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Porto, Portugal

City Living In The World's Oldest Wine-Making Region And One Of Portugal's Most Charming **Coastal Hot Spots**

By Marta Vouga



"Porto is a nation"... that's one of the most famous expressions you hear around here. People have a strong sense of belonging to this special little piece of coastline, with a river flowing along one side and the roaring Atlantic Ocean.

Globally known for its exquisite port wine and surrounded by the enchanting Douro Valley, this city is no stranger to accolades. The Douro Valley itself is a UNESCO World

Heritage Site, named as such for being the first demarcated wine-producing region in the world. The city has been named the Best Startup-Friendly City in Europe by the World Excellence Awards, was named the world's best European destination several times, and listed as a must-visit city by *The Guardian*.

The second-most prominent city in Portugal, with a population of roughly 240,000 in the metropolitan area (and more





than 1.3 million in Grand Porto, which includes cities and satellite towns), the history of this fabulous city is closer to that of an ensemble of small villages, and its landscape formed by generations of seafaring and trade, made possible by the Douro, the longest river on the Iberian Peninsula.

And although property prices are starting to rise, Porto is still one of the best-value choices for living and investing in Europe.

Porto's broad mix of cultures and styles can be seen from one street to another.

The city starts to really come alive around 11 a.m. (apart from traffic, which is up a few hours earlier!) and is shrouded in a bit of a fog that contrasts with the colorful people that live here and lends the coastal city some charm and mystery. Oddly, this resident fog illuminates the city and adds personality... it creates a harmony among the many villages that compose the city.

Porto is not divided by the conventional neighborhoods... districts in Porto are each associated with cooperatives and social housing and are called zones. In the past few years, these various zones have each been given a serious facelift, and the whole city seems anew right now.

Some of the oldest parts of the city are being totally revamped, and it's common to see infrastructure works underway as you walk the streets these days. The city doesn't have room to grow anymore, so the powers that be want to restore what already exists. The Vitória zone in the heart of Porto, for example, was severely run-down but is now super trendy. Even the Ribeira zone, currently one of the most desired areas to live, was quite degraded just a couple years ago... now it's a luxury spot. Even the iconic market, Mercado do Bolhão, is getting a rehabilitation.



Porto is exactly like its port wine... the more stages of development, the better it gets. Porto is an antique city that has already undergone and is now going through more development... so you'll find high and low streets, meaning ups and downs as you walk in the city center (near the river) and flat areas in Matosinhos and Foz (where the beaches are located).

Often proudly referred to as the *Invicta* (undefeated) by locals, the nickname dates back to the 19th century and the Liberal Wars (also known as the Portuguese Civil War, the War of the Two Brothers, and the Miguelite War). The city was occupied by liberal constitutionalists led by D. Pedro IV and surrounded by conservative absolutists troops led by D. Miguel, his brother, for more than a year. D. Pedro IV bravely resisted and implemented liberalism in Portugal. In tribute to D. Pedro IV's efforts, his daughter and successor, queen D. Maria II, gave Porto the title of Invicta, designing it as "the most illustrious of Portuguese cities," which she proudly printed on the municipal coat of arms.

A passion for football (soccer) is another of this city's defining characteristics. Football is a big deal throughout the whole country, and the Portuguese are absolute enthusiasts—infatuated with their teams—and Porto is no different. In fact, its team is one of the most important Portuguese teams in the world. FC Porto (Porto Football Club) has fans from across the globe, as it plays in all major leagues in Europe (UEFA, Champions League, Intercontinental Cup), has won seven European and world titles, and was trained for a long period by one of the most famous football coaches in the world, José Mourinho.

Porto's Zones (Neighborhoods)

As mentioned, neighborhoods here are called zones, and people here tend to say that everything in Porto happens in the zones of Cedofeita, Santo Ildefonso, Sé, Miragaia, São Nicolau (Ribeira), and Vitória. All are within a few steps of one another.

