
Winter in Portugal

ABOUT



Photo: John Copland

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Winter in Portugal is a delightful season with frequent sunshine up and down the country and temperatures that rarely fall below 10°C. And the Portuguese people are even more friendly and welcoming!

With an average of over 300 sunny days a year, winter here can sometimes seem more like spring and you will always need your sunglasses. What's more, some places have a special charm at this time of year:

Explore the Douro

The Douro, with its **World Heritage** scenery, becomes even more beautiful in September and October, when the grapes are harvested. You can even overnight at one of the wineries that produce **port wine** and excellent table wine, or at a fine mansion house.

Stroll on the Beach

In low season, walking along the beach is particularly pleasant. On the Madeiran island of Porto Santo alone, you have 9 km of sands which have therapeutic properties due to their temperature.

Thalassotherapy

But we have so many beaches on the mainland and in the Azores that it's hard to keep count. Many of them offer thalassotherapy centres, in particular the luxury resorts in the Algarve and Madeira, along with plenty more.

Golf

Portugal offers ideal conditions for golf, especially the courses in the Algarve and along the Estoril Coast, which are often fully booked in the winter. Voted **Europe's best golf destination**, in October the Algarve plays host to the **Portugal Masters** competition, one of the sport's top tournaments and a fixture on the PGA's European Tour calendar.

Surfing

Where surfing is concerned, suffice it to say that, in October, the **Moche Rip Curl Pro Portugal** competition, one of the 11 stages in the ASP World Championship Tour, will be staged in Portugal, as will the ASP Prime SATA Airline Azores Islands Pro, one of the events in the Qualification Series, which takes place in September.

New Year's Eve in Madeira

The spectacular New Year's Eve **fireworks** display held every year in Madeira is a huge favourite with cruise line passengers and other visitors from every corner of the globe, who will be delighted with island's splendid scenery and

marvellous climate. The maximum temperature at this time of year can range between 20^o and 25^oC.

Gastronomy

Portugal is one of the countries that follow the **World Heritage Mediterranean Diet**, and the fish and seafood from our coast, to mention just one example, are a festival of flavour and freshness. However, it is also worth sampling our convent sweets, such as the famous pastel de nata (Portuguese custard tart), one of the brand images of Portuguese flavours.

Wine

Your meal will taste even better if you accompany it with one of our quality wines. For this very reason, winter is a great time to indulge in wine tourism, giving you the opportunity to become acquainted with some of our best-kept treasures.

Entertainment

The nightlife in Portugal's major cities is renowned far and wide. But if bars and discos are not your scene then you might enjoy a candlelit dinner at a fado restaurant where you will get an insight into a very personal facet of the Portuguese soul.

In Portugal's hugely varying landscapes, winter is the perfect time to enjoy an array of activities, from sport and outdoor activities such as bird watching to discovering monuments, museums (most are small or medium-sized) and the historical centres of our cities. Some, such as **Guimarães, Oporto, Coimbra, Évora, Elvas and Angra do Heroísmo**, in the Azores, are classed as World Heritage sites. And along the border with Spain, it is well worth exploring the castles and network of **Historical and Schist Villages** (Aldeias do Xisto). These are places of rustic beauty whose stones have centuries' worth of history to recount.

But of one thing, you can be certain: you will take home long-lasting memories of the holidays you spend in Portugal's winter sunshine –charming scenery, good food enjoyed outdoors, roast chestnuts sold by street vendors and the winter sun setting over the sea.