



PORTUGAL: BIRDING, WINE, AND CULTURE TOUR

GENERAL INFORMATION



*The striking and beautiful **Eurasian Hoopoe** is always a popular species when birding in Europe. We will look forward to an encounter with them during this tour.*

TOUR OUTLINE

This set departure Portugal tour will start in Porto and end in Lisbon. The tour will enjoy wonderful fall/autumn birding and many Iberian specials. During the tour we will visit beautiful vineyards for wine tasting and we will also take in a range of fascinating cultural sites. This relaxed-pace, fully guided tour will also enjoy wonderful traditional meals, local wines, and excellent traditional accommodation.

PASSPORT AND VISA

US citizens do not require a visa to visit Portugal for a stay of under 90 days. See specific details here and check for any recent changes to ensure you are suitably covered. Your passport must be valid for a period of at least three months beyond the length of your stay in Portugal. Please make sure that there is at least one full empty page available in your passport. Please make sure that you also bring a photocopy of your passport, to be kept in a different location from your original passport, in case of loss/damage.

UK citizens can travel to countries in the Schengen area for up to 90 days in any 180-day period without a visa. Make sure your passport is valid for at least three months after the day you plan to leave Portugal, or any other Schengen country and is less than ten years old. The three months you need when leaving a country must be within ten years of the passport issue date. Please see further details from the UK Government website on Portugal entry requirements here.

If you are arriving in Portugal from another destination, please refer to those specific government requirements.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as per the Terms & Conditions of the tour to protect yourself against accidents, medical issues, illness, loss of valuables and luggage etc., and travel interruptions or delays of all kinds.

HEALTH AND PESTS

Please consult your doctor regarding any vaccine requirements. All travelers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters (e.g. Chickenpox (Varicella), Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis, Flu (Influenza), Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR), and Polio for example, others may also be recommended, please check your government recommendations and requirements). Some travelers may require Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Measles immunization if they have underlying health conditions. Please update yourself on the Covid-19 vaccination entry requirements.

Insect repellent is recommended for some of the areas we visit. Malaria is not present in Portugal though Leishmaniasis, Dengue, and Zika have been recorded from sand fly and mosquito bites, respectively. Cream for reducing itchiness of bites is also recommended.

Please refer to CDC for further health issues to be aware of in Portugal. Other specific government advice should also be sought. The UK "Travel Health Pro" website provides important information for UK travelers visiting Portugal here.

Sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) should be carried, and a hat should be worn to protect from the powerful rays from the sun, with sunglasses to help prevent glare. A plentiful intake of water (please bring a reusable water bottle) should be adhered to at all times to maintain hydration, however temperatures during the period of our tour should not reach uncomfortable levels, for most travelers (see “Weather and Climate” below).

Please also be sure to check “Dangerous Animals” below.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure that you are covered with medical insurance in case of an emergency while on this tour. Without insurance the cost of medical care can be extremely high. Please notify us at the time of registering for this tour of any medical conditions you think we should know about (including allergies, heart conditions, epilepsy, etc.). This will greatly help us to cater to your needs and update emergency services if required.

CURRENCY

The currency of Portugal is the Euro (€), which comes in 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 Euro denominations in note form. Euro coins are used for €1 and €2 values. Below €1 the currency is known as Euro cents and is in coin form only. Visa & Mastercard are widely accepted, including for drawing cash from ATM’s (as everywhere, bank charges may apply). Note: We will be able to exchange or draw money at the airport upon our arrival and in the various towns and cities we pass through during the tour. Cash will be useful for personal purchases and gratuities.

WEATHER/CLIMATE

The temperatures should be around 72-77 °F (22-25 °C) throughout the tour. Nights are comfortable with temperatures around 52-57 °F (11 – 14 °C). The sun is still strong at this time of year but we should also be prepared for rain.

ELECTRICITY

230V and frequency of 50 Hz, two-pronged round sockets. Adaptors are needed for overseas appliances. Type C plugs fit most sockets in Portugal and Type F also work. Further details, including information on the different plug sockets can be found here.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mobile (cell) phone signal should be present at most locations on the tour (roaming charges might apply depending on your phone contract). Wi-Fi should be available at all hotels.

DAILY ACTIVITIES, PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, AND TOUR PACE

As this is not a tour purely focused on birding (we will be enjoying lots of cultural activities), we

will not be making too many early starts and we will likely take breakfast before beginning our day's activities. There is only one long drive on this tour, of around 6 hours (on Day 3), which is broken up with stops for birding, refreshments, and restrooms (toilets) etc., and on this journey, we will also visit the ancient town of Marvão. Most walking is an easy level of exertion and at a gentle pace (dictated by the group), for the most part, this will all be on easy tracks, roads, and trails.

