



PORTUGAL: BIRDING, WINE, AND CULTURE TOUR

04 – 14 NOVEMBER 2023

02 – 12 NOVEMBER 2024



The beautiful Iberian Magpie is a regional endemic and is one of the avian highlights possible on this Portugal tour.

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Sitting in Europe's southwestern corner gives Portugal the perfect position to offer a huge variety of experiences for any visitor. Portugal is sandwiched between the Atlantic Ocean to its west and south, and its north and east borders are occupied by the beautiful country of Spain. This relaxed-pace tour through Portugal will focus on the wonderful birding possible during the fall/autumn season. We have timed this tour to give a unique view of the country in the late fall/autumn season as vast numbers of winter migrants arrive in the country.

Continental Portugal's bird list stands at 485 species (following International Ornithological Congress (IOC) v11.1 taxonomy, as of May 2021), a high total for such a small country, and its variety of habitats, climates, ecosystems, as well as its small size make it a fantastic country to go birding and gives the chance to find some iconic Iberian species.

We are delighted to offer this Portugal birdwatching tour at a more relaxed pace than our more typical birding tours, by combining the fabulous birding with visits to some of Portugal's best vineyards and cultural highlights. With wine tasting taking place almost every couple of days, and several cultural and geographical highlights to enjoy, we feel this tour has something to offer everyone, from the dedicated birder to the more casual visitor. It is also a great tour for a group of friends who might like somewhere to travel together!

We begin our tour in the beautiful city of Porto, from here we will head straight into the picturesque Douro River Valley, east of the city, for our first look at rural Portugal and its wonderful vineyards. While in the area we will enjoy not only vineyards but other cultural highlights, such as the Côa Valley Archaeological Park, and we will also get to grips with mountain birding with species such as **Griffon Vulture**, **Blue Rock Thrush**, **Iberian Grey Shrike**, **White-throated Dipper**, and **Black Wheatear** all among some of our first targets.



*Sagres in Portugal is one of several places where we can get great views of the giant **Griffon Vulture**.*

From here we will slowly meander our way south through the country's interior, observing how the habitat changes from lush river valleys to drier landscapes more like those of neighboring Spain. Along the way we will take in the beautiful town of Marvão before we reach the plains of the central regions of southern Portugal. It is this area that will hold some of Portugal's real special species, with **Spanish Imperial Eagle**, **Great Bustard**, **Iberian Magpie**, and **Black-bellied Sandgrouse** all possible in this region, along with a whole host of other plains species.

We will then continue south to the Algarve, a beautiful coastline and famous among birders and non-birders alike. Here we will enjoy yet more wine tasting and cultural highlights and the birding will also be exciting, with large numbers of wintering shorebirds (waders) and other migrants present at a variety of different locations. We will also visit Portugal's extreme southern corner and look across the vast Atlantic Ocean to see what might be passing Cape St Vincent, with highlights like **Pomarine Jaeger** and **Cory's Shearwater** both possible.

Finally, we will head north to the beautiful city of Lisbon. Here we visit the superb Tagus Estuary, a vitally important area for birds in Western Europe. Highlights here include **Little Bustard**, **Savi's Warbler**, **Calandra Lark**, **Black-winged Kite**, and **Bonelli's Eagle**, plus tens of thousands of shorebirds (waders) and wildfowl which spend the winter in the estuary. We will also have time to enjoy some of Lisbon's cultural aspects before our tour concludes.

Itinerary (11 days/10 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Porto, Quinta de Aveleda wine tasting, travel to Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo

Welcome to Portugal! We will meet for lunch together, afterwards we will travel east, to our first stop on the tour; wine tasting at the superb Quinta de Aveleda, just a 30-minute drive from central Porto. This beautiful estate sits in 100 hectares of vineyards and grows Alvarinho, Loureiro, Arinto, and Fernao Pires grapes. The vineyard has been in the same family since 1870 and offers an incredible experience to get this exciting Portugal tour going.

Our accommodation for the first evening offers breathtaking panoramic views of the region. The area also has plenty of great birds, which we will likely see during our stay.

