

# Portugal: the essential top 50

## Explore your options

At the perfect size for a getaway of any kind – and with everything from beaches to mountains, wilderness to vineyards and luxury to the simply beautiful on offer – where will your journey take you?

### INLAND JAUNTS

## 1.

### Alentejo

Deep in the Alentejo countryside, amid villages of whitewashed houses, lies the Vale do Guadiana Natural Park. Walk or canoe the Guadiana River, winding through woods, with the scent of citrus in the air. Or head northeast towards the mountains that line the Spanish border and explore Serra de São Mamede natural park, where eagles, vultures and owls mingle with wild boar and deer.

## 2.

### Serra da Estrela

Portugal's highest mountain range is breathtaking. A journey along the Zêzere Valley is one of Portugal's most striking roadtrips, or you could take a hike along one of the 200km of trails that dot the region. Base yourself in the village of Manteigas, visit the artisanal Burel wool factory and stay at the stunning Casa de São Lourenço, with its modernist interiors and floor-to-ceiling windows.

## 3.

### Douro Valley

A day trip from Porto into the Douro Valley, by train or river cruise, is hugely relaxing. Terraced hillside vineyards fall steeply to the river, which winds in wide, lazy bends towards the sea.

**Local tip:** "Have dinner with friends on board Pipadouro's *Friendship 1* vintage launch. Passing the lock at the Valeira Dam is an almost spiritual experience." *Tony Smith, producer, Quinta da Boavista, Douro Valley*



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[1] Moledo is one of many beaches in northern Portugal that's ideal for surfing [2] Serra da Estrela, the country's highest mountain range [3] Long stretches of sand draw people to the Atlantic coast of the north

### THE BEST COASTAL HOPS

## 4.

### Surf and turf

Costa Vicentina is a largely undiscovered stretch of beaches on the west coast of Portugal, running from Porto Covo in the north, via Odeceixe to the Algarve. High cliffs are topped with grasses and fragrant herbs; below, in a long golden arc, lies a deserted stretch of sandy beaches, pounded by Atlantic waves.

**Local tip:** "Bar da Praia at Odeceixe overlooks the beach. Pedro and Pablo, the friendly Spanish owners, serve mellow tunes, tasty tapas and cold beer." *Trish Lorenz, Monocle correspondent*



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FINEST HOTELS

## 8. Torel 1884, Porto

The 12 rooms in this centrally located 19th-century palace (a former bank) are all generously proportioned. The guest-only library with honesty bar is a welcoming spot to while away an hour, or you can taste wine in the bank's former vault.



[1] Heading for the swell [2] Inside The Vintage, Lisbon [3] The pool at Memmo Príncipe Real [4] This hotel in Lisbon offers a warm welcome [5] Porto's Torel 1884 is a former palace [6] Drinks at The Vintage [7] Looking out to sea from White, the Azores [8] Lunch is served at DOP, Porto



## 5. Surfing the islands

Unlike the chilly waters of the mainland, the Azores offer pleasantly warm water from June to December and virtually no crowds. In Madeira, the best surf is on the west coast of the main island: Jardim do Mar, Ponta Pequena and Fajã da Ovelha.

**Local tip:** "The best surf spot in the Azores is on São Jorge Island: Fajã de Santo Cristo." *Rodrigo Herédia, surfer and founder of Sul Villas, Azores*

## 6. Untouched beaches

The north of Portugal offers beautiful sandy beaches, much less visited than those further south. Moledo, surrounded by the Camarido Forest, has conditions that make it ideal for surfers and kite surfers. Or try Afife: a remote strip with long stretches of white sand.

## 7. The fishermen's trail

The coastline between Ericeira and Nazaré is dotted with pretty fishing villages that offer sea views and plenty of restaurants. Ericeira attracts international surfers; Peniche still has a fishing fleet that sails from the harbour every day. Sunbathe on São Martinho do Porto's sweep of golden sand or visit Nazaré – its winter waves are the stuff of legend.

**Local tip:** "In the first week of August, don't miss Peniche's Festa do Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem, which sees the fleet decked with religious icons." *Paulo Mendes, from a Peniche fishing family*



## 9. Memmo Príncipe Real, Lisbon

The 41-room Memmo Príncipe Real, which is nestled on a hilltop in the heart of Lisbon, presents beautiful views across the city. Rooms feature Bang & Olufsen televisions, Hermès amenities and, in some cases, a balcony complete with outdoor fireplace for enjoying the night-time air. There's also a restaurant, terrace bar and guest-only pool.