SPECIES RECORDING (BIRD LISTS AND ANIMAL LISTS)

On arrival in Porto, you will be provided with a printed detailed daily itinerary for the tour (this will also be emailed across to you ahead of the tour in PDF format), this document will give information on the planned daily activities. Your tour leader will go through this with you at the first opportunity and thereafter each day in the evening to let you know any specifics to be aware of for the following day.

We will provide you with a printed blank diary page to allow you to jot down any specific site notes you might want to record to go with the printed bird list that we will give you. The bird list will follow the latest International Ornithological Congress (IOC) taxonomy. At Birding Ecotours we follow IOC taxonomy for birds and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for all other animals recorded during the tour. All itineraries and checklists follow these taxonomies. We will go through the bird list each evening of the tour, recording all the species from that day. This activity is optional and if you do not want to take part in the nightly bird list that is perfectly fine, but it is a really useful way to remember what was seen during the day.

Birding Ecotours leaders also maintain eBird checklists from all group birding activities during a tour (from unscheduled roadside stops to scheduled birding activities) that they will share with all participants who use eBird. You will need to provide your eBird user details to the tour leader at the beginning of the tour for us to be able to do this.

After the tour you will be provided with an emailed PDF copy of a trip report, this will cover the sites visited each day in diary fashion with a checklist at the end. If the tour leader manages to get any interesting bird, animal, or landscape photographs during the tour these will be included in the trip report (and of course, if you get pictures, you are willing to share, we can sometimes include those too). Leader photos will also be added to our Flickr page in a gallery where you will be able to view them for yourselves.

TRANSPORTATION AND SEAT ROTATION

During this fall/autumn tour, your local guide will be driving you in a comfortable (9-seater minibus) vehicle. At Birding Ecotours we employ a seat rotation policy on all our small-group set departure tours. Seat rotation will ensure everybody has equal opportunities throughout the tour. Unfortunately, motion sickness will not excuse you from our seat rotation policy and thus if you are prone to motion sickness you should ensure you bring the necessary medication. We also require that you are fit and flexible enough to maneuver yourself to the back of the vehicle. Tour participants should also be mindful of the extra equipment they bring into the general seating area of the vehicle (rather than the luggage section) and should ensure they do not clog up general thoroughfare or extra seats with camera equipment, tripods, etc. from a comfort and health and safety point of view.

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

There are no domestic flights included in this tour. Note the tour starts in Porto and ends in Lisbon.

ACCOMMODATION

All of the hotels we stay in on this tour will be 3-star or above and are comfortable and well appointed, with excellent facilities, while still retaining the culture of the country as far as possible. The majority of the hotels have excellent on-site restaurants for dining, where we will enjoy evening meals.

WINE TASTING

A total of five wine tasting sessions are included in this tour. These are at Quinta de Aveleda, Douro Valley (Quinta do Vale Meao), Herdade do Esporão, Monte da Casteleja, and Casa Ermelinda Freitas vineyards and represent a fantastic cross section of famed Portuguese wine.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING

Casual and informal dress is fine in the hotels/motels. Loose, lightweight field clothing works best for our birding activities. Shorts/trousers and T-shirts are fine, although please do consider potential insect issues, mentioned above. You will also need to bring some warmer clothing, certainly a minimum of a warm fleece for early morning/evening when temperatures might drop. Rain is a possibility, so rain gear (and a small umbrella) is always useful to have.

Sunglasses, sunhat, and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are useful. A pair of trousers or a long skirt, and a long-sleeved shirt should be included to help protect against the sun. Swimwear can be brought as there are swimming pools at some of the hotels.

We would recommend lightweight walking boots for when out on foot to give extra ankle support while walking. You might like to consider sandals/trainers (tennis shoes) for use in the vehicles and for walking between your room and restaurant in the hotels and lodges.

WHAT TO BRING: OTHER ITEMS

Do not forget: Binoculars, prescription drugs (also bring the generic names for these drugs), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, sunscreen and sunglasses, camera, flashlight (torch), batteries (for electronic equipment and chargers for the re-chargeable batteries, if required), converter plug set if needed and plug adaptors, alarm clock, money pouch, field guide(s), and daypacks. Our local guide will have a telescope for use during the tour.

Other important things to remember include: key documents, cash, passport, proof of vaccinations (and photocopies of vaccination record), your travel or health insurance cards – photocopies of which can be carried by the tour leader in case of emergency, credit cards – see info above, US Dollars can be changed to Euros if you prefer not to simply draw from ATM's, cash for drinks, gifts, tips, items of a personal nature etc. not included within the tour cost.

