

Portugal

Portugal is a quieter, calmer place than its exuberant neighbour, Spain. But it's far from dull. Thanks to the country's relative geographic isolation, Portugal has retained a strong and fascinating sense of identity and culture. In rural areas you still see women carrying shopping on their heads and, despite the increase in tourism, there are relatively few Tinseltown-style attractions or large hotel chains. More importantly, the coffee is still the best in Europe and it's not served in Styrofoam with cinnamon on top. The economic base is very traditional as well, based largely on fishing, wine and textiles. The flipside is that, although EU funding has vastly improved the infrastructure, Portugal is still a relatively poor country. At least Portugal's brand new president is good at arithmetic; ex-economist Cavaco Silva has vowed to work with Prime Minister Sócrates in making sweeping social, economic and educational reforms. Gulp. Let's hope he leaves the architecture and landscape well alone; this country is pure holiday-brochure cliché, with ancient stone villages, proud historic cities, and coastal resorts that still look more like seafaring towns than Glitzville-by-the-sea. Portugal is a bargain for travellers as well. You will find your euro goes a lot further here than elsewhere in Mediterranean Europe.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 92,389 sq km
- **Capital** Lisbon
- **Currency** euro (€); A\$1 = €0.60; ¥100 = €0.67; NZ\$1 = €0.50; UK£1 = €1.48; US\$1 = €0.78
- **Famous for** *fado* (songs), football, port, *azulejos* (tiles), salted cod
- **Official language** Portuguese
- **Phrases** *bom dia* (hello), *obrigado/a* (thank you), *desculpe* (excuse me), *adeus* (goodbye), *faz favor* (please)
- **Population** 10.4 million
- **Telephone codes** international access code ☎ 00; country code ☎ 34; reverse-charge code ☎ 120



HIGHLIGHTS

- Stroll around elegant and evocative **Sintra** (p634), the traditional summer resort of Portuguese kings, studded with fabulous palaces, villas and gardens.
- Step into a medieval film set and explore the tangle of narrow alleys and steep streets of Lisbon's **Alfama district** (p627).
- Don your colour-coordinated lycra wet-suit and pick up the pace by **windsurfing** (p656) in the rugged southwestern tip of the country.
- Browse through the Moorish-inspired backstreets of **Coimbra** (p645) university town, ducking into a *tasca* (small neighbourhood tavern) for a beer and student-priced snack.
- Conquer the trails of the wild and beautiful **Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês** (p654).

ITINERARIES

- **One week** Devote three days to Lisbon, including a night of *fado* (songs) in the Alfama and a trip to Belém. Then sidestep for a day in sumptuous Sintra. Carry on to Porto for two days, enjoying the tipples at the port lodges across the river. Wind up your week with a day in Óbidos, so pretty it was a royal wedding gift.
- **Two weeks** The same as for one week, plus two days in Unesco-listed Évora followed by a day in magical hilltop Monsaraz. Next, hit the road south to the Algarve (including a day each in Tavira, Lagos and Silves).

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Portugal has a sunny warm climate with mild winters. The midsummer heat can be sizzling in the Algarve, the Alentejo and in the upper Douro Valley, but tolerable elsewhere. The north is cold and wet in winter with snowfalls common in the Serra da Estrela. Avoid the Algarve's packed beach resorts in July and August. You can often save up to 50% for accommodation out of season (prices in this chapter are for peak season). See Climate Charts (p863) for more information.

HISTORY

Portugal has had a bouncy history of occupation and strife, stretching back to 700 BC when the Celts arrived on the Iberian Peninsula, followed by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans and Visigoths.

HOW MUCH?

- **Short black coffee** €0.60
- **Underground parking** €1 per hour
- **Herald Tribune newspaper** €2.50
- **Custard tart** €0.70
- **Budget hotel room** €35

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **1L unleaded petrol** €1.27
- **1L bottled water** €0.45
- **Beer** €1
- **Souvenir T-shirt** €6-10
- **Sandwich** €1.75

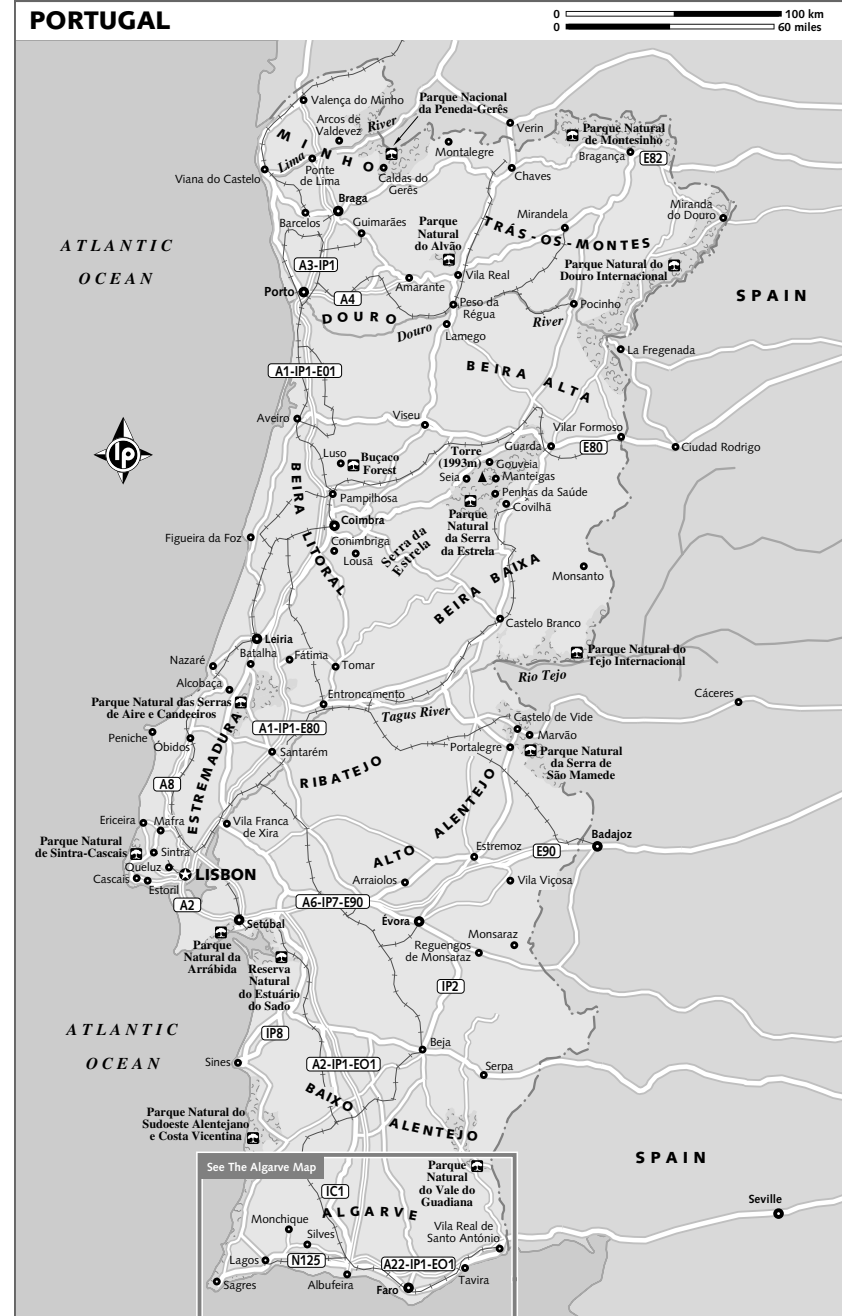
In the 8th century the Moors conquered Portugal. Arabic words filtered into the language and, today, their influence is evident in the culture, architecture and dark features of the people, particularly in the Algarve where the Moors established their capital in Silves. After the Christian conquest, new trade routes were discovered in the 15th century, creating an empire that extended to four continents and launched Lisbon as the wealthiest city in Europe. Portugal's Gothic-style Manueline architecture dates from this time. This period of opulence was short-lived; in 1580 Spain occupied the Portuguese throne for 90 years, and their imperial momentum was lost forever.

In 1755 a massive earthquake tragically destroyed most of Lisbon, followed around 50 years later by Napoleon's thwarted invasion, which further weakened the country. A period of civil war and political mayhem ensued, culminating in the abolition of the monarchy in 1910 and the founding of a democratic republic.

A 1926 military coup set the stage for the dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar until his death in 1970. Discontent with his regime and a ruinous war in Africa led to a peaceful military coup on 25 April 1974.

The subsequent granting of independence to Portugal's African colonies produced a flood of nearly a million refugees into the country. Their influence is reflected in the music and food, especially in Lisbon and Porto.

PORTUGAL



Flush with new funds, Portugal's entry into the EU in 1986 resulted in radical economic reforms and unprecedented economic growth. However, this opulence was short-lived and the early 1990s saw crippling corruption charges, rising inflation and a faltering economy recession.

Expo '98 gave the country a boost, and triggered vast transport and communications projects. This was further advanced by Porto's status as European Capital of Culture in 2001, followed in 2004 by Portugal hosting the Euro 2004 football championships. The latter resulted in a vast injection of funds into the country's infrastructure. Unfortunately, this economic surge was brief and 2005 saw an external deficit of between 7% and 10% and a GDP around three-quarters the EU average. Hopefully right-wing president Cavaco Silva, elected in January 2006, can assist the socialist government in turning the situation around. The fact he is a former economist may just help.

Meanwhile, 2005 saw the worst drought in living memory, devastating agriculture and slashing the sector's financial projections by 35%. It was a critical year for bushfires as well, with 200,000 hectares (about 494,000 acres) burned, mainly in the central Coimbra region and surrounds.

PEOPLE

Portugal's population of 10.4 million excludes the estimated three million Portuguese living abroad, but includes the considerable number of African and Brazilian immigrants. Since May 2004 there has also been an influx of new immigrants from central and Eastern Europe. Foreign residents number approximately 225,000, and are primarily northern Europeans seeking the sunshine of the Algarve.

RELIGION

Portugal is around 95% Roman Catholic; other Christian denominations make up much of the remaining population, as well as many Muslims and a small number of Jews.

ARTS Music

The best-known form of Portuguese music is the melancholy, nostalgic songs called *fado* (literally 'fate') said to have originated from troubadour and African slave songs.

The late Amália Rodrigues was the Edith Piaf of Portuguese *fado*. Today it is Mariza who has captured the public's imagination with her extraordinary voice and fresh contemporary image. Awarded 2004 Portuguese Personality of the Year, her 2005 release *Transparente* was a big worldwide seller. Lisbon's Alfama district has plenty of *fado* houses (p627), ranging from the grandiose and tourist-conscious to small family affairs.

Architecture

Unique to Portugal is Manueline architecture, named after its patron King Manuel I (1495–1521). It symbolises the zest for discovery of that era and is hugely flamboyant, characterised by fantastic spiralling columns and elaborate carving and ornamentation.

Visual Arts

Portugal's stunning painted *azulejo* tiles coat contemporary life, covering everything from houses to churches. The art form dates from Moorish times and reached a peak in the late 19th century when the Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements provided fantastic façades and interiors. Lisbon has its very own *azulejo* museum (p627).

ENVIRONMENT

The Land

Portugal is one of Europe's smallest countries, stretching just 563km from north to south and 220km at its widest east–west point. The country is bordered on the north and east by Spain and on the south and west by the Atlantic.

Wildlife

Portugal is home to the most endangered big cat in the world, the Iberian lynx, as well as a rare beast in the dog family, the rusty-coloured Iberian wolf. However, you are far more likely to come across foxes, deer, otters or even wild boars. Bird enthusiasts will be kept very happy with a vast range of species, including storks, eagles and among the wetland species, flamingos, spoonbills and egrets, which can be seen in natural parks like Ria Formosa (p638).

National Parks

Portugal has 25 natural parks, nature reserves and protected landscape areas. These

areas total approximately 6500 sq km – just over 7% of Portugal's land area. There are 13 World Heritage Sites in Portugal. Check them out on the Web at <http://whc.unesco.org>.

Environmental Issues

Portugal has been suffering from its worst drought in decades with devastating losses to livestock and agriculture. In many parts of the country, January 2005 was the driest January in more than 100 years. Travellers are urged to be prudent in hotels: don't send your towels for a daily wash and take showers, never a bath. Continuing on a watery theme, the criticism concerning the 2002 Alqueva dam near Beja continues. To create the dam, Europe's largest artificial lake, over a million oak and olive trees were cut down and some 160 rocks covered with Stone Age drawings were submerged. On a more positive note, Portugal has fast come up to speed in the recycling department with colour-coded receptacles in every town and city.

FOOD & DRINK

In the larger towns and cities in this chapter, restaurants are divided into budget (€2 to €7), midrange (€8 to €12) and top end (€13 to €20) for the average price of a main dish.

Staples & Specialities

Portuguese cuisine is home-style cooking rather than *haute cuisine*. Seafood is the national favourite, especially *caldeirada* (seafood stew), *sardinhas assadas* (grilled sardines) and the omnipresent *bacalhau* (dried cod), reputedly prepared in some 365 ways.

Meat dishes can be a letdown; consider going for the splurge with *leitão* (roast suckling pig). Chicken is best when barbecued and *piri-piri* (chilli) sauce livens up the simplest dish.

Diet-defying cafés and *pastelarias* (pastry shops) are everywhere in Portugal and offer splendid desserts and cakes.

Portuguese coffee is excellent in even the grungiest bar. A small black espresso is known as a *bica* in the south and elsewhere simply as a *café*. Half coffee, half milk is *café com leite*. Local *cerveja* (beer) includes Sagres in the south and Super Bock in the north.

Portuguese *vinho* (wine) offers excellent value in all its varieties: *tinto* (red), *branco* (white) and *vinho verde* (semi-sparkling young), which is usually white. Restaurants often serve drinkable *vinho da casa* (house wine) for as little as €2.50 per 350ml jug. Port, synonymous with Portugal, is produced in the Douro Valley to the east of Porto.

Where to Eat & Drink

The line between snacks and meals is blurred. For full meals try a *tasca*, a *restaurante cervejaria* (bar-restaurant) or a *marisqueira* (seafood restaurant). Lunch time typically lasts from noon to 3pm, and evening meals from 7pm to 10.30pm.

The *prato do dia* (dish of the day) is often a bargain, as is the *ementa turística* (tourist menu). Be very wary of the *couvert* (the bread, cheese, butter, olives and other tidbits at the start of a meal): they cost extra. You can send them back without causing offence. All restaurants in this chapter are open daily for lunch (noon to 3pm) and dinner (7pm to 10pm) unless otherwise noted.

Vegetarians & Vegans

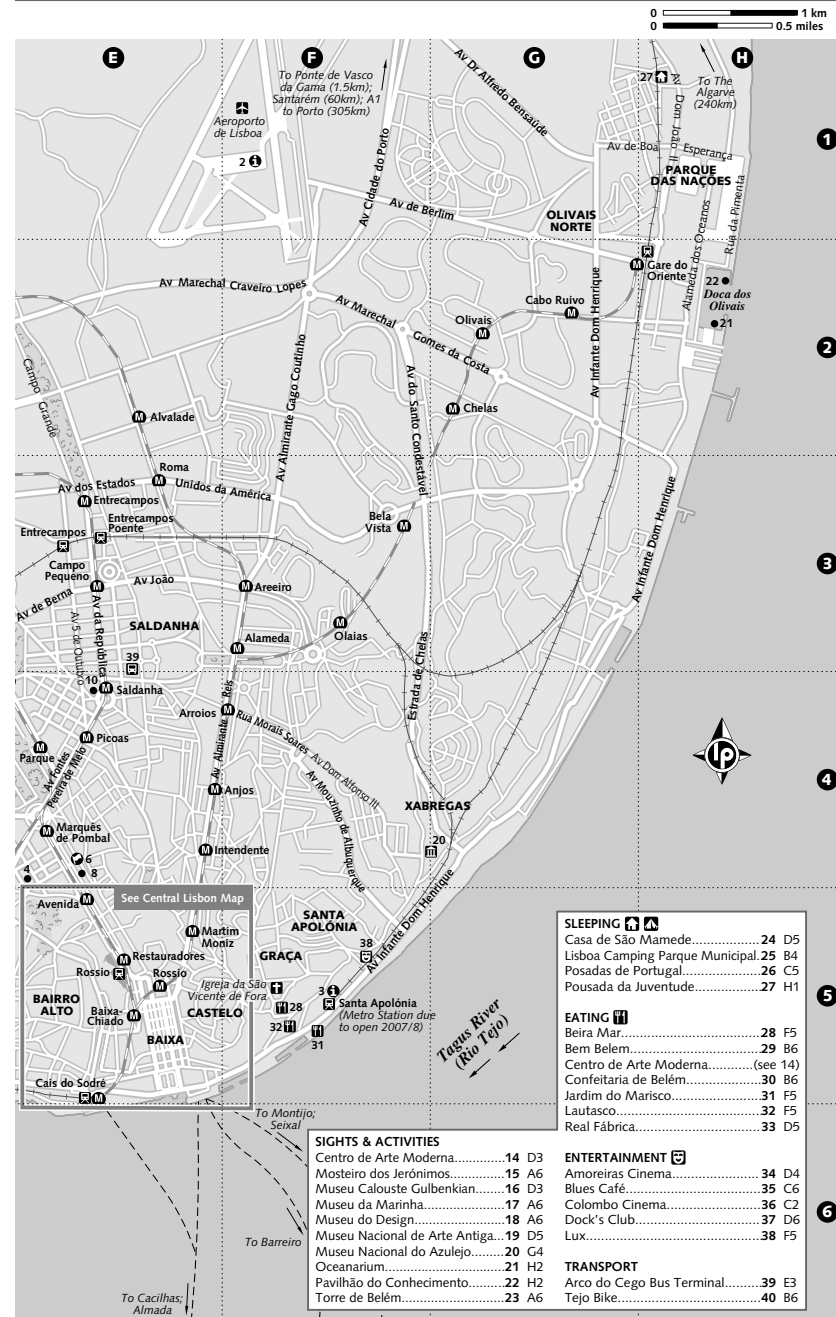
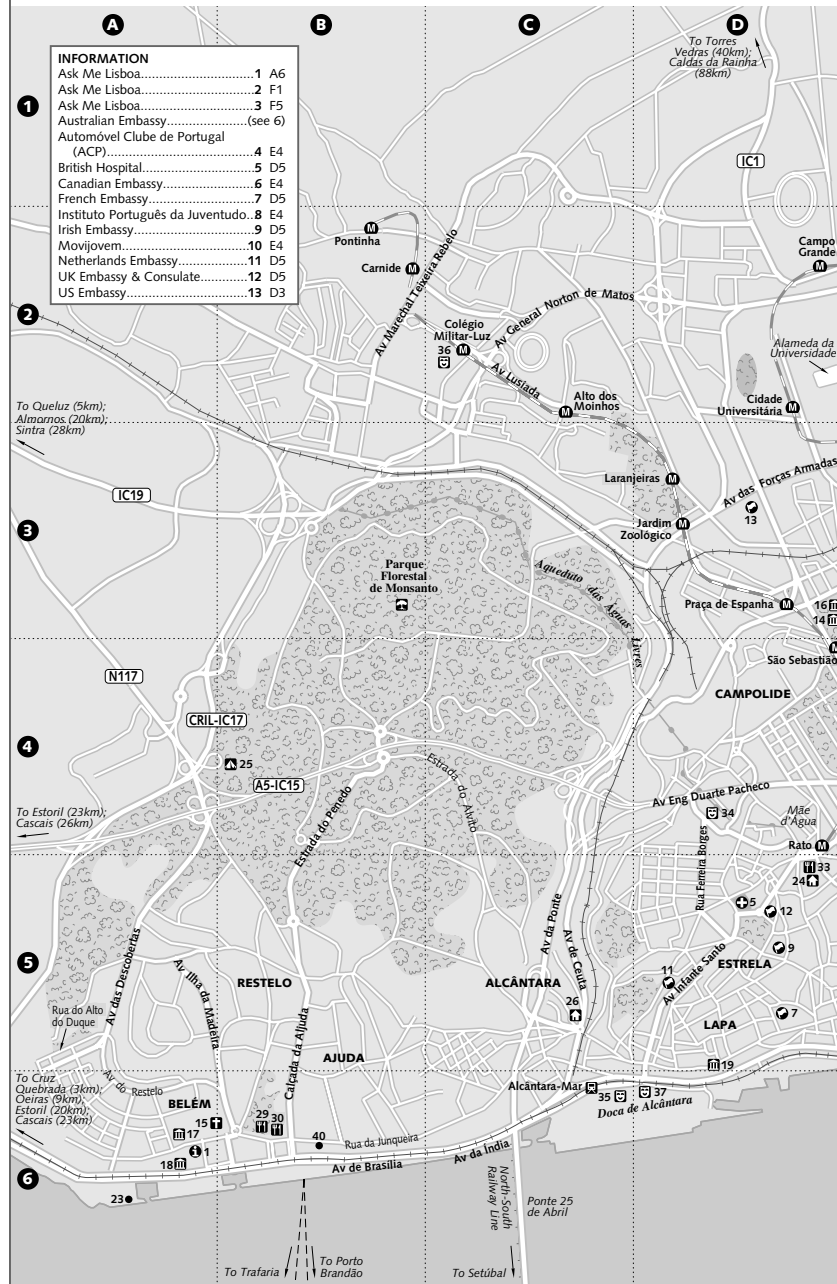
The typical Portuguese menu is tough on vegetarians, although the ubiquitous *sopa de legumes* (vegetable soup) is often included as a starter, together with the inevitable *salada* (salad). In general, the only other option (for vegetarians) is an *omeleta simple* (plain omelette) or the marginally more exciting *omeleta com queijo* (cheese omelette). Vegans have an even tougher time, although Chinese restaurants are fairly common and always have plenty of meat- and dairy-free options.