Overnight: Casa da Cisterna, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo

Day 2. Birding in Douro Valley, Côa Valley Archaeological Park visit, Douro Valley wine tasting

We will have a leisurely start today with some birding in the beautiful Douro Valley. The Douro Valley is classically Mediterranean and the area around our hotel features iconic species of the region including **Spotless Starling**, **Black Redstart**, **Iberian Magpie**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Cirl Bunting**, and **Rock Bunting**.



The upper course of the Douro River Valley is breathtaking and is paradise for anyone interested in birds or geography.

Our focus for the day will be the area within the Parque Natural do Douro Internacional. We will travel east, right to the border with Spain, a beautiful area with rolling hills around the fertile river valley. Key species we will look for here include **Griffon Vulture, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Eurasian Crag Martin, Blue Rock Thrush, Common Kingfisher, Iberian Grey Shrike, Iberian Magpie, Thekla's Lark, Crested Lark, Dartford Warbler, European Serin, White-throated Dipper, Black Wheatear, and Hawfinch.**

In the afternoon we will visit the Côa Valley Archaeological Park where a local guide will show us the beautiful and fascinating Paleolithic rock art, dated to 25,000 years ago. You can read lots of information on this incredible site [here](#). Côa is home to thousands of examples of rock art and features horses, bovines, and other animals, along with human and abstract figures, and is sure to be an early tour highlight.

We will finish the day with wine tasting at the superb Quinta do Vale Meao, a classic Douro Valley vineyard of 98 hectares, with a variety of superb and famed wines, with olive oil to taste too.

Overnight: Casa da Cisterna, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo

Day 3. Transfer to the Alentejo (via Marvão)

Today we will make the journey south through the heartland of Portugal. We will break up the journey by visiting the ancient town of Marvão, a location featured in '1,000 Places to See Before You Die', a New York Times best seller. We will then continue our journey to Moura, where we will spend the next three nights.

Overnight: Hotel de Moura, Moura



Blue Rock Thrush is a common bird of mountain areas in Portugal and always a crowd favorite.



Seeing the ancient town of Marvão will be a cultural highlight of our tour (photo Lara Broom).

Day 4. Birding Cuba, visit to Évora World Heritage Site

Today we will begin by visiting the special protected area around the village of Cuba. This dry grassland habitat is home to some really special species, including **Great Bustard**, **Little Bustard**, **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, **Black-winged Kite**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Iberian Grey Shrike**, **Iberian Magpie**, **Red-legged Partridge**, **Corn Bunting**, and **Eurasian Hoopoe**.

Other species of note here include **Zitting Cisticola**, **Red-rumped Swallow**, **Red Kite**, **Crested Lark**, **Thekla's Lark**, **Northern Wheatear**, **Eurasian Blackcap**, and **Meadow Pipit**, while nearby wetlands should give us chances to see **Northern Shoveler**, **Red-crested Pochard**, **Common Pochard**, and **White Stork**.

In the afternoon we will visit the town of Évora, the town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, designated for its fantastically preserved Roman ruins. In the Middle Ages, the town reached its golden age as it became the residence of Portuguese kings. We will spend time exploring the town and taking in one of Portugal's cultural wonders.

Overnight: Hotel de Moura, Moura

Day 5. Birding Mourão, Herdade do Esporão wine tasting

Today we once again head east towards the Spanish border. We will begin by birding around the town of Mourão. This is an excellent area for raptors (birds of prey) with key targets including **Griffon Vulture**, **Cinereous Vulture**, **Black-winged Kite**, **Red Kite**, **Common Kestrel**, and **Common Buzzard** all occurring here. **Western Barn Owl** and **Little Owl** also occur and we will be sure to keep our eyes peeled for them too.



Black-winged Kite is a true grassland species and a stunning bird too.

The dry grassland here gives us another chance of seeing **Great Bustard**, **Little Bustard**, and **Black-bellied Sandgrouse**, as well as other exciting species like **Iberian Magpie**, **Eurasian Crag Martin**, **European Serin**, **Common Crane**, **Iberian Grey Shrike**, **Red-rumped Swallow**, **Sardinian Warbler**, **Calandra Lark**, **Mistle Thrush**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Corn Bunting**, **Eurasian Hoopoe**, and many others.

In the afternoon we will visit Herdade do Esporão for some more fantastic wine tasting, including their brand-new Monte Velho Rosé. We will also have dinner at the vineyard restaurant which prides itself on using local and seasonal produce for its menu.

