

Grand Circle Cruise Line[®]

THE LEADER IN VALUE AND WORLDWIDE DISCOVERY SINCE 1958

Your Grand Circle Travel Planning Guide



The Douro River: Lisbon to Porto

2026

Grand Circle Cruise Line®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with Grand Circle Cruise Line. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you cruise with us, you can expect an award-winning experience aboard our privately owned river ship. In addition to the convenience of unpacking just once, you will also enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, coupled with camaraderie of your fellow American travelers.

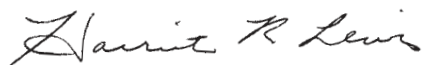
In addition, up to four **expert, local Program Directors** will accompany you from the beginning of your trip to the end. Assigned to a group of 38 travelers on average, these passionate leaders are ready and eager to share their homeland and insights as only a local can. Whether it is recommending their favorite restaurant, connecting travelers with people and culture, or providing the best ways to enhance your leisure time, your Program Director will be available to take care of all the details and ensure that you have a fun and carefree travel experience. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Throughout your journey, you will experience Exclusive Discovery Series events designed to connect you with local people and culture. From sharing traditional fare and lively conversation during Home-Hosted Visits, to discussing Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, you will gain an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-2610**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Grand Circle Cruise Line

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Aveiro, Portugal

New! The Douro River: Lisbon to Porto

Portugal: Lisbon, Aveiro, Guimarães, Regua, Barca d'Alva, Porto | **Spain:** Salamanca

11 days starting from \$4,495

including airfare

Single Supplement: \$995

For departure dates & prices, visit

www.gct.com/dor2026pricing

Wind your way along the legendary Douro River as you **cruise for 7 nights aboard the privately chartered, 132-passenger M/S Gil Eanes, M/S Miguel Torga, or M/S Amália Rodrigues**, from the vibrant capital of Lisbon to Portugal's namesake city of Porto.

IT'S INCLUDED

- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- **Accommodations** for 9 nights, with 7 nights aboard a private river ship with wireless Internet access in all common areas and cabins
- **ALL meals:** 9 breakfasts, 9 lunches, 6 dinners, plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- **12 included tours** with personal headsets and **4 Exclusive Discovery Series events**—Visit a local *quinta* (wine farm) in Regua • Explore the ancient engravings of Foz Côa • Discover the historic Spanish town of Salamanca • Enjoy a wine tasting in the renowned wine cellars of Gaia • Join a local family for a Home-Hosted Dinner in Regua
- **Local Program Directors, a Grand Circle Cruise Line exclusive:** Our dedicated experts are with you and your group of 38-45 travelers from beginning to end to provide an insider's knowledge and perspective
- **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- **All port charges**
- **Baggage handling** for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- **5% Frequent Traveler Credit** toward your next trip

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.



ITINERARY SUMMARY

1-3 • Depart U.S. • Lisbon, Portugal

4 • Porto • Embark ship

5 • Guimarães

6 • Regua • Local quinta

7-8 • Barca d'Alva • Salamanca, Spain

9 • Lamego • Home-Hosted Dinner

10-11 • Porto • Return to U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

Group Size

- This trip has a group size of 38-45 travelers with a local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

Pacing

- 11 days, with 7 nights aboard the *Douro Spirit*
- Return flights often require departing in early morning hours

Physical Requirements

- Walk 1-3 miles unassisted within a time period of 1-2 hours, and participate in 3-4 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs and cobblestones
- Optional activities and elective walks may be offered in addition to the above-mentioned activity levels
- Agility and balance needed for boarding small canal boats and navigating steep, slippery stairs
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters

- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

Terrain & Transportation

- Diverse terrain and uneven walking surfaces, including steep and unpaved paths, hills, riverbanks, 25-50 stairs without handrails, and cobblestones
- Travel by 130-passenger river ship and 49-seat coach
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 40-75°F during cruising season
- June-August are the warmest months

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

all with FREE Single Supplements

Portugal: Cascais & Tomar
PRE-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,595**

Traditions of Iberia: Santiago de Compostela & Braga
POST-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,495**

The Douro River: Lisbon to Porto

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

5 nights in *Portugal: Cascais & Tomar*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive in Lisbon, Portugal • Transfer to Cascais

Day 3 Explore Cascais • Visit Sintra

Day 4 Cascais • Explore Obidos

Day 5 Transfer to Tomar • Visit salt pans of Rio Maior

Day 6 Tomar • Optional tour to Batalha Monastery & the fishing village of Nazaré

Day 7 Transfer to Lisbon • Visit shrine of Fatima • Explore Mira de Aire caves • Join main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight to Lisbon, Portugal. Please refer to your individual air itinerary for exact departure and arrival times.

Day 2 Arrive Lisbon, Portugal

- Destination: Lisbon
- Accommodations: Hotel in Lisbon

Morning: Arrive in the capital of Lisbon, Portugal, where you'll be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. You'll also be joined by your fellow travelers—including those who took our optional *Portugal: Cascais & Tomar* pre-trip extension.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Enjoy time to relax after your flight or set off to explore on your own.

Later, your Program Director will lead an orientation walk around the vicinity of your hotel. This is a great time to get restaurant recommendations.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director is sure to have good suggestions for local fare, including the seafood for which the city is known.

Evening: Free to explore. Perhaps you'll relax after the long flight or enjoy a nightcap with fellow travelers.

Day 3 Explore Lisbon

- Destination: Lisbon
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Lisbon

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Set out to get an introduction—and immersion—into the gems of historic Lisbon. Spread out on seven low hills overlooking the

Tagus River, Portugal's legendary capital has enticed traders and settlers for more than 20 centuries. Your discoveries begin in Belém, the historic neighborhood overlooking the harbor that's home to the 16th-century Belém Tower, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You'll also see the Monument to the Discoveries, the massive stone sculpture depicting 33 legendary Portuguese explorers and artists, including Magellan and Henry the Navigator.

Lunch: On your own. Perhaps you'll try *bacalhau*, a traditional preparation of salted cod.

Afternoon: The afternoon is yours, with the freedom to discover Lisbon as you'd like. Your Program Director will be happy to provide you recommendations. You may choose to explore the city by its historic, famed trams—a fun and practical way to navigate this city of hills. Or, venture to the colorful Alfama district, which rises upward from the sea and is topped by a stone castle.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You're free to continue your discoveries as you'd like.

Day 4 Transfer to Porto • Visit Aliança Underground Museum • Discover Aveiro • Embark ship

- Destination: Porto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: MS *Miguel Torga*, MS *Gil Eanes*, MS *Amália Rodrigues*

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for Porto this morning. En route, you'll stop for an included tour of the Aliança Underground Museum, a wine cellar built into a cave complex beneath the earth. In addition to a variety of wines, the museum is also an art gallery, featuring exhibitions centered around archeological finds, African

contemporary art, ceramics, and more. You'll view some of the works contained in the museum on our guided tour, which will include a wine tasting led by a sommelier.

Then, continue your transfer, stopping in the city of Aveiro for lunch.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Aveiro.

Afternoon: After lunch, you'll explore Aveiro, a city of canals plied by colorful wooden boats, on a discovery walk with your Program Director. Aveiro's iconic boats—known as *moliceiros*—were once used to collect seaweed and algae, which were sold as fertilizer; now, they're used primarily for pleasure cruises. Witness the town's meandering canals and Art Nouveau architecture alongside your Program Director, followed by a little time to explore independently.

Then, continue the drive to Porto, where you'll embark your ship. After a safety briefing from the crew, you'll enjoy your first Port Talk—a nightly feature of your River Cruise Tour, designed as an opportunity for your Program Directors to prepare you for the following day's discoveries.

Dinner: Toast to the discoveries that await over an included Welcome Dinner onboard.

Evening: Relax onboard and enjoy the ship's amenities. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap in the lounge, or retire to your cabin.

Day 5 Explore Guimarães • Visit Ducal Palace

- Destination: Guimarães
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: MS *Miguel Torga*, MS *Gil Eanes*, MS *Amália Rodrigues*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Enjoy a leisurely morning aboard the ship. Perhaps you'll head up to the Sun Deck to take in the passing scenery.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Shortly after lunch, you'll disembark and drive to the town of Guimarães, an area boasting well-preserved medieval buildings like the 10th-century Guimarães Castle. As you explore on foot, you'll learn about the historic event for which the town is most famous: the Battle of São Mamede. In 1128, this battle was the catalyst for securing Portugal's independence and establishing the Kingdom of Portugal.

You'll then continue your discoveries this afternoon with a visit to Ducal Palace, a royal residence that once housed noble Portuguese families. One of these families was the House of Braganza, the ruling house of the Kingdom of Portugal from 1640 to 1910.

Following your guided tour, enjoy free time to explore before returning to the ship. Your Port Talk will be held shortly before dinner.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy the ship's amenities.

Day 6 Regua • Visit local *quinta* • Discover Pinhão

- Destination: Regua
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: MS *Miguel Torga*, MS *Gil Eanes*, MS *Amália Rodrigues*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Continue sailing to the town of Regua, situated on the rolling banks of the Douro River. You'll then disembark and drive to a local *quinta* (wine farm) to learn about the country's famed wine. Port wine exclusively originates on the terraced vineyards that crawl

up alongside the Douro River. During your visit, you'll trace the path of port, from grape to glass. With a local expert as your guide, you'll tour the cellars to learn about the production of this unique spirit. After exploring the *quinta*, you'll learn how to make the port wine cocktails that are so popular in this area, as well as enjoy some traditional snacks to accompany your drinks.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Your ship sets sail this afternoon, during which you'll have free time to enjoy the ship's amenities or relax in your cabin. Later in the day, you'll dock in Pinhão, a picturesque town in Portugal's wine country at the confluence of the Douro and Pinhão Rivers. Tap into the town's laid-back ambiance during a discovery walk with your Program Director, before regrouping back onboard the ship for a Port Talk followed by dinner.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room. You'll also enjoy an onboard folk performance as you dine.