LISBON

pop 720,000

Lisbon has a seductive melancholy charm and is more like a large town than a capital city. It's small enough to walk or, if you're all blistered out, you can always hop on one of the vintage street trams that shudder up and down the hills. The city is a heady mix of crumbling pastel-coloured houses, grand squares and a maze of narrow lanes and alleys. Spread over seven hills on the Rio Tejo

LISBON



and crowned by a castle, the modern centre is contrasted by the Alfama's medieval tangle of cobbled streets.

Providing you avoid the obvious tourist-touting places, you won't need to stress your wallet on food or accommodation here. We can't vouch for the spoilt-for-choice night-life however. That is one aspect of town that has a definite big-city buzz.

ORIENTATION

Baixa is the modern city centre with its grid of streets and huge square to the south, Praça do Comércio. To the north stands Praça Dom Pedro IV, better known as Rossio square, surrounded by cafés, bars and shops. Chiado and Bairro Alto districts lie above the Baixa to the west. The Chiado is the affluent quarter with sophisticated shops, restaurants and cafés, while the atmospheric Bairro Alto is famed for its lively nightlife.

Alfama, northeast of the Baixa, is the oldest part of Lisbon with its warren of medieval streets plunging from the castle to the river.

Belém, a peaceful suburb 6km west of Rossio, is home to the magnificent Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, and several other historical sights.

Saldanha district is around a kilometre northeast of Marquês de Pombal; it has a couple of great museums and a metro stop, but not much else.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

English Bookshop (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 428 472; Rua de São Marçal 83) Has a good range of English books.

Discount Cards

The Lisboa Card is a cost-saving pass that covers travel on the metro, Carris buses, some trains, all trams and lifts, as well as admission to 28 museums, historic buildings and other places of interest. There's also discounted entry to about 40 other attractions. You can buy the Lisboa Card at the airport, tourist offices and from travel agencies. The 24-/48-/72-hour versions cost €13.50/23/28.

Internet Access

Cyber Bica (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 225 004; Rua Duques de Bragança; per hr €3; ☎ noon-2am Mon-Fri, 7pm-2am Sat)

Lisboa Welcome Center (Map pp628-9; ☎ 210 312 810; 2nd fl, Praça do Comércio; per hr €3; ☎ 9am-8pm)
Web Café (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 421 181; Rua do Diário de Notícias 126; per hr €3; ☎ 2pm-2am)

Emergency

Police station (Map pp628-9; Rua Capelo)

Tourist police post (Map pp628-9; Rossia train station)

Medical Services

The rotation of emergency, night service and Sunday schedules are posted on the door of all pharmacies.

British Hospital (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 955 067; Rua Saraiva de Carvalho 49) English-speaking staff and dental care available.

Farmácia Estácio (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 211 390; Rossio 62) Good central pharmacy.

Money

Cota Câmbios (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 220 470; Rossio 41) One of the best exchange rates in town.

Post

Main Post office (Map pp628-9; Praça do Comércio; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Handles post restante collection.

Post office (Map pp628-9; Praça dos Restauradores; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) This second branch is opposite the ICEP tourist office.

Telephone

Portugal Telecom (Map pp628-9; Rossio 68) Telephone booths available and phonecards for sale.

Tourist Information

Ask Me Lisboa kiosks Belém (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 658 435) At the entrance to the monastery; Lisbon airport (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 450 660); Palácio Foz (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 463 314; Praça dos Restauradores); Santa Apolónia train station (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 821 606) All kiosks have free maps and the bimonthly guide *Follow Me Lisboa*, and sell the Lisboa Card.

Gay & Lesbian Community Center (Centro Comunitário Gay e Lésbico de Lisboa; Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 873 918; Rua de São Lazaro 88; ☎ 5-9pm Mon-Sat) Has gay-friendly info on bars, restaurants and clubs. Also check websites: www.ilga-portugal.org and www.portugal.gay.pt.

ICEP tourist office (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 463 314; www.askmelisboa.com; Palácio Foz, Praça dos Restauradores) Deals with national inquiries.

Lisboa Welcome Center (Map pp628-9; ☎ 210 312 810; www.vistilisboa.com; Praça do Comércio) Concentrates on Lisbon.

SIGHTS

Lisbon has an enviable roll call of sights that can be explored by foot. Alternatively, hop on the funicular, tram or metro. Admission is usually half-price for children, students and seniors, and free for everyone on Sundays.

Alfama

This ancient district resembles a medieval blockbuster set with its moody maze of twisted alleys and steeply slanted streets. The terrace at **Largo das Portas do Sol** provides the souvenir snapshot of the city.

Casa do Fado (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 823 470; Largo do Chafariz de Dentro 1; adult/child €2.50/1.25; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-5.30pm) provides vibrant audiovisual coverage of the history of *fado* from its working-class roots to a recreated *fado* house.

Dating from Visigothic times, **Castelo de São Jorge** (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 800 620; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 9am-9pm Mar-Oct, to 6pm Nov-Feb) sits high above the city with spine-tingling views. If you can't hack the hike, take bus 37 from Rossio or tram 28 from Largo Martim Moniz.

Belém

This quarter 6km west of the Rossio is a grand canvas reflecting Portugal's Golden Age and is home to Lisbon's most emblematic religious building. It has a mellow vibe with chairs on squares and reputedly the best *pastéis de nata* (custard tarts) in the country (see p632).

To reach Belém take the train, bus 28 from Praça do Comércio, or tram 15 from Praça da Figueira.

Mosteiro dos Jerónimos (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 620 034; Praça do Império; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) dates from 1496 and is a soaring extravaganza of Manueline architecture with stunning carvings and ceramic tiles.

The **Museu do Design** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 612 934; Praça do Império; adult/child €3/1.75; ☎ 11am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun) has a cutting-edge collection dating from the 1930s, covering Art Deco and Frank Gehry recycled pieces from the '70s.

The **Torre de Belém** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 620 034; admission €3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) symbolises the voyages that made Portugal powerful and is the tourist icon of Portugal. Brave the tiny steps to the turret peak for the natural high of panoramic views.

LISBON IN TWO DAYS

Kick-start your day with a coffee at **Café a Brasileira** (p632) in Baixa. Next, explore Alfama and the **Castelo de São Jorge** (left). Grab a bite, then tram it to Belém and the **Mosteiro dos Jerónimos** (left). Return to Bairro Alto for dinner at **Cervejeira da Trindade** (p631). Check out the bars here before boogying down to super-cool nightclub **Lux** (p632). The next day, catch a train to **Sintra** (p634), returning in time to watch a **fado show** (p632).

A must for old salts is the **Museu da Marinha** (Maritime Museum; Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 620 019; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 5pm Oct-Mar), with all kinds of seafaring paraphernalia including model ships.

Saldanha

The celebrated **Museu Calouste Gulbenkian** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 217 823 461; Ave de Berna 45; adult/child €3/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; ☎ Praça de Espanha) has a superb collection donated by a wealthy Armenian philanthropist. There are Egyptian, Asian, Greek and Islamic artefacts and contemplative paintings by such beret-and-smock masters as Renoir, Rembrandt and Monet.

Lisbon's **Centro de Arte Moderna** (Modern Art Centre; Map pp624-5; ☎ 217 823 474; Rua Dr Nicaulau de Bettencourt; adult/child €3/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; ☎ Praça de Espanha) is prettily approached via the gardens. Enjoy most of the biggies from Portugal's modern-art scene, including London-based Paula Rego whose childhood in Portugal is strongly reflected in her haunting and theatrical themes. Check out the excellent restaurant (see p631).

Santa Apolónia & Lapa

The following two museums are a sidestep away from the city centre, but well worth the extra shoe leather.

The **Museu Nacional do Azulejo** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 100 340; Rua Madre de Deus 4; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun, 2-6pm Tue) languishes in a sumptuous 17th-century convent. Exhibits include a fascinating 36m tile panel of pre-quake Lisbon.

The **Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga** (Ancient Art Museum; Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 962 825; Rua das Janelas Verdes; admission €3; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun, 2-6pm Tue)

CENTRAL LISBON

INFORMATION (see 7)

Ask Me Lisboa.....	(see 7)
Cola Cântaros.....	1 D3
Cyber Bica.....	2 C4
English Bookshop.....	3 A2
Farmácia Estácio.....	4 D3
Gay & Lesbian Community Centre.....	5 E1
German Embassy.....	6 D1
ICEP Tourist Office.....	7 C2
Lisboa Welcome Center.....	8 D5
Main Post Office.....	9 D5
Police Station.....	10 D4
Portugal Telecom.....	11 D3
Post Office.....	12 D2
Spanish Embassy.....	13 C1
Tourist Police Post.....	14 C2
Web Café.....	15 C3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Carris.....	16 D3
Casa do Fado.....	17 F4
Castelo de São Jorge.....	18 F3
Largo das Portas do Sol.....	19 F3
Transtejo.....	(see 73)

SLEEPING

Hotel Anjo Azul.....	20 B3
Hotel Britania.....	21 C1
Pensão Globo.....	22 C3
Pensão Imperial.....	23 D2
Pensão Londres.....	24 C2
Pensão Norte.....	25 E3
Pensão Residencial 13 da Sorte.....	26 B1
Pensão Residencial Gerês.....	27 E3
Residencial Duas Nações.....	28 D4
Residencial Florescente.....	29 D2
Residencial Insulana.....	30 D3
Sé Guest House.....	31 F4

EATING

A Outra Face da Lua.....	32 E3
Arco do Castelo.....	33 F3
Casa Suíça.....	34 D3
Cervejaria da Trindade.....	35 C3
Gandhi Palace.....	36 E4
La Caffè.....	37 C1
Leão d'Ouro.....	38 D3
Mercado da Ribeira.....	39 B5
Os Tibetanos.....	40 B1
Pap 'Acorda.....	41 C3
Pingo Doce Supermarket.....	42 D3
Restaurante Floresta da Cidadã.....	43 C3
Restaurante O Sol.....	44 D3
Restaurante Sinal Vermelho.....	45 C3
Rosa da Rua.....	46 B2

DRINKING

A Ginjinha.....	47 D3
Café a Brasileira.....	48 C4
Café Nicola.....	49 D3
Café Vertigo.....	50 D3

ENTERTAINMENT

ABEP Ticket Kiosk.....	53 D2
Adega do Ribatejo.....	54 C4
Adega Machado.....	55 C3
Discoteca Jamaica.....	56 C5
Finalmente.....	57 B2
Hot Clube de Portugal.....	58 C1

SHOPPING

Ó Gilins Irish Pub.....	59 C5
Portas Largas.....	60 C3
Tertúlia.....	61 C3
Trumps.....	62 A2
Fabrica Sant'Ana.....	63 C4
Grandes Armazens do Chiado.....	64 D4
Moy Garrafeira.....	65 B2
Santos Offícios.....	66 E4

TRANSPORT

Cais de Alfândega Ferry Terminal.....	67 E5
Cais do Sodré Ferry Terminal.....	68 C6
Elevador da Bica.....	69 B4
Elevador da Clória.....	70 C2
Elevador de Lavra.....	71 D2
Elevador de Santa Justa.....	72 D3
Terreiro do Paço Ferry Terminal.....	73 E5

is in Lapa, Lisbon's moneyed diplomatic quarter, and houses a ripping collection of works by Portuguese painters.

Parque das Nações

The former Expo '98 site, a revitalised 2km-long waterfront area in the northeast, equals a family-fun day out. It includes a whopping **Oceanarium** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 917 002; www.oceanario.pt; adult/child €10/5; 🕒 10am-7pm; **M** Oriente), Europe's largest, and **Pavilhão do Conhecimento** (Living Science Centre; Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 917 100; adult/child €5/2.50; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-7pm Sat & Sun; **M** Oriente) with over 300 interactive exhibits for kids of all ages. Take the metro to Oriente station – an equally impressive Expo project.

Alcântara

The old wharves have been slickly revamped into a gilded strip of bars and restaurants with tables sprawling out onto the promenade. After your blow-out brunch, enjoy a waterfront stroll to Belém.

TOURS

Carris (Map pp628-9; ☎ 966 298 558; www.carris.pt; Praça da Figueira; adult/child from €14/8) Offers various bus, tram and walking tours.

Transtejo (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 820 348; www.transtejo.pt; Terreiro do Paço ferry terminal; adult/child €20/8; 🕒 Mar-Oct) Runs cruises on the Tagus. There are great views of the city from this watery perspective.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The **Festa do Santo António** (Festival of Saint Anthony), from 12 June to 13 June, culminates the three-week **Festas de Lisboa**, with processions and dozens of street parties.

SLEEPING

Prices listed are high season (July to mid-September) when it is advisable to reserve ahead.

Baixa & Alfama

Beira Mar (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 871 528; Largo Terreiro do Trigo 16; s/d with shared bathroom €25/35) The river location and views create an ambience of luxury accommodation for bargain-basement prices.

Pensão Imperial (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 420 166; 4th fl, Praça dos Restauradores 78; s/d with shared bathroom €25/35; **M** Restauradores) Located a short suitcase trundle from the main square, readers have

raved about this cheery place with its charismatic owner and spotless comfortably-worn rooms.

Residencial Insulana (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 423 131; www.insulana.cjb.net; Rua da Assunção 32; s/d €45/50; ☎; (M) Baixa) Ignore the shabby entrance, this is a real value-for-money place with good-sized carpeted rooms, satellite TV and a buzzy location in the heart of Baixa.

Residencial Florescente (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 463 517; www.residencialflorescente.com; Rua das Portas de Santo Antão 99; s/d/t €45/55/70; ☎; (P); (M) Restauradores) A popular hotel on pedestrian cobles surrounded by bars, restaurants and streetlife. Rooms are light and bright with satellite TV and wi-fi coverage.

Pensão Residencial Gerês (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 810 497; www.pensaogerres.com; Calçada do Garcia 6; s/d with shared bathroom €50/60; ☎; (M) Rossio) A family-run place with some English, plus religious pics, traditional tiles and fussy comfortable rooms. Go for corner room 105 with its five-star views.

Sé Guest House (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 864 400; 2nd fl, Rua São João da Praça 97; d €70) Owner Luis is a keen traveller and cultural buff, hence the intriguing clutter of global artefacts. There are neck-craning cathedral views from several of the romantic rooms.

Also recommended are:

Pensão Norte (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 878 941; 2nd fl, Rua dos Douradores 159; d €45, with shared bathroom €35)

Residencial Duas Nações (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 460 710; Rua da Vitória 41; s/d €35/45, with shared bathroom €25/30)

Avenida de Liberdade

Pensão Residencial 13 da Sorte (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 539 746; www.trezedasorte.no.sapo.pt; Rua do Salitre 13; s/d/t €40/50/60; ☎; (M) Avenida) A popular place on a slumbering side street, with shiny tiled floors and pretty blue-and-white rooms with fridges.

Hotel Britania (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 155 016; www.heritage.pt; Rua Rodrigues Sampaio 17; s/d €215/235; ☎; (P) ☎; (M) Avenida) Classic Art Deco touches and massive luxury rooms in this go-for-the-splurge hotel, a short walk from the centre.

Bairro Alto & Saldanha

Pensão Globo (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 462 279; www.pglobo.com; Rua do Teixeira 37; s/d €20/30; ☎) Run by friendly English-speaking folk, Globo is a no-frills cheapie. Go for rooms 301, 302

or 303 with large windows overlooking the leafy street.

Hotel Anjo Azul (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 478 069; http://anjoazul.cb2web.com; Rua Luz Soriano 75; s/d €45/55; ☎; (M) Rossio) The city's first gay hotel is located in a tidy blue-and-white tiled 18th-century townhouse, a short shimmy from the Bairro Alto's gay bar district. The rooms are colourful, upbeat and modern.

Pensão Londres (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 462 203; www.pensaolondres.com.pt; Rua Dom Pedro V 53; s/d/t €50/75/90) This friendly and popular place has old-fashioned appeal with large, high-ceiling, carpeted rooms. Those on the 4th floor have camera-clicking views of the city.

Casa de São Mamede (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 963 166; fax 213 951 896; Rua Escola Politécnica 159; s/d €75/80; ☎) A soothing stay in 18th-century surroundings; this former magistrate's house has gorgeous original tiles and elegant antiques-clad rooms.

Greater Lisbon

Lisboa Camping Parque Municipal (Map pp624-5; ☎ 217 623 100; Parque Florestal de Monsanto; camp sites €5) This is a leafy spot 6km northwest of town. Take bus 43 from Cais do Sodré.

Pousada da Juventude (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 920 890; Via de Moscavide; dm/d €15/42; (M) Picoas) This place is the pick of the hostels, with good rooms plus restaurant, cooking and laundry facilities.

EATING

Unsurprisingly, seafood is widely available here and locals have an insatiable appetite for all things Brazilian, including *feijoada* (bean stew) and the daily dose of soap operas. Presentation is not a strong point, think generous portions rather than tower building and drizzle. Avoid tourist rip-offs like some of the energetic restaurants on Baixa's Correeiros. The Bairro Alto has some good-value eateries, while the Alfama has some of the most characterful restaurants, but can be touristy on the main castle route. The **Mercado da Ribeira** (Av da 24 de Julho; ☎ 5am-2pm Mon-Sat), is near Cais do Sodré station.

