

PORTUGAL: TRAVEL OFF THE BEATEN PATH



As a result of blending a rich culture with outstanding architectural designs and breath taking sceneries, Portugal has become the perfect travel destination in Southern Europe. A number of less known attractions are luring adventurous visitors.

Portugal packs some of the most magnificent and easily accessible off the beaten path tourists' attraction sites distributed all over the country, promising a thrilling as well as an educative holidaying season suitable for people from all walks of life.

In Southern Portugal travelers can find a miniature city called **Lagos**, situated in Algarve. Lagos is a must visit destination for beach lovers as well as historians. The city has long and ample sandy beaches lining the coastline with some of them being almost completely obscured by cliffs.

Huge natural caves dot the coastline and can be accessed from Ponta da Piedade, the only lighthouse point from where tourists can hire motor boats. The blue coastal waters are home to quite a large number of dolphins and a wide variety of fish species. The city centre prides itself in having some of the oldest buildings designed in the traditional Portuguese architecture.

Pena Park in **Sintra** guarantees a lush environment with a most interesting botanical variety and spectacular views. The park is closely located to Cruz Alta Point, another great off the beaten path attraction in Portugal.

For nature enthusiasts, [Portugal holidays](#) won't be complete without visiting **Madeira Island**, located off the Portuguese coast. It has very unique volcanic flora that varies greatly with the inland vegetation. The Island is approximately two thousand meters above the sea level and is easily accessible via chartered flights.

Tourists interested in studying prehistoric art will find it beneficial to travel to **Coa Valley**, located in northeastern Portugal. The valley is named after the river that flows through it, River Coa. The valley holds a prestigious position among all other open air Paleolithic art sites around the world since it is one of the largest.

Stone engravings depicting pictures of horses and humans were discovered in Vila Nova de Foz Coa. Archaeologists have dated these engravings to have been made from around 20,000 to almost 10,000 years BCE, thus qualifying it as the best place to visit for both seasoned and amateur historians.

Among the many off the beaten path travel destinations in Portugal, **Viana do Castelo** is one of the most breath taking places worth visiting. The city is located within the Minho Lima region of Southern Portugal. Outstanding sites include the city's famous monuments, Santa Luzia basilica situated on the peak of Mt. St Luzia from where you can enjoy fascinating views of the city as well as the sandy beaches and the Lima River. The basilica can be accessed either by car or via the Santa Luzia Elevator.

Also, Viana do Castelo has one of the oldest floating naval hospitals in existence today, the Gil Eanes Naval Museum, which was constructed in the year 1952 and was in full operation up to 1973. The Naval Museum still contains the original medical equipments, making it one of the must visit places in Portugal.

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