Evening: Free to relax in your cabin, or bond with fellow travelers over today's discoveries.

Day 7 Barca d'Alva • Explore Foz Côa Museum

- Destination: Barca d'Alva
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: MS *Miguel Torga*, MS *Gil Eanes*, MS *Amália Rodrigues*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Begin sailing toward the bucolic village of Barca d'Alva, passing through the Pocinho Dam en route.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After lunch, disembark at the Pocinho pier and drive to the on-site museum of the UNESCO-listed site of Foz Côa, an archeological site situated in the heart of the Côa Valley featuring over one thousand engravings, identified in over 70 different locations. These etchings are predominantly Paleolithic, meaning they date back to approximately 25,000 years ago. Your visit to the site's museum will illuminate the history and symbolism of the archaeological discoveries that were made here.

You'll then head back to the ship and continue sailing to Barca d'Alva, situated less than a mile away from the border with Spain.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Perhaps you'll lounge on the Sun Deck and take in sweeping views of the Douro River.

Day 8 Barca d'Alva • Explore Salamanca, Spain

- Destination: Barca d'Alva
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: MS *Miguel Torga*, MS *Gil Eanes*, MS *Amália Rodrigues*

Activity Note: The market we intend to visit today is closed on Sundays. If this day falls on a Sunday for your departure, your Program Director will plan an alternate activity.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Drive across the border of Spain to the storied village of Salamanca, known for its Plateresque-style architecture and renowned university. Brimming with nearly 3,000 years of history, Salamanca features a UNESCO-listed old town and innumerable antiquities, including ceramic remains that date back to the first millennium BC. Given the town's celebrated

university, the University of Salamanca, the area is also home to important scientific institutions and research centers.

Throughout your guided tour of the area, you'll marvel at the 18th-century Plaza Mayor, the largest public square and a common meeting place among locals. You'll also experience the historic quarters of the old cathedral, which dates back to the early 12th century. Finally, you'll make your way to the town's local market, where you'll pour over fresh produce and rub elbows with locals.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Salamanca.

Afternoon: After lunch, enjoy free time to explore the town on your own. Perhaps you'll walk along the Roman Bridge, which crosses the Tormes River. This historic bridge serves as a symbol of the city, even appearing on the city's coat of arms. Alternatively, your Program Director can provide suggestions.

Later, your group will reconvene and return to the ship for your nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to enjoy the ship's amenities.

Day 9 Explore Lamego • Visit sparkling wine cellar • Local community visit

- Destination: Lamego
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: MS *Miguel Torga*, MS *Gil Eanes*, MS *Amália Rodrigues*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Sail toward the city of Lamego this morning.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Upon arrival in Lamego, you'll disembark for a sparkling wine tasting at a local cellar. *Espumante* (sparkling wine) boasts

UNESCO heritage for its traditional production, which you'll have a chance to learn about during the tasting.

Then, learn more about life in the area during a visit with members of the local community—an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event. During this memorable people-to-people interaction, you'll enjoy the opportunity to speak directly with some of the people who call this region home, and learn about their daily lives during a lively cultural exchange.

Following your conversation, you'll return to the ship for tonight's Port Talk, followed by dinner.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: The remainder of the evening is free to do as you please.

Day 10 Explore Porto

- Destination: Porto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *MS Miguel Torga*, *MS Gil Eanes*, *MS Amália Rodrigues*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: You'll cruise back to Porto this morning. Enjoy the views of this magnificent valley from atop the Sun Deck, or perhaps relax with fellow travelers in the lounge.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Our ship will dock in Gaia this afternoon, located south of Porto on the opposite side of the Douro River. Established two millennia ago, Porto is one of Europe's oldest cities, as well as the settlement that gave Portugal its name (when the town was known as Portus Cale in the ninth century). This was also the launchpad of myriad journeys during

the 14th- and 15th-century Age of Discovery, when Portuguese sailors were the world's leading explorers.

You'll launch your own discoveries when you drive north to explore Porto on a panoramic tour—a helpful introduction to some of the city's famous sites, including the Ribeira district. You'll witness highlights of the city that are seemingly piled one atop the other as they cascade down steep cliffs to the banks of the Douro River.

Then, you'll get off the bus and explore Porto's 2,000-year-old streets on foot. You'll discover the Palácio da Bolsa: Serving as the city's stock market, this Neo-classical building and UNESCO World Heritage Site was constructed in the 19th century, after a fire destroyed the Franciscan convent that originally stood on the spot. The interior boasts magnificent rooms, each decorated by a different artist. The most famous of these is the gilded Arab Room, designed in the Moorish Revival style—a very popular motif during the Romantic period.

After your tour, you'll return south to where your ship is docked in Gaia, where you'll have some time to spend independently before dinner. If you'd like to return to Porto to continue exploring on your own, your Program Director can help you find your way there and back again. Tonight, your group reconvenes on the ship for a Farewell Drink and the nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Toast to the discoveries you made over a Farewell Dinner in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Your last night in Porto is free for independent explorations. Ask your Program Director if there are any music events at the Casa da Música, or sip a glass of port in the ship's lounge.

Day 11 Porto • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: After breakfast, disembark the ship and transfer to the airport for your flight home. Or, continue your discoveries on our *Traditions of Iberia: Santiago de Compostela & Braga* post-trip extension.

END YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

5 nights in *Traditions of Iberia: Santiago de Compostela & Braga*

Day 1 Transfer to Santiago de Compostela, Spain • Visit Pontevedra & Combarro

Day 2 Explore Santiago de Compostela

Day 3 Transfer to Braga, Portugal • Visit Monção

Day 4 Explore Braga

Day 5 Braga • Optional tour to Barcelos

Day 6 Return to U.S.

PRE-TRIP

Portugal: Cascais & Tomar

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 5 nights
- » Dedicated services of a local Program Director
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » **7 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 1 dinner
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight to Lisbon, Portugal. Please refer to your individual air itinerary for exact departure and arrival times.

Day 2 Arrive in Lisbon, Portugal • Transfer to Cascais

- Destination: Cascais
- Accommodations: Hotel in Cascais

Morning/Afternoon: Upon arrival in Lisbon, a Grand Circle representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to your hotel in the seaside town of Cascais. The balance of the day is yours to relax after your overseas flight.

You might choose to join your Program Director for an orientation walk to get better acquainted with the area around your hotel. This is a great time to ask for restaurant recommendations.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director can suggest places to dine this evening.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 Explore Cascais • Visit Sintra

- Destination: Cascais
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Cascais

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a guided tour of Cascais, which was at one time a humble fishing village that has grown over the years into a lively coastal resort town, known for its sandy beaches and popular marina. Then, drive to the Royal Palace in Sintra, dating back to the Middle Ages. The palace is believed to have been built during the early 15th century. After housing many royal family members over hundreds of years, it was declared a national monument in 1910 and currently serves as a museum.

Lunch: On your own. Check with your Program Director for suggestions.

Afternoon: Upon returning to the hotel, the rest of the day is free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for activity ideas.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Free to make independent discoveries this evening.

Day 4 Cascais • Explore Obidos

- Destination: Cascais
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Cascais

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for the walled town of Obidos, known as the “Wedding Present Town” because it was the gift of King Dinis to his young bride Isabel on their wedding day. This launched a storied tradition in which Obidos was presented to each successive Queen of Portugal. Declared a national monument in its entirety, the city’s white walls, *azulejos* (tiles), and cobbled streets offer a clear glimpse of the medieval period here. During your time here, you’ll embark on a walking tour with your Program Director to learn about Obidos.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Obidos.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries. Later, perhaps you’ll join your Program Director for a leisurely discovery walk around Cascais.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director can provide recommendations.

Evening: Your last night in Cascais is free for independent explorations.

Day 5 Transfer to Tomar • Visit salt pans of Rio Maior

- Destination: Tomar
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel in Tomar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for the riverfront town of Tomar, stopping along the way to discover the salt pans of Rio Maior. Upon arrival, embark on a guided tour of the facilities, which have been producing and processing the mineral since 1177. As you explore, you’ll learn how fresh

water passes through a subterranean layer of rock salt and transforms into salt water seven times more salty than the sea.

Continue on to Tomar after the tour.

Lunch: On your own in Tomar. Your Program Director can provide suggestions.

Afternoon: After checking in to the hotel, you’ll have some time to relax and settle in. Later, your Program Director will lead a discovery walk around the idyllic town of Tomar. Set on the banks of the Nabão River, Tomar features renowned landmarks such as the striking Castle of Tomar and the Convent of Christ, a 12th-century UNESCO World Heritage Site and the former medieval headquarters of the Knights Templar.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director is happy to provide recommendations.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries. Perhaps you’ll continue exploring Tomar on your own or rest in your room.

Day 6 Tomar • Optional tour to Batalha Monastery & the fishing village of Nazaré

- Destination: Tomar
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Tomar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today is free for your own discoveries. Maybe you’ll continue exploring the historic town of Tomar, or perhaps you’ll choose to join our optional tour to Batalha Monastery and the fishing village of Nazaré.

For those who join the optional tour, you’ll first depart for the Dominican convent of Batalha, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built by King João I to thank the Virgin Mary for Portugal’s victory over Spain in the battle of Aljubarrota, the site is celebrated for its well-preserved Gothic art

and extensive history—in fact, for more than two centuries, Batalha served as a workshop of the Portuguese monarchy.

After exploring the grounds, you'll then continue on to the quaint fishing village of Nazaré. Seemingly frozen in time, this town is famous for its hand-painted fishing boats and the traditional garb worn by local people. During your time here, you'll enjoy a guided walk around the town, which includes a funicular ride to Sitio de Nazaré, a rocky promontory offering sweeping views of the coast.

Lunch: On your own if you choose to stay in Tomar. Travelers who joined the optional tour will enjoy an included lunch at a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Those who opted to take the optional tour will return to Tomar, and the remainder of the day is free to explore.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Your last night in Tomar is free for independent explorations. Ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 7 Transfer to Lisbon • Visit shrine of Fatima • Explore Mira de Aire caves • Join main trip

- Destination: Lisbon
- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin your transfer to Lisbon. Along the way, visit the shrine of Fatima, one of the most prominent Marian shrines in the world. Fatima is visited by thousands of pilgrims annually because it's believed to be the site of numerous apparitions of the Virgin Mary.