Up until just a few years ago, all these zones were a little isolated and even somewhat dangerous, but they've quickly evolved into wide-open tourist hot spots. Today, they're renowned for their charming, traditional feeling and famous for their weekend riverside markets and old taverns.

Cedofeita boasts artists, alternative bars, art galleries, and monuments. This is the artsiest up-and-comer of the group. Sé, São Nicolau (Ribeira), and Miragaia cover the whole Douro area that most people are visually familiar with... these are what you see in photographs of the city, and are excellent areas to walk, eat, and stop for a glass of wine.



These are the main residential zones I'd recommend:

Cedofeita

A tranquil zone with traditional commerce, superfriendly customer service, and where everyone knows each other.

A 3-km walk from *Baixa* and 1-km from *Boavista*, this is the zone where all the creative magic happens...

Here you'll find the majestic Miguel Bombarda Street art galleries, beginning from near Crystal Palace Street and running all the way to Cedofeita Street—this is truly one of Porto's pearls. Open from 3 p.m. onwards, you'll find dozens of open-air art galleries and guirky, alternative shops and restaurants, each distinct from the last, and together quite different from anything else in Porto. On certain days, especially on weekends, there are special open-air meet-and-greet events with free food and drink, giving you the chance to mingle with the artists.

Even the parking lots over here are different from elsewhere—painted in different colors and decorated with art work, so you're engulfed in the zone's artsy vibe from the minute you park your car. Renting a one-bedroom apartment here would start at 700 euros.

Vitória And Sé

Occupied almost exclusively by locals, the Vitória and Sé zones are some of the oldest, most historically rich zones Porto has to offer. (You could compare them to Mouraria and Alfama in Lisbon, if you're familiar.)

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These are considered to be pure Porto. The houses here are tall and narrow, and they all have great views.



Vitória is perched at the highest point in the city, and as such, is home to the city's public alarm system. It's also home to the stunning Clérigos church, a top site to visit in the city.

Sé is home to its namesake cathedral, the city's oldest market, and the Rua Escura (dark street—it only gets one hour of sun per day). Apartments are a little cheaper here, with one-bedrooms starting around 600 to 650 euros.

Ribeira



Ribeira is one of the more typical and historical zones. As the local saying goes, "In Ribeira, no picture can ever bad."



Hemmed in by the banks of the Douro River, its beautiful line of colorful old houses (themselves a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is crisscrossed by tiny cobblestone alleyways that are home to all sorts of fun cafés, restaurants, and bars. It's also got the traditional market, Mercado Beira-Rio.

Along the banks of the river here, you'll see the traditional wooden cargo boats, rabelo boats, that transported wine barrels across the Douro in the past. Legend has it that each boat sterns was painted the same color as the owner's house, so everyone would always know who it belonged to. To this day, you'll notice that the sterns of the boats you pass here are often the same as the houses on land nearby. A singlebedroom apartment here starts around 700 to 750 euros... but prices are generally higher than that.



Boavista

Traversed by the longest avenue in Porto, Avenida da Boavista, this part of town is upscale. Offering premium hotels, high-end services, mansions, and luxury apartments, the folks who live here benefit from some of the city's most famous cultural offerings. The city park, Parque da Cidade, the Serralves museum and its park, the concert hall (Casa da Música), and the first shopping center in town (Basília) are all found here. One-bedrooms start from 600 to 650 euros, but, again, prices are usually higher.

Boavista, Porto's grand boulevard, starts with a roundabout in the Boavista zone and ends in the Foz zone...

Foz



One of the most intriguing and sophisticated areas on the outskirts of Porto, great for bike rides and romantic walks, Foz is considered one of the city's most luxurious and expensive areas. Boasting amenities like old narrow streets that are cut through by wide avenues, and of course, the sea and its many Blue Flag beaches (Praia da Luz and Praia do Homem do Leme

are my favorites), it's hard not to like this part of town. Living options are a little different here, offering mostly mansions and houses. Otherwise, there aren't many buildings here, and they're generally small.

