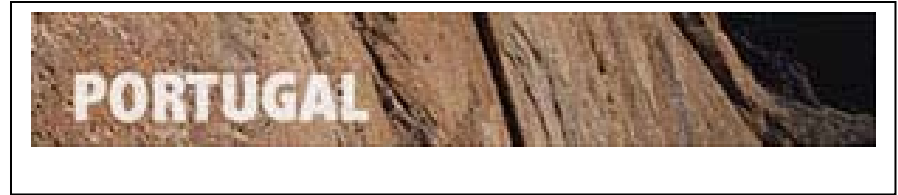


## Portugal

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*"A shawl, a guitar, a voice and heartfelt emotion. These are the ingredients of Fado, the celebrated form of world music that captures what it is to be Portuguese."* Portuguese Trade and Tourism Council, 2004.

With a history dating back to the twelfth century, Portugal is one of the oldest independent nations in Europe. Located in Europe's southwest corner on the Iberian Peninsula, with borders of Spain and the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal and its cultural behavior are heavily influenced by the surrounding sea. The Atlantic Ocean is one predominant entity in Portugal that has affected the people historically, mentally and physically. Although Portugal is today an active democratic country and a member of the European Union, years of political repression have had their effect on Portuguese experience.

The consistently moderate climate, which often enriches the living conditions in Portugal, seems to have molded the resident's temperate nature, casual approach to life and affinity for outdoor activities. In addition to affecting climate, the ocean also prevails as a marketable tourism attraction as well as a major contributor to employment opportunities.

Portugal is one of the countries in the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) to adopt the Euro (€) as its official currency. The Euro, which replaced the local currency, can be used uniformly for transactions in participating European countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain). The introduction of the Euro took place in January 2002, and is now the sole official currency in use.

Portugal is also a member of the European Union. Initially, the forerunner of the EU, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), consisted of just six countries: Belgium Germany France Italy Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Denmark Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973, Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995. On May 1, 2004, the biggest ever enlargement to the EU took place when ten new countries joined; those countries are Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Portugal's history is evident almost everywhere you go within the country. Street names, for instance, are constant remembrances of past celebrations and revolutions/history, while monuments attest to the country's triumphs and tribulations. With a turn of the head, foreigners can see that life for the Portuguese has not been easy or simple.

Portugal and its almost eleven million inhabitants have long been accustomed to countries and peoples dominating them. First colonized by the Romans, the

Portuguese were invaded by the Goths and Visigoths, and later overpowered by the Moors and the Spanish. Constant warring between the Portuguese and the Spanish over control of the Iberian Peninsula lasted for centuries. However, strife with the Spanish virtually ended during the 15th and 16th centuries, the world founded by Portuguese and Spanish explorers was divided between the two countries.

In more recent history, the Portuguese were dominated by the dictatorial regime of Salazar. Dr. António de Oliveira Salazar was an economics professor-turned-Minister of Finance in 1928. Within his first year of office, Salazar turned a 330 million escudo deficit into a budget surplus and continued to balance the budget throughout his reign. So impressive was Salazar that in 1932 he became Prime Minister.

### **Salazar's Rule**

Salazar stressed nationalism for his New State and eventually secured a dictatorial rule. Political parties, strikes and unions were abolished, censorship was enforced and the abhorred political police flourished. Salazar's downfall eventually came, during the 1960s when Portugal's African colonies held independent political movements and Portuguese troops were rushed in to quell the furor. The wars in the African colonies proved unpopular in Portugal and the oppressive nature of Salazar's regime heightened the Portuguese's dissatisfaction. Salazar died in 1970 and was replaced by an old friend and political associate – Marcelo Caetano.

On April 25, 1974, Caetano was overthrown in a bloodless coup, and the African territories were granted their independence. Censorship was lifted, banks, industry and insurance companies were nationalized, the secret police was dispersed and over four million acres of land was expropriated. On April 2, 1976, and enacted on April 25, 1976, a democratic constitution was written under which the Prime Minister and the cabinet were responsible to the President and to the Assembly of the Republic. The President and the Assembly of the Republic are chosen by popular election and proportional representation respectively.