## 10. The Vintage, Lisbon

As the name suggests, interiors in this centrally located 56-room hotel prominently feature specially sourced vintage furniture in among some more contemporary pieces. One-off vintage bar carts in each room come equipped with complimentary gin, tonic and the necessary drink-making implements. There's also a restaurant and a rooftop bar with outdoor cinema, not to mention the subterranean spa.



## 11. Casa Mãe, Lagos

Houses 30 rooms dedicated to Portuguese design. The kitchen garden it overlooks grows everything from strawberries and passionfruit to kale, tomatoes and fragrant herbs.

## 12. Companhia das Culturas, Castro Marim

Situated on a country lane a short drive from the sea, the 16 rooms here are a paean to simple modernism. There is a large living room where you can enjoy complimentary afternoon tea and cake, a swimming pool and an egg-shaped hammam with a marble steam room.



## 13. Vila Joya, Albufeira

Superlative service, wonderful views and a touch of hedonistic decadence set this hotel apart.

## 14. White, Ponta Delgada

With an unbeatable clifftop location, all 10 suites here face the ocean.

TOP RESTAURANTS

## 15. Prado, Lisbon

Based in a former factory that was once overgrown with plants, this Lisbon restaurant serves a farm-to-table menu of local, seasonal produce and natural Portuguese wine in a space filled with greenery. Materials such as marble, glass and brass – along with an abundance of wooden furniture – give the interior a Scandinavia-meets-Portugal vibe.

## 16. Noélia e Jerónimo, Cabanas de Tavira

Chef Noelia Jerónimo's restaurant has been a local fvaourite for more than 20 years. Locally sourced daily specials include oyster risotto made with sparkling wine and lightly battered fish fillets served with *açorda*, a regional speciality made of bread, garlic and coriander.

## 17. Meat Me, Lisbon

Meat Me's variety of beef and pork cuts hanging from the ceiling – with more in maturing chambers – rivals a butcher's. There's even a resident "meat sommelier" who can fill you in on provenance, breed, maturing time and more. If you're not carnivorous, try the elegant cocktail bar: Vasco Martins creates drinks using artisanal distillates, liqueurs and bitters, including a homemade absinthe.

## 18. Belcanto, Lisbon

Portuguese restaurants are gaining recognition throughout the world – not least those of Lisbon chef Jose Avillez, who has 19 to his name. His





two-Michelin-starred Belcanto, which opened in 2012, is the only Portuguese establishment to make it onto the World's 50 Best Restaurants list. "There has been a change within Portugal," says Avillez. "We now realise that it's possible to make contemporary dishes that respect our traditional cuisine."

## 19. Otaka, Ponta Delgada

Chef José Pereira takes familiar Japanese dishes and infuses them with a light Portuguese touch. The result is superlative: melt-in-the-mouth fish – plucked fresh from the Atlantic – with delicate Japanese flavours. Standouts include the crispy nigiri with tuna tartare and black cod with miso crush.



## 20. Cervejaria Ramiro, Lisbon

Thanks to its long Atlantic coastline, Portugal is blessed with some of the highest-quality seafood in Europe. And one of the best places to enjoy it is Ramiro, a simple restaurant serving excellent seafood at reasonable prices. Wash down the tiger prawns, lobster, crab or clams with plenty of cold beer.

## 21. DOP, Porto

If fine dining is your thing, wend your way to DOP in Porto, where chef Rui Paula reinterprets regional specialities in a 14th-century palace. Local products, ranging from cheese and fruit to fish and meat (goat and traditional Portuguese sausages included) are all given the upmarket treatment.

**Local tip:** "If you are in Porto try *cachorrinhos da batalha*, a baguette with two types of sausage, cheese and spicy sauce. Best snack ever." *Inês Matos Andrade, food lover, Porto*



## 22. Manteigaria, Lisbon

Pastel de nata, the Portuguese custard tart, is probably one of the country's most famous exports – and at Manteigaria you'll taste some of the best. Made fresh every half hour, with each new batch announced by the ringing of a bell, they are best eaten warm and sprinkled with cinnamon.

## 23. Majestic Café, Porto

For an elegant morning coffee try this belle époque-era café, which dates from 1921 and has a wonderfully ornate interior filled with original details, such as the decorative ceiling, carved wood panelling and beautiful vintage mirrors. Chandeliers and impressive glass details complete the look.



## 24. Casa Gama, Ericeira

Small, sweet and incredibly moreish, *bolos de areia*, which loosely translates as biscuits of sand, get their name from their crumbly texture. Visit Casa Gama in Ericeira to buy them by the pound in colourful traditional tins.