Foz is often compared to Cascais in Lisbon, being a similarly high-end, seafront, residential city area. It's the most highly sought place to live in Porto. Here, you'll have to up your budget to at least 1,000 euros for a one-bedroom apartment, and likely more.

Island (*Ilha*) Neighborhoods

A new concept in Porto called *ilhas*, "islands," is an alternative kind of neighborhood. A courtyard space will have several small houses, all with the same main entrance door, usually in the back of the house conglomeration—known as *palacetes*, house palaces.

Each house is very small, and those who live in these palacetes together are great neighbors—an ideal scenario for those who come here and don't know anyone or anything about the area. You'd have an immediate close circle of resources to help you out.

Thanks to their affordability, *ilhas* are especially popular with younger generations. Prices start from 200 to 300 euros, and you'll find loads of options in the Campanhã zone (as well as elsewhere).

This whole idea came as a solution to the big spaces left open in certain zones that were rehabilitated. In some cases, the buildings couldn't be renovated and were torn down... leaving a dearth in housing along with ugly holes in the city grid. Porto's creative



solution was this was to provide super-low-cost housing to those who couldn't afford to live in the neighborhood ordinarily.

Keeping Busy And Enjoying Culture In

Parque Da Cidade (City Park) is a green paradise in the middle of a busy urban jungle... Bordered by the sea on one side and punctuated by peaceful lakes, the park is home to a stunning variety of local flora and fauna—who seem to spend just as much time running into the refreshing water features as living on land! The park boasts different types of areas... it has groves, forests, and a huge expanses of grassy areas, as well as refreshment stops and picnic tables.



Aliados is beautiful avenue, and its surroundings are said to be perfectly representative of Porto. Totally refurbished a couple of years ago, this boulevard is home to the city's most ornamental buildings—and the most beautiful McDonald's in the world, according to Business Insider.

Palácio da Bolsa is one of the most beautiful buildings in Porto. With a mix of architectural styles, you'll be greeted at the entrance by has a wonderful granite and marble staircase. As you walk through, you'll come across, for example, the Golden Room, completely wallpapered with gold leaf, stunning ceiling frescoes, sculptures, and much more, all of which lead you to the *pièce de résistance*... the breathtaking Arab Room, designed entirely in the Moorish Revival style, all finished in wood, stucco, and gold leaf. The Arabic inscriptions and exotic figures on the walls are all hand-painted. This is where visiting dignitaries are hosted, where all important receptions

are held, and a popular classical music concert hall.

The Clérigos church tower is one of the most emblematic monuments in the city, and the highest tower in Portugal—75 meters, or 240 steps, tall. From the top, you'll enjoy a 360-degree view of the city.

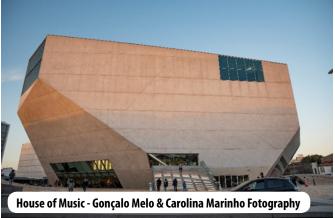


The *Palácio Cristal's* romantic gardens are sure to dazzle, and this lovely outdoor space includes a restaurant and a terrace overlooking the lake on the grounds—all the better for enjoying the atmosphere! Before you settle down for a coffee or a snack, tour the "aromatic plants" garden, the medicinal garden, the rose garden, the "feelings garden," and more themed beds. The landscaping is a view unto itself, but the grounds are also laid out to offer views of the Douro River. Various cultural and social events, shows, and other entertainments are held here... come for concerts, circuses, exhibitions, sporting events.

Serralves is an 18-hectare multiuse space with formal gardens, natural woods, a traditional farmhouse, a contemporary art museum, and more. Considered one of the most important cultural centers in the country, Serralves has received international recognition and was classified as national monument in 2012.







A center for contemporary art, architecture, and landscape, its mission is to promote the arts to those of all ages, as well as being a repository for arts and research. Enjoy its exhibitions, seasonal markets (where you'll be introduced to fabulous local products and the artisans who created them), and the 8,000+ specimens of notable plants throughout the grounds, representing about 230 species.