Next, you'll stop to explore the stunning caves of Mira de Aire, Portugal's largest cave network, before completing the drive to Lisbon. Upon arrival, you'll begin your main trip, *The Douro River: Lisbon to Porto*.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Optional tour to Batalha Monastery & the fishing village of Nazaré

(Day 6 \$205 per person)

Join us on this optional tour to discover the Dominican convent of Batalha, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built by King João I to thank the Virgin Mary for Portugal's victory over Spain in the battle of Aljubarrota, the convent is celebrated for its well-preserved Gothic art and extensive history. Next, you'll continue on to the town of Nazaré, famous for its hand-painted fishing boats and the traditional garb worn by local people. During your time here, you'll explore the town on foot, as well

as by funicular. The tour culminates at Sitio de Nazaré, a rocky promontory offering sweeping views of the coast.

POST-TRIP

Traditions of Iberia: Santiago de Compostela & Braga

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 5 nights
- » Dedicated services of a local Program Director
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » **9 meals:** 5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

From the famed pilgrimage route of Santiago de Compostela to the ancient treasures of Braga, delve into two of Spain and Portugal's most historic cities. You'll also uncover the Galician art and seaside splendor of Pontevedra and Combarro along the way. Don't miss this opportunity to round out your discoveries in this breathtaking region.

Day 1 Transfer to Santiago de Compostela, Spain • Visit Pontevedra & Combarro

- Destination: Santiago de Compostela
- Included Meals: Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Santiago de Compostela

Morning: Upon disembarking from the ship, drive to explore the small towns of Pontevedra and Combarro.

First, visit Pontevedra, a riverside city in northwest Spain known for its well-preserved old town sprinkled with shops, markets, cafés, and *tapas* bars. The town also serves as a stop along the Portuguese Way, and in the 16th century was Galicia's biggest city and considered an important port.

Then, continue on to Combarro, a small fishing village famous for its *hórreos*, traditional stone grain stores on stilts. This village is one of the

only towns in the region to feature this kind of stonework, making it a unique opportunity to observe another way of life. You'll explore the narrow streets, admiring the numerous *cruceiros* (typical Galician stone crosses), and you may want to sample licor café, a native liquor produced with coffee.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Continue driving to Santiago de Compostela, arriving at the hotel in the mid-afternoon. Enjoy free time to explore, and later, perhaps you'll choose to join your Program Director on a discovery walk around the vicinity of the hotel.

Dinner: On your own. Check with your Program Director for ideas.

Evening: You're free to continue your explorations, or you may prefer to meet up with fellow travelers for a drink.

Day 2 Explore Santiago de Compostela

- Destination: Santiago de Compostela
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Santiago de Compostela

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin a full-morning exploration—fittingly, by foot—of Santiago de Compostela, the city that has been the destination of so many Catholic pilgrims over the centuries. According to legend, a ninth-century shepherd witnessed a moving star and followed it, the light eventually leading him to a burial site. The local bishop examined the bones found there and proclaimed them to be those of Jesus’ apostle, James, the patron saint of Spain. Hearing the news, the Spanish king ordered a cathedral be built on the spot in 1075. In doing so, he not only transformed Santiago de Compostela into one of the most sacred Catholic destinations in the world, but he also nurtured the budding relationship between the Spanish monarchy and the Catholic Church that would eventually come to dominate Spanish history and culture.

Your walking tour will conclude—as all successful pilgrimages do—at the cathedral, where you’ll take in its ornate Romanesque and Baroque facades.

Lunch: On your own. You may choose to seek out one of the local takes on Spanish *empanadas*—tuna is a particularly popular filling here in Santiago.

Afternoon: The afternoon is yours to relax, or you are free to soak in the historic pleasures of another of the city’s grand squares, the Plaza de España, with its palaces and 16th-century hospital. Or explore the Casco Antiguo (Old Town), following the Rúa Nueva and the Rúa

del Villar—a pair of pedestrian-friendly streets where cafés, restaurants, and boutiques line arcades beneath red-tile roofs.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: On your own. Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations.

Day 3 Transfer to Braga, Portugal • Visit Monção

- Destination: Braga
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel in Braga

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin your transfer to Braga, Portugal, with a stop in the town of Monção along the way. Nestled on the banks of the Minho River, Monção is a historic walled town that was once the backdrop of numerous battles between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile. Today, it is celebrated for its many wine terraces and signature Alvarinho wine. After admiring the centuries-old architecture of the town, you’ll head to a local winery to sample this very beverage.

Lunch: On your own in Monção. Your Program Director can recommend a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Continue driving to Braga. You’ll check in to our hotel around mid-afternoon. Later, your Program Director will lead a short orientation walk around the neighborhood of the hotel to get acquainted with the area.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director will be happy to provide dining recommendations. Perhaps you’d like to try a local delicacy, *arroz de cabidela*, poultry or rabbit cooked in its own blood and a touch of vinegar.

Evening: The remainder of your evening is free. You may wish to visit Praça da Republica, the city's main square. This is a popular place for locals to congregate, giving you the opportunity to mingle with them and observe nightlife in Braga.

Day 4 Explore Braga

- Destination: Braga
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Braga

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Embark on a panoramic tour of Braga, Portugal's third-largest city. Along the way, marvel at the narrow lanes, plazas, and plethora of baroque-style churches that make up this 2,000-year-old, deeply religious municipality—home of the annual Semana Santa (Holy Week) religious celebration. You'll also visit the hillside church and sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte (which translates to "Good Jesus of the Mount"), one of Portugal's most iconic landmarks. In 2019, UNESCO deemed this area a World Heritage Site.

Later, continue on foot through the city's old town, witnessing features such as the imposing 16th-century Cathedral of Braga and the Roman-era monument Fonte do Ídolo.

Lunch: Enjoy an included light lunch at a local restaurant.

Afternoon: The afternoon is free for your own discoveries. Your Program Director is happy to help you plan the afternoon. Perhaps you'd like to visit the Garden of Santa Barbara, bounded by Braga's medieval Episcopal palace. Stroll among the manicured boxwood hedges and colorful flowers arranged in geometric lines, and admire the palace patio and intricate stonework. Alternatively, you may wish to spend the afternoon at Biscainhos Museum, housed in a 17th- and 18th-century aristocratic

palace and surrounded by lush gardens. Get a glimpse into the lives of Portugal's nobility and the riches that they enjoyed over the centuries, like Iberian-painted tiles, stucco moldings, prized ceramics, and valuable jewels.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director can provide recommendations.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries. Like much of Europe, café culture is alive and well here. Perhaps you'd like to wind down with a warm beverage at one of the many establishments in the city's plazas, or you're always welcome to see if your Program Director has any suggestions.

Day 5 Braga • Optional tour to Barcelos

- Destination: Braga
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Braga

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today is free for your own discoveries. Your Program Director can help you plan various activities.

Alternatively, you may like to join our optional tour to Barcelos, a medieval town classified as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network for its renowned arts scene and prized ceramics. For those who join the tour, you'll embark on a guided walk through the historic city center before continuing on to an art gallery to discuss the local traditions surrounding ceramic production. You'll additionally learn about the town's "mascot," the rooster, which is also considered the national symbol of Portugal.

Lunch: Lunch is on your own for those who remain in Braga. Travelers who choose to take the optional tour will enjoy an included lunch at a local restaurant in Barcelos.

Afternoon: Those who joined the optional tour will drive back to Braga. The remainder of the afternoon is free to explore.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Free to explore or rest in your room.

Day 6 Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Optional tour to Barcelos

(Day 5 \$165 per person)

Join our optional tour to Barcelos, a medieval town classified as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network for its renowned arts scene and prized ceramics. Your discoveries begin with a guided walk around the historic city—from its Gothic medieval bridge to its 15th-century parish church and decorated pottery museum. Along the way, you'll learn about the town's celebrated tradition of pottery making. You'll also come to understand why roosters are revered here.

YOUR DOURO RIVER SHIP

Sail aboard the privately chartered, 130-passenger *Douro Spirit*

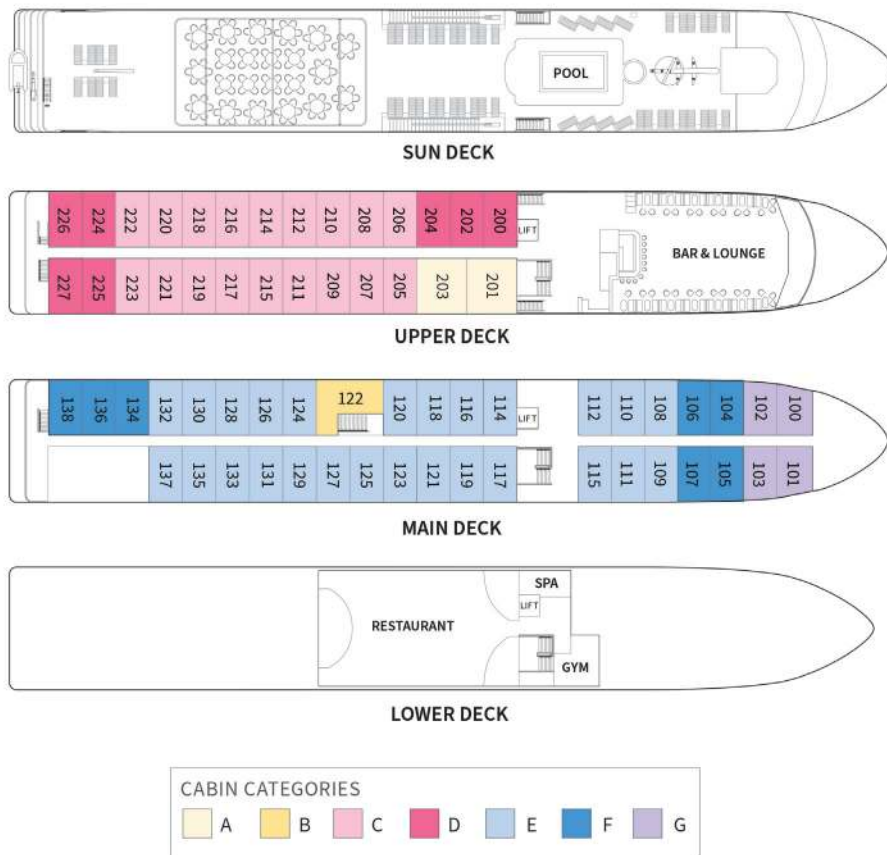
The *Douro Spirit* has a passenger capacity of just 130 with all outside-facing cabins and an English-speaking crew. This ship carries three groups with an **average size of 38 travelers**, each accompanied by a dedicated, local **Grand Circle Program Director**.



SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Dining room with single, open seating:** Enjoy regionally-inspired cuisine in your ship's dining room.
- **Bar & lounge:** Relax with friends old and new.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas.
Please note: Wireless Internet access may be limited at certain points throughout your River Cruise.
- **Sun Deck:** Sit outside and enjoy the view as your ship glides past the European countryside. Or, perhaps you'll take a dip in the swimming pool.
- **English-speaking crew:** Our staff is dedicated to your comfort, and all shipboard announcements are made in English.
- **Smoking/non-smoking:** Smoking is not permitted indoors, but is permitted on the Sun Deck.
- **Shipboard security:** State-of-the-art shipboard radar ensures safe navigation at night and in low visibility; safe docking space; onboard security staff; state-of-the-art fire safety system; and secured entryway doors.

DOURO SPIRIT



Registry: Portugal

Width: 38 ft.

Length: 261 ft.

Passenger capacity: 130

International crew: 30

Decks: 4

Number of cabins: 65—
all outside

Elevator: Yes

CABIN FEATURES

- Outside cabins feature a French balcony
- Cabin sizes are 160–235 square feet
- All cabins have a wardrobe and a drawer, and luggage storage space under the beds
- Private shower, including a hair dryer, shampoo, and soap
- Flat-screen color TV & radio
- Direct-dial telephone; emergency call buttons
- All non-smoking cabins



TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this vacation.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Optional extensions:** No additional blank pages needed.

Visa Required

We’ll be sending you information with detailed instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (Spain, Portugal):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities in Mind

Please review the information below prior to departing on this vacation. *We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience.*

GROUP SIZE

- This trip has a group size of 38-45 travelers with a local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

PACING

- 11 days, with 7 nights aboard the *Douro Spirit*
- Return flights often require departing in early morning hours

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 1-3 miles unassisted within a time period of 1-2 hours, and participate in 3-4 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs and cobblestones
- Optional activities and elective walks may be offered in addition to the above-mentioned activity levels
- Agility and balance needed for boarding small canal boats and navigating steep, slippery stairs
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Diverse terrain and uneven walking surfaces, including steep and unpaved paths, hills, riverbanks, 25-50 stairs without handrails, and cobblestones
- Travel by 130-passenger river ship and 49-seat coach
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 40-75°F during cruising season

- June–August are the warmest months

Health Check

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential to fully enjoy your trip abroad. If you have ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date.

- Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. (You can use the “Keep Your Abilities in Mind” on the previous page as a guideline to discuss with him or her.)
- You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling.
- If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition.

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Select “Find International Travel Information” then select “Country Information”; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Your Health Abroad” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.

- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-321-2835**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

Unless you know that your stomach is particularly sensitive to changes in diet/water, tap water in Portugal and Spain, and on board your ship is perfectly fine to drink.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not accepted.**
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip**; you will need euros instead

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2014) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world.. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

Portugal: Visa and MasterCard credit cards are fairly common in Portugal, but may not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. American Express is not commonly accepted.

Spain: Visa and MasterCard credit cards are fairly common in Spain, but may not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. American Express is not commonly accepted.

Using Your Credit Card in Europe

Most of us are used to credit cards with the embedded computer chip (the ones you insert instead of swiping). In Europe—where they’ve had this type of card longer than us—these credit cards usually require a PIN (personal identification number) to make a purchase. And in contrast, most U.S. credit cards either do not require a PIN or don’t have one. So what do you do if you want make a purchase with your credit card in Europe?

Don’t worry. 90% of the time you won’t need to do anything special. You’ll insert your card and the purchase will go through as normal. Often you won’t even be asked to sign anything.

But bring more than one form of payment with you. For those rare cases when your credit card doesn’t work, the best plan is to already have a backup form of payment with you. Debit cards are a good alternative as they have a PIN. And there’s always cash.

Consider asking your credit card company. You can try contacting your credit card company before you leave to see if they will issue you a PIN. Many won’t—but at least you’ll know. You could also try looking at their website to see if they have guidance about getting a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don’t assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don’t work outside of the U.S.!

Onboard Ship

Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and is calculated in euros. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept euros. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, and American Express, are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your Program Director (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.
- *Please note: Due to limitations with Discover Card in France, we cannot accept it as payment for onboard purchases or for optional tours on river cruises in France.*

Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Exchange Services: Policy Update

Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. To make it easy for you to budget, we have quoted the amounts in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Do not use personal or traveler’s check for tips.

- **Grand Circle Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$7–\$10 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per traveler for each day their Program Director is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in the form of cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Program Director during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$10–\$12 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. **Policy Update:** *Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*

- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don't need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure: When you are exploring on your own, it's useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** Tipping is not customary, but many locals will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change. If the driver helps you with heavy luggage, then 10% is a nice gesture.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** When dining as a group, your tip is included—there is no need for you to leave an additional tip. When dining on your own, if at a coffee shop, you can simply round up the bill. At a restaurant, 10% of the check is suggested.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Customized Air:** You booked international air with us, and have customized it in some way. If you have customized your trip's dates to arrive early, stay longer, or stop on your own in a connecting city, airport transfers will NOT be included. You must also arrange your own accommodations for any additional nights. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner under "My Reservations".

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with Grand Circle Cruise Line, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Overseas Arrival:** Once you arrive overseas, you'll need to collect your luggage and clear customs. A Grand Circle representative will meet you outside of customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel or ship. Important note on porters: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the baggage claim area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your transfer vehicle. Your driver will load your luggage into the transfer vehicle.
- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as GCCL travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-321-2835**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your vacation by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved onsite can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard and Visa on all trips, and Discover on all trips except river cruises in France. We can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.) We do not take Amex, cash, or checks for optional tours.
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- We will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is

“unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Internet Access and Email

Some public places—restaurants, cafes, hotel lobbies—provide complimentary wireless Internet access (WiFi) for customers. While sailing Internet access may be unavailable, depending on locks, bridges, and regional remoteness. Internet access should be most consistently available when the ship is docked in larger cities.

Receiving Calls from Home

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Portugal: +351

Spain: +34

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Same as the main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>	

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags. Portage at hotels is provided for **one** bag per person.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions.** Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you'll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.

What to Bring

We have included suggestions from former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using www.weather.com and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

Your cabin already has: Shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer, soap, body lotion, shower cap, and towels. **And don't forget a reusable water bottle**—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments
- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, skin care products, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ☐ Travel money bag or money belt
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor

- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial hand lotion
- ☐ Light folding umbrella
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards
- ☐ Electrical transformer and plug adapter—see “Regional Electricity” section.

Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ☐ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- ☐ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Electricity

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 220-volt outlets. In your bathroom you will find a 110-volt outlet; this outlet is only for low-voltage appliances, like electric shavers. (Your bathroom also comes equipped with a hair dryer).

Electricity in Portugal and Spain is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B; standard European plugs are Type C, E, and F. **Of the three, a Type C adapter is the most useful as it fits into Type E and F sockets.** Type C is usually what is sold in stores as a European adapter.

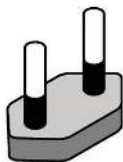
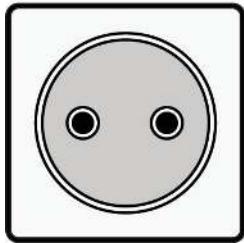
Aboard ship, the plugs in your cabin bedroom are Type C.

For your reference, here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Portugal: C and/or F

Spain: C and/or F

Type C



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Lisbon, Portugal: Lisbon is one of the warmest European capitals. Spring and summer months are usually sunny with maximum temperatures close to or above 86 degrees and lows between 59 and 68 degrees. Autumn and winter are typically rainy and windy with some sunny days; the temperature rarely falls below 41 degrees, usually staying at an average of 50. On average, there are 100 days with rain per year. Lisbon's climate is strongly influenced by the Gulf Stream.

Porto, Portugal: Porto, the second largest city in Portugal following Lisbon, exhibits a temperate maritime climate. Here, you can expect the summers to be warm, averaging at 77 degrees with frequent rain showers, and the winters to be mild and rainy. In general, Porto is one of the wettest areas in Europe; even during its dry season you can expect showers and bursts of colder weather. Even during its rainiest periods, Porto tends to be sunny and temperatures are mild but could drop into the high 30s-low 40s.

Santiago, Spain: This region has a Mediterranean climate characterized by abundant rainfall with mild, humid winters and warm, dry summers. The coldest months are December, January and February. The summer season lasts about six months, from May to October. July and August are the hottest months with relatively little rainfall.

Braga, Portugal: Braga enjoys an Atlantic influenced climate with some extreme temperature due to close proximity to the mountains. Summers are warm and dry while winters are cold and rainy. The warmest months are July and August with very little rain and highs in the 80s, though heat waves are not uncommon. In the winter, temperatures drop into the high-30s and December brings the heaviest rainfall.

