



From Lamego to Chaves

Find all the rest and relaxation that you've been looking for, by enjoying a 2-day tour from Lamego to Chaves.

Start off with a visit to the cathedral and the Santuário da Nossa Senhora dos Remédios, the shrine on the hill overlooking Lamego. With your soul now at peace, you have earned the right to sample some of the local delicacies such as the local smoked ham or the famous "Bola de Lamego" (a loaf baked in the oven with smoked ham). Drink a toast to the beauty and flavours of Porto and Northern Portugal with a visit to the producers of Murganheira and Raposeira, two of the highest quality sparkling wines in the country.

After this, carry on to Pinhão through the landscape of the Alto Douro Wine Region, now classified by UNESCO as World Heritage. Here, you should stop for a while to appreciate the "azulejos" of the railway station and then you can choose between two irresistible trips: one has a special nostalgic feel and involves riding on an old steam train; the other, by boat, will take you gliding gently across the blue of the river.

As evening begins to fall, you can catch the best colours of the River Douro from the viewing point of Casal de Loivos and let your eyes rest upon this work of art produced by nature. Whet your appetite for dinner with a glass of Moscatel de Favaios and sleep like a prince in the Pousada do Barão de Forrester (Alijó) or in one of the houses operating under the Tourism in the Country scheme.

Continue along the EN2 and get to know three excellent spas where you will probably want to plan a future relaxing stay: Pedras Salgadas, Vidago and Chaves. In Vidago, make sure to make the most of the peace and beauty of the hotel and park, a place where you can also enjoy a round of golf. In Chaves, the waters, well known by the Romans, spring naturally at a temperature of 73° C, which is a phenomenon that is unique in the whole of Europe. Stop here and enjoy a well-earned rest at the Hotel do Forte de São Francisco. Celebrate the end of your trip with a dinner served in the good old traditional manner, accompanied by the famous local smoked ham, other extremely tasty smoked meats and the excellent regional wines.



Points of interest along the Itinerary

- Sé Catedral de Lamego
- Santuário de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios
- Museu de Lamego
- Peso da Régua
- Pinhão
- Murça
- Termas de Pedras Salgadas
- Termas de Vidago
- Termas de Chaves



Points of interest along the Itinerary

Sé Catedral de Lamego

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Santuário de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios

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Museu de Lamego

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Termas de Pedras Salgadas

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Termas de Vidago

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Suggestions

Visit Lamego

This ancient city, hidden in the mountains, represents two periods of time. Moors and Christians fought ferocious battles over it. However, in 1057, Fernando Magno, great grandfather to the first king of Portugal, definitively took it for Christianity. This era survives in the tall castle tower, where on foggy days the soul of a Moorish princess is said to return to weep.

Outside, walk up the steep streets where houses emerge out of the medieval walls.

Get your strength back with a little smoked Lamego ham before returning to the centre. The façade of the church of Almacave, in front of which founding king Afonso Henriques would gather his warrior knights, is a genuine example of Romanesque art. The tower adjoining the Se dates from the same period. And when the great bell was being cast, Bishop António Telles de Menezes poured a sack of gold coins into the mould to ensure that its sound would be the richest of all cities. The interior of the Se however is not as Gothically austere as the façade. The colour and lightness of paintings by Italian artist Nicolau Nasoni leap out at you. He also designed the Sanctuary dedicated to Nossa Senhora dos Remédios.

This beautiful monument is a symbol of religious devotion and admiration. Take a look at the fantastic gold leaf carvings and the stories told across the church's tiles.

And a visit to the museum is a must - it is one of the best in the country. Make sure this Douro city, birthplace of the fine wine that was to become Port, features on your itinerary.

Douro and its estates

Classified as a world heritage site by UNESCO, the wine-growing Upper Douro produces the famous port wine, known worldwide for its quality and taste. In this region - the first one in the world to be demarcated - the centuries-old tradition of wine growing has produced a cultural landscape of remarkable beauty.

You can take in all these riches on a short five-day trip, and staying the night in a manor house with a unique atmosphere that is also part of the Port Wine Route. You can choose from: Casa das Torres de Oliveira (Mesão Frio), Casa dos Varais (Peso da Régua) and Casa de Casal de Loivos (Pinhão).

Take a boat trip to discover the countryside around the River Douro, its slopes covered with vineyards. Start your visit to the Port Wine Route at the Port Wine Lodge in Régua, where specialists explain the differences between the various types of this nectar.

