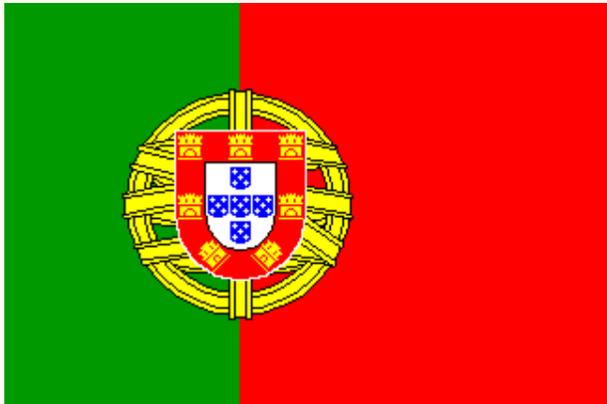# Portugal

The Republic of Portugal (República Portuguesa), or Portugal, is a democratic republic located on the west and southwest parts of the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe; it is the westernmost country in continental Europe. Portugal is bordered by Spain to the north and east and by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and south. In addition, Portugal contains several island territories in the Atlantic, including the Azores (Açores) and Madeira (including the Savage Islands).

A citizen of Portugal is usually identified in English by the noun and adjective Portuguese, but someone born in Portugal can also be referred to as Luso or Lusitano (English "Lusitanian").1

Portugal during the past 3000 years has witnessed a constant flow of different civilizations. Phoenician, Celtic, Carthaginian, Roman, Barbarian (Germanic) and Arabic cultures have all made an imprint in Portugal. During the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal was a major economic, political, and cultural power. The overseas empire was pervasive across the world.

Portugal's name derives from the Roman name Portus Cale, a mixed Greek and Roman name meaning "Beautiful Port".República Portuguesa

Flag of Portugal

Official language:Portuguese
Capital:Lisbon
Area - Total - % water Ranked 109th
 92,391 km² 0.5%
Population - Total ([10,524,145])
 - Density Ranked 75th
10,524,145
 114/km²
Sovereignty
Independence 868, 1095
1128, 1143
Currency Euro (€)1
Time zone
 - in summer WET2, UTC
EST (UTC+1)
National anthem A Portuguesa
Internet TLD.pt
Calling Code+351

History of Portugal

In the early first millennium BC, several waves of Celts invaded Portugal from Central Europe and intermarried with local peoples, the Iberians, forming the Celt-Iberians. Two of the new tribes formed by this intermarriage were the Lusitanians, who lived between the Douro and Tagus rivers, and the Calaicians who, lived north of the Douro river with several other tribes. A Phoenician colony was established in southern Portugal, the Conii. The Celtics, a later wave of Celts, settled in Alentejo.

In 238 BC, The Carthaginians occupied the Iberian coasts. In 219 BC, the first Roman troops invaded the Iberian Peninsula. Within 200 years, Roman armies dominated most of the peninsula, driving the Carthaginians out of their colonies in the Punic Wars.

The Roman conquest of Portugal started from the south, where the Romans found friendly natives, the Conii. Over decades, the Romans increased their sphere of control. But in 194 BC a rebellion began in the north. The Lusitanians and other native tribes successfully held off the Romans, took back land, and ransacked Conistorgis, the Conii capital, because of their alliance with Rome. Viriathus, said

to be born in Lorica (Loriga) in the mountains of the center of Portugal, drove the Roman forces out of all of Portugal. Rome sent numerous legions and its best generals to reinforce the Roman positions. At first, Rome installed a colonial regime. But during this period, Lusitania grew in prosperity and many Portuguese cities and towns were founded. In 27 BC, Lusitania gained the status of Roman Province.

In the 5th century, Germanic tribes, known as Barbarians, invaded the peninsula. One of these, the Suevi, stopped fighting and founded a kingdom whose domains were, approximately, coincident with today's Portugal. They fixed their capital in Bracara Augusta (nowadays called Braga). Later, the Visigoths conquered this kingdom, unifying the Peninsula.