Weather Conditions and River Depths

Throughout the river cruise season, weather conditions affect river depths, and water levels may require adjustments to your itinerary. When river depths rise or fall during your River Cruise, Grand Circle Cruise Line will be required to adjust your itinerary for your safety and to adhere to the current governmental and nautical requirements. Though we strive to adhere to our planned itinerary, we may not always be able to follow it exactly as planned. The sequence of ports visited and the days on which included features and optional tours occur may vary.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	LISBON, PORTUGAL			PORTO, PORTUGAL		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	58 to 47	85 to 72	3.8	56 to 41	87 to 70	6.2
FEB	61 to 49	84 to 68	3.6	59 to 43	88 to 71	5.5
MAR	65 to 51	83 to 61	2.0	62 to 45	86 to 66	3.5
APR	67 to 53	83 to 61	2.5	64 to 48	86 to 66	4.6
MAY	71 to 56	82 to 57	2.2	67 to 52	89 to 67	3.8
JUN	77 to 61	83 to 54	0.7	73 to 57	90 to 66	1.8
JUL	82 to 64	80 to 48	0.2	77 to 60	91 to 65	0.7
AUG	82 to 65	80 to 48	0.3	77 to 60	92 to 64	1.1
SEP	80 to 63	82 to 51	1.1	75 to 57	90 to 65	2.8
OCT	72 to 58	84 to 62	3.1	69 to 53	89 to 70	5.4
NOV	64 to 53	86 to 71	4.2	62 to 47	87 to 70	6.2
DEC	59 to 49	86 to 75	4.8	58 to 44	86 to 72	7.7

MONTH	SANTIAGO, SPAIN			BRAGA, PORTUGAL		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	52 to 39	84	10.2	56 to 39	--	7.6
FEB	54 to 40	82	8.8	58 to 41	--	6.3
MAR	58 to 41	77	5.7	62 to 43	--	4.0
APR	60 to 42	77	5.5	64 to 45	--	4.8
MAY	64 to 47	77	5.8	69 to 50	--	4.7
JUN	70 to 51	75	3.2	76 to 55	--	2.4
JUL	75 to 55	74	1.5	82 to 58	--	0.9
AUG	76 to 55	74	1.5	82 to 57	--	1.2
SEP	72 to 53	76	5.0	78 to 55	--	3.1
OCT	64 to 48	82	7.6	69 to 50	--	6.6
NOV	57 to 44	85	7.9	62 to 45	--	6.9
DEC	53 to 41	86	11.1	58 to 42	--	9.1

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

Douro Spirit

This privately chartered ship is designed exclusively for about three groups of 38–45 travelers. Amenities include a restaurant with panoramic windows, sun deck with lounge chairs, a library, bar, and lounge.

Included features of all Grand Circle Cruise Line European river ship cabins:

- A layout of at least 150 square feet
- All outside cabins
- Individual climate control (heat and air conditioning)
- Sufficient closet and dresser space
- Color TV
- Direct-dial international telephone
- Hair dryer
- Desk
- In-cabin coffee station

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Account at **www.gct.com/myaccount**. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for ships in many parts of the world, including Europe.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods and rich carpeting. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus. Complimentary house wine, house beer, and a selection of soft drinks are included during lunch and dinner. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase, starting at approximately \$23–40 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$20 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer a complimentary coffee and tea station throughout the day.

Open-table, single-seating for all meals: Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

Dining times: Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

- Early riser breakfast: 6:30–7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:00–9:00 am
- Lunch: 12:30–2:00 pm
- Dinner: 7:00–8:30 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call Grand Circle Cruise Line to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

Dress code: The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

Non-smoking policy: The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the sun deck until disembarkation.

Dock and Landing Etiquette

River waterways are simply not big enough to support large landing docks such as those built on ocean shorelines. It is common for river ships to tie up alongside each other at some piers—particularly in ports where docking area is restricted. While we try to arrange the most convenient mooring available in each port of call, outboard boats may occasionally obstruct views, and you may have to step across other ships when you want to go ashore.

Headsets

During your trip, complimentary headsets, or Whispers receivers, are provided on our guided tours through the cities we visit. These receivers and headsets allow you to hear your Program Director and our local guides better. If use a hearing aid or have strong preferences for headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headsets/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by iPods, computer jacks, etc.

Wireless Internet Access

Limited Wireless Internet service is available for free in the cabins and common areas on board your Grand Circle Cruise Line ship. If you want to use the Wireless Internet connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do not rent or loan these devices. To use the Wireless Internet service, please visit Reception after you board for access information. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong 5G cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration.

Laundry & Linen Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently it costs about 2 euros per shirt). Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available. There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels are changed daily.

Medical Care

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. In addition to an emergency call button in all cabins, ships also feature fully staffed reception desks, 24 hours a day.

Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call.

Recreational Facilities

These include a piano, spa, gym, library, sun deck with a small pool, and a lounge with a bar, with drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines). Prices are in Euros.

Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls are directly from your cabin and through satellite. We advise you to use it only for an emergency, as this is a very expensive service (for example, a call to New York City would cost about \$3.75 per minute). (Phone Calling Cards cannot be used over the ship's phone system.)

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is only permitted outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ships.

Shore Excursions

Many sightseeing tours are included on your cruise. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Program Director will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications *Douro Spirit*

- **Size:** 366x38 ft
- **Capacity:** 126 passengers, 33 crew members
- **Layout:** 65 cabins, 5 decks; Elevator-yes

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Your Program Director

Grand Circle Cruise Line is committed to showing you a destination through the perspective of those who live, work, and play there. How better to do that than to have a resident with you every step of the way? We are proud to be the only cruise line to provide you the dedicated services of an expert Program Director, a resident or native of the country who is delighted to share their in-depth knowledge of local history, culture, and hidden gems.

Fluent in English and skilled in fostering camaraderie among travelers, our Program Directors are constantly cited by our travelers as the main reason they continue to travel with us. During your cruise, you'll enjoy multiple Program Directors aboard your ship, who will each be with you and your group of 25-47 travelers throughout your journey—both on ship and on land. And with personal headsets on every included and optional tour, you'll be able to enjoy their perspective and enthusiasm as you explore at a level deeper than most Americans go.

Portuguese Culture

Portuguese culture is shot through with the influences of the Celtic, Lusitanian, Phoenician, Germanic, Visigoth, Viking, Sephardic Jewish, and Moorish people who settled here. Set at Europe's westernmost point, Portugal developed its own easygoing ways, and you'll notice that the pace of life here is more relaxed than in many other parts of Europe. It is one of the most charming aspects of traveling here.

Most visitors find the Portuguese people to be gracious, courteous and helpful—if a little reserved. Part of that stems from the value they place on modesty and humility. They are careful not to boast, be too loud, or cause offense. The Portuguese are arguably more conservative than their neighbors. They tend to uphold and revere old traditions, and religious and family ties are very strong here. As you come to appreciate those things, you'll also begin to feel the Portuguese people's real warmth.

António de Oliveira Salazar, Portugal's onetime dictator from 1926 to 1968, once described the nation's culture in terms of the "Three Fs:" *fado* (the searingly sad folk song), *Fátima* (the Catholic shrine where a miraculous vision is said to have occurred), and *futebol* (soccer). He was being facetious, but there is no denying that the Portuguese people hold these things very dear.

Take *fado*, for instance. This uniquely Portuguese style of folk music is on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Translating to "destiny" or "fate," *fado* is mournful, and yet, passionate. The songs are often about homesickness, the sea, lost love and longing—things that would be familiar to many a Portuguese seafarer, of which there are many. It is the musical expression of an important concept called *saudade*, a word connoting longing, melancholy, and nostalgia for something lost. But *saudade* is also bittersweet, tinged with beautiful memories. The Portuguese writer Manuel de Melo called it "a pleasure you suffer, an ailment you enjoy."

Some very devout people do make pilgrimages (*romarias*) to religious sites like Fátima, but overall, strict religious observance is on the decline in this predominantly Catholic culture. But that is a matter of church attendance and involvement with the organized church. Religion is still interwoven with the larger culture. Most towns are physically centered around a church, which is the nucleus of social events such as the annual village festa (festival). Most people have strong attachments to their hometowns and tend to remain there, or visit often. Grandparents are often involved in helping to care for children when the parents work, and especially in smaller towns (where homes tend to be larger), they often live with their children as part of the extended family.

As for *futebol* (soccer), Portugal's obsession with the sport borders on the religious, and some of the greatest players in the world (like Luís Figo, Eusébio, and Cristiano Ronaldo) hailed from Portugal, and are national heroes. When a big match is on, the whole country seems to stop to cheer their favorite of the so-called "Three Greatest" teams: F.C. Porto, Sporting C.P., and S.L. Benfica. Head to a local tavern, watch the game with the locals, and you are sure to get swept up in the excitement.

If sports are not your thing, you will surely find many other cultural diversions...Portugal has experienced a renaissance, with many talented young designers, artists, musicians, architects, chefs, and entrepreneurs flocking to cities like Lisbon, Porto, and Guimarães—all of which have been named European Capitals of Culture since the advent of this century.

Religion and Religious Observance

The majority of Portuguese people (81%) identify as Catholics. However, apart from major celebrations, church attendance is quite low. Even so, Catholicism is deeply entwined with the national and cultural identity. Even those who are not devout still have religious weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and festivals honoring regional saints are still popular. It was only after the 1974 "carnation revolution" that the church and state were officially separated.

Language in Portugal

Portuguese is the official language of Portugal. It is a Romance language (along with Spanish, French, Italian, and Romanian), and is closely related to the Galician language spoken in northwest Spain. About 27% of the people also speak English, and that number is growing.

Useful Phrases

Portuguese people will appreciate the effort (even a fractured one) if you try to learn a few words in their language. Please do not try to speak to locals in Spanish—the Portuguese are sensitive to comparisons with their neighbor and are also very proud of their own language. Since enough people speak English, you should have little trouble getting by. Here are some colorful slang expressions that you may hear:

- *Tchau* is pronounced similar to the Italian word *ciao*, and is used as an informal way to say "goodbye"
- *'Tá bem* is the Portuguese way to say "fine" or "it's all good."