Make the itinerary even more cultural with a visit to the Sanctuary of Nossa Senhora dos Remédios, in Lamego, to Casa de Mateus, in Vila Real - known all over the world after appearing on the Mateus Rosé wine label - and to the Monastery of Tarouca.

The Douro by car

You'll be travelling up hill and down dale, along narrow, winding roads, but you'll find that it's well worth the effort when you discover everything that the Douro has to offer you.

Follow the main road, beginning in Peso da Régua and driving across the plateaux above the Douro valley. From the viewpoint of São Leonardo, you can see the river valley and the mountains of the Serra do Marão, all in just one glance. A famous Portuguese writer described this landscape as a "geological poem". You'll easily understand why.

At Casal de Loivos, you have a naturally formed balcony overlooking Pinhão and the open, curved valley of the River Douro. Rest for the night in a manor-house and wake up gently to the surprising and beautiful view.



Cross over the River Tua, a tributary of the Douro, visit Torre de Moncorvo and continue on to a very special part of the Douro, Barca d'Alva. One of the best Portuguese wines is produced here. Very close by is the Foz Coa Archaeological Park, a fascinating outdoor gallery of rock art, which has been classified as world heritage.

You have almost reached the far end of Portugal. Whenever you can, let yourself get lost along the minor roads, and, on your way back, following the southern bank of the River Douro, make sure to stop and enjoy the views from the castle of Numão and São Salvador do Mundo. These are places from where it is well worth gazing at the horizon.

The Douro by train

The real stars of an historic train ride through the Douro valley are the carriages and the steam and diesel locomotives that pull them. Travelling at 30 kilometres an hour, these trains evoke a time when they were the only connection between Port producing villages and the outside world.

Follow the course of the river by travelling along the Linha do Douro. The railway line from Porto to Pocinho is a remarkable feat of engineering, overcoming the various natural obstacles with the help of 26 tunnels and 30 bridges. The result is an unforgettable journey through scenery of great natural beauty. The older stations are of particular interest, particularly Régua, which was the most important in the region. The station at Pinhão, on the other hand, is one of the country's most beautiful, with façades of decorative tiles depicting scenes of vineyard workers and views of the local countryside.

You can also travel along the Linha do Douro in regular trains from Porto, that leave from the city's old São Bento station. Or you can combine your train ride with the programme of local boat rides. Two great ways to see the river.

Visit Chaves

The history of Chaves goes back to Roman times. The local hot spring water, (at a temperature of 73° C), was recognised by Roman legions for its medicinal properties.

Begin your tour at the most important legacy of this period: the pretty Roman bridge over the Tâmega that today connects the two halves of the city. In the medieval centre, follow the Rua Direita as far as the castle. Notice the picturesque houses decorated with iron verandas. Enjoy the bustle and character of the local streets.

Make a detour to the Church of Misericórdia, with its fine Baroque entrance. Inside, you'll find tile panels depicting scenes from the life of Christ along the length of the church. A little further on, there is the medieval castle keep, flanked by ramparts with great views out over the city.

Take a break at one of the many bars and cafés in the Termas Park. There are plenty of local specialities, with smoked Chaves ham top of the list.

Other key points are the fortresses of S. Francisco and S. Neutel. Within the walls of the former, a 16th century convent has now been converted into an upmarket hotel, whilst still retaining its character.

Gastronomy of the Douro

The cuisine of the Douro region is one of the most varied in Portugal. On the coast the fish and shellfish are complemented by the region's quality white wines. Inland, the meats, cooked in a variety of ways, are succulent and tender.

Wet your appetite with port served in its freshest fashion: the 'Portonic'. Then begin with 'caldo verde' soup, the most popular in Portugal. From Chaves and Lamego come the smoked sausages. From Mirandela and Miranda do Douro comes the 'alheira', a chicken pudding-sausage. The annual Vinhais fair is the best place to stock up on this delicacy and many others, including 'salpicão da terra' a type of jerky.



For incredibly fresh fish, stick to the coast. 'Bacalhau' cod is used in some of its finest recipes from this region while sardines steal the show at the annual S. João festival. Fresh water fish and shellfish are great with a chilled white on a summer's evening.

The reds of the Douro region go well with the strong pork influence, served in the north as crackling 'rojões' or with chicken and rice hotpot. Stuffed suckling pig and goat from Bragança, the beans and meat stews and the Vila Real "maronesa" veal are other landmarks in the local cuisine.

To finish, enjoy the "tucinho do céu" pastries of the ancient convents. The 'creme queimado' and sweet cinnamon rice pudding are also rightly famous.

Useful contacts

Caves da Raposeira

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Caves da Murganheira

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Casa de Casal de Loivos

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