



Mystical Portugal with Berto Gándara

May 7-16 2025

\$4295*+ AIR

PORTUGAL ITINERARY.

- 7 May Arrive Lisbon
- 8 May. Lisbon
- 9 May Lisbon
- 10 May Lisbon to Fatima to Tomar
- 11 May Tomar
- 12 May Tomar to Braga
- 13 May Braga
- 14 May Brago to Porto
- 15 May Porto
- 16 May. We say Good Bye to Portugal
- 16 May 19 May- Optional add on to Santiago de Compostela



Follow the ancient way of seafarers, knights, and pilgrims through the ever-changing countryside of Portugal toward the Cathedral of St. James, the apostle. Next October led by Berto Gandara we will dive into Portugal's rich culture filled with heroes such as Magellan and Vasco de Gama and the mysterious Knights Templar, the secret military of the arm of the Church based in the Portuguese hills.

Discover this fascinating history, the traditional cuisine, the mysteries, the laughter and beauty, and the gorgeous countryside of Portugal while following your own soul journey,

Day 1. Lisbon

Your centrally located hotel is the perfect base for exploring this lively, hilly port and capital. Nearby are fascinating neighborhoods, historic trolleys, grand squares, fine art, foodie delights, and a soundtrack of soulful fado.



Get comfortably installed in your hotel, home for next three nights. Later meet fellow travelers for an overview of the days ahead, and a traditional Portuguese Welcome Dinner



Day 2. Lisbon

Immerse yourself in the soul of Lisbon with a guided walking tour through the enchanting neighborhoods that surround the hotel. Take a tuk-tuk adventure through Lisbon's enchanting viewpoints. Explore the city's hills from Alfama to Graça, soaking in panoramic views of São Jorge Castle, the Tagus River, and charming Lisbon streets.

Your afternoon is free to explore at your own pace, or adventure out to Sintra on an easy train ride to visit this historic town of initiation.

Day 3. Lisbon

We will visit the seafaring Belem district, home to many of the city's most historic buildings. Traveling the waterfront learn about Portugal's golden age of exploration at the heroic Monument to the Discoveries and how faith, money and a knack for sailing combined to build the impressive Monastery of Jeronimo including the cloisters and cathedral.

Enjoy lunch at a typical Portuguese café then return to hotel for a free afternoon to wander, shop, or stroll along the riverside and explore on your own.



Day 4. Lisbon to Fatima. Fatima to Tomar.

After breakfast travel scenic coastal roads through ever-changing countryside, arriving at the sacred site of Fatima. It was here, during the first world war that the Virgin appeared to three Portuguese children with her message. Hear the legends and feel the wonders that remain.

After a brief orientation to the site, you'll have free time to sink into the mystery of this pilgrimage site. Lunch on your own at one of the many international restaurants before we depart to Tomar.

Journey continues to town of Tomar and the glorious castle on the hill, home of the Knights Templar. The missions of the Knights Templar in the Middle Ages are steeped in history and surrounded in mystery. We begin to unravel some with our visits and conversations. Tonight we will gather for a regional dinner together.

Day 5. Tomar.

With our local guide, explore the interior chambers of the Convento de Cristo, also a UNESCO world heritage site. Begin to see the influence of the Knights Templar, noticing how the architecture and images hint at their secrets. Spend time in the Inner sanctum Charola modeled after the Church of the Holy Sepulture in Jerusalem.

Walk around the stone walls, then follow the path through Templar Gardens to the Church of St Marie of the Olives, which is significant in the Templar legends.





Day 6. Tomar to Braga

Travel from the history and mystery of Tomar to the vibrant and lively city of Braga.

Stop at a *Vinho Verde* farm, to enjoy a lunch long to be remembered. Taste the delicious wines, tour the estate and delight in an incredible meal savoring every bite of local specialties paired perfectly with the finest regional wines.

Arriving Braga, our guide will take us to the Sanctuary de Bom Jesus, an architecture marvel and spiritual site. It's imposing 537-step Baroque staircase leads to a most spectacular panoramic view. You can choose to walk up those stairs or use the historic water powered funicular. After we check into our historic hotel, the evening is free to wander this festive town.



Day 7. Braga.

Home to a university and one of the last stops on the Portuguese Camino, Braga is a fluid mix of ages, cultures and religions, rooted in historical prominence, and known for innovations as well as wines. Sometimes called the Silicon Valley of Portugal, it's also the youngest city of Europe with more young people per square mile. And in 2016 was voted the Happiest City in Europe.

This morning our local guide leads us on an exploration of Braga's historical center. Visit the 15th century Cathedral, and other architectural gems, landmarks and quaint neighborhoods while sampling their famous local pastries.

The rest of the day is free to immerse yourself in the city's ambiance. Stroll through the charming streets, visit local shops, or simply relax in a local café for dinner.

Day 8. Braga To Porto



After a short drive, we'll arrive in Portugal's northern 'capital' city, Porto. Porto is built on the estuary of the famous Douro River and is known for its beautifully painted tiles and wines, especially their fortified Port wine. It's been said that Lisbon is where one enjoys the life, and Porto is where one works to make the life.