- *Fixe* means “cool,” but also “nice” and “good.” It can be used in a variety of contexts, such as *Ele é um tipo fixe* (He’s a cool guy) or *a viagem foi muito fixe* (the trip was really nice.)

Getting Around in Portugal

Taxi: Portuguese taxis are a convenient but expensive method of transportation for long rides. If you are just going across town, prices are more reasonable. Officially metered taxis are ivory colored or black with green tops.

Trains: Portugal’s railway system is not extensive, but it does operate between major cities. On all train fares, passengers 65 and older will be given half-rate fares upon presentation of passport.

Remember to purchase your ticket prior to boarding the train. Once on board, you may be asked to show your ticket. If you do not have one, you will be charged a hefty fine! Tickets are not sold on the train.

Casino Estoril

One of the most famous casinos in Europe is in Estoril, about a thirty-minute taxi ride from Lisbon (cab fare costing about twenty euros). But before you set off, be sure to bring your passport with you, as it is required for entrance.

Hotel Courtesy in Spain

Like in many other European nations, manners are more formal in Spain than the U.S. Hotel staff will likely address you as “señor” or “señora” and may be caught off guard if you ask a question without greeting them with a quick “hello” or “good day” first. Local staff (and other visiting Europeans) will generally make an effort to be quiet in hallways and common rooms, which are normally used for reading, relaxing, or quiet conversation. For this reason, eating and drinking in any common rooms other than the bar or restaurant is frowned on. If you have any laundry to dry, please keep it inside your room (and not on the balcony).

Getting Around in Spain

Taxi: Taxis are widely available in the area.

Bus: Generally less expensive than both taxi and train travel, bus travel in Spain has increased in recent years.

Trains: Spain has an extensive railway network linking all major towns and cities, and rail travel in Spain is generally comfortable, reliable and often cheaper than many other European countries. Trains are modern and many are high-speed.

Portuguese Cuisine

Start with rich farms and Europe’s oldest vineyards, add in the bounties of the Atlantic and Mediterranean, season with some Moorish spice, and that is a good beginning for Portugal’s unique cuisine. Then, you can ramp it up with a variety of novel ingredients that Portuguese

explorers brought home during the 15th-century: African vanilla and cinnamon...potatoes from South America...*piri piri* chilies from Brazil (used in a popular chicken dish)...and citrus from the Orient. Here are a few things Portuguese chefs do with all that variety:

- **Caldo verde:** A classic soup of kale, potatoes, onions, and garlic simmered with olive oil in a clay pot. It is often served with cornbread and sometimes made with ham or sausage.
- **Feijoada à transmontana:** A bean stew with cabbage and sausages. It is often served confit-style in a dish called *rojões*, which features white wine and cumin.
- **Francesinha:** A hefty sandwich of thickly sliced bread stuffed with bacon or pork belly, sliced roasted pork, sausage, beefsteak, fried egg, and cheese.
- **Aletria:** A sweet noodle pudding made with *vermicelli* (angel hair) pasta, milk, sugar, egg yolks, cinnamon, and lemon or orange zest.
- **Cataplana:** Fish and cod cooked with red and green peppers, tomatoes, garlic, wine, and paprika.
- **Pastel de Nata:** A egg custard pastry, iconic to Portugal. Traditionally dusted with a topping of cinnamon.
- **Bacalhau à Brás:** A dish of salted shredded cod, mixed with thin fried potatoes, onions, and egg.

Spanish Cuisine

The 21st century's culinary firmament is lit by a galaxy of superstar chefs from Spain. Among them are the legendary Ferran Adrià (whose former restaurant, El Bulli, launched the "molecular gastronomy" trend), Carme Ruscalleda (the only female chef to be awarded five Michelin stars), octogenarian Juan Mari Arzak (the father of the "New Basque" cuisine), and Jose Andrés, (credited with bringing small plate dining to America). Even if you do not dine in one of their restaurants, they have influenced Spanish chefs in even the humblest establishments, where you might find traditional classics like these:

- **Gambas al ajillo:** Shrimp cooked with Garlic and Chilies
- **Gazpacho:** A chilled soup that hails from Andalusia
- **Jamón Iberico:** A Spanish ham that is dry-cured and hung on the rafters of local bars and restaurants
- **Txangurro:** A baked spider crab stuffed with onions, tomatoes, leeks, brandy, and parsley, topped with breadcrumbs.
- **Pastel Vasco:** A slice of vanilla custard cream with a crunchy crust.

Lisbon in Brief

City Layout & Details

Lined with restaurants, museums, shops, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and old pastel-colored buildings juxtaposed with modern architecture, Lisbon is a charming city with something to offer for everybody. The people are known for their hospitality and festive spirit which is demonstrated by the various festivals held in the city throughout the year to celebrate film, art, music, and sports, among other things.

The capital city of Portugal, Lisbon is located along the western coast where Tagus River opens into the Atlantic and sprawls across seven hills. Stroll through Belem, a neighborhood on the waterfront, where you will find the Mosteiro dos Jeronimos, a beautiful monastery with UNESCO status, and the Museu Colecao Berardo, a modern art museum. Explore the historic city centre, the Baixa Pombalina, and wander through Chiado to scope out the shops and restaurants. For a taste of the quieter, local life, head to Alfama and meander through the narrow streets – be sure to start at the top and make your way down to the bottom! Delight your taste buds with a stop at one of the wine bars in Bairro Alto to taste some wine, cheese, and charcuterie.

Local Transportation

Lisbon offers multiple forms of public transportation that make it easy to navigate the city. While driving is an option, streets are generally congested and difficult to maneuver, and parking can be extremely hard to find. With the many taxis and means of public transportation available, you will have plenty of options if you do not want to drive.

Metro: There are four main metro lines which are labeled by color: red, green, yellow, and blue. Metro stations will be denoted with “M” signs. Remember to validate your ticket at the station entrance before boarding the metro. A single ride costs approximately 1.40 euros. You can also purchase a 24-hour pass that is valid on all metro lines, as well as trams, funiculars, and buses.

Buses and Trams: Lisbon has an extensive bus and tram system that span the city, making it an easy option while you are exploring. The trams have an old-city charm that has turned the transportation itself into a tourist attraction. Pick up a map from the local tourist office or at your hotel to see all of the routes available to explore.

Funicular: There are four funiculars in Lisbon – the Ascensor do Lavra, the oldest in Lisbon, the Ascensor da Bica, the Ascensor da Gloria, and the Elevador de Santa Justa (the “Elevator of Santa Justa”). Most of the funiculars cost about 3.60 euros for a round trip ticket, except the Santa Justa which is 5 euros.

Taxi: Taxis are plentiful in Lisbon. Keep in mind that they may charge more at night or if you have luggage with you. It is also very common to use Uber.

Porto in Brief

City Layout and Details

The hilly city of Porto lies on the northern bank of the Douro River. On the southern bank is the city of Vila Nova Gaia. With a population of around a quarter of a million at its heart, this industrious city boasts a metropolitan population of around a million and half. It's a hilly landscape with a wide variety of architectural styles—from the monumental granite of mercantile and industrial structures to baroque churches and stately beaux-arts buildings. You'll find medieval alleyways at the city's heart, and broad, modern boulevards in the outskirts.

The Ribeira district, Porto's historic center, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its winding lanes, crooked staircases and baroque, tiled churches lend an old world charm to the heart of the city. Moving outward you'll encounter more modern town houses and eventually new, sprawling suburbs under development.

Entertainment & Recreational Activities

Ribeira: This historic district is lovely for aimless strolling. It's mix of alleyways, churches, and tidy little squares tucked into the odd corner means you'll be constantly discovering new nooks and interesting sights. You can cross from the Porto Ribeira district to the slightly more modern district in Vila Nova de Gaia via several bridges—which offer lovely views of both cities—or local ferries. Both sides of the river have benefited from the recent renaissance and renewal, and offer both vibrant nightlife and upscale restaurants.

Walking: Porto is hilly and the streets and alleys are not always perfectly maintained, may be cobbled or bricked, and parts of your path may include stairs cut into the cliffs that drop down to the river. However, a little walking effort will yield enormous rewards as you discover a city with many subtle charms and a long, visible history that other European cities are in danger of losing. Take local transportation out to the ocean front drive called “Foz” for stunning views.

Local Transportation

Metro: The Porto Metro is a state of the art light rail/subway system developed in 2001 for the *Porto-European Capital of Culture* event. With 5 lines it's quick, new, and the most efficient way to get around Porto and out to some suburban areas. It's a work in progress, however, and not all planned lines are available—so you can't always get there from here via the Metro in Porto yet. A daily pass is available, and it makes travel both convenient and inexpensive throughout the city.

Taxi: Many travelers rely on taxis or Uber to get around Porto. They are plentiful, and except for congestion in the city center, they are a fast way to travel through the city. However, they are not inexpensive: good planning can make taxi a rare but effective option.

Bus: The most economical way to get around Porto is by bus (provided you are not pressed for time). Local buses go nearly everywhere in Porto, which is saying a lot in this compact and complex city – and they are generally modern and comfortable. However, there are occasional timetable issues: be prepared for less than precise arrivals and departures, particularly if there's a strike.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your vacation. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. Grand Circle is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Portugal

Among the recommended buys in Portugal are Atlantis crystal, Vista Alegre porcelain, pottery, tiles, and gold and silver-filigree jewelry. Other local handicrafts include lace, woodwork, cork products, ceramics, embroidered goods, hand-loomed carpets, hand-knit sweaters, crocheted shawls, brass, copper and pewter ware, and baskets.

Europe Tax-Free Shopping: Many stores in Portuguese cities have adopted the "Europe Tax-Free Shopping" (ETS) system, which allows foreign shoppers to easily recover the Value Added Tax (IVA)—which can be anywhere from 6%–23% depending on the item. Stores that participate in the ETS system will clearly display an ETS sign at the entrance. If you make a purchase, ask the shopkeeper for a tax-free form. When you depart Europe, you show the airport customs official your purchases and tax-free forms. You will then receive a cash refund or a credit to your credit card, approximately four weeks following your return to the U.S., for the total amount of your tax-free allowance.

