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**Amazing Portugal**

**By Johnathan Bakers**

The western part of the Iberian Peninsula, the part bathed by the Atlantic Ocean is the traditional

country of Portugal. Long ago, the territory between the northern part of Portugal and Spain were not very well defined and the cultural aspects were very similar. But then the Castrena culture made its first appearance with grass thatched huts in a round formation in the north and then the Romans took over, separating the two territories. From the beginning of the 5th century Braga was named capital of Portugal, then it was invaded by the Visigods and finally, as almost all the Iberian Peninsula, the Arabs moved in, leaving a tremendous influence, especially their architecture, culture and was of governing.

But all this is quite old, and even though it is interesting to know, when visiting Portugal (

<http://www.lisbon-and-portugal.com/travel/portugal.html>

)and its capital city Lisbon, many people are

looking for actual entertainment and fun places to visit along with historical ones. Lisbon, Portugal's Proud Capital In Lisbon, where the majority of the tourist start their visit after having arrived at the airport, there are various excursions to do around the city. There are museums of all kinds: – Museum do Chiado which is located in one of the most enchanting areas of Lisbon. Here you can find Portuguese and French Art. It is open on Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and all other days except Mondays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. – Science Museum which is located at the main entrance to the Science University has as its principal objective to be education with over 60 interactive themes using physics, chemistry and maths. It is open from monday to friday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and from 2 to 5 and not open on Sundays. – Museum do Carmo which is installed in the ruins of the monastery and has an excellent archaeological collection from many different periods. – National Museum of Ancient Art which is found in the area called Belem near the river in the Palace of onde Alvor. It is the most important museum in Portugal having 65 halls taking in a lot of Portuguese painters and sculptors and all the combinations that the portuguese made when it had all its colonies. Extremely interesting and takes time to see. Open from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. from Wednesday to Sunday, and Tuesday from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sundays are free.

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And Lisbon is also known for its open air entertainment like: – Eduardo VII Park found right next to the Marques de Pombal Square. This park was created to commemorate the English King Eduardo VII's visit to Lisbon in 1903. The Gym Pavillion Carlos Lopez is beautifully decorated on the outside with tiles. And the Estufa Fria ( greenhouse) where you can find all kinds of plants from all over the world which were brought to Lisbon and have been adapted to the climate change there. – Tapada da Ajuda is a 200 acre park once used for hunting but now there are various activities like a children's park, recreation area and an Astronomy Observatory . – Botanical Gardens which was founded in 1873 and considered one of the best in all Europe. There are over 2,500 species including palm and banana trees. Being as it is situated on a hill, the different level connected by steps makes its beauty even more enhancing and delightful for the eye to see. It is open in winter from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in summer from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Portugal's nice lodging Lisbon needs quite a few days to visit it so if you have need some ideas on hotels, here you go. The Four Seasons–Ritz is the tops with beauty gardens and a great view of Eduard VII Park. Or maybe Carlton palace Hotel which is a 19th century palace with tropical gardens. Coming down a little the Comfort Principe with a panoramic view restaurant and good service and quality. On the busy Ave. Liberdade in a small neoclassical Moorish palace called Veneza, nice pensions like As Janelas Verdes which is a 17 room restored old house from the 18th c. near the Museum of Ancient Art and for those just wanting to lay their heads down, some nicely kept campings or youth hostels. But once you are in

Portugal you have to take full advantage and see places like Sintra, Porto, Albufeira in the Algarve region and an extra special get away to Madeira or the Azores Islands. It's all lovely.

Johnathan Bakers is a successful author and regular contributor to the

<http://www.lisbon-and-portugal.com>

website. John is also publishing on topics like Portuguese culture and history.

### **Travelling Beyond The Algarve Reveals The Real Portugal**

**By Mr Hanna**

The Algarve is atypical sun and sand holiday destination attracting tens of thousands of Europeans every summer. Although the region has much to offer both the package holiday maker, independent traveller and, of course, golfer, many visitors to Portugal fail to get beyond the trappings of the holiday resorts and sample the real Portugal.

Outside of the Algarve, Portugal has a long and illustrious history. An independent nation since 1143, Portugal is one of the oldest nations in Europe and its location on the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula dictates a long history of sea faring and discovery. A vast monumental and cultural legacy has been left for modern visitors to enjoy. The tourist information site gives an interesting and informative overview of the cultural and historic attractions of the country as well as useful guides to

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the regions and cities of Portugal (

<http://www.portugal.org/tourism/index.html>

).

The capital city, Lisbon, is an ideal location for a short break and is rapidly gaining a reputation as such. A thriving and bustling mix of the old and new, Lisbon retains a respect for its historic past whilst offering the visitor the attractions and amenities that could be expected of a main European city. The city is dominated by the old port area - the departure point for explorers such as Magellan - and recent regeneration of the area is sympathetic and impressive. Lisbon comes to life at night as the locals descend on the pavement restaurants and bars creating a relaxed, sociable and informal atmosphere.

Further North and the impressive, World Heritage status city of Porto can be found. The city, of course, lends its' name to the world famous variety of wine but the city's baroque and Romanesque architecture leave a lasting and perhaps not as regrettable impression. Although the Algarve signs to mind when you mention beaches and Portugal, the coastal region of Minho, to the north of Porto have perhaps the most stunning beaches in the country. The area has some resorts, but these are quieter and smaller in scale to their southern counterparts and offer a quieter, perhaps more relaxed beach holiday than the Algarve.

Travelling to Portugal via, Lisbon, Porto or Faro is relatively easy from the UK with most operators offering direct flights from a range of UK airports. Internal flights are relatively inexpensive and the rail system is cheap and efficient. Portugal is a relatively small country and is negotiable by road for those looking to traverse wide areas. Car rental in Portugal is abundant - especially in Lisbon and Porto and most of the major car hire firms offer one way or return car hire in Portugal (

<http://www.easycar.com/car-hire/destination/Portugal.aspx/EN>

).

The Algarve is an ideal family holiday destination and has many charms but Portugal as a country has much more to offer for those willing to explore a little further.

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