Arriving in Porto, check into your well-located 4-star Grande Hotel de Porto. Get acquainted with the neighborhood by taking a short walking tour for an overview what's nearby. This afternoon is a great time to wander this bustling area of famous shops and local boutiques and discover some of their great restaurants and cafés.

Day 9. Porto Take a leisurely morning as you organize the day as you like. Your guides can provide suggestions for you to explore around the city. For a finale, enjoy an evening of the Portuguese expressive, soulful Fado music with your Farewell Dinner

Day 10. Porto. After breakfast, it's a farewell to new friends, and on to other adventures. Assistance is available for transport to your outbound travel... or join us for the optional onward pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.



The price is \$4295.00 Per person, double occupancy. Single Supplement, \$1000. If paying by credit card, a 4% credit card fee will be applied, Your deposit of \$750 is due on booking to hold your place. Final Payment is due on January 15, 2025. Space is limited. Please note the *Itinerary is subject to improvement and changes*

What is Included In Portugal:

- Accommodation in 3 and 4-star hotels with breakfast.
- All guided tours listed, including entrance fees and gratuities to guides.
- 2 lunches. (traditional café Belem, *Vhino Verdi* farm with wine tasting)
- 3 dinners. (Welcome dinner Lisbon, Tomar evening, Farewell dinner with Fado in Porto)
- Transportation in private coach through Portugal from 1st to last hotel.
- Insights and guidance from Berto
- Services of local guides, three IOJ travel coordinators

What is NOT included:

- Air fare
- Transfer for the airport to the first hotel and transfers out of the last hotel.
- Any passport fees
- Trip Insurance, Cancellation or medical insurance
- Meals and drinks unless specified

Optional Add On

Pilgrimage to Santiago Compostela, Spain



May 16-19



\$1279*

PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO COMPOSTELA

- 16 May Porto to Santiago
- 17 May Santiago Compostela
- 18 May Santiago Compostela
- 19 May The end of the pilgrimage, the beginning of new insights...

History of the Camino.

In 1075, while constructing a church, Bishop Alfonso VI found remains which he declared were those of St. James, the apostle. He ordered a cathedral to be built on the site, to house the remains of the only apostle found in Europe. As word spread, pilgrims started walking across Europe to visit the legendary sacred burial of one of Jesus's apostles. But is it? One of the mysteries we will explore. Over the years that small church grew to become the epic Cathedral de Santiago de Compostela.

Your Pilgrimage

Immerse yourself in a contemplative journey.

Day 1 Porto to Santiago Compostela

After breakfast, and a blessing, begin your own journey to Santiago Cathedral of St. James the Apostle. We'll travel on a public bus for this journey, shifting into the feeling of pilgrimage. Once we arrive in Santiago you will have the choice to walk 3 miles of the northern Camino, arriving at the pilgrim's stone in front of the Cathedral where all pilgrimages end offering prayers of gratitude.

Very nearby the Cathedral is our hotel, Monuento San Francisco which is built within an 18th century convent and a world heritage site. It is our base camp for the next three nights and quite the opposite of camping on a stone church floor. Tonight dinner is on your own to choose from a great selection of restaurants in the old town.



Day 2 After breakfast join Berto for meditation and contemplation. Later in the day, our local guide leads us into the depths and heights of the Cathedral's inner chambers, revealing the icons and symbols we've followed thru other sites along the way. Learn more of its history, past glories, and sometimes miracles.

Rest of the day you are free to follow your own *camino* in around the Cathedral, and down the narrow cobblestone streets of the old town.

Day 3 Gather with Berto this morning for meditation and contemplation. Then visit the bustling market that provides nourishment for the town and its pilgrims. This market is on every 'must see' list for Santiago. Here you'll find lots of fun options for lunch.

The rest of the day is for you to further pursue what calls you. Spend quiet time in the Cathedral, or one of the many small churches in the village.

Tonight we meet for a group circle, sharing our experiences. To celebrate, we have our farewell dinner in the grand restaurant of Monumento San Francisco, savoring all our experiences and enjoying the fellowship of our companions.

Day 4 A warm farewell to your fellow pilgrims, as you head to your next adventure. Assistance is provided to airports, trains, or buses and a warm glow follows you home.

The Add On price is \$1279.00* Per person, double occupancy. Single Supplement, \$450.00 If paying by credit card, a 4% credit card fee will be applied, No additional deposit is required at booking. Please note the *Itinerary is subject to improvement and changes.*

What is Included on Santiago Pilgrimage:

- Transportation to Santiago on public bus
- Three nights in 4-star hotel with breakfast
- Guided tours listed, including entrance fees and gratuities
- Farewell dinner
- Insights and guidance from Berto
- Services of local guides, IOJ travel coordinators

What is NOT included on Santiago Pilgrimage:

- Meals and beverages unless specified
- Transfer from Santiago hotel to airport, trains or buses.