Baixa & Alfama

Pingo Doce (Map pp628-9; Rua de Dezembro 73; (M) Rossio) A good central supermarket, with a handy health-food shop with vegetarian buffet right next door.

A Outra Face da Lua (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 863 430; Rua da Assunção 22; snacks €3; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat; (M) Rossio) Shop for vintage threads then check out the natty café with its salad range, sandwiches and healthy snacks.

Casa Suíça (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 214 090; Praça Dom Pedro IV 96-104; snacks from €3; ☎ closed Mon; (M) Rossio) A wood-panelled classic with adorably-named cream cakes like *susanas* and kisses, plus savoury rolls.

Restaurante O Sol (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 471 944; Calçada do Duque 23; mains €2.50-5; (M) Rossio) A macrobiotic and vegetarian restaurant up steep steps, with heady castle views and healthy soy-burger-style bites.

Arco do Castelo (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 876 598; Rua do Chão da Feira 25; mains €7) Surprisingly reasonable considering the ace position across from the castle, the curries at this Indo-Portuguese restaurant tick all the right succulent/spicy boxes.

Lautasco (Map pp624-5; Beco do Azinhal 7-7A; mains €9; ☎) Full points for atmosphere with seating on a secluded square in the shade of a magnificent rubber tree. The usual suspects are on the menu, including cod fritters and *bacalhau*.

Gandhi Palace (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 873 839; Rua dos Douradores 214-216; mains €8; (M) Baixa-Chiado) Good central choice for those suffering from curry-house withdrawal; the mango milk shake is a must. If you like it hot, ask – local tastes are mild.

Jardim do Marisco (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 824 242; Av Infante Dom Henrique, Doca Jardim do Tabaco; mains €10; ☎) In an ideal river-side setting for a spot of refuelling, this large airy warehouse conversion has a diverse menu of grilled meats, seafood and pasta, plus cut-price kiddie choices.

Leão d'Ouro (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 426 195; Rua 1 de Dezembro 105; mains €18; ☎; (M) Rossio) With a gracious interior of arches and tiles, classic dishes include *feijoada*. Be warned, there are several aquariums here so your dinner may just be watching you.

Avenida de Liberdade

Os Tibetanos (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 142 038; Rua do Salitre 117; mains from €6; ☎ closed Sat & Sun; ☎; (M) Avenida) Doubles as a Tibetan Buddhist school with Zen-style surroundings, a leafy patio and a diverse meatless menu; try the Japanese mushrooms with seaweed and tofu.

Centro de Arte Moderna (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 256 736; Rua Dr Nicalaul de Bettencourt; mains €8; ☎ lunch Tue-Sun; (M) Praça de Espanha) The restaurant at this museum has a tasty lunchtime buffet with more salad choice than you can shake a carrot stick at, plus good value meat and fish mains.

Real Fábrica (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 852 090; Rua da Escola Politécnica 275; mains from €8; (M) Rato) This cool, if self-conscious, converted silk factory produces elegant, interesting food with an emphasis on seafood.

La Caffé (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 256 736; Av de Liberdade 129B; mains €10; ☎ 12.30-3.30pm & 8pm-11pm Tue-Sun; ☎; (M) Restauradores) Upbeat minimalist décor plus free internet, giant fashion-TV screens and a creative twist on Med cuisine, like chicken curry risotto and ricotta mousse with honey, spices and *rucula* (rocket).

Bairro Alto & Saldanha

Cervejaria da Trindade (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 423 506; Rua Nova da Trindade 20C; mains €7; (M) Baixa-Chiado) This vaulted restaurant has fairly pedestrian food, but the setting, in a former convent with dazzling tile work, provides serious food for thought.

Rosa da Rua (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 432 195; Rua da Rosa 265; mains €8-10; ☎ closed Mon) A stylish eatery with minimalist metal-and-stone interior, this restaurant has an innovative menu of dishes, including fried pork with chestnuts and steak with peanut butter sauce.

Restaurante Sinal Vermelho (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 461 252; Rua das Gáveas 89; mains €8.50-11.50; ☎ closed Sat lunch & Sun; ☎) This elegant restaurant on a cobbled corner is decorated with breezy-blue *azulejos* and shelves of dusty bottles. The menu is reassuringly traditional with eight varieties of grilled fish and the like.

Pap'Acorda (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 464 811; Rua da Atalaia 57-59; mains €12-15; ☎ closed Sun & Mon; ☎) Lisbon luvvies lord it up in this former bakery now hung with thick curtains and chandeliers. The house speciality is various takes on *acorda*, a type of purée with lashings of coriander and garlic.

Restaurante Floresta da Cidade (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 460 621; Travessa Poço da Cidade 10-12; mains from €15) Eat in the tiled and palm-fringed terrace, choosing from a reassuringly brief menu, including meat and fish dishes topped off with creamy mango mousse.

Belém

Confeitaria de Belém (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 637 423; Rua de Belém 86-88) A classically tiled and elegant café with reputedly the best *pastéis de nata* in Portugal. Delicious!

Bem Belém (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 648 768; Rua Vieira Portuense 72; mains €8; ☹ closed Sun) This popular meet-and-greet place serves simple calorie-stoking food including mixed kebabs and squid with shrimps. Eat al fresco overlooking the park.

DRINKING

Lisbon delivers the goods for caffeine and calorie junkies with sumptuous Art Deco cafés, particularly around Bairro Alto and Rossio. The bars in Alcântara and Oriente areas attract a well-heeled set while Alfama has plenty of gluggable choices, including moodily low-lit places for cocktail hour.

Café Nicola (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 460 579; Rossio 24; ☹ 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 10am-7pm Sun; ☑ Rossio) A world apart from the cookie-cutter homogeneity of the international chains, this Art Deco café is a past winner of the Café of the Year award and has a sumptuous interior – and cakes.

Martinho da Arcada (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 866 213; Praça do Comércio 3; ☹ 8am-11pm Mon-Sat; ☑ Baixa-Chiado) Grab a coffee at the former haunt of Pessoa and sit at a table under the arches.

Café a Brasileira (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 469 547; Rua Garrett 120; ☹ 8am-2pm; ☑ Baixa-Chiado) Another historic watering hole for Lisbon's 19th-century greats, with warm wooden innards and a busy counter serving daytime coffees and pints at night.

A Ginjinha (Map pp628-9; Largo de Domingos; ☑ Rossio) A quirky gem of a place specialising in powerful *ginjinha* (cherry brandy); buy a mini tumbler for just €0.70.

Solar do Vinho do Porto (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 475 707; Rua São Pedro de Alcântara 45; ☹ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat) Expect red carpet treatment with squishy chairs and a lengthy list of quaffing port.

Café Vertigo (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 423 112; Travessa do Carmo 4; ☹ 10am-late) A favourite of the young literary set, this place has a bohemian buzz with a fabulous stained glass ceiling, plus newspapers and chess for kick-back time.

ENTERTAINMENT

Pick up the free monthly *Follow me Lisboa*, the *Agenda Cultural Lisboa* or quarterly *Lisboa Step By Step* from the tourist office for

what's on. Check out www.visitlisboa.com (Lisbon tourist office website) and www.lisboacultural.pt (for cultural events).

Live Music

Adega Machado (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 224 640; Rua do Norte 91; ☹ 8.30pm-3am Tue-Sun) Earthy and authentic, run by Rita, goddaughter of the legendary Amália Rodrigues; the walls are papered with signed photos of *fado* enthusiasts – including Kirk Douglas.

Adega do Ribatejo (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 468 343; Rua Diário de Notícias 23; ☹ 8.30pm-12.30am Mon-Sat) A dark atmospheric place with high-standard nightly *fado*.

Hot Clube de Portugal (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 467 369; Praça da Alegria 39; ☹ 10pm-2am Tue-Sat; ☑ Avenida) Hot, sweaty and packed with nightly gigs and raw new jazz sounds.

O Gilíns Irish Pub (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 421 899; Rua dos Remolares 8-10; ☹ 10am-2am; ☑ Cais do Sodré) Predictable blarney atmosphere with live music on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Tertúlia (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 462 704; Rua do Diário de Notícias 60; ☹ 7pm-late Mon-Sat) Low-lit bar with newspapers, live jazz, exhibitions and a piano for the occasional tinkling of the ivories.

Nightclubs

Cover charge for nightclubs vary from €12 to €180 depending on whether there is a DJ or other attractions.

Lux (Map pp624-5; ☎ 218 820 890; Armazém A, Cais da Pedra; ☹ 6pm-6am Tue-Sat, 4-8pm Sun) Hollywood actor John Malkovich helped bankroll this super-cool club with its peacocking crowd of beautiful people.

Dock's Club (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 950 856; Rua da Cintura do Porto; ☹ 11pm-6am Tue-Sat) Another riverside dance temple attracting a voguish clientele.

Blues Café (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 957 085; Rua da Cintura do Porto; ☹ 11pm-6am Tue-Sat) Jazz, blues and club nights, plus dockside drinking in a cool former warehouse with chilled lighting and a chic clientele.

Discoteca Jamaica (Map pp628-9; Rua Nova do Carvalho; ☹ 11pm-4am) Enjoy reggae and '60s and '70s sounds at this pulsating night spot on an otherwise seedy street.

Gay & Lesbian Venues

Lisbon has a relaxed yet flourishing gay scene, with an annual Gay Pride Festival at the end of June.

TAKING THE BULL OUT OF BULLFIGHTING

Like it or loathe it, bullfighting is still a testosterone-fuelled important part of the Portuguese culture. However, unlike neighbouring Spain it's not standard TV viewing in every workingman's bar and, more famously, the bull is not killed in the ring.

Bullfighting here dates back 2000 years when it was recorded by a Roman historian. In the 12th century, the *tourada* (bullfight) became a way to maintain military fitness and prepare nobles for horseback battle. When one poor (albeit noble) fellow was gored to death, the bulls' horns became leather padded, as they are to this day.

The fight begins with a regal display of cavaliers dressed in 17th-century costumes and mounted on equally magnificently-harnessed horses. After complex exhibitions of *haute icole*, a single cavalier gallops within inches of the bull's horns and plants several barbed spears into the animal's neck. The stars of the next act are eight elaborately-garbed men with a death wish. The leader taunts the bull with a toddler tantrum of noisy knee-slapping and yelling before throwing himself onto the animal's head, grabbing the horns while his mates pile in to try and grab the beast. The final act features the bull being led away to be killed. Only rarely will the bull be spared and usually it is to be subjected to another fight rather than retirement in green pastures.

Portas Largas (Map pp628-9; ☎ 218 461 379; Rua da Atalaia 105; ☹ 7pm-late Tue-Sat) An institution in these parts with barn-size doors, a fun-loving vibe and giant carafes of sangria.

Trumps (Map pp628-9; Rua da Imprensa Nacional 104B; ☹ 11pm-6am Tue-Sat) Not much elbow space in these two bars; one has a dance floor for the bump and grinders.

Finalmente (Map pp628-9; Rua da Palmeira 38; ☹ 10pm-6am Mon-Sat) Expect a teeny heaving dance floor and nightly drag shows.

Cinemas

Lisbon has dozens of cinemas, including the multiscreen **Amoreiras** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 878 752) and **Colombo** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 217 113 222; ☑ Colégio Militar-Luz), both located within shopping centres.

Sport

Lisbon's football teams are Benfica, Belenenses and Sporting. Euro 2004 led to the upgrading of the 65,000-seat Estádio da Luz and the construction of a new 54,000-seat Estádio Nacional. Bullfights are staged at Campo Pequeno, recently reopened after extensive reforms, between April and October. Tickets for both sports are available at **ABEP ticket kiosk** (Map pp628-9; Praça dos Restauradores; ☑ Restauradores).

SHOPPING

Shopping is fun here, with plenty of idiosyncratic small shops along with glossy boutiques and shopping malls. Antique shops are mainly in the Bairro Alto dis-

trict. Hand-painted ceramics can be found around Baixa and Chiado. Largo do Chiado, across Rua da Misericórdia, is home to some of Lisbon's oldest and fanciest shops. For designer boutiques take a high-heeled strut down swanky Rua Garrett. For more pedestrian fashion Rua Augusta in the Baixa is good for the international chains like Hennes, Intimisso and Zara.

Grandes Armazens do Chiado (Map pp628-9; Rua do Carmo; ☑ Baixa-Chiado) This shopping complex is artfully concealed behind the restored façade of the historic main department store. The FNAC here is good for books, music and booking concert tickets.

Moy Garrafeira (Map pp628-9; Rua Dom Pedro V 111) The oldest Portuguese gourmet shop has local cheeses and port, plus fabulously expensive imported wares including green tea from Japan for an eye-watering €30 for 50g.

Fabrica Sant'Ana (Map pp628-9; Rua do Alecrim 95; ☑ Baixa-Chiado) and **Santos Offícios** (Map pp628-9; Rua da Madalena 87) are touristy but have an eclectic range of Portuguese folk art.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Portugália and TAP have frequent daily flights to/from Lisbon to Porto, Faro and many European cities; see p658.

Bus

A dozen different companies, including **Renex** (☎ 218 940 285), operate from Gare do Oriente. The Arco do Cego terminal (Map pp624-5)

is the base for **Rede Expressos** (☎ 707 223 344; www.rede-expressos.pt) and **EVA** (☎ 213 147 710; www.eva-bus.com), which cover the whole country.

Train

Santa Apolónia station (☎ 218 816 121) is the terminus for northern and central Portugal, and for all international services. Cais do Sodré station is for Belém, Cascais and Estoril. Note that Rossio station will be closed until sometime in 2007 due to the construction of a tunnel. For Sintra, Óbidos or Nazaré you must now depart from the Sete Rios train station.

Barreiro station is the terminus for *sub-urbano* services to Setúbal and for some southern Portugal destinations, others depart from the better connected Gare do Oriente; connecting ferries leave frequently from the Terréiro do Paço ferry terminal (Map pp628–9). The north–south railway line, over the Ponte de 25 Abril, goes to suburban areas and will eventually carry on further to southern Portugal.

For more detailed information on all the above modes of transport see p657.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

The AeroBus runs every 20 minutes from 7.45am to 8.45pm, taking 30 to 45 minutes between the airport and Cais do Sodré; buy your ticket (€3) on the bus. A taxi into town is about €10, plus €1.50 for luggage.

Bicycle

Tejo Bike (Map pp624–5; ☎ 218 871 976; Doca Sto Amaro; per hr from €6), 300m east of Belém, provides pedal power for rides along the waterfront.

Car & Motorcycle

On the outskirts of the city there are cheap (or free) car parks near Parque das Nações or Belém. The most central underground car park is at Praça dos Restauradores, costing around €1 an hour. On Saturday afternoons and Sundays parking is normally free in the pay-and-display areas in the centre.

Public Transport

A €3.70/6.90/13.40 ticket known as the 7 *Colinas* is good for one/three/five days on all buses, trams, metros and funiculars.

Pick it up from Carris kiosks and metro stations. The Lisboa Card is good for unlimited travel on nearly all city transport (see p626).

BUS, TRAM & FUNICULAR

Buses and trams run from 6am to 1am, with a few all-night services. Pick up a transport map from tourist offices or Carris kiosks. A single ticket costs €1.20. There are three funiculars: Elevador da Bica (Map pp628–9), Elevador da Glória (Map pp628–9) and Elevador do Lavra (Map pp628–9), plus a wonderful 19th-century wrought-iron lift in the Baixa, Elevador de Santa Justa (Map pp628–9), which takes you nowhere but has charming views.

FERRY

Car, bicycle and passenger ferries leave frequently from the Cais do Sodre ferry terminal (Map pp628–9) to Cacilhas (€0.60, 10 minutes), a transfer point for some buses to Setúbal. From Terreiro do Paço terminal catamarans zip across to Monijo (€1.65, every 30 minutes) and Seixal (€1.35, every 30 minutes).

METRO

The metro is useful for hops across town and to the Parque das Nações. Individual tickets cost €0.70; a *caderneta* of 10 tickets is €6.15. A return ticket (*allé et retour*) is €1.25. The metro operates from 6.30am to 1am.

Taxi

Lisbon's taxis are metered and best hired from taxi ranks. Beware of rip-offs from the airport. From the Rossio to Belém is around €7 and to the castle about €5.50.

AROUND LISBON

Sintra pop 20,000

Lord Byron called this hilltop town a 'glorious Eden' and, although best appreciated at dusk when the coach tours have left, it is a magnificent place. Less than an hour west of Lisbon, Sintra is a twinkling tiara of stunning palaces and manors surrounded by lush green countryside. The traditional summer retreat of Portugal's kings, Sintra is hilly, so ladies leave your high heels at home.

The **tourist office** (☎ 219 231 157; www.cm-sintra.pt; Praça da República 23) has a list of accommodation. Check your emails at the **Casa Viola** (Rua Dr Alfredo da Costa 4; per hr €2.50) near the centre.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Although the whole town resembles an historical theme park there are several compulsory eye-catching sights. Most are free or discounted with the *Lisboa Card* (see p626).

The **Palácio Nacional de Sintra** (☎ 219 106 840; adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Thu–Tue) is a dizzy mix of Moorish and Gothic architecture with twin chimneys that dominate the town.

The **Museu do Brinquedo** (☎ 219 242 171; Rua Visconde de Monserrate; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun) offers serious playtime potential with 20,000 toys from all over the world.

An energetic 3km greenery-flanked hike from the centre, the 8th-century ruined ramparts of **Castelo dos Mouros** (☎ 219 237 300; adult/child €3.50/2; ☎ 9am–7pm, to 8pm Jun–Sep) provide fine views. The entrance fee includes the Monserrate Gardens (see below).

Trudge on a further 20 minutes to the exuberantly kitsch **Palácio da Pena** (☎ 219 105 340; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Tue–Sun), where every room is crammed with fascinating treasures. Alternatively, take bus 434 (€3.20) from the station.

Monserrate Gardens (☎ 219 237 116; ☎ 9am–7pm, to 8pm Jun–Sep) are fabulously lush botanical gardens 4km from town.

En route to the gardens is **Quinta da Regaleira** (☎ 219 106 650; adult/child €10/5, guided tours €20/10; ☎ to 4pm Mar–May, Oct & Nov, to 3.30pm Dec–Feb), a magnificent World Heritage site and, as an early 20th-century neo-Manueline extravaganza, one of Sintra's highlights. Guided tours must be pre-arranged.

Cabra Montéz (☎ 917 446 668; Rua D Mafalda, Belas; www.cabramontez.com) organises canoeing excursions (from €35).

SLEEPING

Villa Marques (☎ 219 230 027; Rua Sotto Mayor 1; s/d €50/60, with shared bathroom €35/45) Fabulous tiled pictures adorn this traditional manor house with its grand staircase, grandmotherly rooms and an outside terrace that has views of the duck pond and countryside beyond.

Estrada Velha (☎ 219 234 355; Consiglieri Pedroso 16; s/d €50/60; ☎) There are just five meticulously decorated rooms here with wood-panelling and wrought-iron beds; the downstairs bar-restaurant is excellent for light tasty fare like sweet and savoury crepes.

Lawrence's Hotel (☎ 219 105 500; www.lawrences-hotel.com; Rua Consiglieri Pedroso 38–40; s/d €188/245; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Shift your credit card into overdrive to stay at one of Iberia's oldest hotels, certainly vintage enough to have bedded both Lord Byron and William Beckford.