## 25. Café da Rosa, Silves

The historic Moorish town of Silves is worth a visit on a trip to the Algarve, if only to eat a slice of sweet potato cake (or any of a number of other handmade delicacies) at Café da Rosa. Eat in the pretty blue-and-white-tiled room or relax in the sun on the terrace.

## LESSER-KNOWN FINE WINES



## 26. Vicentino Wines

Founded by Norwegian producer Ole Martin in 2007, Vicentino confounds the notion that good wine can't be made near the ocean. Offering red, white and rosé, the firm was awarded Portuguese winemaker of the year in 2016.

## 27. Azorean Wine Company

In the five years since its founding, the Azorean Wine Company has seen the price of Azorean grapes rise to a level similar to that of those from Napa Valley, Burgundy and Champagne. It has also helped to revive an ancient varietal: the once virtually extinct *terrantex do pico*.

## 28. Quinta do Ferro

Micaela Fonseca took over Quinta do Ferro in 2011 aged 30 and changed its focus to producing sparkling wine using local grapes. "I did lose clients early on because they thought I was 'just a young girl'," she says. "But I think women are more patient and the wine business needs resilience, care and a human touch."

## 29. Morgado do Quintão

The Algarve is the country's smallest wine region but probably the oldest: the drink has been made here since Phoenician times. Keep an eye out for Morgado do Quintão, which produces about 7,500 bottles of red, white and rosé a year.

## TOP IN DESIGN

## 30.

### Bordallo Pinheiro

Lifelike swallows captured mid-flight, veined green-cabbage-leaf plates and vivid red tomato-shaped tureens: Bordallo Pinheiro's designs owe their style to the man who founded the ceramics firm in 1884: journalist, caricaturist and sculptor Raphael Bordallo Pinheiro.



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## 31.

### Early Made, Porto

All the labels at independent fashion shop Early Made have a relationship with Portugal, either through a designer or manufacturer. You'll find a well-curated selection of menswear and womenswear by brands including Anecdote, Homecore, Stutterheim and Albam. "Made in Portugal" is important, especially for independent fashion labels," says Early Made co-founder Emanuel De Sousa. "They appreciate the quality, flexibility and ethos of the Portuguese industry."

## 32.

### Paulo Tuna, Caldas da Rainha

Paulo Tuna was seven when he won his first knife in a raffle. Since then his obsession with blades has grown and today he's one of the world's best knife-makers, creating pieces for the likes of Noma chef René Redzepi. Wooden handles and covers are hand-carved and blades use high-quality, hand-hammered Swedish, German or Japanese steel.



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[1] Prado in Lisbon [2] Porto's Majestic Café [3] Making pastel de nata at Manteigaria [4] The tarts are justly famed [5] Vinho from Morgado do Quintão [6] Patricia and Emanuel de Sousa of Early Made [7] Early Made's well-curated selection [8] Ceramics at Bordallo Pinheiro [9] Bordallo Pinheiro





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## 33.

### Fora, Lisbon

Eyewear company Fora's Lisbon shop has polished concrete floors, white walls and a neon sign. "All our glasses are designed here and handmade in a traditional factory in the north of Portugal," says Walter Franco, who is manning the shop floor. "We were buying and selling vintage sunglasses before we started making our own and that heritage look inspires our collection."

## 34.

### Alentejo Wool Factory by Mizette Nielsen

The Alentejo Wool Factory turns out blankets of the purest wool in bold, colourful stripes. Its weavers work on whipped looms that are more than 150 years old; it is the only remaining factory in Europe to weave in this traditional way. Visit the factory to see the weavers in action or the brand's small shop, with its slate floor and whitewashed walls, 15km away in the fortified hill town of Monsaraz.



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### OUTSTANDING ARCHITECTURE

## 35.

### Casa de Chá da Boa Nova, Leça da Palmeira

Dating from 1956, the Boa Nova Tea House was one of Álvaro Siza Vieira's first commissions and his design incorporates the site's rock formations and ocean front. Refurbished under his supervision in 2016, the interior features wood cladding, modernist furniture and long windows that merge the ocean with the indoors.

## 36.

### Casa da Música, Porto

Designed in 2001 by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, the building's distinctive white concrete façade – resembling faceted stone – encloses a 1,300-seat auditorium with corrugated glass façades at either end. The curved glass not only enhances acoustics but also opens the hall to the people of the city.



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## 37.

### Gare do Oriente and Parque das Nações, Lisbon

Created for the Lisbon Expo in 1998, the highlight of Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava's Gare do Oriente is the canopy of 25-metre-high pillars topped with metal and glass that resemble the veiny underside of a palm leaf. Near the river, Alvaro Siza Vieira's Portugal Pavilion, with its concrete canopy draped between two high porticoes, is the standout building.

