

## Introduction to Portugal

Portugal is a peaceful country and a perfect host with plenty of diversity. From the rugged mountain peaks, remote gorges and terraced vineyards of the north, to the pristine beaches, rolling hills and wide horizons of the south, visitors have a fascinating array of things to discover in Portugal. Portugal is Europe's most western point and warmest country. Portugal is a stroll around a spectacular palace, an all-night party in one of Lisbon's hottest clubs, a hike through mountains inhabited by wolves and lynx, or a relaxed day on a deserted cove, taking things easy in true Portuguese style – all are in close range in a country that allows visitors to travel from end to end within the space of a day. Discovery is of course the hallmark of this sea-faring nation. Portugal's famous navigators opened up sea routes to the world, bringing back riches from Africa, India and Brazil. Their legacy is everywhere – in the cities built on the riches of the discoveries, in ornate Manueline architecture, and in present-day Portugal's openness to other cultures. For everywhere visitors go, they are met by warmth, friendliness and generosity of spirit.



Lisbon

- > **LISBON**, and **ESTORIL COAST AND LISBON VALLEY & ALENTEJO** (pages 6-14) Listed as # 2 on the New York Times 'must-see' list 2008, Lisbon has been rediscovered as a social and cultural icon in Europe. A short drive takes you to Estoril, Cascais and Sintra, Obidos, Evora and more – storybook villages, cosmopolitan seaside towns, beautiful palaces and monasteries and towns guarded by castles.
- > **OPORTO, CENTRAL AND NORTHERN PORTUGAL** (pages 15-17) Oporto has much more to offer than its well known wines. Portugal's second-largest city boasts Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture cascading down the hills of the city. And the gateway to what many consider the 'heart' of Portugal. Guimaraes and the mountainous north to the centrally located towns of Coimbra and Aveiro.
- > **DOURO Region (New)** (pages 18-19) Arguably the most important and oldest demarcated region in the world, consider World Heritage Centre by Unesco. Wine-growing in the Douro is lost in the mists of time
- > **ALGARVE** (pages 20-22) The most southern province of Portugal, one of Europe's most popular sunshine resorts has 94 miles of beach, offers top-class resorts as well as historic villages and towns that time seems to have left behind. Golf, beaches, fresh seafood, and year-round sunshine are a few of the many things that attract visitors from around the world. Lagos, Silves, Monchique, Tavira are towns that all deserve a visit.
- > **POUSADAS** (page 28) Choose a combination of these charming accommodations to create your own tour of Portugal, from North to South and the Azores. Pousadas are historical buildings where you can enjoy excellent service with charm, spectacular old and new architecture with breathtaking views.
- > **SOLARES DE PORTUGAL** (pages 29-30) Ranges from stately manor houses and elegant contry houses. They are family homes as opposed to hotels, offering a very different kind of holiday experience with that personal touch.