Spain

Leather goods, from supple suede gloves and elegant calf handbags to wineskins that require careful curing (botas), are excellent purchases. Other good buys are shoes, from classical calf pumps to provincial cloth espadrilles; porcelain by Lladro and pottery by regional craftsmen; and wool rugs made by tapestry makers or simple cotton-rag throws.

Siesta: Throughout Spain, most stores and offices close between 1:30 pm and 5 pm. Then they reopen until 7:30 pm (many close even later). Restaurants generally remain open during siesta. In the larger cities you may find that big department stores will stay open from 10am – 10pm.

Value Added Tax: Known in Spain as the IVA, Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals. The IVA ranges from 7% to 21% (luxury items, cars). Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson about the VAT at time of purchase. Be sure to save all receipts and forms for Customs.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Portugal

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** Portugal contains 35,556 square miles, including the Azores and Madeira islands. The Madeira island group occupies 305 square miles. The main island of Madeira is 35 miles long and about 13 miles across at its widest point.
- **Capital:** Lisbon
- **Language:** Portuguese
- **Geography:** Portugal's mainland terrain is mountainous, pastoral, and earthy. Its interior moors and flatlands are circumscribed by 500 miles of gorgeous coastline with long stretches of sandy beaches. Madeira consists of two inhabited islands, Madeira and Porto Santo, and two groups of uninhabited islands. The largest island is Madeira. It is volcanic and mountainous, with its highest peaks in the interior rising to over 6,000 feet. The island contains nearly 100 miles of coastline, but no beaches (except one tiny one at Prainha near the eastern tip of the island). The north coast is untamed and less populated; the western end is forested and cool; and the eastern tip consists of barren reddish rock that extends into the blue sea.
- **Population:** 10,421,117 (Estimate)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic, 81%, Christian and other, 19%
- **Time Zone:** Portugal is ahead of U.S. Eastern Time by five hours; Central Time by six hours; Mountain Time by seven hours; Pacific Time by eight hours.

National Holidays: Portugal

In addition to the holidays listed below, Portugal celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Corpus Christi. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

04/25 Liberty Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/10 Portugal Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

10/05 Republic Implantation

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/01 Restoration of Independence

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

Portugal: A Brief History

Portugal's earliest tribes occupied the Tagus valley, the Alentejo and Estremadura as far back as 8,000 BC. Later, Neolithic clans built hilltop forts called castros in northern Portugal, and around 700 BC these were occupied by Celtic Lusitanians. They were fierce, which led the Carthaginians (who had settled on the south coast) to recruit them around 200 BC to fight off the Romans. The Celtic Lusitanians proved their worth—while it only took Rome seven years to conquer Gaul, it took them nearly 200 to subdue Iberia. By the time that was accomplished, Rome had colonies in Lisbon, Evora, Santarem, and Beja.

Christianity reached Portugal near the end of the 1st century, and by the 3rd century, bishoprics had been founded at Lisbon, Braga, and other towns. As Visigothic invaders crossed the Pyrenees, they made their way to Portugal. But since they ruled from Toledo, their influence was not strong. This made it easy for the Moors, who arrived soon after 711 AD. Portugal's Moors settled mainly in the south, and brought many agrarian reforms as well as a love of culture. They established Muslim supremacy, but allowed Christians and Jews to worship, work, own property, and freely engage in business. Though their cities were grander and larger in Spain, they still left an enduring impact on Portuguese culture.

The Christian Reconquest had some early victories in Portugal, taking Porto back from the Moors by 868 and Coimbra by 1064. Meanwhile, a small kingdom was coalescing around the old Roman settlement of Portus Cale. It was controlled by the kings of Leon and Castile until 1139, when Afonso Henriques won a battle and proclaimed himself King of Portucale. The Algarve was reconquered in 1264, the capital was moved from Coimbra to Lisbon, and Portugal's land boundaries have since remained almost unchanged.

But Portugal's imperial ambitions had no boundaries. In 1415, King John conquered the North African trading post of Ceuta. Under his son Prince Henry the Navigator, advances were made in shipbuilding, navigation, and cartography; and Portuguese *caravels* sailed the coast of Africa. Madeira and the Azores were colonized, and over the next century, explorers like Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama expanded the empire from Africa to India and southeast Asia, and to Brazil.

In 1580, Spain invaded Portugal and held it for 60 years. Although the Portuguese independence was restored in 1640, Portugal kept fighting back frequent Spanish raids to take over again for about 28 years. By that time, Dutch, English, and French competitors had surpassed Portugal's colonial might. The country's fortunes mostly waned over the next centuries. Portugal was able to end a five-year occupation by Napoleonic forces with the help of Britain. But that alliance did Portugal no good when the 1890 British Ultimatum was delivered, requiring Portugal to give up its claim to land between Mozambique and Angola. Still, Portugal fought in World War I on the Allied side.

A weak postwar governments led to a military coup in 1926, in which Antonio Oliveira Salazar became a Finances Minister, before progressing to dictator in 1933, ruling for almost 40 years. He kept Portugal neutral in World War II, but granted naval and air bases to the Allies after 1943. Portugal joined NATO as a founding member in 1949, but did not gain admission to the United Nations until 1955. Salazar suffered a stroke in 1968 and died in 1970. In 1974, a socialist military coup ended the Salazar era. It was called the "carnation revolution" since civilians placed flowers in the rifles of the military. Directly afterwards, most of Portugal's former colonies were granted their independence. With EU membership in 1986, Portugal entered the European mainstream.

Since the debt crisis of 2008, Portugal's economy has made progress. The government deficit has fallen, as has unemployment. But some of this has been achieved by austerity measures that have hit the young, teachers, health care workers, and others. The future will call for the same kind of resolve and innovation that drove Portugal's golden Age of Discovery so long ago.

Spain

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** The mainland occupies approximately 195,364.5 square miles. Off Spain's east coast in the Mediterranean are the Balearic Islands (1,936 square miles), the largest of which is Majorca. Sixty miles west of Africa are the Canary Islands (2,808 square miles).
- **Capital:** Madrid
- **Languages:** Spanish, Basque, Catalan, and Galician. In resort areas, many people also speak English, French, and German.
- **Geography:** Spain's topography consists of a broad central plateau that slopes to the south and east, crossed by a series of mountain ranges and river valleys. It is a land of both towering peaks and endless beaches, as well as fertile landscapes and high, dry plains. Principal rivers are the Ebro in the northeast, the Tajo in the central region, and the Guadalquivir in the south.
- **Population:** 47,325,360 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 67.8%, atheist 9.1%, other 2.2%, non-believer 18.4%, unspecified 2.5%
- **Time Zone:** Spain is six hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time.

National Holidays: Spain

In addition to the holidays listed below, Spain celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 Labor Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

10/12 Hispanic Day

11/01 All Saints Day

12/06 Constitution Day

12/08 Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas

Spain: A Brief History

Spain has been continuously inhabited for 1.2 million years, but the bulk of our knowledge about Spain's earliest people begins around 1100 BC, when Phoenicians established trading colonies along the southern coast. These attracted the Greeks; and around the same time, Celts descended in the north, establishing hill villages known as *castros*, many of which still stand in Galicia and northern Portugal.

The Romans arrived in Spain around 206 BC, but had to defeat the Carthaginians for it. Afterwards, the Romans still had a fight on their hands: The Iberian tribes resisted for 200 years. Today, in places like Mérida, Córdoba, Segovia, and Tarragona, you can see remnants of Roman roads, bridges, aqueducts, temples, and amphitheaters. Towards the end of their dominion, the Romans also brought Christianity. But Pax Romana crumbled as Visigoths and Franks swept over the Pyrenees.

The civilized heights of Rome were not equaled until the Moors arrived from North Africa around 711 AD. The enlightened Islamic civilization they established was called Al-Andalus, and it lasted for nearly 800 years. Islamic cities such as Córdoba, Seville, and Granada flourished. Throughout Al-Andalus, Christians, and Jews lived under some restrictions, but were free to worship, work, own property, and trade. When the rest of Europe was struggling through the Dark Ages, the city of Córdoba became a beacon of enlightenment with a celebrated university, palaces, gardens, observatories, libraries, street lamps, and running water. Mathematics, astronomy, literature, music, and architecture flourished.

Córdoba's star began to dim in the 11th century as the caliphate broke into dozens of small kingdoms. Infighting opened a crack for northern Christians to pry open, and the Christian Reconquest pushed south. The last stronghold of the Moors, Granada, fell to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1491. They instituted a 300-year campaign of terror, the Spanish Inquisition, which sought to root out heretics through the confiscation of property, imprisonment, torture, and execution. It required Muslims and Jews to convert to Christianity or leave Spain, thereby ending a source of valuable cultural contributions.

But Spain's fortunes continued to rise. In 1492, Christopher Columbus opened up the New World to Spain's imperial ambitions. Spain amassed tremendous wealth and a vast empire through Columbus' conquest of the Caribbean, as well as the conquest of Mexico by Cortes (1519–21) and Peru by Pizarro (1532–33). In 1588, Philip II sent his Armada to invade England, but its defeat cost Spain its supremacy. After centuries of dwindling losses, Spain's overseas empire ended with Cuban independence in 1898.

Spain remained neutral during World War I, but was unable to avoid the upheavals that arose in its aftermath. Civil war erupted in 1936, pitting right-wing Nationalists under Francisco Franco against socialist, communist, and centrist Republicans. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported Franco with planes, weapons, and 92,000 troops, making Spain a testing ground for WWII. Franco declared the war over in 1939, but there was no peace. In the ensuing years, his regime killed 100,000 intellectuals, teachers, and dissenters. After World War II (which Spain sat out), a UN-sponsored boycott plunged the nation into "years of hunger." They didn't wane until the 1950s, when U.S. aid and tourism infused the economy. When Franco died in 1975, Juan Carlos I took the throne and Spain transitioned to democracy.