An Islamic invasion took place in 711, destroying the Visigoth Kingdom. Many of the ousted nobles took refuge in the unconquered north Asturian highlands. From there they aimed to reconquer their lands from the Moors. They were eventually successful.

In 868, Count Vímara Peres reconquers and governs the region between the Minho and Douro Rivers (including the city that became its first capital, Portucale - today's city of Porto). Thus, the county became known as Portucale (i.e. Portugal). Occasionally, Portugal gained factual independence during weak Leonese reigns. In fact, the struggle for independence has started as early as the 9th century.

After the Moors were, for the most part, driven out of power, most of the Northern Iberian peninsula was briefly united under Christian rule. However, it quickly split apart after the death of Ferdinand the Great of Leon and Castile, whose domains were divided by his children. Therefore, in 1065 the Kingdom of Galicia and Portugal became independent, shortly after a war among brothers, made all the domains of Ferdinand back in one.

At the end of the 11th century a knight from Burgundy named Henry became count of Portugal. Henry was a strong supporter of independence. Under his leadership, the County of Portucale and the County of Coimbra merged. Henry declared independence 2 for Portugal while a civil war raged between Leon and Castile.

Henry died without reaching his aims. His son, Afonso Henriques, took control of the county. The city of Braga, the Catholic centre of the Iberian peninsula, faced new competition from other regions. The lords of the cities of Coimbra and Porto with the Braga's clergy demanded the independence of the renewed county.

Portugal traces its national origin to 24 June 1128 with the Battle of São Mamede. Afonso proclaimed himself first as Prince of Portugal and in 1139 as the first King of Portugal. On October 5 1143, with the assistance of a representative of the Holy See at the conference of Zamora, Portugal was formally recognized as independent 2. Afonso, aided by the Templar Knights, continue to conquer southern lands to the moors. In 1250, the Portuguese Reconquista came to an end, as the Algarve was finally reconquered from the Moors. Since then, the border with the kingdoms that would be Spain has remained almost unchanged.

July 25 1415, marked the beginning of the Portuguese Empire, when the Portuguese Armada along with King John I and his sons Prince Duarte (future king), Prince Pedro, Prince Henry the Navigator and Prince Afonso, also with the mythical Portuguese hero Nuno Álvares Pereira departed to Ceuta in North Africa, a rich Islamic trade centre. On August 21, the city was conquered, and the Portuguese Empire was founded. Further steps were taken which expanded the Empire even more. Henry the Navigator's interest in exploration together with some technological developments in navigation made Portugal's expansion possible and led to great advances in geographic knowledge. The discoveries were financed by the wealth of the Order of Christ. Order founded by king Diniz for Templar Knights, who found refuge in Portugal after being pursued all over Europe.

In 1418 two of the captains of Prince Henry the Navigator, João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira, were driven by a storm to an island which they called Porto Santo, or Holy Port, in gratitude for their rescue from the shipwreck. In 1419, Zarco disembarked on Madeira Island. Between 1427 and 1431 most of the Azorean islands were discovered.

In 1434, Gil Eanes rounded the Cape Bojador, South of Morocco. The trip marked the beginning of the Portuguese exploration of Africa. Before this voyage very little information was known in Europe about what lay beyond it. At the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries, those who tried to venture there became lost, giving birth to legends of sea monsters.
    Bartolomeu Dias turning the Cabo das Tormentas (Cape of Storms), afterwards renamed Cabo da Boa Esperança (Cape of Good Hope), representing Portugal's hope of becoming a powerful and rich empire by reaching India.
In 1448, on a small island known as Arguim off the coast of

Mauritania a castle was built, working as a feitoria (a trading
post) for commerce with inland Africa thus circumventing the Arabic
caravans that crossed the Sahara. Some time later, the caravels
explored the Gulf of Guinea leading to the discovery of several
uninhabited islands and reaching the Congo River.