Overnight: Hotel de Moura, Moura

Day 6. Birding at Castro Verde, transfer to Algarve

Today we will visit the area known as Castro Verde. Classic grassland species here are similar to those on previous days, but we also stand a good chance of adding the iconic **Bonelli's Eagle**, **Golden Eagle**, and **Spanish Imperial Eagle** while in the area. Other species of note here include **Hen Harrier**, **Common Chiffchaff**, **Spanish Sparrow**, **Black-winged Stilt**, **Little Owl**, **Common Kestrel**, **Western Marsh Harrier**, **Eurasian Stone-curlew**, **Cinereous Vulture**, **Short-toed Snake Eagle**, **Merlin**, **Great Egret**, **Western Yellow Wagtail**, **Kentish Plover**, **Whinchat**, **Black Stork**, **Dartford Warbler**, and **Eurasian Tree Sparrow**.

In the afternoon we will transfer to Alte on the Algarve, our base for the next three nights.

Overnight: Alte Hotel, Alte



Spanish Imperial Eagle is one of the jewels in the crown of Iberian birding. It is an eye-catching species and because it is a regional endemic it is also highly prized by visiting birders.

Day 7. Birding Ria Formosa Natural Park and Castro Marim

Today we will visit the Ria Formosa Natural Park (this site is also identified as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International and is a Ramsar site – a wetland of international importance). This fantastic coastal area is one of Portugal's most productive birding spots and the species list here is vast.

The following interesting species are possible: **Iberian Magpie, Booted Eagle, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Bluethroat, Western Subalpine Warbler, European Nightjar, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Black-winged Kite, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, European Bee-eater, Rock Sparrow, Melodious Warbler, and Woodchat Shrike.**

Today we will also take a boat trip around a section of the park to get us closer to the wonderful wetland birds found here, which include **Western Swamphen, Audouin's Gull, Slender-billed Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Eurasian Spoonbill, Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Duck, Red-knobbed Coot, Purple Heron, Little Bittern, Squacco Heron, and many others.**



Eurasian Spoonbill is one of the iconic species of the Algarve.

In the afternoon we will visit the vast Salinas Correodora near Castro Marim. This is a mecca for shorebirds (waders) with beautiful species like **Pied Avocet, Bar-tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank, Grey Plover, Common Greenshank, and Kentish Plover** being the main highlights. Other species of note here include **Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Spoonbill, Slender-billed Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Mediterranean Short-toed Lark, Common Kingfisher, Western Subalpine Warbler, Spectacled Warbler, Ortolan Bunting, Tawny Pipit, and Bluethroat.**

Overnight: Alte Hotel, Alte



Audouin's Gull is one of the world's rarer gulls and is classified as Vulnerable by BirdLife International.

Day 8. Birding Sagres and Cape St Vincent, visit to Fortaleza de Sagres, Monte da Casteleja wine tasting

Today we will travel west along the Algarve to Portugal's southwestern corner. Our first stop will be the open areas inland of Sagres where we will visit a well-known raptor (birds of prey) watchpoint. Here we will hope to come across many of our target species including **Griffon Vulture**, **Bonelli's Eagle**, **Egyptian Vulture**, and **Booted Eagle**. The area is also usually busy with many other species and is a real migrant hotspot, so we can expect a great range of species here.

We will then make the short journey to Cape St Vincent, a beautiful location and excellent for seabirds. Top species like **Cory's Shearwater** and **Pomarine Jaeger** can be close to shore and if conditions are favorable, we may even be able to see the Critically Endangered (BirdLife International) **Balearic Shearwater**. Many migrants can also be found in the scrubby habitat here during the fall, such as **Ring Ouzel**, **Common Blackbird**, **European Robin**, **Willow Warbler**, **Common Chiffchaff**, and **Eurasian Siskin**.

After the morning's birding session we will head to the nearby town of Sagres, where we will have lunch and explore the fascinating Sagres Fortress, a stunning headland area where we can combine culture, history, and some birding (at this time of year the joy of visible migration is very much in evidence and looking to the sky is often rewarding!). Later in the afternoon we will visit Monte da Casteleja for wine tasting of traditional Algarve wine. The grapes for this wine are grown using responsible organic agricultural techniques, which works directly with the environment.

