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# All About Portugal

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## Portugal Identity Card

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With its mild climate, 3000 hours of sunshine per year and 850 kms of splendid beaches bathed by the Atlantic Ocean, Portugal is the perfect holiday destination all year round.

This is a country that has the oldest borders in Europe, with an exceptional range of different landscapes just a short distance away, lots of leisure activities and a unique cultural heritage, where tradition and modernity blend together in perfect harmony. Its superb cuisine, fine wines and hospitable people make this a tourist paradise of the highest quality. Situated in the extreme south-west of Europe, just a few hours from any of the other European capitals, Portugal attracts visitors from all over the world. Come and discover the charms of this country too.

**GEOGRAPHY** Portugal is situated at the south-west point of Europe and also includes the Madeira and Azores archipelagos in the Atlantic Ocean. Mainland Portugal occupies an area of 88,889 km<sup>2</sup>. It is 218 km wide and 561 km long. It has 832 km of Atlantic coast and a 1,215 km border with Spain. The Azores are situated in the Atlantic Ocean between Europe and North America. They have an area of 2,355 km<sup>2</sup> and consist of nine islands - São Miguel and Santa Maria in the Eastern Group, Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico and Faial in the Central Group and Flores and Corvo in the Western Group. It takes about two hours to get from the Azores to mainland Portugal by plane. The Madeira Archipelago has an area of 741 km<sup>2</sup> and lies in the Atlantic Ocean about 500 km from the African coast and 1,000 km from the European continent (1½ hours flying time from Lisbon). It consists of the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo and the uninhabited Desertas and Selvagens islands, which are nature reserves.

**CLIMATE** Mainland Portugal The climate in Portugal varies considerably from one region to another and is influenced by the relief, latitude and proximity to the sea, which offers mild winters, especially in the Algarve. In the Porto e Norte area and Beiras region, particularly inland, nearer Spain, the winters are colder, although the temperatures are still mild when compared to the rest of Europe. There is some snowfall. It occurs most in the Serra da Estrela mountains, where we find the highest point in mainland Portugal (1,991 m) and where it is sometimes possible to ski. The summers are hot and dry, especially in the inland areas (Trás-os-Montes in north-eastern Portugal and Alentejo). Temperatures are slightly lower in the coastal areas, because of the influence of the sea. There are often warm, sunny days in autumn. Nice weather at the beginning of November is often called "St. Martin's Summer" as this saint's day is on 11 November.

**Azores** The climate in the Azores is influenced by the islands' latitude and by the Gulf Stream, and temperatures are mild there all year round. The same factors also influence the sea temperature, which is very pleasant both in winter and summer and ideal for nautical sports all year round.

**Madeira** The subtropical characteristics of the weather in the Madeira Archipelago can be explained by its geographical position and mountainous relief. The climate in Madeira is exceptionally mild, with average temperatures varying between 24 °C in summer and 19 °C in winter. The sea temperature is also very pleasant all year round, thanks to the influence of the warm Gulf Stream. It varies between 18 °C in winter and 22 °C in summer.

### POPULATION

Portugal has a population of about 10 million. The population density is at its greatest in Lisbon, the capital and its suburbs, where about 1.9 million people live. The second largest city in Portugal is Oporto in the north. Generally speaking, there are more people living in the country's coastal regions than in the inland areas.

### RELIGION

The majority of Portuguese are Catholics, but the Portuguese Constitution guarantees religious freedom and there are a number of different religions in Portugal.

### LANGUAGE

From a Latin root, Portuguese is spoken by about 250 million people in every continent, and is the 5th most spoken language in the world and the 3rd, if we only consider the European languages.

The Portuguese-speaking countries are scattered all over the world. Portuguese is spoken in Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe), in South America (Brazil) and in Asia, (East Timor, the youngest nation in the world), and it is also the official language in Macao Special Administrative Region of China.

In Portugal there are lots of people who are able to communicate in English, French and Spanish.

# Map of Portugal

● Towns and Villages

✈ Airports

● Highways

● Parks and Reserves

● Rivers