A remarkable achievement was the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope
by Bartholomew Dias in 1487. By then the spices of India were
nearby, hence the name of the cape. In 1489, the King of Bemobi gave
his realms to the Portuguese King and converted to Christianity.
Between 1491 and 1494, Pêro de Barcelos and João Fernandes Lavrador
explored North America. At the same time, Pêro da Covilhã reached
Ethiopia, searching for the mythical and lost Christian kingdom of
Prestes João. Vasco da Gama sailed to India, and arrived at Calicut
on May 20 1498, returning in triumph to Portugal the next year. In
1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral landed on the Brazilian coast. Ten years
later, Alfonso d'Albuquerque conquered Goa, in India.

In 1578, a very young King Sebastian died in battle, leaving no
heir, which lead to a dynastic crisis. Because Philip II of Spain
was the son of a Portuguese princess, the Spanish ruler became
Philip I of Portugal in 1580. Some men claimed to be King Sebastian
in 1584, 1585, 1595 and 1598. Sebastianism, a myth that the young
king would return on a foggy day has prevailed until modern times.

Portugal maintained an independent law, currency and government, and
the two first Spanish kings were popular. The third Spanish king,
Philip III tried to make Portugal a Spanish province. Because of
this, in December 1 1640, the Duke of Bragança, of the Portuguese
Royal Family, John IV, was acclaimed, and a Restoration War against
Spain was fought. New empires had emerged and started to assault all
the Portuguese Empire; Portugal regained some, but some were lost,
especially in Asia.

The 1755 Lisbon earthquake and tsunami, which killed more than a
third of the capital's population and devastated the Algarve as
well, had a profound effect on domestic politics and on European
philosophical thought. From 1801, the country was occupied during
the Napoleonic Wars, and lost Olivença (part of the national
territory) to Spain (ally of France). Shortly after, Brazil
proclaimed its independence, under the rule of Emperor Pedro I,
later the Brazilian emperor will also be Pedro IV of Portugal.

A 1910 revolution deposed the Portuguese monarchy starting the First
Republic. It was marked by chaos, and came to an end in 1926 when a
nationalist military coup d'état gave birth to the Second Republic,
a period of almost fifty years of non democratic rule. Although a
stable period financially and economically, it saw the beginning of
the end of the Portuguese Empire. India annexed Portuguese India,
including Goa, in 1961. Independence movements also became active in
Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea, and an increasingly
costly series of colonial wars failed to defeat the guerrillas.
Discontent about the war was one of the factors leading to the 1974
coup d'état.

The Carnation Revolution of 1974, an effectively bloodless left-wing
military coup, installed the Third Republic. Broad democratic
reforms were implemented. In 1975, Portugal granted independence to
its Overseas Provinces (Províncias Ultramarinas in Portuguese) in
Africa. In December 1975, Indonesia invaded and annexed the
Portuguese province of Portuguese Timor (East Timor) in Asia one
week after independence was declared (but before legal recognition
of this by Portugal and other countries had been given). The Asian
dependency of Macau, was returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999.
Portugal applied international pressure to secure East Timor's
independence from Indonesia, as East Timor was still legally a
Portuguese dependency, and recognized as such by the United Nations.
After a referendum in 1999, East Timor voted for independence and
Portugal recognized its independence in 2002.

With the 1975 independence of its colonies, the 560 year old
Portuguese Empire had already effectively ended. With it, 15 years
of war effort also came to an end. Also many Portuguese returned
from the colonies, coming to comprise a sizeable sector of the
population and starting an economic recovery, thus opening new paths
for the country's future just as others closed. In 1986, Portugal
entered the EEC, today's European Union.

 Politics

The four main organs of Portuguese politics are the President of the
Republic, the Parliament, the Council of Ministers (Government), and
the Judiciary.