Bringing two colored pens (e.g. blue and red biros) and a 12 inch (30 centimeter) ruler will help

immensely when it comes to filling in the bird list and animal list each evening. Using alternating colors for different days makes the listing activity much easier! Trust us, we have done it a lot!

LUGGAGE

Due to restricted space in the vehicles, please pack as lightly as possible. A medium, soft-sided duffle bag (not the hard sided cases) works best for packing in the vehicles. Please bring a daypack to keep items that you wish to use daily when in the vehicle or in the field.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS

Portugal, like much of Europe, has a low risk of harm from wild animals, and we are unlikely to come across any/many of those that are considered dangerous. Animals of note, if you would like to look them up prior to the tour, include **Portuguese man o' war**, **Wild Boar**, **Grey (Iberian) Wolf**, **Iberian Lynx**, **European (European Yellow-tailed) Scorpion**, **Seoane's Viper**, **Lataste's Viper**, **Mediterranean (European) Black Widow spider**, **Brown Recluse spider**, **Asian Hornet**, and **Portuguese Processionary Caterpillar**. The tiny **Tiger Mosquito** is also occasionally found.

CRIME

Portugal is generally a safe place to travel, with very friendly people, however, as with anywhere in the world, it is advisable to take care and remain cautious and observant for the unexpected, especially in busy cities where there are many people around. Please use safety/lock boxes, when provided in hotels, for storage of personal possessions like passports, money, jewelry, and any other valuable items and follow any advice given to you by the Birding Ecotours tour leader, our local guide, or the hotel staff.

LANGUAGE

Portuguese is the national and official language of Portugal and is spoken by a large majority of the population. English is also widely spoken. Our local guide will help translate when needed.

BOOKS

Recommended field guide for this tour:

Collins Bird Guide: The Most Complete Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe – Lars Svensson (2010), HarperCollins (note this book is published by Princeton in the US). This publication is also available as an app on Apple and Android systems. This is the guide we recommend for this, and all of our European birdwatching tours. See our useful recommended bird books blog post here.

Other bird books of note:

Aves de Portugal (Birds of Portugal) – Helder Costa *et al.* (2018), Lynx Edicions.

Flight Identification of Raptors of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East – Dick Forsman (2016), Helm.

Flight Identification of European Seabirds – Anders Blomdahl *et al.* (2007), Helm.

Other books of note and specific interest:

Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Britain and Europe – Jeroen Speybroeck *et al.* (2016), Bloomsbury Publishing.

Mammals of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East – Stéphane Aulagnier *et al.* (2009), Bloomsbury Publishing.

Europe's Sea Mammals: Including the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands and Cape Verde – A Field Guide to the Whales, Dolphins, Porpoises and Seals – Robert Still *et al.* (2019), Princeton University Press.

Collins Butterfly Guide: The Most Complete Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe – Tom Tolman (2009), HarperCollins.

Field Guide to the Dragonflies of Britain and Europe – Klaas-Douwe B Dijkstra *et al.* (2020), Bloomsbury Publishing.

A Photographic Guide to Insects of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean – Paul D Brock (2017), NatureBureau.

Field Guide to the Wild Flowers of Southern Europe – P Davies and B Gibbons (1993), Crowded Press.

SOUND RECORDINGS

It is possible to listen to, and download, calls of the birds of Portugal from the excellent [xeno-canto](#) website.

USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES

[Aves Vox](#) – this app allows you to download bird songs and calls from xeno-canto to your phone.

[eBird](#) – this website/app contains a wealth of information; you can explore the sites we will visit on the tour to find birds that you ‘need’ or would like to see. You can explore photo, video, and sound galleries for practically every species in the world through The Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s [Macaulay Library](#). If you subscribe to [Birds of the World](#), you can get further detailed information of the life histories and all kinds of useful information, this is an incredible resource and pulls information from the Macaulay Library, eBird, and The Internet Bird Collection. You can also keep checklists of your bird sightings very easily using the eBird app and this is a great way to keep track of your world bird list.

[Merlin](#) – this app can help you identify birds by sight (from images) and sound (from recordings) and is a useful tool to aid identification.

IOC World Bird List – this website contains all the latest details on taxonomic revisions and updates. You can read about newly discovered and described species, splits (creation of a new species) and lumps (deletion of a species) of existing species, and loads of other important and interesting information.

Lonely Planet – a huge resource on places of interest around the world. If you are interested in, or planning to, extend your stay in the country before or after your tour, this guide will help you find some must-see places.



Sardinian Warbler is an attractive resident bird and is present year-round in Portugal.