EATING

Xentra (☎ 219 240 759; Rua Consiglieri Pedroso 2-A; mains €6) A cavernous bar with canteen-style meals, rock music on Sunday nights and karaoke on Mondays.

Tulhas (☎ 219 232 378; Rua Gil Vicente 4–6; mains €7; ☎ closed Wed) This friendly establishment is typically full of happily chomping locals. The Tulhas menu features comfort food favourites such as *bacalhau* topped with mashed potatoes and cream, and a vegetarian dish that's *not* based on eggs or lettuce.

Café de Paris (☎ 219 232 375; Praça da República 40; mains €15) Enjoy such lush grub as rucula salad with cheese, figs and nuts in this sublime 18th-century setting, complete with nymphette ceiling mural and outside terrace overlooking the main square.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Lisbon–Sintra railway terminates in Estefânia, 1.5km northeast of the town's historic centre. Sintra's bus station, and another train station, are a further 1km east in the new-town Portela de Sintra. Frequent shuttle buses link the historic centre with the bus station.

Until Lisbon's Rossio station re-opens, trains run from the Sete Rios station (€1.40, 45 minutes). Buses run hourly from Sintra to Estoril (€3.10, 40 minutes) and Cascais (€3.10, 45 minutes).

GETTING AROUND

A taxi to Pena or Monserrate costs around €15 return. Horse-drawn carriages cost €60 return to Monserrate. Old trams run from Ribeira de Sintra (1.5km from the centre) to Praia das Maças, 12km to the west, for €1.20.

THE SPANISH-PORTUGUESE DIVIDE

Years ago, this author taught English at a Seville-based private academy to Spanish teenagers and adults. Despite being just two hours drive from Portugal, not one student had crossed the border. They seemed to view the typical Portuguese like some sort of poor relation with a speech impediment; a xenophobic view that seemed worryingly widespread. In turn, the Portuguese viewed the Spanish as being insufferably arrogant.

The roots of Portuguese-Spanish animosity dates from 1385 when Portuguese forces successfully defeated the Spanish-led invading forces. The two countries have also colonially clashed over Latin America.

More recently and more positively, EU membership has led to vastly increased trade between the two countries and the investment of Spain in Portugal and vice versa. On the ground though, travellers may well find that most Portuguese still prefer speaking French or English to Spanish and you still can't buy a bottle of Spanish rioja in the local supermarket here. Or, equally tragically, a *pastéis de nata* (custard tart) in Spain!

Cascais

pop 33,255

Cascais is a handsome seaside resort with elegant buildings, an atmospheric old town and a happy abundance of bars and restaurants. The **tourist office** (☎ 214 868 204; www.visiteestoril.com; Rua Visconde de Luz 14) has accommodation lists and bus timetables; there's also a **tourist police post** (☎ 214 863 929; Rua Visconde da Luz). You can slurp a soft drink while checking your emails at **Navegue Aqui** (☎ 214 840 150; Sebastião Carvalho e Melo 17; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat May-Sep, 10am-8pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr).

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Estoril is a classy palm-fringed resort 2km east of Cascais with a superb sandy beach and Europe's largest **casino** (☎ 214 667 700; www.casino-estoril.pt, in Portuguese; ☎ 3pm-3am, fl show 11pm).

Praia Tamariz has an ocean swimming pool. The sea roars into the coast at **Boca do Inferno** (Hell's Mouth), 2km west of Cascais. Spectacular **Cabo da Roca**, Europe's westernmost point, is 16km from Cascais and Sintra and is served by buses from both towns.

Wild **Guincho** beach, 3km from Cascais, is a popular surfing venue.

SLEEPING & EATING

Residencial Solar Dom Carlos (☎ 214 828 115; www.solardomcarlos.com; Rua Latino Coelho 8; s/d with breakfast €50/65; ☎ P) Sparkling clean, well-placed accommodation efficiently run by English-speaking owners.

Casa da Pergola (☎ 214 840 040; www.portugal.virtual.pt/pergola.house; Av Valbom 13; d €104; ☎) Well

worth the splurge, this elegant 19th-century home is tastefully done up with expensive art and antiques. Enjoy breakfast and bird-song in the pretty garden.

Tanya's Palace (☎ 214 846 332; Sebastião Carvalho e Melo 15; mains €7) If you're suffering from hot-and-spicy withdrawal this place has decent Indian and Thai dishes to eat in or take away.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Trains run frequently to Cascais via Estoril (€1.50, 30 minutes) from Cais do Sodré station in Lisbon. **Transrent** (☎ 214 864 566; www.transrent.pt; Centro Commercial Cisne, Av Marginal) rents cars, bicycles and motorcycles.

Setúbal

pop 114,500

Unsurprisingly, Portugal's third-largest port is famous for its excellent seafood restaurants. Aside from the catch of the day, other draws are a stunning Manueline church, a castle with views and an easy-going pedestrianised centre packed with shops and cafés. Pity about the in-your-face piped music over the city sound system.

INFORMATION

Instituto Português da Juventude (IPJ) (☎ 265 534 431; Largo José Afonso; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Has free internet access for a maximum of 30 minutes.

Municipal tourist office (☎ /fax 265 534 402; Praça do Quebedo) Is a five-minute walk east from the bus station (Av 5 de Outubro).

Regional tourist office (☎ 265 539 130; www.mun-setubal.pt; Travessa Frei Gaspar 10) With the oddity of a Roman fish-preserving factory under its glass floor.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Portugal's first Manueline building, the stunning **Igreja de Jesus** (Praça Miguel Bombarda; admission free; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-5pm Tue-Sat), has maritime motifs and twisted pillars that resemble coiled ropes. The **Galeria da Pintura Quinhentista** (Rua do Balneário Rio Paula Borba; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sat), just around the corner, has a renowned collection of 16th-century paintings.

Good **beaches** west of town include Praia da Figuerinha (accessible by bus in summer). Across the estuary at Tróia is a more developed beach, plus the ruins of a Roman settlement. On the ferry trip across you may see some of the estuary's 30 or so bottlenosed dolphins.

SAL (☎ 265 227 685; www.sal.pt, in Portuguese) organises walks from €5 per person. For jeep safaris, hiking and biking in the Serra da Arrábida, or canoe trips through the Reserva Natural do Estuário do Sado, contact **Planeta Terra** (☎ 265 080 176; www.planeta.terra.pt; Praça General Luís Domingues 9). **Vertigem Azul** (☎ 265 238 000; www.vertigemazul.com; Av Luísa Todi 375) offers canoe and dolphin-spotting excursions. There are free wine-cellar tours of **José Maria da Fonseca Succs** (☎ 212 198 940; www.jmf.pt; Rua José Augusto Coelho 11; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri), the oldest Portuguese producer of table wine.

SLEEPING

Pousada da Juventude (☎ 265 534 431; setubal@movijovem.pt; Largo José Afonso; dm/d €10/23) Adequate tidy hostel with a buzzy vibe.

Pensão Bom Regresso (☎ 265 229 812; Praça de Bocage 48; d €45) Overlooks the main square; about as close to church as you can get without attending confession. Rooms are clean but monastically basic.

Residencial Bocage (☎ 265 543 080; fax 265 543 089; Rua São Cristóvão 14; s/d €35/46; ☎ P) Fairly forgettable rooms in a newish building; satellite TV and nearby parking are the major perks for the price.

Albergaria Solaris (☎ 265 541 770; Praça Marquês de Pombal 12; s/d €45/50; ☎) Rooms have all the standard hotel clobber at this pretty tiled hotel. Go for a room with a balcony overlooking the action-packed square.

EATING

Peregrina (☎ 265 230 602; Rua dos Almocreves 74; mains €8) One of three vegetarian restaurants

with a good choice of healthy grub, including quiche, tofu, nut rissoles and salads.

O Beco (☎ 265 524 617; Largo da Misericórdia 24; mains €10) Locals rate this restaurant as one of the city's best. Enjoy a special seafood moment and choose one of the lobster dishes.

Xica Bia (☎ 265 522 559; Av Luísa Todi 131; mains from €10) Xica Bia has an elegant dinner-for-two setting with barrel-vault ceiling, exposed bricks and chandeliers. The menu includes plenty of thrills, including an exemplary *arroz de marisco* (shellfish rice).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses leave at least hourly from Lisbon's Praça de Espanha (€3.25, one hour). Ferries shuttle across the estuary to Tróia approximately every 45 minutes (€1.30, 15 minutes).

THE ALGARVE

The Algarve is holiday-brochure heaven with superb beaches, sweeping golf courses and year-round sunshine. Although overdevelopment has blighted parts of the coast-hugging strip venture inland and you'll land solidly in Portugal again. Algarve highlights include the forested slopes of Monchique, the fortified village of Silves and windswept, historic Sagres. Faro is the regional capital.

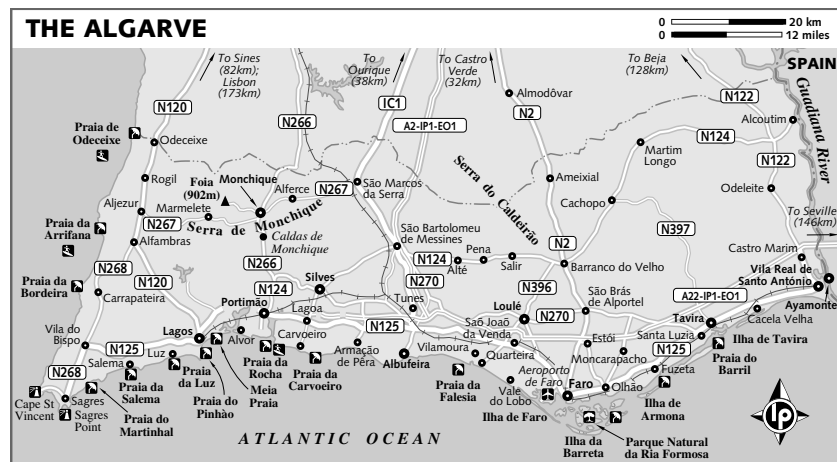
FARO

pop 58,000

Faro is an attractive seaside town and makes a good place from which to explore the rest of this coastal strip. The centre is a picturesque jumble of pedestrian shopping streets, interspersed with pretty plazas and churches. To avoid the crowds visit out of season, especially since Brits can fly here for a no-frills fare. *The Resident* is an expat-oriented, English-language newspaper with entertainment information. Go online at **Planet Cyber Center** (☎ 289 391 974; Ferreira Neto 5; per hr €2.50; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat). The central **tourist office** (☎ 289 803 604; www.rtalgarve.pt; Rua da Misericórdia) has informative leaflets and maps.

Sights & Activities

The palm-clad **waterfront** around Praça de Dom Francisco Gomes has pleasant kick-back cafés. Faro's beach, **Praia de Faro** (Ilha



de Faro), is 6km southwest of the city; take bus 16 from opposite the bus station. Less crowded is the unspoilt Ilha Desserta in the nature park **Parque Natural da Ria Formosa** (☎ 917 811 856; www.ilha-deserta.com), where you can also take a three-hour **lagoon tour** (€20; ☎ 11am & 3pm year-round).

Sleeping & Eating

Avoid midsummer when many of the hotels are block-booked by tour groups.

Pensão Residencial Central (☎ 289 807 291; Largo Terreiro do Bispo 10; s/d €35/45; ☎) This has large bland rooms with floral-and-white décor. The main draw is the location, with balconies overlooking the jacaranda-fringed square.

Residencial Adelaide (☎ 289 802 383; fax 289 826 870; Rua Cruz dos Mestres 7; d €50; ☎) White and turquoise is the colour backdrop here, together with the owner's art work. Several rooms have vast terraces; all have fridges.

Residencial Algarve (☎ 289 895 700; www.residencialalgarve.com; Rua Infante Dom Henrique 52; s/d €50/60; ☎) Cheerful, bright rooms with all the necessities, including satellite TV. Breakfast is served in a pretty internal patio.

Sol e Jardim (☎ 289 820 030; Praça Ferreira de Almeida 22; mains €9) This cavernous restaurant is a jumble of nets, jolly murals and a parrot or two. Couscous is a speciality.

O Aldeão (☎ 289 823 339; Largo de S. Pedro; mains €12) Dishes from the Alentejo and Algarve are prepared with culinary panache at this elegant restaurant overlooking lovely Igreja de São Pedro.

Getting There & Away

Faro airport has both domestic and international flights (see p658).

From the bus station, just west of the centre, there are at least six daily express coaches to Lisbon (€15, four hours), plus several slower services, and frequent buses to other coastal towns.

The train station is a few minutes' walk west of the bus station. Five trains run daily to Lisbon (€18.50, five hours).

Getting Around

The airport is 6km from the centre. Buses 14 and 16 run into town until 9pm, costing €1.35 for a single ticket. A taxi costs about €12 from the airport to the town centre.

TAVIRA

pop 12,500

Traditionally-tiled façades and a web of cobbled streets add to the charm of this laid-back town. Tavira is famed for its ecclesiastical history and seafood. The **tourist office** (☎ 281 322 511; Rua da Galeria 9) can help with accommodation and the **town hall** (Praça da Republica; ☎ 9.30am-2pm Mon-Fri) provides free internet access.

Sights & Activities

One of the town's 30-plus churches, the **Igreja da Misericórdia's** Renaissance façade is the most striking in the Algarve. Tavira's ruined **castle** (Rua da Liberdade; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) dominates the

town. Nearby, the 16th-century **Palácio da Galeria** (☎ 281 320 540; Calçada da Galeria; admission €2; ☎ 10am-12pm & 4-7.30pm Tue-Sat) is an informative cultural centre with a rooftop contemporary art gallery and views.

Ilha da Tavira is an island beach connected to the mainland by a ferry at Quatro Águas. Walk the 2km or take the (summer only) bus from the bus station.

Enjoy pedal power with a rented bike from **Casa Abilio** (☎ 281 323 467; Rua Goao Vaz C Real 23a). For walking or biking trips call **Exploratio** (☎ 281 321 973). Kitesurfers can bounce the waves with **Escola de Kitesurf** (☎ 962 337 285; www.kitesurfceolis.com; Av Da Ria Formosa).

Sleeping & Eating

Residencial Imperial (☎ 281 322 234; José Pires Padinha 24; s/d €40/60) A lick of paint has improved this no-nonsense *pensão* with balconies and a downstairs restaurant overlooking the river.

Marés (☎ 281 325 815; José Pires Padinha 134; s/d €45/70; ☎) Enjoy well-dusted, bright rooms with terracotta tiles, satellite TV and balconies with river views.

Vila Galé Albarcora (☎ 281 380 800; www.vilagale.pt; Quatro Águas; d €115) A former tuna-fishing village metamorphosed into a luxury hotel complex with health club, Turkish bath and games room. Prices plummet out of season.

Patio (☎ 281 323 008; António Cabreira 30; mains €10-15; ☎) Fatten your credit card at the town's swankiest restaurant dishing up traditional cuisine like octopus and bean stew.

Aquasul (☎ 281 325 166; Dr Augusto da Silva Carvalho 11; mains €10-14; ☎) Arty Gaudi-inspired dishes here include beetroot carpaccio with goat's cheese, and pizza.

Getting There & Away

Some 15 trains and six express buses run daily between Faro and Tavira (€2.45, one hour).

LAGOS

pop 25,400

In summer the pretty fishing port of Lagos has a beach party vibe; out of season it's pretty laid back as restaurants and hotels take a siesta until spring. The municipal **tourist office** (☎ 282 764 111; www.lagosdigital.com, in Portuguese; Largo Marquês de Pombal) is in the

centre of town. Surf a frothy coffee while emailing at cool **Bora Café** (☎ 282 083 438; Conselho Joaquim Machado 17; per hr €3; ☎ 9.30am-10pm Mon-Sat).

Sights & Activities

The **Museu Municipal** (☎ 282 762 301; Rua General Alberto da Silveira; admission €2; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) houses an eclectic mix of archaeological and ecclesiastical treasures (and oddities). Admission includes the adjacent **Igreja de Santo António** (☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-5pm Tue-Sun), one of the best Baroque churches in Portugal.

The beach scene includes **Meia Praia**, a vast strip to the east; **Praia da Luz** to the west; and the smaller **Praia do Pinhão**.

Blue Ocean (☎ 282 782 718; www.blue-ocean-divers.de) organises diving, kayaking and snorkelling safaris. On the promenade, fishermen offer motorboat jaunts to nearby grottoes. For horse riding contact **Quinta Paraíso Alto** (☎ 282 687 596; www.qpahorsriding.com). Rent windsurfing gear from **Windsurf Point** (☎ 282 792 315, www.windsurfpoin.com).

Sleeping

Pousada da Juventude (☎ 282 761 970; Rua Lançote de Freitas 50; dm/d €16/45; ☎) Up there with the best. Rooms are airy and light, plus there's internet access and a garden with hammocks.

Rubi Mar (☎ 282 180 678; www.rubi-mar.com; 2nd fl, Rua de Barroca 70; s/d €45/50, with shared bathroom €30/45) English-American run with pleasant homey rooms and breezy harbour views. Owners can also book excursions, car hire and golf.

Casa de São Gonçalo (☎ 282 762 171; Rua Candido dos Reis 73; s/d €70/90) This fine 18th-century house endearingly shows its age with plush rooms and a picturesque garden.

Eating

Restaurante Piri-Piri (☎ 282 763 803; Rua Lima Leitão 15; mains €8) A good choice serving a tasty *cataplana* (fish stew) and *piri-piri* chicken or clams. If you're a fan, pick up a bottle of the red-chilli wonder from one of the grans at the market.

Taberna de Lagos (☎ 282 084 250; 25 de Abril; mains €8) This atmospheric former warehouse has a menu of pizzas, pastas, salads and vegetarian dishes. Live music accompanies Sunday lunch.

No Patio (☎ 282 76 37 77; Rua Lançarote de Freitas 46; mains €9; ☒ closed Sun & Mon) Owner Martin has a serious foodie background in the UK. This is British nosh at its best: steak-and-kidney pie, sticky toffee pudding and lots more home-sweet-home dishes for poor deprived Brits.

Getting There & Away

Bus and train services depart frequently for other Algarve towns and around eight times daily to Lisbon (€14.50, four hours).

Getting Around

Rent bicycles, mopeds and motorcycles from **Motor Ride** (☎ 289 761 720; Rua José Afonso 23; per day from €8.50).

MONCHIQUE

pop 6975

The pine-clad flip side to the seagulls and sand, pretty Monchique is surrounded by the forested Serra de Monchique. The **tourist office** (☎ 282 911 189; Largo dos Chorões) overlooks the park.

Sights & Activities

Igreja Matriz (Rua da Igreja) features a stunning Manueline portal, with its stone seemingly tied in knots. Follow the brown pedestrian signs around the old town's narrow streets.

Caldas de Monchique, 6km south, is a mildly heritaged yet quaint hot-spring hamlet. Some 8km west is the Algarve's 'rooftop', the 902m **Fóia** peak atop the Serra de Monchique, with heady views through a forest of radio masts.

Omega Parque Monchique (☎ 282 911 327; Caldas de Monchique; adult/child €8/5; ☒ 10am-6pm) is a small ecofriendly zoo with animals kept in as near a natural environment as possible.

Alternativtour (☎ 282 420 800; from €30) organises bike and walking tours.

Sleeping & Eating

Residencial Miradouro Da Serra (☎ 282 912 163; Rua Combatentes do Ultramar; s/d €35/45) Nothing-special rooms but location is on a high with several rooms enjoying stunning views. Grab number 205 if you can.