The President of the Republic, elected to a 5-year term by universal
suffrage is also commander in chief of the armed forces.
Presidential powers include appointing the Prime Minister, as
advised by the Parliament which elects the Prime Minister, and the
Council of Ministers, named by the Prime Minister. Some other major
powers include dismissing the Government, dissolving the Parliament,

and declaring war or peace. These have several constitutional restrictions, namely the need to previously consult the presidential advisory body. This is the Council of State, composed of six senior civilian officers, all former presidents elected since 1976, and ten citizens, five chosen by the President and other five by the Parliament. The most commonly used power is that of approving or vetoing any legislation.

The Parliament, or Assembly of the Republic (Assembleia da República in Portuguese) is a unicameral body composed of 230 deputies. It is elected by universal suffrage according to a system of proportional representation to multi-member constituencies. Deputies serve terms of office of 4 years, unless the president dissolves the assembly and calls for new elections. The Assembly of the Republic is the main legislative body. The President of Parliament substitutes the President of the Republic in the event of his absence.

The Government is headed by the Prime Minister, who names the Council of Ministers. A newly elected government is required to define the broad outline of its policy in a program and present it to the Parliament for a mandatory period of debate. Failure of the assembly to reject the program by a majority of deputies confirms the government in office.

The national and regional governments are dominated by two political parties, the PSD (Partido Social Democrata) - Social Democrats and the PS (Partido Socialista) – Socialists. Within the Portuguese political culture, the PSD is described as center-right and the PS is described as center-left. Other parties with seat in the parliament are the PCP (Partido Comunista Português – Communists), PP (Partido Popular – Popular Party), BE (Bloco de Esquerda – Left Block) and PEV (Partido Ecologista Os Verdes – The Greens Ecologist Party). PCP, BE, and Os Verdes are left wing and the PP right wing. As of 2005, José Sócrates is the prime minister for the Socialists, the party also has the absolute majority in the parliament (121 MPs).

The Courts have several categories, including judicial, administrative and fiscal. The national Supreme Court is the court of last appeal. A nine-member Constitutional Tribunal reviews the constitutionality of legislation.

In a survey on nationalism and European issues made by a notable weeky in Portugal in 1994, revealed that only 9% of the Portuguese people would consider themselves as very little or not at all nationalist, while 43% consider themselves as a lot or extremely nationalist. But when the question is federalism in Europe, Portuguese people do not see a contradiction between a European identity and nationalism, 51% of the interviewed would even agree with Portugal's integration in a supposed United States of Europe, while 27% would be against (22% do not have an opinion). Portuguese public opinion and media tend to be Europhile, in the EuroBarometer's 2004 Spring survey, 60% of the Portuguese trusted the EU.

Portugal has a territorial dispute with Spain. By the Vienna Treaty of 1815, Spain agreed to return Olivença (Olivenza in Spanish) to Portugal, but this agreement was never met. Portugal has periodically reasserted its claim to the territory. This issue has been discussed at the Portuguese Parliament as recently as 2004. In accordance with international law, Olivença is still considered to be Portuguese territory, despite being under Spanish administration since 1801.

Districts and regions

Map of Portugal

Main article: Political divisions of Portugal''

Portugal is divided in 8 regions: Açores, Alentejo, Algarve, Centro, Lisboa, Madeira, Norte, and Vale do Tejo. These regions are recognized and mostly for use within the European Union.

Since early 2004, the country is establishing new regional areas:
*Autonomous regions: Azores, and Madeira;
*Metropolitan Areas: Lisbon, Porto, Coimbra, Minho, Aveiro, Algarve, and Viseu;
*Urban Communities: Oeste, Vale do Sousa, Leiria, Lezíria do Tejo, Baixo Alentejo, Trás-os-Montes, Centro Alentejo, Baixo Tâmega, Douro, Médio Tejo, Beiras, Beira Interior Sul, and Alto Alentejo;
*Intermunicipal communities: Pinhal, and Vale do Minho.