Porto has long made culture a priority for its citizens, and was rewarded for these efforts in 2001 when it was elected the European Capital of Culture. The Casa da Música, the city's concert hall, was conceived to commemorate the occasion and is credited with renewing locals' interest in the arts.

Right in the heart of the city on Boavista Avenue, its unconventional architectural style gets mixed reactions. Many consider it to be an architectural



masterpiece... but some say it looks like a meteorite landed in the middle of the city. With two main auditoriums (holding 1,238 and 300 people respectively), it also offers a superb view over the city through its rooftop restaurant. As the first building in Portugal exclusively dedicated to music, this monument to the arts is worth a visit.

Perhaps counterintuitively, Casa da Música is not only an icon for music, it's also one of the best places in the city to skate. Its unusual exterior architecture creates ramps, slopes, and bowls that attract skaters from all over the area, along with the wide-open space and the fact that the stone dries quickly after rain.

The Coliseu do Porto and the Teatro Municipal do Porto are the city's theaters, offering year-long programs



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that include national and international symphonies, opera, ballet, plays and a variety of other types of show (like puppetry, circuses, and even movie screenings).

Located in a quiet area, the Mercado do Bom Sucesso is a fun new-concept multi-use space. It offers dozens of stalls full of gastronomic delights from all over Portugal and beyond. These food stalls make up a modern, upscale "food court," interspersed with shops selling clothes, books, fresh-food stalls, local specialties, and more. Weekly events are held here, from intimate live concerts, DJ sets, and theater and dance performances to exhibitions and educational workshops for both children and adults



The market used to be traditional, decorated with frescoes and wood finishes, but in the city's ongoing renovation, it was modernized and converted to san "urban design." The lower area was formerly for produce and the top floor for butchers, fishmongers, and florists (tons and tons of flowers came through this building back in the day). This was where local farmers and vendors came to hawk their wares... a little slice of the past in a modern city. While the traditional market is a bit of a loss, the replacement has been received well by the city.

The Mercado Do Bolhão is Porto's most iconic market and one of the most famous in the entire country. It's undergoing major overhaul at the moment, so it's currently in a temporary location just a few hundred meters away from the original site.

The transformation of the Bom Sucesso market is being repeated here... it will become a similar "urban food court," but several times bigger than the Bom Sucesso. Dating back to 1850, this beautiful market, known for the monumentality of its neoclassic architecture and for having the freshest products in town, is the essence of Porto and one of the best places to experience true Porto lifestyle...

Livraria Lello (Lello Bookstore) has long been considered one of the most beautiful bookstores in the world and is certainly the most emblematic in Portugal. Having been home to several literary men, it has been a huge inspiration for writers and artists for all over the world, including "Harry Potter" author J. K. Rowling, who was a regular guest while she lived in Porto. It was the famous wooden staircases of Lello that inspired her vision of the Hogwarts' stairs, and Porto University's student uniforms (which aren't very different from those worn by all Portuguese students) that inspired the long black coats of the Hogwarts's uniforms. There's an entrance fee of 5 euros, and be prepared for a long wait to get in.



Santa Catarina Street is mostly pedestrianized, is one of the busiest streets in Portugal, and the most commercial artery of the Baixa zone (downtown area). Famous for being the main open-air shopping center in Porto, it is also renowned for its stunning Christmas-light displays during winter and for its beautiful tiles and iconic façades—fine examples of Art Nouveau style.

Extending more than 1,500 meters, this is the largest shopping area in Porto, running from Via Catarina to one of the most well-preserved treasures of Porto, the Maiestic Café. One of the most visited cafés in



Portugal, it tells the history of Porto... it's like stepping back into 1920s-era Porto, when writers and artists gathered here for their intellectual debates. This is Porto's Belle Epoque and one of the most cherished and representative examples of Art Nouveau in the city.