Overnight: Alte Hotel, Alte



The excellent habitat around our raptor watchpoint at Sagres.

Day 9. Birding Lagoa dos Salgados, transfer to Lisbon, Ermelinda Freitas wine tasting

Today we will be birding in the central Algarve, at the bird rich Lagoa dos Salgados. This is another excellent area for relaxed birdwatching and should hold many migrants during our visit, as well as numerous interesting resident species. Species of interest here include **Red-knobbed Coot, Ferruginous Duck, Eurasian Spoonbill, Little Bittern, Mediterranean Gull, Audouin's Gull, Slender-billed Gull, Black-winged Kite, Iberian Magpie, Bluethroat, Eurasian Penduline Tit**, and many others.

In the afternoon we will head north towards Lisbon. This will see us arrive in good time at Ermelinda Freitas, our final vineyard visit of the tour. This vineyard is known for producing some of Portugal's most prestigious wines, winning numerous international and national awards and other accolades. After our wine tasting session, we will head into Lisbon itself and to our hotel for the final two nights of the tour.

Overnight: Praia do Sal Resort, Lisbon

Day 10. Birding Tagus Estuary, Fado dancing in the evening

Our final full day will be spent exploring the superb Tagus Estuary on the outskirts of Lisbon. This is one of Europe's premier birding locations and a must-visit for any Portuguese tour. Not only is it the largest estuary in western Europe, but it is also a staging area for hundreds of thousands of wintering and migrating wildfowl and shorebirds (waders).

The list of the more common species found here is vast but some of the highlights of the area include **Little Bustard, Glossy Ibis, Greater Flamingo, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, Marsh Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, Black-winged Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Bonelli's**

Eagle, Long-eared Owl, White-winged Tern, Savi's Warbler, Dartford Warbler, Iberian Magpie, Calandra Lark, European Stonechat, Eurasian Penduline Tit, Short-toed Trecreeper, Spotless Starling, Common Waxbill, and so much more.



The Tagus Estuary is packed full of waterbirds!

After a leisurely day exploring the Tagus Estuary, we will return to Lisbon for a final group dinner. Here we will experience the traditional Fado dancing of Lisbon, which provides a wonderful send-off after what is sure to have been an enjoyable tour through this enchanting country.

Overnight: Praia do Sal Resort, Lisbon

Day 11. Departure from Lisbon airport.

Sadly, it will now be time to depart Portugal from Lisbon Airport. After a final breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flights.

You could extend your stay in Europe by joining our **Greece: Fall Birding Adventure** tour which immediately precedes this tour to Portugal. Here we will explore the beautiful areas of northern Greece for key species like **Slender-billed Gull, Pygmy Cormorant, Dalmatian Pelican, Moustached Warbler, Ferruginous Duck, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Red-breasted Goose, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Alpine Accentor, Alpine Chough, Greater Spotted Eagle, Eastern Imperial Eagle, Cinereous Vulture, Rock Bunting, and Sombre Tit.**

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes must use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or reasons beyond our control.

Duration:	11 days / 10 nights
Group Size:	4 - 8
Dates:	04 - 14 November 2023 02 - 12 November 2024
Start:	Porto, Portugal
End:	Lisbon, Portugal
Prices:	€5,665 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2023) €TBC (we expect 2024 prices to be 5-10 % higher than 2023 prices) per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2024)
Single Supplements:	€75 (2023) €TBC (2024)

Price includes:

All accommodation in a premium 3-star standard or equivalent (Day 1 until Day 10 as described above, or similar)
Meals (from lunch on Day 1 until breakfast on Day 11, most dinners supplied at hotels)
Five wine tasting sessions
Drinking water in vehicle throughout – please bring a refillable water bottle
Expert tour leader
Local bird and wildlife guide fees
Birdwatching site entrance fees and travel permits
All ground transport and tolls/taxes while on tour, including airport drop-off at end of tour in Lisbon
Boat trip in Ria Formosa Natural Park
Visit to Côa Valley Archaeological Park

Price excludes:

Flights to and from Portugal (tour starts in Porto and ends in Lisbon)
Drinks at dinner
Expenditures due to flight cancellations/delays or other causes beyond our control (force majeure)
Visa fees, if visa required
Departure tax, if required
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls etc.

Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing excursions
Personal travel insurance
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))