Madeira, Azores, Lisbon and Porto already existed as regional entities before this process has taken place.

Geography

Continental Portugal is split in two by its main river, the Tagus (Tejo). To the north the landscape is mountainous in the interior areas with plateaus, cut by four breakings lines that allow the development of relevant agricultural areas. Portugal's highest point, however, is Mount Pico (2351m) in the Azores.

The south down as far as the Algarve features mostly rolling plains with a climate somewhat warmer and drier than the cooler and rainier north. Other major rivers include the Douro, the Minho and the Guadiana, similar to the Tagus in that all originate in Spain. Another important river, the Mondego, originates in the Serra da Estrela (the highest mountains in mainland Portugal - 1,991 m). The islands of the Azores and Madeira are volcanic in origin, and in the Azores, one to nine volcanoes are possibly active.

Climate

In mainland Portugal, average temperatures are 13ºC in the North and 18ºC in the South. Madeira and Azores, due to their location in the Atlantic, are rainy and wet, and have a narrower range of temperatures.

Portugal is one of the warmest European countries. Spring and Summer months are usually sunny and the temperatures very high during July and August, with highs in the centre of the country between 30°C and 35°C, reaching sometimes highs of 45°C in the southern interior. Autumn and Winter are typically rainy and windy, yet sunny days are not rare either, the temperatures rarely fall below 5°C, usually staying at an average of 10°C. Snow is common in the mountainous areas of the north. Portugal's climate is classified as Atlantic-Mediterranean.

Economy

Portugal has developed an increasingly service-based economy since joining the European Union in 1986, a development that began with the boom of the 1960s. Over the past decade, successive governments have privatised many state-controlled firms and liberalised key areas of the economy, including the financial and telecommunications sectors. Today, Portugal is a developed nation. It joined the Economic and Monetary Union in 1998 and began circulating its new

currency, the euro, on January 1, 2002 along with 11 other EU members.

As of 2004, economic growth has been above the EU average for much of the past decade, but GDP per capita stands at just 75% of that of the leading EU economies. Portuguese GDP grew 1.5% in real terms in the second quarter of 2004 compared with the same period in 2003, by virtue of favourable domestic conditions. It benefited from investment and private consumer spending. Exports increased, but not in comparison with the strong growth of imports. In the same quarter the unemployment rate was 6.3%. In 2003, GDP per capita shrank 1%, due to the stringent austerity measures imposed by the government, low rates of investment and an internationally weak economic climate.

The country still has a 6.7 percent illiteracy rate, almost exclusively among the elderly. Portugal has been increasingly overshadowed by lower-cost producers in Central Europe as a target for foreign direct investment.

In the technology area, Portugal has one of the higher rates in the World when possessing a mobile phone (over 100%). Third generation mobile phones, UMTS, are being largely commercialized by operators since early 2004. Considering that 41% of the homes in Portugal had a computer in the first quarter of 2004, only 26% of the population had Internet at home; an additional 4% also used it. It is considered that in the near future most of the population will have access to the Internet via mobile phone.

Demographics

As of 2004 Portugal has 10.5 million inhabitants.

Map of Portugal. Map includes the area of the portuguese territory of Olivença, disputed
with and currently administered by Spain.

Portugal is a fairly homogeneous country linguistically and religiously. Ethnically, Portuguese are a combination of several ethnicities, primarily native Iberians, Romans, Celts, and Visigoths. Other elements are Moors, Suevi and Phoenician. Even so, Portuguese people are ethnically homogenous. The country is characterized by city, town or village cultural differentiation and there is virtually no regional affiliation, unlike other European countries. Portuguese is spoken throughout the country, with only the villages of Miranda de Douro's Leonese dialect recognised as a locally co-official language. It is known as Mirandese. The closely related Asturian dialect in Spain is another Leonese dialect but not officially recognized by Spain.