Casa Da Nora (☎ 282 912 532; Largo 5 de Outubro; mains €9) The bow-tied waiters at this classy restaurant in the square dish up delicious homemade soups, fish and meat dishes.

Getting There & Away

There are eight buses daily from Portimão (€2.75, 45 minutes) to Monchique.

SILVES

pop 10,768

There is nothing self-important about this pretty town, despite it being the one-time capital of Moorish Algarve. Take the puff-you-out climb up to the fairy-tale castle crowning the hill. The **tourist office** (☎ 289 442 255; Rua 25 de Abril) can help with accommodation. Check your inbox at **It-Connect** (☎ 282 083 915; Rua Francisco Pablos 13; per hr €1.50).

Sleeping & Eating

Residencial Ponte Romana (☎ 282 443 275; Horta da Cruz; s/d €15/30) Floral-themed rooms beside the Roman bridge, with castle views and a cavernous bar-restaurant full of old-timers in flat caps and Portuguese families.

Hotel Colina Dos Mouros (☎ 282 440 420; Sítio do Pocinho; s/d €70/80; ☒ ☒) Avoid July and August and the price here seriously plummets. Sip a sundowner from your balcony overlooking the round pool with a castle backdrop.

Café Ingles (☎ 282 442 585; mains €8.50) Situated at the castle entrance, this English-owned funky place has vegetarian dishes, home-made soups, pasta and wood-fired pizza. In summer there's live music at weekends.

Restaurante Rui (☎ 282 442 682; Rua C Vilarinho 27; mains from €12) Push the boat out and select your seafood straight from the tank. The intrepid can enjoy wild boar chops.

Getting There & Away

Silves train station is 2km from town; trains from Lagos (€1.50, 35 minutes) stop nine times daily (from Faro, change at Tunes), to be met by local buses. Eight buses run daily to Silves from Albufeira (€3.30, 40 minutes).

SAGRES

pop 1940

End-of-the-road Sagres was thought to be the end of the world in pre-Columbus days. Still today, the town exudes a bleak sort of drama, the fort perched high above the thundering surf. There is a central **tourist office** (☎ 282 624 873; Rua Comandante Matoso), plus **Turinfo** (☎ 282 620 003; Praça da República), which rents cars and bikes, books hotels, arranges jeep and fishing trips and even provides internet access, bless 'em.

Sights & Activities

The **fort** (adult/child €3/1.50; ☒ 10am-8.30pm May-Sep, 10am-6.30pm Oct-Apr) has a 12-minute slide show on the history; Henry the Navigator established his navigation school here and primed the explorers who later founded the Portuguese empire.

Visit Europe's southwestern-most point, the **Cabo de São Vicente** (Cape St Vincent), 6km to the west. A solitary lighthouse stands on this barren cape.

This coast is ideal for the surfing set; hire windsurfers at sand-dune fringed **Praia do Martinhal**.

The **Scubado Diving Centre** (☎ 282 624 594; www.scubado-algarve.com; Porto da Baleira) organises diving trips daily at 10am and 3pm.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Baleira (☎ 282 624 212; www.sagres.net/baleira; Rua Comandante Matoso; s/d €91/121; ☒ ☒ ☒) A good looking low-rise hotel with direct beach access, harbour views, tennis courts and spacious smart rooms.

Mar à Vista (☎ 282 624 247; Praia da Mareta; mains €8) Bask in the sea-and-surf views from the terrace; the Med cuisine here includes pasta with lobster and eight different salads.

Getting There & Away

Frequent buses run daily to Sagres from Lagos (€2.50, 50 minutes), with fewer on Sunday. Three continue out to Cabo de São Vicente on weekdays.

CENTRAL PORTUGAL

One of Portugal's poorest regions, this central slice of the country has an outback-meets-the-Med feel with its vast plains of cattle and groves of olive trees and cork oaks. Richly historic, it is scattered with prehistoric remains and contains one of the country's most architecturally rich towns, Évora, as well as several spectacular walled villages. There are fine local wines and, for the more energetic, plenty of hiking and skiing in the dramatic Beiras region.

ÉVORA

pop 53,755

Évora has a lot going for it. Aesthetically, this city is easy on the eye with its medieval narrow alleys, juxtaposed with opulent man-

sions and palaces. These old-fashioned good looks are the backdrop to a lively student town surrounded by wineries and dramatic countryside. The **tourist office** (☎ 266 702 671; www.cm-evora.pt, in Portuguese; Praça do Giraldo 73) carries an excellent city map. Log on to the internet at the **Cyber Centre** (☎ 266 746 923; Rua dos Mercadores 42; per hr €2.50; ☒ 9am-midnight Mon-Fri, 2pm-midnight Sat & Sun).

Sights & Activities

Évora's cathedral, **Sé** (Largo do Marquês de Marialva; adult/child €3/free; ☒ 9am-noon & 2-5pm), has fabulous cloisters and a museum jam-packed with ecclesiastical treasures.

The **Temple of Diana** (Largo do Conde de Vila Flor) was once part of the Roman Forum and is a heady slice of drama right in town.

Capela dos Ossos (☎ 266 744 307; Largo Conde de Vila Flor; admission €1; ☒ 9am-1pm & 2.30-6pm) was discovered in 1958 during restoration work. Providing a real Addams family day out, this ghoulish Chapel of Bones is constructed from the bones and skulls of several thousand people.

Turaventur (☎ 266 743 134; www.turaventur.com; Praça 1 de Maio) offers a whole range of adrenaline-fuelled activities, including canoeing (half-day €60), mountain biking (four hours €35) and 4WD safari tours (full day €60).

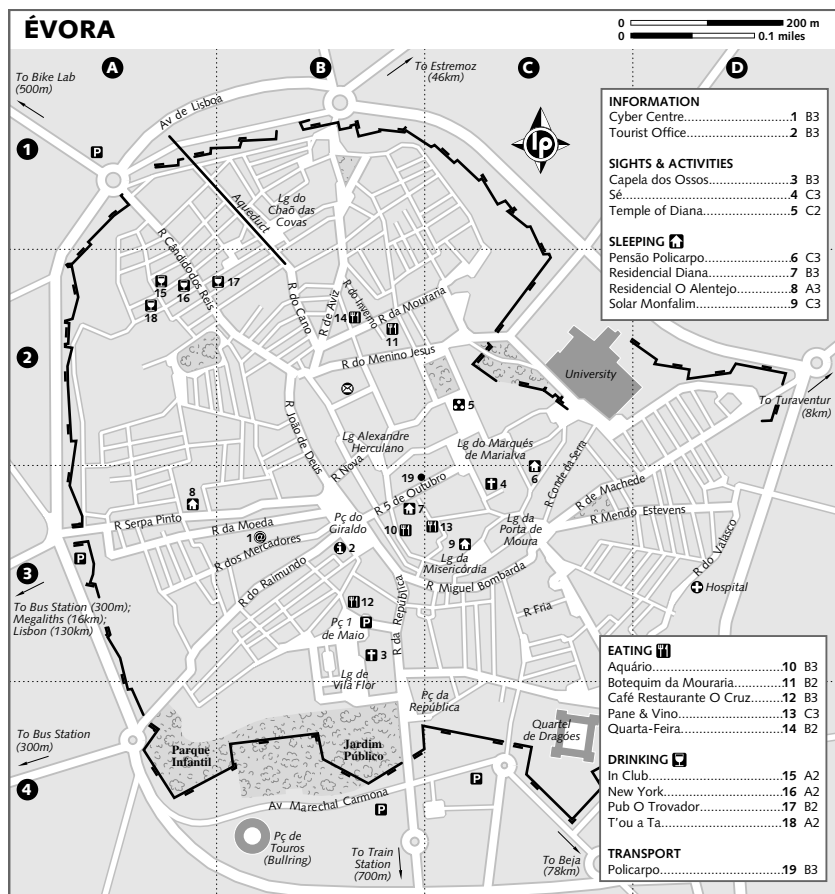
Sleeping

Residencial O Alentejo (☎ 266 702 903; Rua Serpa Pinto 74; s/d €30/45; ☒ ☒) A deeply traditional house, complete with original mosaic-tiled floors and gran on reception; the rooms here are well-sized and everything works. This is a good street for bars.

Residencial Diana (☎ 266 702 008; www.residencialdiana.com; Rua Diogo Cão 2-3; s/d €35/50; ☒ ☒)

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Pensão Policarpo (☎ 266 702 424; www.pensaopolicarpo.com; Rua da Freiria de Baixo 16; s/d €50/55; ☒ ☒) A palatial place for a paltry price; this historic manor is complete with Roman columns and part of the original city wall in the foyer. Located bang in the centre of town, the rooms are furnished with rustic Alentejan furniture and are all different; a couple have traditional tiles, others elaborate bed heads. All are cushy and bright. In short, a winner.



Located on a souvenir-shopping street attracting deep-pocketed tourists, this shiny comfortable hotel has high-ceilinged rooms with homely furnishings. Service can be gruff.

Solar Monfalim (☎ 266 750 000; www.monfalimtur.pt; Largo da Misericórdia 1; s/d €75/90; (P) ☎ ☎ ☎) This is an exquisitely renovated 16th-century nobleman's house with an arched gallery overlooking the cobbles. Rooms are elegant, stylish and have wi-fi coverage.

Eating

Aquário (☎ 266 785 055; Rua de Valdevinos 7; mains €6) Vibrant little vegetarian restaurant with just a few daily choices, including a vegan option.

Café Restaurant O Cruz (☎ 266 747 228; Praça 1 de Maio 20; mains €6) Earthy and inexpensive for scoffing plain, filling fare like pork with clams. Outside tables overlook the magnificent San Francisco church.

Pane & Vino (☎ 266 746 960; Páteo do Salema 22; mains €7) Sunny colours, cheery staff and a vast menu including thin-crust pizzas, generous salad bar and creamy tiramisu.

Botequim da Mouraria (☎ 266 746 775; Rua da Mouraria 16a; mains €8; ☎ closed Sun) A real insider's place; there are just a dozen bar stools and a nightly set menu of creations by master chef-cum-barman-cum-owner. Get here early to grab a pew.

Quarta-Feira (☎ 266 707 530; Rua do Inverno 16; mains €12; ☎ closed Sun) Arm yourself with a

compass; this place is well hidden. Run by friendly Ze Dias and family, enjoy sublime home cooking here with an emphasis on game and *bacalhau*.

Drinking

In Club (☎ 266 706 559; Rua do Escrivão da Câmara 16; ☎ 8pm-1am Mon-Thu, 8pm-3am Fri & Sat) Hits its stride post-dinner, attracting a mix of suits and scruffs.

New York (☎ 266 705 675; Rua do Apóstolo 4; ☎ 8pm-2am Mon-Fri, 9pm-3am Sat) An after-hours hang-out to perfect your morning hang-over. Live music.

Pub O Trovador (☎ 266 707 370; Rua da Mostardeira 4) A chilled-out setting attracting a voguish clientele.

T'ou a Ta (Rua do Calvário 12-14) Packing them in at weekends, this backstreet club has a frazzled bar staff and fun-loving vibe.

Getting There & Away

Évora has six buses to Lisbon (€9.80, 1½ hours) Monday to Friday and two to Faro (€11.80, four hours), departing from the station off Av Túlio Espanca (700m southwest of the centre). Three daily trains run from Lisbon (€8.15, 2½ hours).

Getting Around

Bike Lab (☎ 266 735 500; Centro Comercial da Vista Alegre, Lote 14; ☎ summer only) rents out bicycles. **Policarpo** (☎ 266 746 970; www.policarpo-viagens.pt, in Portuguese; Rua 5 de Outubro 63) organises city tours and jaunts to megaliths and other nearby attractions.

MONSARAZ

pop 977

In a dizzy setting, high above the plain, this walled village has a moody medieval feel and magnificent views. The **tourist office** (☎ 266 557 136; Praça Dom Nuno Álvares) can advise on accommodation. Eat before 8pm as the town tucks up early to bed.

Museu de Arte Sacra (Praça Dom Nuno Álvares; admission €1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm) has a good display of religious artefacts; the 15th-century fresco is quite superb. Three kilometres north of town is **Menhir of Outeiro**, one of the tallest megalithic monuments ever discovered.

Up to four daily buses run to/from Reguengos de Monsaraz (€2.15, 35 minutes), with connections to Évora.

ESTREMOZ

pop 15,400

One of three marble towns in these parts, Estremoz is like an aging *grande dame* with a face-lift: cosmetically shiny and bright but underneath slightly fading and out of touch with the times. In its prime, the town was one of the most strongly fortified in Portugal with its very own palace (now a luxurious *pousada*; upmarket inn). The **tourist office** (☎ 268 333 541; www.cm-estremoz.pt, in Portuguese; Largo da República 26) is just south of Rossio.

Sights

Museu Municipal (☎ 268 339 200; Largo D Dinis; adult/child €1.10/free; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 2-5.30pm Tue-Sun), in a beautiful 17th-century almshouse, specialises in fascinating pottery figurines, including an entire Easter parade.

Vila Viçosa, another marble town 17km from Estremoz, is centred around the **Palácio Ducal** (☎ 268 980 659; Terreiro do Paço; adult/child €5/free, armoury museum extra €2.50; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-5.30pm Tue-Sun), the magnificent ancestral home of the dukes of Bragança. It's rich with *azulejos*, frescoed ceilings and elaborate tapestries.

Sleeping & Eating

Residencial Carvalho (☎ 268 339 370; Largo da República 27; s/d €20/40) Next to the tourist office, newly are well-dusted and spacious with newly-tiled bedrooms. Larger rooms cost more.

Café Alentejano (☎ 268 337 300; Rossio 13-15; s/d €25/40) Just a few rooms next to the restaurant, so expect culinary wafts. The space is tight but smart with front views overlooking the town's main square.

Adega do Isaiás (☎ 268 322 318; Rua Almeida 21; mains €6.50-8) Huge wooden vats of wine cosy-in on the dining room. Expect a good grilling; this place specialises in steaks.

Getting There & Away

Estremoz is linked to Évora by four local buses (€3.50, 1¼ hours) and two *expressos* (€6.75, 45 minutes), Monday to Saturday.

CASTELO DE VIDE & MARVÃO

pop 4145

A worthy detour north of Estremoz, is the hilltop spa town **Castelo de Vide**, noted for its picturesque houses with Gothic doorways. Highlights are the **Judiaria** (Old Jewish Quarter), the medieval backstreets and (yet

another) castle-top view. Try to spend a night here heading skywards to **Marvão**, a fabulous mountain-top walled village (population 190) 12km from Castelo de Vide. The **tourist offices** (Castelo de Vide ☎ 245 901 361; Rua de Bartolomeu Álvares da Santa 81; Marvão ☎ 245 993 886; Largo de Santa Maria) can help with beds.

On weekdays three buses run from Portalegre to Castelo de Vide (€4.80, 20 minutes) and two to Marvão (€2.65, 45 minutes).

ÓBIDOS

pop 10,809

This exquisite walled village was a wedding gift from Dom Dinis to his wife Dona Isabel (beats a fondue set) and is over-heritaged, but still well worth a visit. Highlights include the **Igreja de Santa Maria** (Rua Direita), with fine *azulejos*, and views from the town walls. The **tourist office** (☎ 262 959 231; www.cm-obidos.pt, in Portuguese; Rua Direita) has a brochure of walks in the area and can advise on accommodation. Check your email for free at **Net** (☎ 262 955 561; Rua Direita 107; ☎ 10am-10pm May-Sep, 10am-9pm Mon-Fri & 11.30am-6.30pm Sat-Sun Oct-Apr).

Sleeping & Eating

Casa dos Castros (☎ 262 959 328; Direita 83-85; d €35) Bargain price for these homey large rooms right on the main street.

Casa do Poço (☎ 262 959 358; Travessa da Mouraria; d €60; ☎) Pin-drop quiet with flagstone floors, blue tiles and courtyard setting, this hotel has a fabulous location down a wiggly flower-flanked side street.

O Pátio do Llador (Rua Direita 15; mains €8) There's a good varied menu at his rustic-styled restaurant with a pasta and salad choice, as well as the fish and meat stalwarts.

Restaurante Alcaide (☎ 262 959 220; Rua Direita 60; mains €11) A classy place with countryside views and a menu of masterfully combined dishes like codfish with cheese, chestnuts and apple.

Getting There & Away

There's a direct bus Monday to Friday from Lisbon (€6, one hour, every 10 minutes) or via Caldas da Rainha, 10 minutes away.

NAZARÉ

pop 16,000

Nazaré is a seagulls-and-sand resort with excellent seafood and a sweeping sandy beach. The locals wear national dress to lure

the tourists into buying their wares – handy for impressive pics to wow the folks back home. The **tourist office** (☎ 262 561 194) is at the end of Av da República.

Sights & Activities

The **beaches** are superb, although swimmers should be aware of dangerous currents. Climb or take the funicular to the cliff-top **Sítio**, with its cluster of fisherman's cottages and great view.

Two of Portugal's big-time architectural masterpieces are close by. Follow the signs to **Alcobaça** where, right in the centre of town, is the immense **Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Alcobaça** (☎ 262 505 120; adult/child €4.50/2.25, church admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm, to 5pm winter) dating from 1178; don't miss the colossal former kitchen.

Batalha's massive Gothic **Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Vitória** (☎ 244 765 497; admission to cloisters & unfinished chapels adult/child €3.50/2; ☎ 9am-6pm, to 5pm winter), dating from 1388, is home to the tomb of Henry the Navigator.

Sleeping & Eating

Many townspeople rent out rooms; doubles start from €35. Check at the tourist office.

Ribamar (☎ 262 551 158; fax 262 562 224; Rua Gomes Freire 9; s/d €30/45; ☎) Sporting a sunny yellow-and-white frontage a frisbee throw from the beach, this 25-room hotel has sea-view balconies and spacious bijou rooms.

Mar Bravo (☎ 262 569 169; www.marbravo.com; Praça Sousa Oliveira 71; s/d €80/100; ☎) A deluxe stay with tastefully furnished, carpeted rooms, sea views and a classy seafood restaurant complete with a 'select your lobster from the tank' option.

Casa Marques (☎ 262 551 680; Rua Gil Vicente 37; mains €5) Stout fishermen's wives dish up tasty seafood dishes. There are also kebab and pizza takeaways on the same street – fussy families take note.

Ala-Riba (☎ 262 553 516; Rua Adrião Batalha 45; mains €9) Owner José's spell in Canada equals surf-and-turf on the menu, plus lobster, *cataplana* in a breezy blue-and-white interior.

Getting There & Away

The nearest train station, 6km away at Valado, is connected to Nazaré by frequent buses. Nazaré has numerous bus connections to Lisbon (€7.50, two hours).

TOMAR

pop 17,000

A charming town straddling a river, Tomar has the storybook notoriety of being home to the Knights Templar; check out their headquarters, the outstanding **Convento de Cristo** (☎ 249 313 481; adult/child €4.50/2; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Jun-Sep, 9am-5.30pm Oct-May) monastery. Other rarities include a magnificent 17th-century **Aqueduto de Pegões** (aqueduct) and a vegetarian restaurant. The town is backed by the dense greenery of the **Mata Nacional dos Sete Montes** (Seven Hills National Forest). Tomar's **tourist office** (☎ 249 329 000; www.rttemplarios.pt, in Portuguese; Serpa Pinto) can provide town and forest maps.