When the 2008 global economic crisis plunged Spain's economy, the conservative government enacted harsh austerity measures. Youth unemployment reached 60%, and by 2017 over 87,000 workers left Spain, creating a brain drain. Recently, the government rolled out a "Return Plan" to lure them back. Also in 2017, a referendum in Catalonia backed separation from Spain. Madrid imposed direct rule, though polls show that 68% of Spaniards prefer dialogue with Catalonia.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Portugal

A Concise History of Portugal by David Birmingham (2018, History) This condensed, illustrated history offers an introduction to Portugal's people, culture, and evolving role in contemporary Europe.

A Small Death in Lisbon and ***The Company of Strangers*** by Robert Wilson (1999 and 2001, Fiction) Both these political thrillers are set in Portugal with flashbacks to World War II, when the supposedly neutral nation was a hotbed of espionage.

Baltasar and Blimunda by Jose Saramago (1998, Historical Fiction) Written by the winner of the 1998 Noble Prize for Literature, this historic romance offers detailed insight into what life was like in Portugal in the late 18th century. Set in 1711, in the midst of the terrors of the Inquisition and the plague, it follows a seemingly mismatched couple as they discover the wonders of love.

The Portuguese: The Land and Its People by Marian Kaplan (1991, History) A travel guide and history book all in one that takes you from the Moorish Invasion to the Age of Discovery to modern times.

Spain

A Million Steps by Kurt Koontz (2013, Travel Narrative) Follow the author as he walks the Camino de Santiago—a pilgrimage route in Spain that stretches more than 400 miles—a journey that is both physical and spiritual.

Sister Queens: The Noble, Tragic Lives of Katherine of Aragon and Juana, Queen of Castile by Julia Fox (2011, biography). The daughters of Ferdinand and Isabella each lost positions of power—one to the whims of England's Henry VIII, and the other to madness.

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon (2005, Fiction) A mix of mystery, romance, and hauntings abound in this international bestseller, set in 1950s Barcelona.

The Last Jew by Noah Gordon (2000, Historical Fiction) A sweeping tale of survival during the Spanish Inquisition.

Traveler's Tales: Spain edited by Lucy McCauley (1995, Anthology) Incisive, lyrical musings on all aspects of Spain, written by luminaries such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Calvin Trillin, and Barbara Kingsolver.

Suggested Films & Videos

Portugal

Porto (2016, Drama) An American expatriate and a French woman spend one intense night together in the titular Portuguese city. Years later, they try to make sense of their connection, the transience of joy, and haphazard nature of life. Filmed in 35, 16 and Super 8 mm, this film sees Porto through a novel and striking lens.

Night Train to Lisbon (2013, Drama) A Swiss schoolteacher (Jeremy Irons) prevents the suicide of a young Portuguese woman, who then disappears. Soon thereafter, he visits a bookshop where he discovers a puzzling memoir written during the Salazar era. Consumed by the idea that he may not be living his life to the fullest, he travels to Lisbon to unravel the mysteries.

No Reservations: Lisbon (2012, Season 8, Episode 4) Emmy award-winning chef and social critic Anthony Bourdain visited Lisbon just as it was on the verge of becoming a travel sensation. Enjoy his witty commentary, local encounters, and mouth-watering presentations of Lisbon's culinary pleasures.

Amália (2008, Documentary) This biopic tells the story of Amália Rodrigues, Portugal's Queen of Fado.

Lisbon Story (1994, Drama) A straightforward tale of a German sound engineer who falls in love with Lisbon. Director Wim Wenders takes you through a city that he obviously loves, offering the beauty of old houses, narrow streets, the sounds of the city, a haunting soundtrack, and the lives lived in Portugal's capital.

Spain

Pain and Glory (2019, Drama) Antonio Banderas earned a Best Actor nomination for his portrayal of a legendary director flashing back through his past, and facing a present filled with loss, memory, physical ailments, and imagination. This thinly-veiled autobiographical sketch from director Pedro Almodovar is a rueful reflection on creativity, wrapped up with warmth, humor, and vivid glimpses of life in late 20th-century Spain.

Ocho Apellidos Vascos (released in the U.S. as *Spanish Affair*, 2014, Comedy) Two of Spain's most disparate cultures collide as a jilted bride from the Basque Country goes to Seville, where a skillful Andalusian ladies man is frustrated by his inability to woo her. A fun and warm-hearted look at the differences between northern and southern Spain.

The Way (2010, Drama) A grieving father (Martin Sheen) honors his lost son's desire to finish the journey of a lifetime by competing the historical pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago. Along the way, he meets other trekkers with their own stories to tell.

Pan's Labyrinth (2006, Fantasy) From director Guillermo del Toro. Following Spain's bloody civil war, young Ofelia enters a world of unimaginable cruelty when she moves in with her new stepfather, a brutal military officer. Armed only with her imagination, Ofelia discovers a labyrinth

and a faun who offers her a path to saving herself and her mother. The lines between fantasy and reality begin to blur, and before Ofelia can turn back, she's at the center of a ferocious battle between good and evil.

All About My Mother (1999, Comedy) When her 17-year-old son is tragically killed in a car accident, Manuela sets out to reconnect with her son's father and ends up forging new connections with an outrageous transvestite, a pregnant nun, and her son's favorite actress. This 1999 Oscar winner for Best Foreign Language Film is another from director Pedro Almodovar, whose other acclaimed works include *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *Volver*.

Useful Websites

Grand Circle Forum (tips from previous travelers)

www.gct.com/forum

Grand Circle Frequently Asked Questions

www.gct.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps or Maps.me

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber or Bolt or Grab

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App or Skype or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

TripWhistle

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Tourlina

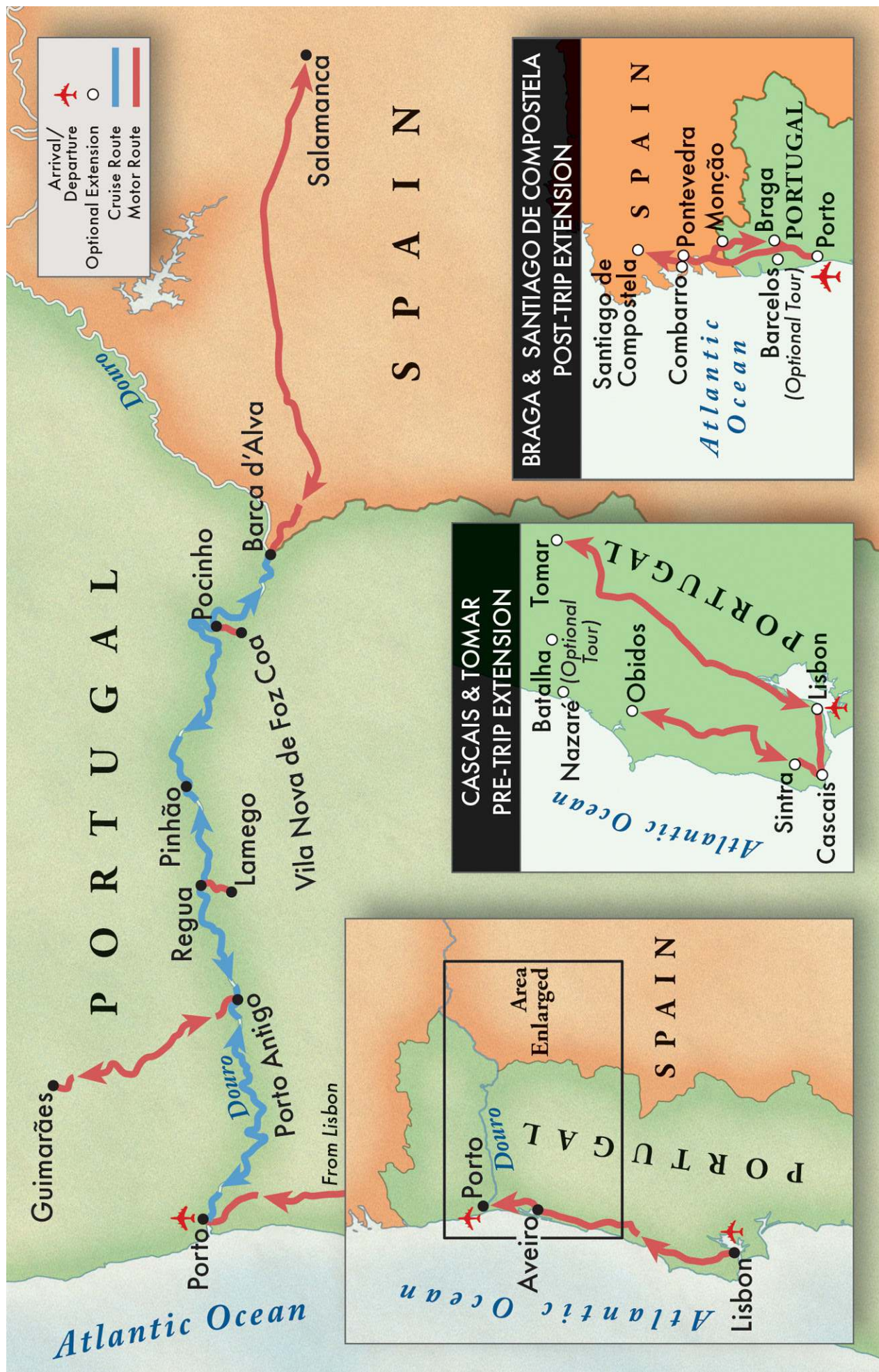
For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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Most Popular Videos, Slideshows & Photos from our Grand Circle Vacations Created by our Travelers



Submitted by Fran Geisler, 8-time traveler
from Edisto Island, SC



Submitted by Milly Champeau, 6-time
traveler from Clinton, TN



Submitted by Elinor Graham, first-time
traveler from Ocala, FL



Created by Sarah Brown, first-time traveler
from Providence, RI



Created by Joseph Jiang, 3-time traveler
from San Francisco, CA



Created by Sheila Knox, 20-time traveler
from Modesto, CA



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