Almost ten percent of Portugal's citizens are immigrants, half of them being legal. Since the decolonization period, Portugal has received immigrants from the former African colonies, and from

Europe (especially the United Kingdom, Germany and France - the climate, culture, and relatively low cost of living are the main attractions). Today, many Eastern Europeans (especially Ukrainians, Moldavans, Romanians and Russians), as well as Brazilians, are making Portugal their home in search of a better life. Portugal, long a country of emigration, has now become a country of immigration. Most of Eastern Europe immigrants came between 1999 and 2002, through Germany, after this country opened the Euroland's borders. After the initial shock with a so massive number, immigrants are well accepted in the Portuguese society when comparing to other European countries. After 2002, most of the migrational pressure comes from Angola and Brazil. The biggest community is the Cabo Verde Cape Verdean, part of it is considered has Portuguese, and do not count has immigrants.

The great majority of the Portuguese population belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, a significant part do not attend a religious service frequently. Religious observance remains very strong in northern areas, with the population of Lisbon and southern areas generally less devout. Religious minorities include a little over 300,000 Protestants. There is also about 50,000 Muslims and 10,000 Hindus, most of them came from Goa, a former Portuguese colony on the west coast of India. There are also about 1,000 Jews, but a considerable large number of people have some Jewish heritage, and although they consider themselves Catholics, one can observe some Jewish customs.

Culture

Portugal is one of the oldest countries in Europe, thus it has a strong and unique culture. The country is known for its traditional architecture, its wines, its food, and its literature.

Literature

Portugal is sometimes known as "a country of poets". As a matter of fact, Portuguese poetry has a larger influence in the country's literature than prose. In the dawn of nationhood, poetry in Portuguese-Galician was widely popular in most Christian Iberian Peninsula. There are excellent works of both lyrical and epic poetry. The best-known Portuguese poets internationally are Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa. Modern Portuguese poetry, since the 19th century, has its roots in a handful of relevant poets, from neo-classicism to contemporary.

Prose developed later than verse and first appeared in the 14th century. The line of the chroniclers, which is one of the boasts of Portuguese literature, began with Fernão Lopes. Gil Vicente and the priest António Vieira are some pre-modern Portuguese writers. It is the modern Portuguese literature that is more internationally known, mostly the works of Almeida Garrett, Alexandre Herculano, Eça de Queirós, Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, António Lobo Antunes and the 1998 Nobel Prize for literature winner, José Saramago.

Music

Fado (from fate or destiny in Portuguese) is a form of melancholic music. The music is usually linked to the Portuguese word saudade (a word with no accurate equivalent in English; being a type of longing, it conveys a complex mixture of sadness, pain, nostalgia, happiness and love), and its origins are probably from a mixture of African slave rhythms with traditional music of Portuguese sailors, with Arabic influence.

Mariza, the new Fado Diva. She performed a duet with Sting for the Athens 2004 Olympic games, where the Fado was partially sung in English.

There are two varieties of Fado: Lisbon and Coimbra. The Lisbon style is the popular, while the Coimbra's is the refined style; both are seen as ethnic music for sophisticated audience. Amália Rodrigues introduced the most well-known variety of fado. After her disappearance, a new wave of performers added stylistic changes and brought more international popularity to the traditional Portuguese music. There are also some successful experiences with fado, namely mixing it with electronic music. Mariza and Mísia brought with them a new look to the traditional song, occasionally reviving 19th century fado. While Dulce Pontes mixed it with popular and traditional Portuguese music. Madredeus and Cristina Branco added with new instruments and themes - all that they kept from the original Fado is its looks and the concept of "saudade". All varieties of Fado are sorrowful; although some can also be joyful songs. António Chaínho and Carlos Paredes are the most notable masters on the Portuguese guitar.

During the Fascist Regime music was used by the left-wing resistance as a way to say what could not be said, singing about freedom, equality and democracy. Many composers and singers became famous and persecuted by the political police. Zeca Afonso's Grândola, Vila Morena was used has call sign to break out the Carnation Revolution

in 1974.