Ponte Dom Luís I (Dom Luís bridge) is the most iconic bridge in Porto and was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. Built in the 80s, the metallic structure with two stories connects the cities of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, which are separated by the river. The upper story runs a metro line across, while the lower allows for car traffic.

More often referred to simply as the Luís I bridge, there's a city legend behind this shortened name. According to stories passed from generation to generation, the king wasn't present at the inauguration of the bridge, so the proud Porto people refused to put the "Dom" in the name, as revenge for the lack of respect he supposedly showed the city. Truth or not, its beauty and grandeur can't be denied.

Porto's Enticing Night Life

One of the favorite pre-night spots where youngsters gather before a full night out is Café Piolho. With a bohemian atmosphere, this café continues to be, generation after generation, one of the most important meeting places for students and intellectuals of the city.

The nightlife in Porto is almost entirely in the zone commonly known as Galerias, located between

Torre dos Clérigos and Avenida dos Aliados. Here is where you'll find bars behind every door. There's a lot of street nightlife in Porto, even in the rain people walk in and out of bars, passing from one to the next and hanging out on the street in between. You also have nightclubs, such as the highly acclaimed Industria and Eskada... but these aren't close to the city center, and perhaps that's why frequenting clubs has waned in popularity in the last few years here.



At What Cost, A Life In Porto?

Rental prices in Porto have increased exponentially over the past years. It's rare to find an apartment for less than the minimum salary (580 euros), and if you do, it'll probably be a loft.

People who have moved to Porto over the past decade say prices have almost doubled. For example, a loft in Boavista three years ago would cost 500 euros; now, it costs 800 euros.

Nonetheless, Porto's rental and property prices continue to be more affordable than Lisbon's. A couple's average monthly expenses are 50 euros for electricity, 25 euros for water, and 50 euros for NET+ Cable TV, for a total of about 125 euros.

The average cost of living for an individual in Porto is 1,500 euros (no luxuries but living comfortably). If you don't own a house, you'll need to rent a place longterm (and pay a good amount of rent upfront) while the bureaucracy of legalizing your stay takes place. And Portugal's bureaucracy is not known for being particularly fast...

While some expats consider the cost of living in Porto to be a little high, remember that the local average salary is pretty low—so it's entirely feasible to live here on much less than I'm proposing, but you'd have to give up more creature comforts and live in a smaller, less central apartment.

If you're considering working locally, you're likely to be successful in finding a job, but, again, the salary won't be what you'd expect back home. Portugal's wages are some of the lowest in Europe. And while you can live comfortably here on a local salary, of course, you wouldn't have much left over at the end of the month.

As always, your costs depend on your lifestyle.

Go here to see fully itemized budgets for Porto here.

A Snapshot Of The Property Market

Below I offer a brief survey of local real estate for sale...

Cedofeita

Apartment Size	Average Price Per Square Meter (Euros)
Studio (locally referred to as T1)	2,893
One-bedroom (T2)	2,335
Two-bedroom (T3)	2,043

Boavista

Studio (T1)	3,333
One-bedroom (T2)	2,823
Two-bedroom (T3)	2,307

Ribeira

Studio (T1)	5,250
One-bedroom (T2)	3,618
Two-bedroom (T3)	3,368

Foz

One-bedroom (T2)	3,168
Two-bedroom (T3)	2,938

Staying Healthy In Portugal

Portugal is renowned for its health care—it's the 12th best in the world according to the World Health Organization, and Porto is no exception.

Porto's public hospitals include Centro Hospitalar São João, Hospital de Santo António (consistently named one of the best in the country). And in Gaia, about 1 km from the city center, there's Centro Hospitalar de Vila Nova de Gaia.

The largest private hospitals are Hospital da Luz Arrábida (which even has an English website but is outside the city center in Gaia) and the CUF Porto Hospital. One of the most acclaimed hospitals is Lusíadas Porto (in the city center).



Can Your Pet Come To Porto?

Porto, like most cities in Portugal, is a great place for your pet. Full of gardens and places to go for walks, it's extremely pet-friendly and offers great conditions for happy four-legged friends.