Sleeping & Eating

Residencial União (☎ 249 323 161; Rua Serpa Pinto 94; s/d €25/40) Situated within a reasonable baggage-lug from the main car park, this gracious older home has dark wood furnishings, creaky floorboards and old-fashioned bathrooms.

Estalagem de Santa Iria (☎ 249 313 326; Mouchão Parque; s/d €65/85; P ☎) Boutique hotel with just 13 large sunny rooms with balconies overlooking the park and river beyond. The restaurant is elegant and good.

Gaia (☎ 249 311 109; Rua dos Moinhos 75; mains €6; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) A vegetarian restaurant with just a few tables and daily dishes that can include *seitan* (wheat gluten) stew, tofu lasagne or meatless *feijada* (Brazilian bean stew).

Bela Vista (☎ 249 312 870; Rua Fonte do Choupo 6; mains €8) The town's best-known restaurant, in a riverside setting, serving dishes like roast kid (baby goat, that is) with real gastro-flair.

Getting There & Away

There are at least four express buses daily to Lisbon (€6.50, two hours) and even more frequent trains (€6.80, two hours).

COIMBRA

pop 150,000

Coimbra is a dynamic, fashionable, yet comfortably lived-in city, with a student life centred on the magnificent 13th-century university. Aesthetically eclectic, there are elegant shopping streets, ancient stone walls and backstreet alleys with hidden *tascas* and *fado* bars. Coimbra was the

birth and burial place of Portugal's first king; and the country's most important city when the Moors captured Lisbon.

Information

Esp@go Internet (Praça 8 de Maio; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 10pm Sat & Sun) Free wi-fi and internet access for 30 minutes.

Municipal tourist office (☎ 239 832 591; Praça Dom Dinis)

Regional tourist office (☎ 239 488 120; www.turismo-centro.pt; Largo da Portagem) Has pamphlets and cultural events information.

Tourist office (☎ 239 833 202; Praça da República)

Sights & Activities

Igreja de Santa Cruz (☎ 239 822 941; Praça 8 de Maio; adult/child €2.50/1.50; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm) has a fabulous ornate pulpit and medieval royal tombs. Located at the bottom of the hill in the old town, you can reach the monastery via the elevator (one way €1.60) by the market.

University Velha (☎ 239 822 941; www.uc.pt/sri; admission €4; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm) is unmissable in its grandeur. You can visit the library with its gorgeous book-lined hallways and the Manueleine chapel dating back to 1517.

Conimbriga, 16km south of Coimbra, is the site of the well-preserved ruins of a **Roman town** (☎ 9am-8pm mid-Mar–mid-Sep, 10am-6pm mid-Sep–mid-Mar), including mosaic floors, baths and fountains. There's a good **museum** (adult/child €3/free; ☎ 9am-8pm summer, 10am-6pm winter) here with restaurant. Frequent buses run to Condeixa, 2km from the site; direct buses depart at 9.05am and 9.35am (only 9.35am at weekends) from the **AVIC terminal** (Rua João de Ruão 18, Coimbra) returning at 1pm and 6pm (only 6pm at weekends).

Odabarca (☎ 239 912 444; Parque Dr Manuel Braga; trips €8) run river trips on the Rio Mondego. Several companies rent canoes and kayaks, including **Down Stream** (☎ 966 087 358; www.down-stream.net; Quintais de Cima; from €18), the tourist office can provide you with a list. A free minibus takes you to Penacova for the 25km river journey.

Festivals & Events

Coimbra's annual highlight is **Queima das Fitas**, a boozy week of *fado* and revelry that begins on the first Thursday in May when students celebrate the end of the academic year.

THE FÁTIMA FAITHFULS

If you want to channel Dylan and buy one of the souvenir 'flesh-coloured Christs that glow in the dark' then check out Fátima, located in between Leiria and Tomar, and one of the largest religious shrines in Mediterranean Europe. Aside from gawping at the kitsch religious souvenirs, the place itself is pretty extraordinary with its dazzling white basilica fronted by a vast concrete forecourt. Suspiciously reminiscent of an airport runway, this was built to hold more than a million devotees and is essential during the annual pilgrimages on 12–13 May and 12–13 October when pilgrims arrive from all over the country, some walking barefoot or on padded knees in penance.

The story behind Fátima dates back to 13 May 1917, when the Virgin appeared to three children on top of a tree. The Virgin promised to return on the 13th of each month for the next five months, and amid much scepticism (yet each time accompanied by increasingly larger crowds) the three children reported successive apparitions. The word spread and by the final appearance on 13 October some 70,000 devotees had gathered and witnessed the so-called Miracle of the Sun. According to eyewitnesses, there were shooting beams of multicoloured light, and the sun intensified to a blinding swirling ball of fire. Disabilities and illnesses were miraculously cured: the blind could see, the dumb could talk and the crippled could walk (get the picture...?).

Three secrets of Fátima were also revealed to the children. The first foretold WWII and the spread of atheism. The second message was more prophetic concerning Russia and the spread of communism. The third secret was revealed in May 2000 by the Vatican, apparently predicting the attempt on the life of Pope John Paul II in 1981.

The exact site where the Virgin appeared is now a small chapel, always packed with devotees offering flowers and lighting candles. Seven masses are held here daily, including two in English; check the information booth for details. The basilica is surrounded by hotels, souvenir shops and a park with picnic tables – for those coach-loads of Portuguese families.

Whatever your religious convictions, Fátima is an extraordinary place and well worth the detour if you have a couple of hours to spare.

Sleeping

Pensão Santa Cruz (☎ 239 826 197; Praça 8 de Maio; s/d €25/32) Think threadbare large rooms in an old building in a great position overlooking one of the city's most dynamic squares.

Pensão Residencial Larbelo (☎ 239 829 092; fax 239 829 094; Largo da Portagem 33; s/d/t €25/40/55; 📶) Well-polished, if dated, rooms with lacy curtains and views of chairs on the square; perfect for that *bica* break.

Residência Coimbra (☎ 239 837 996; www.residencia.coimbra.com; Rua das Azeiteiras 55; s/d/t €25/40/55; 📶 📺) Glossy stylish rooms with satellite TV and fridges. There's wi-fi in the breakfast room and lobby.

Pensão Flôr de Coimbra (☎ 239 823 865; fax 239 821 545; Rua do Poço 5; s/d from €40/45) Enjoy lashings of white linen and *fin de siècle* atmosphere at this renovated family home. The rooms are large and atmospheric with high ceilings and antiques. There is a small restaurant attached with a menu that includes a daily vegetarian dish.

Casa Pombal Guesthouse (☎ 239 835 175; www.casapombal.com, in Portuguese; Rua das Flores 18; d €48, with shared bathroom €40) This place is a gem

with pretty rooms painted in pastel colours and roof-top views. Dutch owner Elsa's breakfast is more generous than most.

Hotel Astória (☎ 239 853 020; www.almeidahotels.com; Av Emídio Navarro 21; s/d €84/101; 📶 📺) A slightly-scuffed older hotel with an air of all-round poshness, especially in the grand sitting room with its chandeliers and burgundy sofas. There's wi-fi in the lobby.

Eating & Drinking

Head to the lanes west of Praça do Comércio, especially Rua das Azeiteiras, for cheap eats.

Café Santa Cruz (☎ 239 833 617; Praça Maio) Former chapel that has been resurrected into one of Portugal's most atmospheric cafés.

Restaurante Jardim da Manga (☎ 239 829 156; Rua Olímpio Nicolau Rui Fernanda; mains €7; 📶 closed Sat) A better breed of self-service restaurant at the back of the dramatic cupula and fountain of the Mosteiro de Santa Cruz. Vegetarian dishes available.

O Estudante (☎ 239 832 699; Rua da Sota 44-48; mains €7.50) Black-and-white photos of his-

toric Coimbra line the walls at this nonsense eatery with its tasty specials including a memorable *arroz de pato* (duck with rice).

Zé Manel (☎ 239 823 790; Beco do Forno 12; mains €7-10) Great food, huge servings and a zany atmosphere with walls papered with diners' comments, cartoons and poems. Vegetarian choices.

Italia (☎ 239 838 863; Parque Dr Manuel Braga; mains €8-10) Expand your midriff at this excellent Italian restaurant on the riverfront with laden dishes of excellent pizza and pasta.

Entertainment

Coimbra-style *fado* is more cerebral than the Lisbon variety, and its adherents staunchly protective. **Bar Diligência** (☎ 239 827 667; Rua Nova 30; 📶 6pm-2am) and **Boémia Bar** (☎ 239 834 547; Rua do Cabido 6; 📶 8pm-2am) are popular *casas de fado*.

À Capella (☎ 239 833 985; Capela de Nossa Senhora de Victória, Rua Corpo de Deus, Largo da Victória) Housed in a fabulous 14th-century former chapel with a nightly *fado* show at 9.30pm (€5).

Quebra Club (☎ 239 836 038; Parque Verde do Mondego) Has live jazz at weekends.

Via Latina (☎ 239 833 034; Rua Almeida Garrett 1) Fires up to a steamy dance pit late at night.

Getting There & Away

At least a dozen buses and as many trains run daily from Lisbon (€9.60, 2½ hours) and Porto (€9, 1½ hours), plus frequent express buses from Faro and Évora, via Lisbon. The main long-distance train stations are Coimbra B, 2km northwest of the centre, and central Coimbra A. Most long-distance trains call at both. Other useful connections include eight daily buses to Luso/Buçaco (from Coimbra A; €2.55, 45 minutes).

LUSO & THE BUÇACO FOREST

pop 2000

This region is oh-so-pretty with its dense forest of century-old trees surrounded by countryside dappled with heather, wildflowers and leafy ferns. There's even a palace here; a wedding-cake affair, which somehow works. Buçaco was chosen as a retreat by 16th-century monks and surrounds the lovely spa town of Luso.

The **tourist office** (☎ /fax 231 939 133; Av Emídio Navarro) has maps and leaflets about the for-

est and trails, as well as free internet access. The **Termas** (thermal baths; ☎ 231 937 910; Av Emídio Navarro; admission free; 📶 May-Oct) offers a range of treatments.

Sleeping & Eating

The Luso tourist office has a list of beds.

Astória (☎ 231 939 182; Av Emídio Navarro; s/d €30/35) Like that favourite woolly, this place is well worn but snug. There's dark wood and beams, and the location is ace if you're taking a dip in the baths.

Palace Hotel do Buçaco (☎ 231 930 101; www.almeidahotels.com; s/d from €145/185; 📶 📺) Live a real-life fairy tale and stay at this truly sumptuous pile complete with gargoyles, ornamental garden and turrets. The equally elegant restaurant offers set menus for around €40.

Restaurante O Cesteiro (☎ 231 939 360; EN 234; mains €7) A large dining room with extensive menu of confident traditional dishes. The grilled chicken is a winner.

Getting There & Away

There are three buses daily Monday to Friday, two on Saturday and one on Sunday from Coimbra (€2.50, 50 minutes). There is just one train that departs around 10.30am from Coimbra B (€1.30, 30 minutes).

SERRA DA ESTRELA

The forested Serra da Estrela has a raw natural beauty and offers some of the country's best hiking. This is Portugal's highest mainland mountain range (1993m), and the source of its two great rivers: Mondego River and Zêzere River. The **main park office** (☎ 275 980 060; www.rt-serradaestrela.pt; Manteigas) has plenty of information on the Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela; additional offices are at Seia, Gouveia and Guarda.

The park publishes *Discover the Region of the Serra da Estrela*, a walking guide in English with maps and narratives (€4.25), plus a topographic map of the park (€6.60).

Sleeping

Pousada da Juventude (☎ /fax 275 335 375; penhas@movijem.pt; Penhas da Saúde; dm/d from €10/25) Located 10km above Covilhã, this is an excellent hostel and good excursion base, providing meals or kitchen facilities. Buses come from Covilhã (€1.25, twice daily, July to September only), or a taxi costs €12.

Residencial Santos (☎ 271 205 400; Rua Tenente 14, Guarda; d/€45; 🚻) This place is a pleasing midrange choice with gleaming rooms and an ultramodern interior with interconnecting walkways and glass lifts.

Getting There & Away

Several buses run daily from Coimbra along the park's perimeter to Seia, Gouveia, Guarda or Covilhã. Others go via Covilhã (€4, 45 minutes) to Castel Branco (€7.50, 1¼ hours) and Lisbon, and several times daily to Viseu (€6.20, 1½ hours), Porto and Coimbra.

The twice-daily IC Line 110 train links Lisbon and Coimbra to Guarda (€12.80, 4¼ hours).

Getting Around

No buses cross the park, although you can go around it. At least two buses link Seia, Gouveia and Guarda daily, and considerably more run between Guarda and Covilhã.

THE NORTH

The country's northern region is country-bumpkin heaven with its rolling landscape interspersed with dense forests and dramatic mountains. This region is also glut-tony for wine-lovers: it's the home of the sprightly *vinho verde* wine, while its capital Porto is named after another tippie and is a beguiling combo of the medieval and modern. Smaller towns similarly have a real now-and-then feel including magnificent Braga, the country's religious heart, and the folkloric capital of Viana do Castelo.

PORTO

pop 300,000

Portugal's second-largest city, Porto has a real foreign feel with a gritty old quarter and steep streets lined with lofty, strung-with-washing houses. A lively city with chatter in the air and a tangible sense of history, Porto's old-world river-frontage district is a World Heritage Site. Across the water twinkle the neon signs of Vila Nova de Gaia, the headquarters of the major port manufacturers. Tipple aside, Porto is home to medieval churches, a clutch of museums and countless eateries and cafés. The city has recently taken a giant stride into

the 21st century with the construction of a metro system.

Orientation

Porto centre is small enough to cover mainly by foot. The city clings to the north bank of the Douro River, spanned by five bridges across from Vila Nova de Gaia, home to the port-wine lodges. Central Porto's axis is Av dos Aliados. The picturesque Ribeira district lies along the waterfront, in the shadow of the great Ponte de Dom Luís I bridge.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

Portweb (☎ 222 005 922; Praça General Humberto Delgado 291; per hr €2.50; ☎ 10-2am Mon-Sat, 3pm-2am Sun) Great ambience at this basement cyber café.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Santo António Hospital (☎ 222 077 500; Largo Prof Abel Salazar) Has English-speaking staff.

MONEY

Portocâmbios (Rua Rodrigues Sampaio 193)

Top Atlântico (☎ 222 074 020; trinidadetopotlantico.com; Rua Alferes Malheiro 96) Doubles as an Amex representative.

POST

Main post office (Praça General Humberto Delgado) Across from the main tourist office.

TELEPHONE

Telephone office (Praça da Liberdade 62) Where faxes can be sent.

TOURIST INFORMATION

ICEP tourist office (☎ 222 057 514; fax 222 053 212; Praça Dom João I 43) The national tourist office.

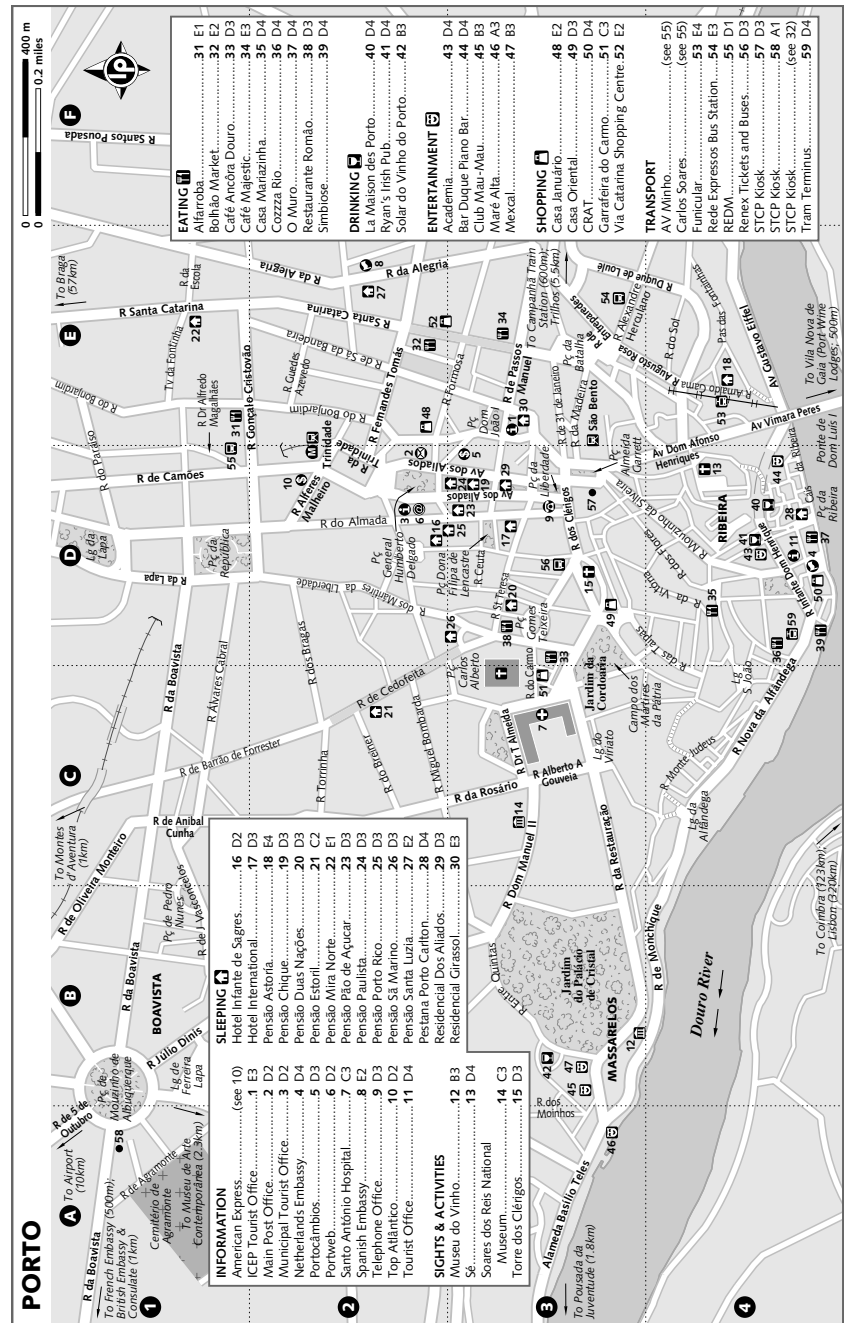
Municipal tourist office (☎ 223 393 472; www.portoturismo.pt; Rua Clube dos Fenianos 25) Next door to the tourist police office.

Tourist office (☎ 222 009 770; Rua Infante Dom Henrique 63) Smaller city tourist office.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Montes d'Aventura (☎ 228 305 157; Alameda Dr Antonio Macedo 19; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Organises walking, cycling and canoeing trips.

Trilhos (☎ /fax 225 020 740; www.trilhos.pt, in Portuguese; Rua de Belém 94; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Another option for canoe and hydrospeed excursions.



Sights

Head for the river-front Ribeira district for an atmospheric stroll around, checking out the gritty local bars, superb restaurants and river cruises.

Torre dos Clérigos (Rua dos Clérigos; admission €1.50; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm) is atop 225 steep steps but rewards those who make it to the top with the best panorama of the city.

Dominating Porto is the **Sé** (☎ 222 059 028; Terreiro da Sé; cloisters €2; ☎ 9am-12.15pm & 2.30-6pm Apr-Oct, to 5.15pm rest of year, closed Sun morning).

The cathedral is worth a visit for its mixture of architectural styles and vast ornate interior.