## 38.

### Museum of Art Architecture and Technology (Maat), Lisbon

Designed by British architect Amanda Levete, Maat is a low white wave of a building that seems to rise from the water. It's clad in 15,000 white crackle-glazed tiles that shimmer in the light and give the exterior a mutable feel; visitors can walk over, under and through the building. The roof plaza offers panoramic views across the river.



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### LUXURIOUS SPA OFFERINGS

## 39.

### Ritz Four Seasons, Lisbon

With its marble-and-oak interior, eucalyptus-scented sauna and poolside lounge beds that overlook the park, the Ritz Spa will help relax all your senses. The spa's exclusive Ignae anti-ageing facial is a regional speciality and incorporates products made from organic botanical oils and minerals, all sourced from the rich flora and unique hot springs that are found in the Azores.

## 40.

### São Lourenço do Barrocal

The tranquil Susan Kaufmann Spa at São Lourenço do Barrocal is almost monastic in style, with a vaulted white ceiling and terracotta floor. It offers organic spa treatments, dry saunas and a cedar-wood hot tub with views over gardens and the picturesque hill town of Monsaraz.



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## 41.

### Douro Six Senses, Lamego

Perched on a hillside overlooking vineyards and the Douro River, the Douro Six Senses Hotel is a dream choice for oenophiles. Its spa (which includes a heated indoor pool with water jets and regionally inspired therapies – some of which are, obviously, grape based) is just what you need after a night sampling the best wine the area has to offer.

[1] Smart eyewear from Fora, Lisbon [2] At work in Alentejo Wool Factory [3] Amanda Levete's striking Lisbon Maat [4] Casa da Música in Porto [5] The capital's Gare do Oriente [6] The station was designed by Santiago Calatrava [7] Find soothing spa treatments at Ritz Four Seasons



## BEST CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



1

### 42.

#### Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon

The museum's eclectic collection, formerly belonging to Armenian oil magnate Calouste Gulbenkian, includes ancient Egyptian artefacts, religious icons and French furniture, as well as paintings by Rubens, Rembrandt, Monet and others.

### 43.

#### Serralves, Lisbon

The Serralves museum hosts some of Portugal's best exhibitions but it's worth a visit for more than the art. Set among beautiful gardens is the art deco Serralves Villa, it was originally a private home that took almost 20 years to complete. A host of designers, including René Lalique, are credited with creating its luxurious interior.

### 44.

#### José de Guimarães International Arts Centre, Guimarães

Guimarães, with its medieval buildings, has been a Unesco World Heritage site since 2001. The city's contemporary-art museum has a more modern feel, both in the programming and the architecture: its brass-walled rectangles house galleries, an auditorium and workspaces.

[1] Serralves museum is enveloped by beautiful gardens [2] Distinctively packaged Claus Porto soap [3] The specialist teas of Companhia Portuguesa in Lisbon

## BEST GIFTS

### 45.

#### Claus Porto, Porto

Portugal's Claus Porto brand has been around since 1887. Its hand-wrapped soap features heritage packaging and also has a range of perfumes and scented candles created in collaboration with UK perfumer Lyn Harris. Its men's grooming marque, Musgo Real, offers citrusy colognes and an old-school classic: soap on a rope.

### 46.

#### Monterosa olive oil, Moncarapacho

Pale green, piquant and peppery, these fragrant olive oils have won prizes in Japan and the US. Monterosa is striving for organic certification and presses its olives by hand. Pay a visit to the Algarve-based farm for a tour or buy online; the company ships to customers worldwide.



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### 47.

#### Travassos gold, Travassos

Gold filigree – delicate jewellery finished in a lace-like design – is one of Portugal's prettiest souvenirs. The art is typical of towns such as Viana do Castelo and Travassos, and the latter has a number of working goldsmiths and a museum dedicated to the craft.

### 48.

#### Flora da Selva coffee, Lisbon

At Flora da Selva the coffee beans – sourced from all over the world – are manually roasted over a wood-fired oven. It's a slow-roasting process that preserves the coffee's aroma and makes for a flavourful, low-acidity finish.



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### 49.

#### Conserveira de Lisboa

Portugal has a long tradition of preserving fish. Almost 90 years old, Conserveira de Lisboa has plenty of provenance. Choose one of its distinctively packaged tins of sardines, tuna, mackerel, cod or squid as a tasty memento of your visit.

### 50.

#### Companhia Portuguesa do Chá, Lisbon

The vintage fittings in this specialist tea shop have been repurposed to hold bespoke tea blends. These include a special Lisbon mix and an Earl Grey made with Portuguese bergamot – and they're all sold in limited-edition tins.