The particulars of bringing your pet will depend on the airline you choose and your pet's transport rules, which vary according to the country of departure and destination. All airlines have limited capacity for pets as well as strict transport rules, so make sure to strictly follow the instructions of the chosen airline.

You'll need to provide the following information to reserve a ticket: type of pet to be transported, transport container dimensions, and total weight of the animal with the container.

To travel within the EU, your cat, dog, or ferret needs to have an EU Company Animal Passport (issued by an authorized veterinarian), an identification microchip or a legible tattoo (applied before July 3, 2011), and a valid rabies vaccine. Always check the rules carefully as they vary country to country (the U.K., Ireland, Finland, and Malta are more stringent).

If you travel outside the EU or you come to Porto with a companion animal from outside the EU, you should also contact the General Directorate of Food and Veterinary Affairs.



Falando Em Português: The Language

Most locals are fluent in English; it's taught since primary school as well as in most international schools and university programs. The older generation may not be as fluent as the younger folks, but they're just as welcoming and genuine... Their smiles don't require translation.

Portugal ranked 18th in EF Education First's English Proficiency Index—the world's largest ranking of English proficiency. Within Portugal, Porto came out on top for having the best English in the country.

You won't struggle to get by from a linguistic point of view if you settle in Porto... That said, learning a few words in Portuguese will only further endear you to the local population.

Education

Porto also ranks highly for education levels... Porto Business School is one of the best in Europe (according to European Business Schools Rankings). The Porto School of Architecture is one of the most prestigious in the world, producing several alumni of international prestige and Pritzker Architecture Prize winners.

LGBT Friendliness And Safety

Portugal in general is very LGBT-friendly, and Porto is no exception. Portugal was the sixth country in Europe (eighth in the world) to legalize gay marriage.

There are several LGBT bars and restaurants in the city. Among the most well-known are Conceição 35, Zoom, Café Lusitano, Invictus Café Bar, or Pride Bar. Porto is also safe, including for tourists and visitors. Its people are known for being extremely friendly, open-minded, and tolerant.

Disabled Access

Porto is full of ups and downs. There are many hilly places but also some flat areas. The city is currently undergoing huge restructuring, so getting around could be difficult if you have mobility issues.

Porto's sidewalks are not the most wheelchair-friendly. Foz and Boavista are the flattest areas and therefore the best choices for someone in a wheelchair.

The Legalese...

For full details on the visa options and obtaining residency in Portugal, go here.

For details on taxes in Portugal, go here.

Where Eating Is A Matter Of The Heart

Porto is the second-widest city in Portugal, meaning lots of ground to cover and secret spots for eating. Central Porto is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with narrow streets, small family grocery stores, and historical sites of universal value. This city is distinguished for its delicious food and enthusiastic and genuine inhabitants.

The locals are some of the most welcoming people in the world. Even though all Portuguese people are



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extremely amicable, Porto's inhabitants are known for their frankness, good humor, and devotion to taking care of their quests' needs.

Mass tourism used to be Porto's claim to fame, but things have changed in recent years... Foreigners are coming here not as tourists but as expats. Local business owners explain that a couple years ago, cafés were packed with foreigners wanting full breakfasts. Now, most just buy milk, bread, and other groceries to take home and cook for themselves.

Traditional Dishes

Porto's original residents are tripeiros (or tripe-eaters), which is how *Tripas à Moda do Porto*, the local dish, came about. Food is a matter of the heart—the reason this city is home to a fine selection of modern restaurants...



Porto's signature dish is unquestionably the king of sandwiches, the iconic Francesinha (layered with pork, bacon, beef, smoked sausage, fried egg, and cheese).

Where to find the best Francesinha in Porto is a debate as old as time... to this day, there's no conclusion. Around every corner you'll see advertisements for the best Francesinha in town. My advice? Try as many as you can. A typical Francesinha will cost you between 8 and 10 euros.

