

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT PORTUGAL: FACTS & TIPS



If you are traveling to Portugal to complete your next holiday adventure, then you simply must know some of the most exciting things about it! It might just help you plan the most perfect trip, and if you are lucky, there will be many unknown things for you. So keep your eyes open for fun facts and tips, and let's dive into the magical world of Portugal.

Lisbon is Extremely Old

When people think about the oldest cities in Europe and the world, many immediately go for Rome or Athens, but did you know that the capital city, Lisbon is also an elder among all others? In fact, Lisbon is even older than Rome! It has been a Portuguese city since 1147, but its history dates back to 1200BC, making it one of the most ancient cities in Europe. Archeologists found that even at that time, the area was full of people and settlements, meaning it has been approximately 3000 years of residents in the city.

Our tip for you is that while visiting, look for the oldest establishments and sites! You will be reliving history!

The Portuguese Language is Extremely Popular

And that comes as a surprise for many! While some might think that speaking Portuguese is basically speaking Spanish, the language is super popular and is an official language in nine countries. Suppose you learn some of it for your trip to Portugal. In that case, you will easily converse in Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, East Timor, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Macau, Mozambique, Sao Tome, and Principe. Moreover, it is the sixth most spoken language in the world!

The Portuguese are Fatalists

It is incredible how much faith the residents of Portugal have. They are huge believers in fate, and they proclaim that no one can escape the road that has been built for them. They do not really believe in actions and consequences, just the sheer fate bestowed upon you. They even have a whole specific song genre dedicated to this tradition. It is called fado, and the songs are primarily about melancholic love, life, fate, and hopefulness. Try to catch a show of fado once you are there!

Impressive Portugal's Dictatorship

The time that the country was under an authoritarian regime is truly something that needs to be acknowledged more. From the year 1936 to 1974, Portugal was ruled by a strong dictatorship, with António de Oliveira Salazar ruling most of the time. It went through three stages of absolute rule: firstly, the military dictatorship, Ditadura Militar, from 1926 to 1928, then onto the national one from 1928 to 1933, and lastly, the New State, from 1933 to 1974. They were under the influence of strict Catholicism and only became a fully democratic country in 1976.

It is incredible how recently these things happened, so pay attention to that while visiting the oldest history museums, and learn even more about the previous life of the Portuguese!

If you are looking for comfortable transportation while visiting, check out the **train to Lisbon** for possible destinations and timetables!

Shortest and Longest Reign

Aside from being the oldest country in Europe, Portugal also holds the title of being the country with the longest reign, as well as the shortest. Henrique of Portugal was a king for an impressive time of 73 years! No wonder he was nicknamed the Conquerer!

On the other hand, Luis Filipe, Prince Royal of Portugal, was in charge for only 20 minutes after being shot by the revolutionary society called the Carbonaria.

Portugal Off-Season

While at the peak of the holiday season, in the summer, the country is swarming with tourists, you should actually consider visiting it in the off-season, and here is why!

Naturally, the streets are way less crowded, so you will not have to brush shoulders with a bunch of people, and the same goes for the beaches! If you visit in spring or autumn, the shores are significantly less packed, so you will be more comfortable and can relax with your own company. Also, the prices drop just a bit, so taking a trip before or after the big holiday season is more affordable, especially if you are traveling on a budget!

And the best thing is that you will not miss anything! The most popular tourist attractions are available for visitation all year long, the sun does not stop shining after the summer, and the cities are still as vibrant and colorful as ever!

Off-Beaten Tracks

Following our advice on traveling in the off-season, we also suggest you keep thinking outside of the box and look for less popular or well-known places. Aside from the most prominent cities and most famous touristy areas, Portugal is home to a number of cute lovely villages, small towns, scenic off-beaten routes, and picturesque landscapes.

For example, travel north to see the Douro, a vineland that has been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site, where wine spills without end, and people seem to be living in a dream, with stunning valleys and vineyards. Chat with locals and roam around town so that you get the feel of true authentic Portugal without the tourists and crowds!

As for the beaches, there are several quieter ones that remain that way even in the summer. If you want to spend the day sinking in the sun but are not up for company, check out the beaches of the Alentejo and Centro districts. While travelers often overlook these regions, the beauty remains!

There you go! Now that you know the best facts and tips for visiting Portugal, you are surely more than ready to start your journey. It is time to fill up your itinerary, pack your bags, and welcome the Portuguese sun. Good luck!

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