The Portuguese President is directly elected on a one-person, one-vote basis. If no candidate obtains more than 50% of the votes in the first round the two candidates with the greatest number of votes go forward to a second and final round. The presidential mandate is for five years and the incumbent may be re-elected for a second consecutive term.

Legislative power is vested in Parliament - the Assembly of the Republic - where there are 230 deputies (Members of Parliament) elected by proportional representation (Hondt system) in nationwide elections. Members of Parliament are elected for a four-year term.

Government is the executive power. It comprises a Prime Minister, the Cabinet, Ministers and Secretaries of State. The Prime Minister is appointed by the head of state. Remaining cabinet members are also appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The judiciary is separate from, and independent of, all other sovereign bodies. It consists of lower courts, higher courts, the Supreme Civil Court, the Supreme Criminal Court, and a Constitutional Court.

## **Lisbon**

Lisbon is said to be an extraordinarily beautiful city, with antique streetcars riding the cobblestone streets up and down the city's seven hills, and with an abundance of people traversing the city's mosaic sidewalks. The lower part of the gridded, Neoclassical-designed city is the heartbeat of Lisbon, Baixa. Baixa is home to many of Portugal's administrative departments, banks and business offices. The squares in and around Baixa form a rather interesting attraction, chic tea rooms and fashionable shops cater to the affluent, and the street performers and pavement artists offer delightful pedestrian entertainment. In addition to an abundance of businesses, sights and shops, Lisbon also offers a booming nightlife, interesting museums and an atmosphere teeming with progressive people amidst strong traditional values.

Of course, there is more to the city than what the tour guides show. Although Lisbon is home to much of the nation's cultural and financial offerings, it does not take long for anyone to notice the disparate living conditions present in the capital. Brand new luxury apartment buildings are within proximity to makeshift dwellings on the outskirts of Lisbon. A more common sight is that of older homes in need of repair decorated with dishes for satellite television. However, such differences between the relative rich and poor are evident throughout the world and are tolerated just the same in Portugal as elsewhere.

## **Climate**

Mainland Portugal experiences frequent and often heavy, chilling rain from late October through mid-May, but the remainder of the year is normally sunny. In fact, during the month of July, visitors may scorch during the typical 12.5 hours of sunshine per day. With minimal rainfall and temperatures rarely exceeding 37 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit), except in the southern part of the country, Portugal has a very accommodating climate.

Temperatures in Lisbon in January are typically 14 degrees Celsius (57 degrees Fahrenheit), while in April average temperatures are about 19 degrees Celsius (66 degrees Fahrenheit). Residents of Lisbon can expect temperatures of about 28 degrees Celsius (82 degrees Fahrenheit) in July and temperatures of about 22 degrees Celsius (72 degrees Fahrenheit) in October.

In addition to the provisions of the ocean, Portugal's rich northern landscape, alive with lush valleys and rivers, complements the southern region's coastline of beaches and cliffs. The vast diversity found in such a small country may surprise some foreign nationals, not merely in terms of the varied landscape, but in the tremendous assortment of cultural differences as well. Modern elegance and sophistication can be found in the capital city of Lisbon and the northern city of Porto amidst classical and traditional buildings. This contemporary atmosphere found in the city areas is quite a contrast to the country-life found in the more rural areas of Portugal.

## **The Culture**

The native Portuguese have, over the last 2,000 years, mixed with African, Arabic, Celtic, Germanic and Roman peoples. Portuguese citizens of African descent make up the country's only significant minority. Typically considered to be a friendly and gentle people, the Portuguese are also said to be very tolerant and passive, yet they are known to have a resistance to sweeping changes.

When greeting a Portuguese man or woman, it is customary to shake their hand, but

not with too strong of a grip. Close friends or relatives may kiss each other on both cheeks. Using the first name in a greeting is only done amongst close friends. It is best to precede the last name with their title, either "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss." Always use a person's professional title as well, such as doctor. "Doctor" generally applies to lawyers, economists, teachers and physicians.