Another delicacy is the pork-knuckle sandwich, covered in a mountain of cheese. Don't miss Casa do Guedes' version, considered unanimously by locals to be the best in the world. Sandwiches are about 3 euros each.

Port Wine—Porto's Winemaking Roots **Run Deep**

Bathed by the Douro River, the second-largest river in Portugal, Porto is also famous for its fabulous vineyardcovered mountain slopes. Portugal's winemaking roots are ancient; the result of years of care and dedication backed up by good geography and favorable weather conditions.

When a region and a wine share the same name, you can imagine the passion involved in the product... and the excitement of visiting this part of Portugal. Port wine is a globally consumed delicacy that tells a beautiful story about the country.

Renowned for being one of the most civilized and sociable wines, port wine is produced under very specific conditions in the mountainous eastern reaches of the Douro Valley.

It has a variety of styles, each with its own characteristic flavor. The styles can be divided into two broad categories: wines matured in sealed glass bottles with no exposure to air (reductive ageing), and wines matured in wooden barrels whose permeability allows a small amount of exposure to air (oxidative ageing).

What distinguishes port wine is the diversity of sweetness and colors along with its persistent aroma and taste. It's best appreciated slowly, not only because of its sweetness but also because of its high alcohol percentage (19% to 22%).



Because of its special characteristics, port wine can be successfully paired with many dishes but also enjoyed as an aperitif, a dessert wine, and a digestif.

Several port wine brands are acclaimed, and almost any local will be able to advise you on the best option for your budget. The price of the bottle will depend on its producer... Major producers (such as Sandeman, Porto Ferreira, or Burmester) produce thousands of bottles and therefore offer a range of prices.

The most recent wines cost about 6 euros (that are aged three or fewer years). The longer the wine spends in the wood stage, the higher the price; the longer the producer has the wine "locked," the greater his investment. The category of the wine, whether tawny or white, also affects the price.

Then you have the vintage wines. These are ruby, meaning they are more fruity and are made in years of excellence—when it rains at the right time, when there's not too much sun, and when there are no diseases in the vineyard. The fermentation of the grapes is stopped halfway, making the wine sweeter and stronger if wine spirits are added.



Port wine prices depend on the stages of wood:

- 10 years—20 to 25 euros
- 20 years—30 to 70 euros
- 30 years—80 to 130 euros
- 49 years—up to 500 euros
- Vintage from exceptional years—more than 2,000 euros depending on the demand

Port wine is produced in the charming lodges of Vila Nova de Gaia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site south of the river. Set in this peaceful and secluded area, the lodges are astonishing venues for wine tasting events. Some date back more than 300 years. The harvest happens mid-September—the best time to plan your visit.

Noteworthy Northern Beaches



Portugal is world-renowned for its warm beaches in the south, and the reputation is well-deserved... However, the north has some hidden treasures, too, that most visitors aren't aware of.

In central Porto, you can take a dive at Praia da Luz or Praia do Homem do Leme (Foz). Praia da Luz, flanked by rocks with a small amount of sand in between, enjoys Blue Flag status. Its name, which translates to "beach of light," was chosen because of its proximity to Rua Nossa Senhora da Luz, a street.

Praia do Homem do Leme also holds Blue Flag status and is very affordable. This small, rocky beach is frequented by families because of its two playgrounds. Translating to "the rudder man's beach," the name is confirmed by the monument depicting a man vigorously grabbing a rudder.

Close to the city center, the most popular beaches are Senhor da Pedra, Leça da Palmeira, Aterro, Angeiras, Matosinhos, and Silvalde.

How To Get To Porto



The Porto Airport, also known as Francisco de Sá Carneiro Airport, has been elected the best in Europe several times. It's located about 11 kms away from the city center and is very accessible on public transport. If you take the railway, it'll take you directly to Campanhã Station (about 30 minutes away).

Porto Airport's flow of passengers and flights is increasing exponentially, as more and more people arrive in Portugal each year. This is thanks in large part to the growing number of low-cost airlines making it easier for more people to travel.