Portuguese pop-rock has grown particularly after the 1974
revolution. Other genres include a local version of hip hop, the Hip
Hop Tuga, mostly performed by the African-Portuguese (descendants of
immigrants from former Portuguese colonies in Africa). Hip Hop Tuga
is very popular among the younger and urban population in Portugal,
while Pimba, the Portuguese soft-pop music, is popular in the rural
areas and among Portuguese immigrants.

As for dancing, Portugal has the traditional folklore (Ranchos
Folclóricos), with many varieties from each region: Fandango,
Corridinho and O Vira are some of them. Portugal shares with Angola
a shared rhythm known as "Kuduro", a sort of 'hard hass' with fast
movements and extreme sensuality and strong African rhythm.
A typical aspect of Portugal is its architecture, influenced
by several early civilizations but unique to the nation.
Traditional architecture is partly endangered.

Sport

European football is the most popular and practiced sport in
Portugal. As of August 2004, the country is ranked 8th in 205
countries by FIFA. Luís Figo is one of the world's top players, but
the legendary Eusébio, Rui Costa and Cristiano Ronaldo are also
noteworthy. FC Porto crowned its international success by winning
the UEFA Cup in 2003 and UEFA Champions League in 2004 as well as
local cups. The team also won the Intercontinental Cup in Japan last
December, by defeating Colombian champions Once Caldas in the
penalty shootouts. Portugal is also very well represented in other
sports, such has Rink hockey, being the country with most world
titles. Golf is also worth mentioning, since its greatest players
play in the sunny region of the Algarve during the "Algarve Open".

The country has an ancient martial art known as "Jogo do Pau" (Eng.,
Stick Game), used for self-protection and for duels between young
men in dispute over a young women. Having its origin in the middle
ages, Jogo do Pau uses wooden sticks as a combat weapon. Other
sports are the "Jogos Populares", a wide variety of traditional
sports used for fun.

Gastronomy

Eating in Portugal is often a visitor's most remembered
characteristic of the country. Each region of Portugal has its own
traditional dishes, including various kinds of meat, sea-food,
diverse and fresh fish. Portuguese have a reputation for loving cod
dishes (bacalhau in Portuguese). For that there are 365 ways of
making cod dishes. The Romans associated Portugal with Bacchus,
their God of Winery and Feast. Today the country is known by wine
lovers, and its wines had won several international prizes. Many
famous Portuguese wines are known as some of the world's best: Vinho
Verde, Vinho Alvarinho, Vinho do Douro, Vinho do Alentejo, Vinho do
Dão, Vinho da Bairrada and the sweet: Port Wine, Madeira wine and
the Moscatels of Setúbal and Favaios (Douro). Port Wine is largely
exported, now followed by Vinho Verde. Exports of Vinho Verde are
largely increasing, in response to the growing international demand.

Festivals

Festivals play a major role in Portugal's summers. Even thought they
have religious conotations, most of these celebrations are, in fact,
everything but religious. Every city and town has its own or several
festivals. The June Festivities are extremely popular, these
festivities are dedicated to three saints known as Santos Populares
(En., Popular saints) and take place all over Portugal. Why the
populace associated the saints with these pagan festivities is not
known. The practice is possibly related to Roman or local deities
before Christianity spread in the region. The three saints are Saint
Anthony, Saint John and Saint Peter. A common denominator in these
festivities are the wine and água-pé (a watered kind of wine),
traditional bread along with sardines, marriages, traditional street
dances, fire, fireworks and joy.