West of the city is the **Museu de Arte Contemporânea** (☎ 226 156 500; www.serralves.pt, in Portuguese; Rua Dom João de Castro 210; admission €5; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat & Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-7pm Oct-Mar), enclosed by pretty gardens and with works by contemporary Portuguese artists.

Museu do Vinho (Wine Museum; ☎ 222 076 300; museuvinhoporto@cm-porto.pt; Rua de Monchique 45-52; admission €2; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun) traces the history of wine and port making with an informative short film, models and exhibits. Tastings available.

Soares dos Reis National Museum (☎ 223 393 770; Rua Dom Manuel II 44; admission €3; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun) exhibits Portuguese painting and sculpture masterpieces from the 19th- and 20th-centuries. Catch bus 78 from Praça da Liberdade.

Many of the port-wine lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia offer daily tours and tastings, including **Croft** (☎ 223 772 965; www.croftport.com; admission free) and **Osborne** (☎ 223 757 517; www.osborne.es; admission free).

Festivals & Events

Porto's big festivals are the **Festa de São João** (St John's Festival), from 16 to 24 June, and the international film festival, **Fantporto**, in February. Also worth catching are the **Celtic music festival** in April/May and the **rock festival** in August.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Pensão Duas Nações (☎ 222 081 616; www.duasnacoes.com.pt; Praça Guilherme Gomes Fernandes 59; s/d/t from €13.50/21.50/24; ☎) A backpackers favourite with walls washed in bright primary colours and comfortable clean rooms.

Pensão Santa Luzia (☎ 222 001 119; Rua da Alegria; s/d €20/25; ☎) A tramp from the centre but a bargain, these pleasant, spotless rooms are run by an elderly *senhora* who is still charging escuda-era rates.

Pensão Astória (☎ 222 008 175; Rua Arnaldo Gama 56; d €35) Set in an evocative location hugging the ancient city walls high above the river, this *hostal* has elegant old doubles. Approach via the steep steps (or funicular) from the river front.

Pousada da Juventude (☎ 226 177 257; porto@movijovem.pt; Rua Paulo da Gama 551; dm/d €18/42; ☎) A tastefully spruced-up hostel 4km west of the centre. Reservations are essential. Take bus 35 from Praça da Liberdade.

Also recommended:

Pensão Porto Rico (☎ 223 394 690; Rua do Almada 237; d €30; ☎)

Pensão Mira Norte (☎ 222 001 118; Rua de Santa Catarina 969; d €30)

MIDRANGE

Residencial Girassol (☎ 222 001 891; Rua de Sá da Bandeira 133; s/d €35/45) Well-named for its sunflower theme, which includes umpteen prints and plastic flowers. Front rooms are small but comfortable and overlook an enticing *pastelaria* window.

Pensão Chique (☎ 222 009 011; Av dos Aliados 206; s/d €35/45) Smiley owner and refurbished rooms with carpeting and pale paint work. The bathrooms are old fashioned but everything works.

Pensão Paulista (☎ 222 054 692; Av dos Aliados 214; s/d €35/45; ☎) Small shiny-wod rooms with balconies overlooking a tree-lined avenue crowned by the majestic city hall.

Pensão São Marino (☎ 223 325 499; Praça Carlos Alberto 59; s/d €38/45) Tiled doll's house of a building overlooking the square with the airport bus stop outside. Carpeted rooms are decorated with feminine flair.

Residencial Dos Aliados (☎ 222 004 853; www.residencialaliados.com; Rua Elisio de Melo 27; s/d €40/65; ☎ ☎) Wedding-cake of a building in a superb location, the rooms have a homey spare-room feel, with antiques, rugs and black-and-white tiled bathrooms.

Hotel International (☎ 222 005 032; www.hi-porto.com; Rua do Almada 131; s/d €55/70; ☎) This historic hotel has been given an upbeat revamp with warm-ochre paintwork, modern sculptures and artwork, and carpeted elegant rooms. There's wi-fi in the lobby.

Also recommended is **Pensão Estoril** (☎ 222 002 751; fax 222 082 468; Rua de Cedofeita 193; d €45; ☎).

TOP END

Pensão Pão de Açúcar (☎ 222 002 425; Rua do Almada 262; www.residencialpaodeacucar.com; d/€75; ☎ ☎) Upbeat Art Nouveau décor with Escher-inspired spiral staircase. Go for the top floor with rooms opening onto the palm-fringed terrace.

Pestana Porto Carlton (☎ 223 402 300; www.pestana.com; Praça da Ribeira 1; s/d from €131/147; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) Here you'll find red-carpet service in a gorgeous 16th-century setting. Rooms have city or river views and sleek glossy furnishings with all the extras. There's wi-fi in the lobby.

Hotel Infante de Sagres (☎ 223 398 500; www.hotelinfantesagres.pt; Praça D Filipa de Lencastre 62; s/d €160/175; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) A luxurious pile featuring stained glass, chandeliers, carved wood ceilings and a central patio with fountain and palms. The rooms here are all different and are decorated with impeccable taste and flair.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

O Muro (☎ 222 083 426; Muro dos Bacalhoeiros 88; mains €7; ☎) (closed Mon) Top-notch, well-priced restaurant on the river with delicious, filling food, including several vegetarian choices. Delightfully wacky décor ranges from dried *bacalhau* to a Che Guevara poster.

Restaurante Romão (☎ 222 005 639; Praça Carlos Alberto 100; mains €7.50) Small check-tablecloth place serving up tasty northern specialities such as tripe and roast kid. Leave room for the *torta de noz* (walnut tart).

Simbiose (☎ 222 030 398; Rua Infante Dom Henrique 133; mains €11) Swooning-couples kind of place with a candlelit dining room overlooking the river. The cuisine is no-surprises Portuguese, with a reasonable daily buffet (€7.50).

Casa Mariázinha (☎ 222 009 137; Rua de Belmonte 2-4; meal €60) Think five tables and four courses served with a flourish – and the accompanying wines – by sommelier Antonio. The food is delicious: gourmet and good to look at, prepared by Brazilian wife Neide.

Cozza Rio (☎ 222 000 712; Rua S Francisco 8; mains €60) There's a fashionable vibe at this small

restaurant (yes, that is how it is spelt) with its lunchtime menu of tapas and more traditional night-time fare, including octopus-studded rice.

CAFÉS, QUICK EATS & SELF-CATERING

Café Majestic (☎ 222 003 887; Rua Santa Catarina 112) An extravagant Art Nouveau relic where powdered ladies enjoy afternoon tea.

Alfarroba (☎ 222 088 720; Rua Do Bolhão; snacks €2.50) Excellent vegetarian buffet and takeaway next to Hotel Don Henrique.

Café Ancóra Douro (☎ 222 003 749; Praça de Parada Leitão 49; snacks €3) Undergoing an overhaul at time of research, this place typically heaves with students here for the veggie burgers, hot dogs and crepes.

Bolhão market (Rua Formosa; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) Sells fruit and veggies in season, plus cheese and deli goodies.

Drinking

Solar do Vinho do Porto (☎ 226 094 749; Rua Entre Quintas 220; ☎ 2pm-midnight Mon-Sat) Sophisticated setting for tasting the port made just across the river.

La Maison des Porto (☎ 936 057 340; Rua São João 46; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 3-7pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 10am-12.30pm Wed & Sun) This vinotique gets the thumbs up from readers; taste and learn about port from the charming multilingual owner.

Ryan's Irish Pub (☎ 222 005 366; Rua Infante Dom Henrique 18; ☎ 6pm-2am) There's a suitably blarney atmosphere here for enjoying the usual range of gluggable beer.

Entertainment

Academia (☎ 222 005 737; Rua São João 80; ☎ 10pm-late Tue-Sat) Revamped and stylishly hip disco-bar.

Bar Duque Piano Bar (☎ 223 20 848; Rua da Lada 98; ☎ Mon-Sat) On a street back from the Douro, this place has a nice low-key ambience, aside from karaoke nights.

Mexcal (☎ 226 009 188; Rua da Restauração 39; ☎ 10pm-4am Tue-Sat) The Latino music here is good for a little late-night hip swinging.

Club Mau-Mau (☎ 226 076 660; Rua do Outeiro 4; ☎ 11pm-4am Wed-Sat) A dodging-elbows disco with live music on Thursday nights.

Maré Alta (☎ 226 162 540; Alameda Basílio Teles; ☎ 10pm-2am Wed & Thu, 10pm-4am Fri & Sat, 8pm-4am Sun) Nail-bitingly trendy disco with occasional live gigs.

Shopping

Major shopping areas are eastward around the Bolhão Market and Rua Santa Catarina, and westward along Rua dos Clérigos.

The best central shopping mall is **Via Catarina Shopping Centre** (Rua Santa Catarina) in a tasteful building. Port is, naturally, a popular purchase in this town. Shops with a broad selection include knowledgeable **Garrafeira do Carmo** (Rua do Carmo 17), the deli **Casa Januário** (Rua do Bonjardim 352) and **Casa Oriental** (Campo dos Mártires da Pátria 111), which also specialises in *bacalhau*. Other good buys are shoes and gold-filigree jewellery. For handicrafts visit **CRAT** (Rua da Reboleira 37) in the Ribeira.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Porto is connected by daily flights from Lisbon and London, and almost-daily direct links from other European cities (see p658).

BUS

Porto has a baffling number of private bus companies; the main tourist office has a separate desk for transport queries and timetables. In general, for Lisbon and the Algarve the choice is **Renex** (☎ 222 003 395; Rua das Carmelitas 32) or **Rede Expressos** (☎ 222 052 459).

Three companies operate from or near Pracetó Régulo Magauanha, off Rua Dr Alfredo Magalhães: **REDM** (☎ 222 003 152) goes to Braga; **AV Minho** (☎ 222 006 121) to Viana do Castelo; and **Carlos Soares** (☎ 222 051 383) to Guimarães.

TRAIN

Porto is a northern Portugal rail hub with three stations. Most international trains, and all intercity links, start at Campanhã, 2km east of the centre. Inter-regional and regional services depart from Campanhã or the central **São Bento station** (☎ 225 364 141); buses 34 and 35 run frequently between these two.

At São Bento station you can book tickets to any destination from any other Porto station.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

The **AeroBus** (☎ 808 200 166; www.stcp.pt; €4; ☎ 6.45am-6.15pm) runs every half hour between

ANDANTE FARES

The Andante is a euro-economising ticket covering metro, funicular, tram and some bus routes. The initial card costs €0.50, and it may then be recharged with more credit at vending machines at metro, train and bus stations. The savings are substantial. For a detailed breakdown on the multitravel deals and season tickets pick up the *Transport Guide* pamphlet (in English) available at the city tourist offices.

Aliados and the airport. TAP Air passengers get a free ride. A taxi costs around €18.

BUS

Central hubs of Porto's extensive bus system include Jardim da Cordoaria, Praça da Liberdade and São Bento station (Praça Almeida Garrett). Tickets are cheapest from STCP kiosks or newsagents and tobaccoists: €1.55 for a return within Porto and from €1.95 for outlying areas. Tickets bought on the bus are €1.30 for a single. There's also a €4 day pass available.

FUNICULAR

Save your puff and hop on the funicular that shuttles up and down a steep incline from Av Gustavo Eiffel to Rua Augusto Rosa (€1.35, from 8am to 8pm).

METRO

Porto's metro currently comprises four metropolitan lines that all converge at the Trindade stop. An additional line running from the airport to the centre is scheduled to open in 2007. For an update and metro map check the website www.metroporto.pt. Tickets cost €1.30 for a single ride, but you can save money by investing in an Andante card (see above).

TAXI

To cross town, expect to pay about €5. An additional charge is made to leave the city limits, including across the Ponte de Dom Luís I to Vila Nova de Gaia.

TRAM

Porto has three antique trams that trundle daily along and around the Douro to the Foz district.

ALONG THE DOURO

Portugal's best-known river flows through the country's rural heartland. In the upper reaches, port-wine grapes are grown on steep terraced hills, punctuated by remote stone villages and, in spring, splashes of dazzling white almond blossom.

The Douro River is navigable right across Portugal. Highly recommended is the train journey from Porto to Peso da Régua (€6.75, 2½ hours, about a dozen trains daily), the last 50km clinging to the river's edge; four trains continue daily to Pocinho (4½ hours). **Douro Azul** (☎ 223 393 950; www.douroazul.com) and other companies run one- and two-day river cruises, mostly from March to October. Cyclists and drivers can choose river-hugging roads along either bank, although they're crowded at weekends. A detailed colour map *Rio Douro* (€3) is available from Porto bookshops.

VIANA DO CASTELO

pop 36,545

Portugal's folkloric capital specialises in making (and selling) the traditional embroidered costumes but is far from twee. This elegant port town has grandiose 16th-century buildings, superb restaurants and beaches. The **tourist office** (☎ 258 822 620; www.rtam.pt; Rua Hospital Velho) has information on festivals and the region. In August Viana hosts the **Festas de Nossa Senhora da Agonia** (see p657).

Sights

The stately heart of town is Praça da República, with its delicate fountain and grandiose buildings, including the 16th-century **Misericórdia**, a striking Renaissance building, its upper storeys supported by ornate caryatids.

Atop Santa Luzia Hill, the **Templo do Sagrado Coração de Jesus** (Temple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; ☎ 258 823 173; admission free; ☎ 8am-7pm Apr-Sep, 8am-5pm Oct-Mar) offers a grand panorama across the river. The funicular railway is not operating, so if your ankles and knees can cope, take the steps, or a taxi, roughly 2km to the top.

Sleeping

Pousada da Juventude Gil Eannes (☎ 258 821 582; navigileannes@movijovem.pt; Gil Eannes; dm €11) This *hostal* is located in the bowels of a grand

ship. QE2 it ain't, but it's comfortable and the novelty factor is high.

Pensão Verde Minho (☎ 258 822 386; Rua do Anjinho 34-36; s/d €25/35) Ace location for foodies on a cobbled restaurant-flanked side street; the spotless rooms are pretty slick for the price.

Residencial Viana Mar (☎ 258 828 962; Av Combatentes da G Guerra 215; s/d €35/45) Well-positioned with comfortable chintzy rooms and a sunken bar that dates from the sixties when it was Viana's first nightclub.

Margarida da Praça (☎ 258 809 630; Largo 5 de Outubro 58; s/d €55/70; ☎ ☎) There's a boutique feel to this port-side place with its modern art, classy restaurant and shiny, comfortable rooms.

Eating

A Gruta (☎ 258 820 214; Rua Grande 87; mains €7) This is a snug place with half-tiled walls and a reasonable daily menu of solid local dishes. Nip across to the *pasteleria* for dessert.

Dolce Vita (☎ 258 820 214; Rua do Poço 44; mains €7) Wood-fired pizza and innovative pasta sauces make this *the* obligatory refuelling spot in town.

Zip (☎ 258 826 594; Rua Luis Jácome 17; mains €7) Well-named, this buzzy new restaurant with its red-and-wicker décor has an excellent international menu if you're suffering from *bacalhau* burn out, including crepes, pasta dishes and salads.

O Garfo (☎ 258 829 415; Largo 5 de Outubro 58; mains €8) Mixed grill, salmon and cod cakes are just some of the goodies available at this warm inviting restaurant opposite the docks.

Getting There & Away

Half a dozen express coaches daily go to Porto (€5, one hour) and Lisbon (€14, 5½ hours) Monday to Friday, with fewer at weekends.

BRAGA

pop 110,000

The religious capital of Portugal, lovely Braga is monolithic in its ecclesiastical architecture with a contemporary contrast of pedestrian streets flanked with classy cafés, shops and boutiques. The only downside is the Big Mac eyesore in the middle of the town's most beautiful square. The **tourist office** (☎ 253 262 550; www.cm-braga.pt; Praça da

República 1) can help with accommodation and maps.

Sights

In the centre of Braga is the **Sé** (museum & chapels adult/child €2/free; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), an elegant cathedral complex.

At Bom Jesus do Monte, a hilltop pilgrimage site 5km from Braga, is an extraordinary stairway, the **Escadaria do Bom Jesus**, with allegorical fountains, chapels and a superb view. Buses run frequently from Braga to the site, where you can climb the steps (pilgrims sometimes do this on their knees) or ascend by funicular railway (€1).

It's an easy day trip to **Guimarães** with its medieval town centre and a palace of the dukes of Bragança.

Sleeping

Pousada da Juventude (☎ 253 616 163; braga@movijovem.pt; Rua de Santa Margarida 6; dm/d €10/27) This bland but lively hostel is a 10-minute walk from the centre.

Hotel Residencial CC Avenida (☎ 253 275 722; Bragashopping; s/d €35/45; ☎ ☎) Shopoholic heaven, in the centre of a commercial centre, this modern place has pink-and-white rooms, satellite TV and friendly front-desk folk.

Albergaria da Sé (☎ 253 214 502; fax 253 214 501; Rua Gonçalo Pereira 39-45; s/d €45/50; ☎ ☎) A swallow's swoop from the cathedral with appropriate heady views, the rooms have hard-wood floors, sophisticated artwork and a subtle colour scheme.

Eating & Drinking

Adega Pregão (☎ 253 277 249; Praça Velha 18; mains €7) Earthy local with outdoor tables on a scenic side street. Dishes include a recommended roast lamb with chestnuts.

Taberna do Felix (☎ 253 617 701; Praça Velha 17; mains €9) Perfect for a smoochy dinner, this intimate restaurant has dim lighting, stone walls and an innovative menu, including tapas and fish fritters.

D Diogo (☎ 253 262 297; Diogo de Sousa 81-83; mains €15) Go for the splurge at this classy candlelit restaurant with its limited menu of refined fish, meat and rice dishes.

Café Vianna (☎ 253 262 336; Praça da República) A classic 19th-century café under the arches.

A Brasileira (☎ 253 262 104; Largo do Barã de S Martinho) Mildly decadent corner bar attracting effortlessly scruffy students.

Getting There & Away

Intercidade trains arrive twice daily from Lisbon (€15, five hours), Coimbra (€10, 2¼ hours) and Porto (€2, 1¼ hours), and there are daily connections north to Viana do Castelo. Daily bus services link Braga to Porto (€4.50, 1½ hours) and Lisbon (€14.50, five hours).

PARQUE NACIONAL DA PENEDA-GERÊS

Boasting some of the most stunning scenery in the country, this superb park is a popular holiday spot for Portugal's happy campers. Hikers are also keen, especially on the wilder northern region around Serra de Peneda. The area has an ancient history with dolmens, stone circles and standing stones; most are marked on local tourist maps. The park's main centre is at Caldas do Gerês, a sleepy, hot-spring village.

Information

Gerês' **tourist office** (☎ 253 391 133; fax 253 391 282) can provide information on activities and accommodation.

Other park offices are at Arcos de Valdevez and Montalegre. All have a map and an English-language booklet on the park (€3). A more detailed topographical map can be bought in Lisbon or Porto or ordered online (www.igeoe.pt, in Portuguese).

Activities

HIKING

There are trails and footpaths through the park, some between villages with accommodation. Leaflets detailing these are available from the park offices.

Day hikes around Gerês are popular. An adventurous option is the old Roman road from Mata do Albergaria (10km up-valley from Gerês by taxi or hitching), past the **Vilarinho das Furnas** reservoir to Campo do Gerês. More distant destinations include **Ermida** and **Cabril**, both with simple cafés and accommodation. Guided walks are organised by several outfits including **Incentivos Outdoors** (☎ 914 863 353) at Gerês and **Trote-Gerês** (☎ /fax 253 659 860) at Cabril.