Renting a car is a good option for getting around, with low-cost rental companies at the airport as well as low-cost parking lots. If you go away for the weekend, for instance, you can park in a low-cost garage for 6 or 7 euros a day.



Porto's Transport System

Porto's public transport systems are integrated, so you can use the same card for metro, bus, and tram.

The card is called *Andante* and costs 60 cents. The city is divided into zones, and average fares will vary depending on how many zones you cross, ranging 1.20 to 2 euros.

Porto's public transport network is considered one of the best in Europe and is cost-effective. You could easily get by without a car, but if you prefer one, gas costs approximately 1.46 euros per liter. Traffic in the city center is often heavy, especially during rush hour... Locals generally prefer Uber over taxis for getting around because it's cheaper. You only need to download the app on your phone.



Porto's railway is above ground, letting you "interact directly with the city." It combines the efficiency and speed of an underground system with the comforts of above-ground travel.

Porto also has a tram or streetcar network. A one-trip tram ticket costs about 3 euros, which you purchase exclusively onboard.



Tuk tuks have become an extremely popular means of urban transportation. These three- or four-wheeled rickshaws are mostly used in Asia... But they're now

making their way to Porto because they're a great way to get to know the city. Drivers are often great sources of local knowledge, and tuk tuk rides are inexpensive, stopping wherever you want.

Porto: Who Is It Good For?

In Porto, the sun doesn't shine as often as it does in other cities... You might find yourself missing it at some point. If it's not raining, the weather here is usually gray, and the light can be a bit dull.

If you come from a big city, you might experience an adjustment period when you first arrive. Porto is like a big village full of houses... It's peaceful and traditional but full of life. On Sundays, everyone eats in with their families, so eating out can be an issue.

Traffic is becoming chaotic in the city center something to be aware of if moving here. Everyone knows everyone in Porto, which may be a good or bad thing depending on your preference. There's a definite feeling of belonging...



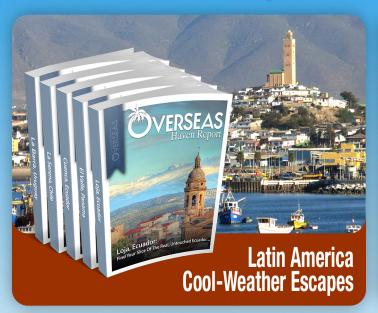
Locals will become familiar with you very fast, wanting to know who you are, where you're from, and your story. You'll feel right at home, and even if there's a language barrier, they'll overcome it without ever losing their personality. You won't feel like an outsider even though you're new.

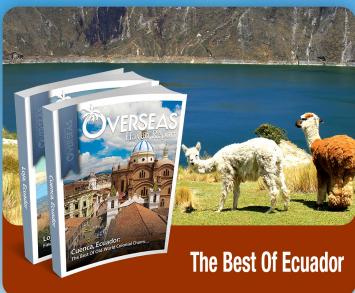
In Lisbon, it's said that people "invite you, make you the best food, and give you their best service," while in Porto they tell you to "serve yourself and make the table," treating you like family... This sums up the essence of Porto nicely.

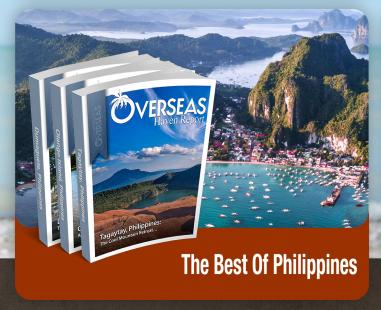


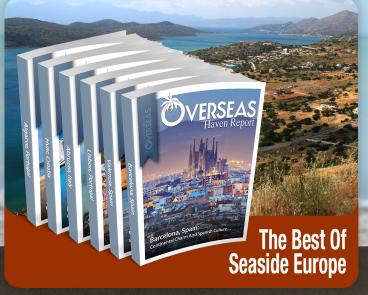
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