisite garden terrace, inviting outdoor pool with pool bar, delicious panoramic *Rabelo Restaurant*, and cozy *Library Bar* to gather and sip vintage Port Wine. www.vintagehousehotel.com

During our stay in the Douro Valley, we have planned a remarkable variety of excursions and experiences, giving the opportunity to discover this enchanting region in several ways:

- Relax on a *private boat trip* on the river, appreciating the different shades of the vineyard terraces as we quietly glide past this striking landscape, combined with a guided visit and exclusive lunch at one of the local *Quintas* (vineyards) where port wine is produced.
- Enjoy a *bicycle tour of the vineyards*, on a course that starts downhill and is essentially flat, with very few slight climbs. Our route is 12 kms (7 ½ miles), done in 2 ½ hours, passing through several typical villages and among magnificent landscapes.
- Discover the Douro Valley with a *full day 4wd Safari*, on both paved and off-road surfaces. Stops include the *Casal de Loivos* and *Galafura* scenic viewpoints; Pass through local villages; Visit and tasting at 2 local wineries; and Lunch together in a typical restaurant. The safari is caravan-style with off-road vehicles following each other. Each vehicle is equipped with mobile radio and water, and will be driven by specialized off-road guides.
- Enjoy the *scenic train trip* (2 hours, 15 minutes) along the shore of the Douro River to the city of *Porto*, at the mouth of the Douro.
- *Porto* is Portugal's second city and one of Europe's most charming. Discover a colorful city with medieval relics, soaring bell towers, extravagant baroque churches and stately beaux-arts buildings piled on top of one another. Arching over the river is the impressive double-decked metal Dom Luis I bridge, completed in 1886, designed by *Gustave Eiffel*, now a symbol of the city. We enjoy a *private walking tour of Porto*, discovering its history and cultural treasures.





Oceanfront Overnight

April 21st – 22nd

Portugal is one of the warmest countries in Europe and its beaches are among the cleanest in the world. The coastline is huge, 1,114 miles (1,793 kilometers), and is dotted with open beach breaks, concealed beaches, and some of the best surf spots in the world. There are a lot of great countries in Europe with a lot of great surf, but when you consider all the factors, surfing Portugal might be the best. The food and wine are delicious, the cost of living extremely affordable, and the people friendly. The country manages to be both modern and traditional at the same time, and maintains a romantic, Old Europe charm that makes it a great place to travel, even if there weren't any surf. But there is surf—a lot of it. The west-central coast of Portugal is synonymous with beaches of rare natural beauty. In Santa Cruz alone there are eleven beaches with extensive sand areas and rocky cliffs. Formed by clay sediments and covered by a green blanket of vegetation, the cliffs give you a sense of protection and at the same time a sense of peace.

Searched by surfers, the Portuguese West Coast offers exclusive surfing conditions. That is also why it was chosen to be one of the *World Surf League's* competition stages. Portugal is also home to the biggest wave ever surfed, an incredible 80-feet, off the central coast of Portugal in November 2017.

With all this coastline and picture-perfect beach and surf towns, we are using this excuse to spend one night along this spectacular coast. The biggest waves are from October to May; since we will be here in April, we're hoping to get glimpses of the monster swells.

Our home for the night is the *Noah Surf House* in Santa Cruz. With its windows facing the waves and the entrance door right on top of the sand, with people from all four corners of the world united by their passion for the sea and sports, the Noah Surf House is both eco-friendly and super-friendly. Here we will share unique moments with family and friends, with plenty of time for long talks and endless laughter. A place of Peace, Sun and Joy. A Pure place that celebrates the waves and the Sea!

Dinner will be at the *Noah Beach House*, which as the name suggests, can be found on the stunning *Física Beach*. The Beach House boasts a restaurant, bar, and terrace, where we can lay back and enjoy the sunset. Fish directly from the ocean and local produce are the stars of the menu. www.noahsurfhouseportugal.com

The following morning, as we transfer from the *Surf Coast* inland to the *Alentejo*, we discover two remarkable destinations: the oceanfront village of *Ericeira* and the royal village of *Sintra*.

South down the coast about 30 kms from Santa Cruz lies the village of *Ericeira*, a traditional Portuguese fishing village with history dating all the way back to the 12th century. The name 'Ericeira' comes from *Ouriceira*, which means a place flush with *ouriços* (sea urchins). The laid-back hospitality of its people, the old village with its narrow cobblestone streets, whitewashed houses, local culture, and grilled sardines combine to make Ericeira the quintessential Portuguese seaside village.

Nowadays, this still-captivating fishing village is widely considered to be *Portugal's surf capital*. Ericeira was declared a *World Surfing Reserve* in 2011, and still remains the only place in Europe acknowledged by the organization. We explore this postcard village, check out the surf, and enjoy the freshest-ever seafood lunch together.

We also visit *Sintra*, a favorite summer residence of Portuguese royalty for more than 500 years, offering commanding views of the *Sintra Valley*, *National Palace* and *Moorish Castle*. With its rippling mountains, thick forests, exotic gardens and glittering palaces, Sintra is like a page torn from a fairy tale. Its UNESCO World Heritage center is dotted with pastel-hued manors folded into luxuriant hills that roll down to the blue Atlantic.