Saint Anthony is celebrated on the nights of the 12th and 13th,
especially in Lisbon (where that saint was born and lived most of
his life), with Marchas Populares (a sort of street carnival) and
festivities. In the meantime, several marriages known as Casamentos
de Santo António (En., Marriages of Saint Anthony) are celebrated at
the same time. But the most popular saint is Saint John. He is
celebrated in many cities and towns throughout the country on the
nights of the 23rd and 24th, especially in Porto and Braga, where
the sardines, Caldo Verde (traditional soup) and plastic hammers to
hammer on other peoples' heads for luck are indispensable. The final
Saint is Saint Peter, celebrated on the nights of the 28th and 29th,
especially in Póvoa de Varzim and Barcelos, festivities are similar
to the others, but mostly dedicated to the sea and extensive use of
fire (fogueiras). In Póvoa de Varzim, there is the Rusgas in the
night, another sort of street carnival. Each festivity is a
municipal holiday in the cities and towns where it occurs.

Carnival is also widely celebrated in Portugal, some traditional

carnivals dates back several centuries. In January 6, Epiphany is celebrated in some families, especially in the North, where the family gatters to eat "Bolo-Rei" (King Cake); this is also the time for the traditional street songs - "As Janeiras" (The January ones). Monday after Easter, Pascolea (also known has Dia do Anjo, Angel Day), is used in some areas, usualy in the North of the country, to do a pic-nic, some people work on the Good Friday holiday to have this day off. Saint Martin Day, is celebrated in some countries in Europe, Portugal included, it is in November 11. This day is the peak of three days, often with very good weather, it is known has Verão de São Martinho ("saint Martin summer" or "Short Summer"), the Portuguese celebrate it with gerupiga (an alcoholic drink) and roasted Portuguese chestnuts (castanhas assadas). and it is called Magusto.

Holidays

January 1 Ano Novo New Year's Day. Beginning of the year, marks the traditional end of "holiday season."
Tuesday, date varies Carnaval Carnival. Not an official holiday, but usually declared by the government as a non-working day. Very ancient festivity celebrating the end of the winter. It gained Christian connotations, and now marks the first day of a period of 40 days before Easter Week (Semana Santa, Holy Week), thus also known has Entrudo.
Friday, date varies Sexta-Feira Santa Good Friday.
Sunday, date varies Páscoa Easter. Used for family gathering to eat Pão-de-Ló (an Easter cake) and easter eggs. In the North, processions (compasso) visits and blesses every home with an open door, thus meaning they are catholics. Traditionally, this is the second visit of children and non-married youngersters to their godparents, recieving an Easter gift. The first visit is on Palm Sunday, 7 days before, where children give flowers and palms to their godparents.
April 25 Dia da Liberdade Literally, "Freedom Day". Celebrates the Carnation Revolution, marking the end of the dictatorial regime. Event of 1974.
May 1 Dia do Trabalhador Labour Day.
June 10 Dia de Portugal Portugal Day. Marks the date of Camões death. Camões wrote The Lusiad, Portugal's national epic. Event of 1580
Thursday, date varies Corpo de Deus Ascension Day. 40 days after Easter.
August 15 Assunção Assumption of Mary.
October 5 Implantação da República Implantation of the Republic. Event of 1910.
November 1 Todos os Santos All Saints Day. Day used for visiting deceased relatives.
December 1 Restauração da Independência Restoration of Independence. Event of 1640.
December 8 Imaculada Conceição Immaculate Conception. Patron Saint of Portugal.
December 25 Natal Christmas Day. Celebrated in the 24th to the 25th in a family gather to eat codfish with potatoes; seasonal sweets and dry fruits; drink Port wine; and share gifts.

Popular Saints Festivities (main local holidays)

June 13 Dia de Santo António Saint Anthony Day. Celebrated in Lisbon,and Loriga among others.
June 24 Dia de São João Saint John Day. This is the most popular festivity in Portugal. It is celebrated in Porto, Braga, Angra do Heroísmo, Horta, and Vila do Conde among others
June 29 Dia de São Pedro Saint Peter Day. Celebrated in Évora, Setúbal, Póvoa de Varzim, and Barcelos among others.