CYCLING

Mountain bikes can be hired from **Incentivos Outdoors** (☎ 914 863 353) or the German-run **Pensão Carvalho Araújo** (☎ 253 391 185; ☎ May-Sep).

HORSE RIDING

The national park operates **horse riding facilities** (☎ 253 390 110) from beside its Vidoeiro camping ground, near Gerês. **Equi Desafios** (☎ 253 352 803; www.equidesafios.com; Rua Dr Francisco Xavier de Araújo) in Gerês also organises treks.

WATER SPORTS

Rio Caldo, 8km south of Gerês, is the base for water sports on the Caniçada reservoir. Equi Desafios (see) rents out canoes and other boats. For paddling the Salamonde reservoir, Trote-Gerês rents out canoes from its camp site at Cabril.

Gerês' **Parque das Termas** (admission €1; ☎ Sat & Sun Apr, daily May-Oct) has a **swimming pool** (Mon-Fri €3.50, Sat & Sun €5).

Sleeping

Although Gerês has plenty of *pensões*, you may find vacancies are limited as many are block-booked by spa patients in summer.

Cerdeira Camping Ground (Campo do Gerês; ☎ 253 351 005; fax 253 353 315; camp sites €4) Cerdeira has shady camp sites, a laundry and a mini-supermarket.

Pensão Adelaide (☎ 253 390 020; fax 253 390 029; d €40; ☎ ☎) Bit of a hike from the centre but the views are a suitable reward. Rooms are clean and bright.

Águas do Gerês (☎ 253 390 190; Av Manuel Francisco da Costa 136; www.aguasdogerês.pt; s/d €45/55; ☎ ☎) A grand old building houses the town's latest hotel with its stylish and tasteful rooms, tennis and spa facilities.

Hotel Universal (☎ 253 390 020; Av Manuel Francisco da Costa; www.ehgerês.com; s/d €58/70; ☎ ☎) A leafy patio lends an air of elegance to this main-street hotel with comfortable rooms. Shares a tennis court with the Águas hotel.

Eating

Most of Gerês *pensões* serve hearty meals to guests and nonguests. There are several restaurants, plus shops in the main street for stocking up on picnic provisions. The Cerdeira Camping Ground has a cheap restaurant of a reasonable standard.

Getting There & Away

From Braga, at least six coaches daily run to Rio Caldo and Gerês, and seven to Campo do Gerês (fewer at weekends). If you are

coming from Lisbon or Porto, change at Braga.

PORTUGAL DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Most tourist offices have lists of accommodation to suit a range of budgets. In this chapter the budget category for a double room is up to €45, midrange is between €46 and €75 and top end is over €76.

Note that most accommodation options, excluding camping grounds and youth hostels, include a continental breakfast in the price.

Camping

Camping is always the cheapest option, although some camping grounds close out of season. The multilingual, annually updated *Roteiro Campista* (€5), sold in larger bookshops or via the www.rroteiro-campista.pt website, lists Portugal's camping grounds.

Ecotourism and Farmstays

Private counterparts are operated under a scheme called **Turismo de Habitação** (www.turihab.pt) and a number of smaller schemes (collectively called 'Turihab'). They allow you to stay in a farmhouse, some with self-catering cottages. Check the website or ask at tourist offices about local Turihab properties. **Turismo da Natureza Portugal** (www.icat.fc.ul.pt, in Portuguese) offers lodging throughout Portugal's national protected areas.

Guesthouses

The most common types of guesthouse are the *residencial* and the *pensão*, which are usual family owned and comfortable. Many have cheaper rooms with shared bath.

Hotels

The government grades hotels with one to five stars. For a high-season double expect to pay €60 up to as much as €250. Prices drop considerably in low season.

Pousadas

Pousadas are government-run former castles, monasteries or palaces, often in spectacular locations. For details contact tourist offices, or **Pousadas de Portugal** (☎ 218 442 001;

www.pousadasjuventude.pt; Rua Soares de Passos, 1749 Lisbon).

Youth Hostels

Portugal has 46 *pousadas da juventude* (youth hostels) within the Hostelling International (HI) system. Reserve in advance for a €1.50 fee by contacting **Movijovem** (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 524 072; www.pousadasjuventude.pt; Av Duque d'Ávila 137, Lisbon).

If you don't already have a card from your national hostel association, you can pay a €2 supplement per night (and have a one-night, six-night or year-long 'guest card').

ACTIVITIES

Off-road cycling and bike trips are booming in Portugal; see Tavira (p639), Setúbal (p637), Évora (p641) and Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês (p654).

Despite some fine rambling country, walking is not a Portuguese passion. Some parks are establishing trails though, and some adventure travel agencies offer walking tours.

Popular water sports include surfing, windsurfing, canoeing, white-water rafting and water skiing. For local specialists, see Lagos (p639), Sagres (p641), Évora (p641), Tavira (p639), Coimbra (p645) and Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês (p655).

Alpine skiing is possible at Torre in the Serra da Estrela usually from January through to March.

The **Instituto Português da Juventude** (☎ 213 522 694; www.sej.pt, in Portuguese; Av da Liberdade 194, Lisbon) offers holiday programmes for 16 to 30 year olds (visitors too), including cycling, canoeing and rock climbing.

BUSINESS HOURS

Banks are open 8.30am to 3pm weekdays. Museums and tourist attractions are open between 10am and 5pm Tuesday to Friday, but are often closed at lunch. Shopping hours are generally 9am to 7pm weekdays, and 9am to 1pm Saturday. Restaurants are open for lunch and dinner, unless noted. Tourist offices in larger towns are generally open Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm, in smaller towns they close for lunch from between 1.30 and 3pm. Portuguese post offices (*correios*) are open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6pm. In Lisbon and Porto they are also open on Saturday mornings.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Portuguese Embassies & Consulates

Countries hosting Portuguese embassies or consulates abroad include the following listings:

Australia (☎ 02-6290 1733; 23 Culgoa Circuit, O'Malley, Canberra ACT 2606)

Canada (☎ 613-7290 883; 645 Island Park Dr, Ottawa Ont K1Y 0B8)

France (☎ 01 47 27 35 29; 3 Rue de Noisiel, 75116 Paris)

Germany (☎ 030-590 063 500; Zimmerstrasse 56, Berlin 10117)

Ireland (☎ 012-894 46; Knocksinna House, Foxrock, Dublin 18)

Netherlands (☎ 070-363 02 17; Bazarstraat 21, The Hague 2518)

New Zealand (☎ 09-309 1454; PO Box 305, 33 Garfield St, Parnell, Auckland)

Spain (☎ 915 617 800; Calle Castello 128, 28006 Madrid)

UK (☎ 0207-235 5331; 11 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PP)

USA (☎ 202-328 8610; 2125 Kalorama Rd NW, Washington DC 20008)

Embassies & Consulates in Portugal

Nations with embassies or consulates in Portugal include the following:

Australia (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 101 500; Av da Liberdade 200, Lisbon)

Canada Lisbon (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 164 600; Av da Liberdade 196); Faro (☎ 289 521 120; Rua Frei Lourenço de Santa Maria 1)

France Lisbon (Map pp624-5; ☎ 226 939 292; Calçada a Marques de Abrantes 123); Porto (☎ 226 094 805; Rua Eugénio de Castro 352)

Germany (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 810 210; Campo dos Mártires da Pátria 38, Lisbon)

Ireland (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 929 440; Rua da Imprensa à Estrela 1, Lisbon)

Netherlands Lisbon (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 914 900; Av Infante Santo 43); Porto (☎ Consulate 222 080 061; Rua da Reboleira 7)

New Zealand (see the UK Embassy)

Spain Lisbon consulate (Map pp628-9; ☎ 213 472 792; Rua do Salitre 1); Porto (Map p649; ☎ 225 101 685; Rua de Dom João IV 341); Vila Real de Santo António (☎ 281 544 888; Avenida Ministro Duarte Pacheco)

UK Lisbon (Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 924 000; Rua de São Bernardo 33); Porto (☎ 226 184 789; Av da Boavista 3072); Portimão (☎ 282 417 800; Largo Francisco a Maurício 7) The UK consulate also oversees consular matters for New Zealand.

USA (Map pp624-5; ☎ 217 273 300; Av das Forças Armadas, Lisbon)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

April

Holy Week Festival Easter week in Braga features colourful processions, including Ecce Homo, with barefoot penitents carrying torches.

May

Festas das Cruzes Held in Barcelos in May, the Festival of the Crosses is known for processions, folk music and dance, plus regional handicrafts.

June

Feira Nacional da Agricultura In June Santarém hosts the National Agricultural Fair, with bullfighting, folk singing and dancing.

Festa do Santo António The Festival of Saint Anthony fills the streets of Lisbon on 13 June.

Festa de São João Porto's big street bash is the St John's Festival, from 16 to 24 June.

August

Festas de Nossa Senhora da Agonia Viana do Castelo's Our Lady of Suffering Festival runs for three days, including the weekend nearest to 20 August, and is famed for its folk arts, parades and fireworks.

HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day 1 January

Carnival February/March (Shrove Tuesday)

Good Friday and the following Saturday March/April

Liberty Day 25 April (commemorating the 1975 Revolution)

Labour Day 1 May

Corpus Christi May/June (the ninth Thursday after Easter)

National Day 10 June

Feast of the Assumption 15 August

Republic Day 5 October

All Saints' Day 1 November

Independence Day 1 December (celebrating independence from Spain in 1640)

Immaculate Conception 8 December

Christmas Day 25 December

MONEY

There are numerous banks with ATMs located throughout Portugal. Credit cards are increasingly being accepted in hotels, restaurants and shops, however, you will normally be asked to provide photo identification. Exchange bureaux are common throughout Portugal; often located near to or even within the same building as the tourist offices.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Ambulance ☎ 112
- Fire ☎ 117
- Police ☎ 112

POST

Stamps can be bought over the counter from the post office or from an automatic dispensing machine (*Correio de Portugal - Selos*).

TELEPHONE

Mobile Phones

Mobile phone numbers within Portugal have nine digits and begin with ☎ 9.

Phone Codes

All Portuguese phone numbers have nine digits. These include area codes, which always need to be dialled. For general information dial ☎ 118, for international inquiries dial ☎ 179, and for reverse-charge (collect) calls dial ☎ 120.

Phonecards

Phonecards are the most reliable and cheap way of making a phone call from a telephone booth. They are sold at post offices, newsagents and tobacconists in denominations of €5 and €10.

VISAS

EU nationals need only a valid passport or identity card for entry to Portugal, and may stay indefinitely. Citizens of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States can stay for up to 90 days in any half-year without a visa. Others, including nationals of South Africa, need a visa unless they're the spouse or child of a EU citizen.

TRANSPORT IN PORTUGAL

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Portugal's main gateway is the **Aeroporto Portela** (LIS; ☎ 218 413 700) in Lisbon, approximately 8km north of the city centre. Porto's **Aeroporto Francisco Sá Carneiro** (OP0; ☎ 229 432 400) also handles international flights,

as does the **Aeroporto de Faro** (FAO; ☎ 229 800 801) in the Algarve, which has the largest number of charter flights. The website for all three airports is www.ana-aeroportos.pt, in Portuguese.

Air Portugal (TAP; ☎ 289 800 218; www.tap.pt, in Portuguese) is the main international airline. **Portugália Airlines** (PGA; ☎ 218 425 559; www.pga.pt, in Portuguese) is primarily a domestic airline, but is increasingly opening up international routes including to/from Manchester, Brussels, Nice and Lyon. **Hi Fly** (☎ 210 062 480; www.hifly.aero), formerly Air Luxor, flies to major European capitals and to former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome.

Following is a list of the major carriers serving Portugal with the airports they use: Lisbon, Porto or Faro. For details of carriers to/from outside Mediterranean Europe see the Transport chapter (p877).

Air France (code AF; ☎ 218 482 177; www.airfrance.com) Lisbon, Porto.

Air Portugal (code TAP; ☎ 289 800 218; www.tap.pt) Lisbon, Porto, Faro.

British Airways (code BA; ☎ 214 154 151; www.ba.com) Lisbon, Porto, Faro.

British Midlands/Bmibaby (code WW; ☎ UK 0870 264 2229; www.bmibaby.com) Lisbon, Porto, Faro.

easyJet (code EZY; ☎ 218 413 700; www.easyjet.com) Lisbon, Faro.

Iberia (code IB; ☎ 808 261 261; www.iberia.com, in Spanish) Lisbon, Porto.

KLM (code KL; ☎ 204 747 747; www.klm.nl, in German)

Lufthansa (code LH; ☎ London 020-8750 3460; www.lufthansa.com, in German) Lisbon, Porto, Faro.

Monarch Airlines (code ZB; ☎ 289 889 475; www.fly-monarch.com) Faro.

Portugália Airlines (code PGA; ☎ 218 425 559; www.pga.pt, in Portuguese) Lisbon, Porto, Faro.

Ryanair (code FR; ☎ 229 432 400; www.ryanair.com) Porto.

Spanair (code JK; ☎ 218 4998 578; www.spanair.com) Lisbon.

There are year-round flights from the UK to Lisbon, Porto and Faro with BA, PGA and TAP. No-frills carriers include easyJet with flights from London Luton to Lisbon and from several UK airports to Faro. Ryanair flies from London Stanstead to Porto. British Midland's Bmibaby also has inexpensive flights from the East Midlands to Faro.

TAP and Continental Airlines both have a daily flight from New York to Lisbon

with connections to Faro and Porto. Air France has multiple daily non-stop Paris–Lisbon and Paris–Porto connections, while PGA has a daily flight from Paris to Porto. From neighbouring Spain, TAP, Iberia and Spanair have daily Madrid–Lisbon flights. Elsewhere in Europe, KLM and TAP fly to Lisbon and Porto daily from Amsterdam, while PGA has regular direct flights to Lisbon from Berlin, Stuttgart, Cologne and Hamburg.

Land

BUS

From UK

Eurolines (☎ UK 08705-143 219; www.eurolines.co.uk) offers departures for Portugal twice weekly with several stops that include Lisbon (42 hours) and Porto (40 hours). Buses depart from Victoria coach station, travelling via the Channel ferry and stopping over in Buniel, Spain and Lille in France. The current return fare London–Lisbon is UK£179.

From Spain

Eurolines (☎ Madrid 915 063 360; www.eurolines.es, in Spanish) operates several services from Spain to Portugal, including Madrid–Lisbon (€40, eight hours), Seville–Lisbon (€36, four hours) and Barcelona–Lisbon (€80, 16 hours), all going at least three times weekly.

ALSA (☎ Madrid 902 422 242; www.alsa.es) has twice-daily Madrid–Lisbon services, while **Damas** (☎ Huelva 959 256 900; www.damas-sa.es) runs twice daily Monday to Saturday from Seville to Faro and Lagos via Huelva, jointly with the Algarve line EVA.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

There is no border control in Portugal and there are plenty of self-service stations; some have garages that can replace batteries, repair punctures and do minor mechanical repairs, as well as carry some spare parts. Alternatively, they can direct you to the nearest car workshop. For more information about driving in Portugal see opposite.

TRAIN

The fastest and most convenient route to Portugal from the UK is with Eurostar from London Waterloo to Paris via the Chan-

nel Tunnel, and then onward to Lisbon via Irún. Contact **Rail Europe** (☎ UK 08705-848 848; www.raileurope.co.uk; return ticket around €300). From Paris, contact **SNCF** (www.sncf.com; return ticket around €210).

Renfe (☎ Spain 902 240 202; www.renfe.es; return ticket €126) has a nightly sleeper service between Madrid and Lisbon. Badajoz–Elvas–Lisbon is slow and there is only one regional service daily, but the scenery is stunning.

GETTING AROUND

Air

Air Portugal (TAP; ☎ 707 205 700; www.tap.pt) has daily Lisbon–Faro flights (under an hour) year-round. Overall, however, flights within Portugal are poor value unless you have a youth/student card; it is a lot cheaper to hop on the bus or train.

Bicycle

Mountain biking is popular in Portugal and a great way to explore the country, although given the Portuguese penchant for overtaking on blind corners, it can be dangerous on lesser roads. Bicycle lanes are rare, aside from in the natural parks: veteran pedallers recommend the Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês (p654). A growing number of towns have bike-rental outfits (around €10 a day). If you're bringing your own, pack plenty of spares. Bicycles can't be taken with you on trains, although most bus lines will accept them as accompanied baggage, subject to space and sometimes for an extra fee.

Boat

Portugal is not big on waterborne transport as a rule, however, there are river cruises along the Douro River from Porto (p648), Lisbon's river trips (p629) and commuter ferries.

Bus

Portugal's buses are generally modern and comfortable. However, there is a baffling number of privatised bus companies operating across the country. In Porto alone there are at least 18 bus companies, most based at different terminals.

The only company really worth worrying about is the national network, **Rede Expressos** (☎ 969 502 050; www.rede-expressos.pt, in Portuguese),

which has a fleet of 100 buses, a comprehensive website and provides connections to 300 locations throughout the country. Most bus-station ticket desks will give you a computer print-out of fares, and all services and schedules will be clearly posted at each major station.

CLASSES

There are three classes of bus service: *expressos* are comfortable, fast, direct buses between major cities; *rápidas* are fast regional buses; and *carreiras* stop at every crossroad. *Expressos* are generally the best cheap way to get around (particularly for long trips, where per-kilometre costs are lowest). An under-26 card should get you a discount of around 20%, at least on the long-distance services.

COSTS

Travelling by bus in Portugal is fairly inexpensive. Refer to the Getting There & Away section of the respective city or town you are travelling to or from for distance times and fares.

RESERVATIONS

Advance reservations are only really necessary on the longer routes of the *expresso* service.

Car & Motorcycle

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATIONS

ACP (Automóvel Clube de Portugal; Map pp624-5; ☎ 213 180 100; www.acp.pt, in Portuguese; Rua Rosa Araújo 24, Lisbon) has a reciprocal arrangement with many of the better-known foreign automobile clubs, including AA and RAC. ACP provides medical, legal and breakdown assistance. Emergency help is available in the north (☎ 228 340 001) and the south (☎ 219 429 103).

HIRE

To hire a car in Portugal you must be at least 25 and have held your home licence for over a year (some companies allow younger drivers at higher rates). To hire a scooter of up to 50cc you must be over 18 years old and have a valid driving licence. For more powerful scooters and motorbikes you must have a valid driving licence covering these vehicles from your home country.

INSURANCE

Although most car insurance companies within the EU will cover taking your car to Portugal, it is prudent to consider extra cover for assistance in case your car breaks down. The minimum insurance required is third party.

ROAD RULES

Driving is on the right side of the road. Speed limits for cars and motorcycles are 50km/h in cities and public centres, 90km/h on normal roads and 120km/h on motorways (but 50km/h, 70km/h and 100km/h for motorcycles with sidecars). Drivers and front passengers in cars must wear seat belts. Motorcyclists and passengers must wear helmets, and motorcycles

must have headlights on day and night. Using a mobile phone while driving could result in a fine.

Drink-driving laws are strict here with a maximum legal blood-alcohol level of 0.05%.

Train

Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses (CP; ☎ 808 208 208; www.cp.pt) is the statewide train network and is generally efficient, although can be slower than long-distance buses. Most trains are *regionais* (R) or *suburbanos*, stopping at stations en route. The more costly *intercidades* (IC) trains are faster, while the most luxurious and pricey are the *alfa pendulares* (AP) trains. Both the IC and AP lines require seat reservations in advance.