Portugal has a strong moral and religious foundation. They do, however practice an open and liberal social conscience. Always be aware that they have a deeply-rooted history in religion, and expect people to respect the mores and values of those beliefs. Furthermore, they have a strong cultural history, of which they are very proud, and have overcome many obstacles as a member of the European Union (EU).

Dress is quite conservative, and most people consider neat dressing an obligation. Comfortable dress-casual shoes with suits and women's dress is common. It is unacceptable to wear dirty or worn clothing that is not presentable. Tennis or walking sneakers/shorts are not worn with casual clothing except during sports activities.

The Portuguese have a great respect for the elderly, who should be deferred to in conversation and when meeting.

### **Language**

While Portuguese is the official language of Portugal, English, French, and Spanish are also widely spoken and understood. The Portuguese can be very cordial when foreigners attempt to speak Portuguese but are often offended when non-Spaniards speak Spanish with them. On the whole, the Portuguese are very friendly, especially if you make the effort to speak their language.

Reading the Portuguese language is relatively easy if you have some knowledge of the Spanish language. Speaking Portuguese is a whole different matter. The Portuguese words may be difficult to distinguish and pronounce, with sounds more relative to Eastern European languages than that of the Romance languages. The biggest complication with speaking Portuguese is that the consonants in the language seem to slur and the vowels either have a nasal sound to them or are ignored entirely.

### **Religion**

Portuguese in the Lisbon area are no longer outwardly very religious, especially the younger generation. However, Roman Catholicism continues to be a strong influence in the provinces and the north of Portugal. Each town has its own religious processions and festivals throughout the religious calendar year. Especially in Oporto or Lisbon, the whole month of June is dedicated to feasting and dancing, with each borough setting up its own carnival-style venue.

While the Portuguese are predominantly Roman Catholic, foreign nationals may be able to find small populations practicing other religions, such as Protestantism and Judaism.

### **Doing Business**

Although English is widely spoken, the ideal situation in a business meeting would be to communicate in your host's native tongue. Do make every effort possible to at least learn a few polite greetings prior to your arrival and during your stay in Portugal. If discussing a business deal in Portuguese is not an option, be polite, ask

your colleagues if they would not mind speaking English or French to avoid any linguistic misunderstandings. Because they are similar, many people try to speak Spanish to the Portuguese, but do not speak Spanish in a business meeting unless your Portuguese colleagues have consented. This is a sore spot in the hearts of many in this very independent nation.

When setting up meetings or appointments, be aware that the Portuguese are somewhat difficult to tie down to specific times. Unless you have been personally introduced, first enquire by letter when an appointment would be possible. Follow-up with a phone call and be persistent until you have arranged a time and date. Be patient -- it is not uncommon to be kept waiting an hour or so before an appointment is kept. If you give in to your anger, it is unlikely that you will get another appointment. Your options are to either arrive late yourself or bring a good book. Avoid making appointments during noon and 3:00 p.m. when most businesses shut down.

When visiting Portugal, avoid discussing politics and government. A favorite pastime of the Portuguese is to converse about family and football. Discussing the advantages of living in Portugal and personal interests is also acceptable, although it is impolite to be over-inquisitive.

Most lunch meetings last well into the evening and most business dinner's last well into the night. If negotiating a deal, keep a clear head even though the table will be crowded with wine bottles. Be prepared for a nicotine-filled meal as well, as the Portuguese smoke considerably. You may offer to pay the bill, but do not be surprised if your offer is declined. Insisting to pay will only make everyone uncomfortable.

If you are invited to someone's home for dinner, you are not obliged to bring a gift. However, what hostess would not appreciate flowers or chocolates? A bottle of whisky would be always welcome, mainly in the men's sector. Do not bring chrysanthemums, though, since they are associated with death. If you choose not to bring a gift, you can reciprocate the favor by taking your hosts to a restaurant on another occasion. Business gifts, if given discreetly, are acceptable. An item connected with your company is appropriate.

Typical business hours in Portugal are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and then 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. However, banking hours are generally shorter from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, while shops offer a variety of business hours.

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