Explore the *Pena Palace* in Sintra, offering glimpses into how the Portuguese Royal Family lived in the 19th century. The palace includes many architectural styles including Moorish and Gothic. It is fanciful to an extreme, and there are oddities that need to be explained inside.

The second portion of our adventure is based in the UNESCO World Heritage village of *Evora*, a delightful village that exudes Portuguese charm, and one of Portugal's most beautifully preserved walled medieval towns, climbing a gentle hill above the *Alentejo* plain. Evora sits at a major crossroads, and was important for both the Romans and the Moors, whose cultures are evident in the atmosphere of the village. Today, Evora hosts fascinating monuments, which include a 2nd century Roman temple, the 16th century *Chapel of the Bones*, and a variety of other historic sites, all conveniently located inside the 14th-century walls. Évora's narrow winding lanes lead to striking architectural works: an elaborate medieval cathedral and cloisters; the cinematic columns of the *Templo Romano* (near the intriguing Roman baths); and a picturesque town square, once the site of some rather gruesome episodes courtesy of the Inquisition. Aside from its historic and aesthetic virtues, Évora is also young and vibrant, with a large student population who attend one of the world's oldest universities. Its many attractive restaurants serve hearty Alentejan cuisine. Outside town, cork forests, captivating villages, and rustic wineries are waiting to be discovered.

Evora lies within the Alentejo countryside. Prepare to be bewitched – Portugal's largest region, covering a third of the country, truly captivates. Think golden plains, rolling hillsides, lime-green vines, traditional whitewashed villages, marble towns and majestic medieval cities; plus a proud if melancholic people, who valiantly cling to their local crafts. Centuries-old farming traditions – and cork production – continue here. Alentejo's rich past offers fragments from Roman conquerors and solid Visigothic churches. There are Moorish-designed neighborhoods and awe-inspiring fortresses built at stork-nest heights. As for the cuisine, Alentejo is the destination for traditional food. Gastronomic delights are plentiful – pork, game, bread, cheese, and wine. Birdlife and rare plants are prolific, and cycling opportunities abound. The world is (finally) catching on to Alentejo, and we're here before everyone else is!

Our home is the *Albergo do Calvario Boutique Hotel*, the top choice in Evora. Unpretentiously elegant, discreetly attentive and comfortable, this beautifully designed guesthouse has an ambiance that travelers adore. The kind-hearted staff provide the best service in Évora, and breakfasts are outstanding, with locally sourced seasonal fruits, homemade cakes and egg dishes. Gorgeous lounge areas are decked out with a tasteful melange of antique and modern furniture. Comfortable beds, marble-filled bathrooms, and a pleasant garden patio area ensure a homey, don't-want-to-leave kind of stay. It's in a delightful part of town, near *Porta Lagoa* and the aqueduct, in the center of so many shops and restaurants to discover during free time. www.adcevora.com

Our stay in Evora provides the opportunity to discover the region in depth, including two amazing bicycle excursions, and of course a day in Lisbon:

- *Guided walking tour of Evora*, discovering the remnants of its colorful glorious past, and insights into its exciting present.
- *Easy bicycle course in Evora environs*, with lunch at a local farmhouse.
- *Cycling from Estremoz to Vila Viçosa*, discovering the *Marble Triangle*. Starting in the enchanting village of *Estremoz*, this ride leads to the marble capital of Portugal, *Vila Viçosa*. The so called *white gold* is the main economic driver of the region. Its richness is a constant presence in the wide streets and tall buildings.
- *Private tour of Lisbon*, the capital of Portugal and the current "it spot" in Europe. Explore the sights on a lively walk around the city's diverse *barrios* and major monuments where the smells, sights and sounds of everyday life can only be experienced on foot. Stroll quaint alley ways and side streets to reveal the layers of history that have transformed Lisbon over the ages. We visit Lisbon for the day, exploring its charms, architecture, and vantage points, discovering for ourselves why everyone is flocking here now.

Throughout the trip:

- Dining together is a special part of our experience; at least two meals each day, with wines, are included at carefully selected atmospheric restaurants and hidden gems.
- Plenty of free time, giving you the opportunity to explore as you wish.
- All activities included.
- Intelligent Trip Design, always with a sense of journey, genuinely connecting you to the region.
- Services of dedicated local guides.



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Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ E-Mail _____

_____ **\$5,500 per person, double occupancy**
Single Supplement is \$850

Deposit of \$500 per person is required to reserve your place.

Personal checks accepted.

Please return this form with the \$500 per person, payable to:

**Villas and Vines
PO Box 131
Douglas, MI 49406**

MasterCard and Visa accepted with a 3% surcharge per person added to the final payment.

Final payment is due by February 17, 2020 (60 days prior)

*This tour includes all hotels, ground transportation, bi-lingual tour guide, activities, meals, and wines as outlined in the program. **Air is NOT included.***

Please note this trip begins in Porto and ends in Lisbon.

CANCELLATION: If canceled up to 60 days prior, there is a \$500 cancellation fee. If canceled between 60 – 30 days prior, the penalty is 50% of the total cost of the trip. The trip is non-refundable if canceled within 30 days of departure. Trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

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