

PORTUGAL

Porto, Minho & Douro Valley

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive Route Notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



Overview

The northern reaches of Portugal exude a rural beauty unlike anywhere else. At once rugged and peaceful and wholly magnificent, the steep granite mountains of Minho and gentle hills of the Douro Valley each embody a distinct Portuguese spirit and exploring them by foot is a true privilege. You'll begin in the spellbinding province of Minho, a rich patchwork of soaring slopes and emerald-green terraces criss-crossed and climbed by ancient, rugged shepherd trails that link tiny secluded stone villages. This is the most contemplative, and immersive, way to experience rural Portugal: your solitude is part of the adventure as Garrano ponies, Barossã cattle and a shepherd tending his flock may be your only companions. Pathways then point to the Douro River Valley, where vintners have been producing Portugal's prized port wines for generations. Traverse gentle downhill slopes past lush vineyards and the elegant wine estates known as *quintas*. Pause for a glass of wine or two while taking in breathtaking vistas of the celebrated winding river. And marvel at scenic vine-laden slopes from the river during a private boat excursion. Along the way, join local guides on informative walks through historic Guimarães, birthplace of Portugal, and Porto, one of Europe's most authentic cities. This is Portugal at its purest.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Porto. Transfer to Parada with visit to Lindoso. Peneda-Gerês National Park: Trilho dos Moinhos de Parada (Path of the Mills); 3.6 miles, easy to moderate, 550-ft cumulative elevation gain and loss

Arrive in Porto and make your way with a Country Walkers representative north into Portugal's remote Minho province at the Spanish border. Your destination is the country's first and only national park, Peneda-Gerês, a striking landscape of forested hills and isolated villages that evoke the rich rural traditions of Portugal. As one of the country's least developed regions, accommodations here are simple and trails are not perfectly maintained. Therein lies its adventure and its charm, as you'll discover during a two-night stay that puts you at the heart of this tranquil and unspoiled place. You'll follow paved granite trails through deep wooded valleys and up to remote uplands reaching up to 4,900 feet, passing through tiny villages that haven't changed for centuries. It's common to walk an entire day without passing anyone else here, save perhaps a shepherd guiding his flock.

Stop in the small town of Ponte da Barca for last-minute items before arriving in the village of Lindoso, best known for its 13th-century medieval castle and its dozens of 19th-century *espigueiros*, granite corn granaries elevated on pillars to

keep rats and mice at bay. The castle is one of Portugal's finest examples of medieval military architecture with its Vauban-style, star-shaped wall and dramatic situation above the valley of the Lima River. Central to the nation's identity, it played a major role as the Minho region changed hands between Spain and Portugal in the 1660s.



After time to explore the castle and its *espigueiros*, continue with your representative to Parada, an old granite village dripping with rural, old world charm. Cows and goats not only share the narrow streets with residents; they also share the houses, relegated to street level while owners live upstairs. On your way to your rustic guesthouse, you might pass women doing laundry in the communal wash basin. At your modest guest house, you will meet your host, Patricia, over a light lunch and then accompany your representative on a warm-up walk along the Trilho dos Moinhos de Parada (Path of the Mills). Ascend a steadily climbing, wide cobbled pathway in the shade of grape arbors. Moss-covered stone walls and small vineyards of Portugal's famed *vinho verde* grape line your trail, as do magnificent views of the Lima Valley, the slopes of Peneda Mountain dotted with tiny villages, and Parada and its granaries. Later, your wide path narrows into uneven stone footpaths and ancient shepherds' trails that lead past towering oak trees. As you reach the plateau, you're surrounded by the pristine Terras de Lindos mountains, overlooking deep valley contours and soaring peaks of the Serra Amarela. After time to admire the sweeping view, and perhaps the wild, free-roaming Garrano ponies that frequent the area, follow stone cairns downhill through yellow gorse and purple heather and over ancient granite bridges to Poço da Gola, one of the park's many natural pools, with its abandoned water mill. Take a dip here if you'd like, then continue on this trail back to the village, passing the historic jailhouse, city hall, and courthouse along the way. Your Country Walkers representative will leave you to delight to a true Portuguese rustic dinner (prepared by your host) in Patricia's eat-in kitchen.

Casa da Fecha, Parada/Lindoso

A beautifully renovated home with traditional wood furnishings, stone walls, and tiled floors, the Casa da Fecha in the stone village of Parada is the ideal spot from which to explore Peneda-Gerês National Park by foot. This self-catering guesthouse evokes the true spirit of rural Portugal because it is woven so deeply



into the fabric of this simple and special place. Though it is a three-bedroom house with three bathrooms, you will have it to yourself so you can fully experience life in an ancient village in your own way. Even the welcoming owner Patricia ensures your privacy as she lives elsewhere in the village.

DAY 2

Peneda-Gerês National Park: Gavieira to Peneda; 5.2 miles, moderate to challenging, 1,350-ft cumulative elevation gain and loss

After a hearty breakfast, transfer 40 minutes to the stone village of Gavieira amidst the granite uplands of Serra da Peneda. Today's walk is sometimes gentle and sometimes challenging. It begins along a pilgrimage route, heading out of the village on a moderate trail through a varied terrain of narrow paths, river banks, and an emerald-green patchwork of terraced pastures. Continue up a gentle slope under the hushed canopy of oak and chestnut trees, later stepping into a more humid environment of ferns and mossy stone walls. A trail through a pine forest leads to open fields of rocks dotted by stone cairns, which lead you over a hillock and up a granite mountain trail through tall vegetation. At the plateau, more cairns point the way to a picturesque artificial lake formed by a dam. On the distant hillsides, you might spot the region's ubiquitous Barrosã cattle with their long lyre-shaped horns or even see more Garrano ponies. You're sure to find an ideal spot to enjoy the picnic lunch that Patricia prepared for you this morning. A steady descent down a magnificent old granite stairway, one of Portugal's great mountain routes, delivers you to the large main square of Peneda, straddling a deep ravine at the foot of a towering cliff draped in green.

The focal point of Peneda has long been the Sanctuary of Senhora da Peneda, a pilgrimage destination for many of the devout who call these mountains home. Each September, the Nossa Senhora da Peneda Festival fills a music-filled square with thousands who have walked the same trails that brought you here. In the open portico, take a moment to admire statues of the four evangelists and the 20 chapels representing the Stations of the Cross. If you wish, you can take in the ambiance of this quiet village at an outdoor café before a meal of simple mountain food at your hotel.

Peneda Hotel, Peneda

The simple amenities of the rustic and historic Peneda Hotel befit the needs of the pilgrims who converge here to pray at the Sanctuary of Senhora da Peneda. Its peaceful locale and stunning setting alongside a waterfall and over a gushing creek makes it a tranquil haven to conclude an enriching day of walking. The restaurant serves simple mountain food and the option to dine in the clean mountain air on the outdoor terrace. Relax in a spacious room with blond-wood floors and French windows that look out across the ravine to the village.



DAY 3

Branda da Avelreira to Padrão or Sistelo; 5.2 mile or 6.7 miles, moderate with challenging sections, 300-ft cumulative elevation gain and 1,950-ft or 2,700-ft cumulative elevation loss. Transfer to Guimarães with visit en route to the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte in Braga

Today's walk follows the Romeiros da Peneda, a shepherd's trail through stunning agricultural landscapes. Your route traces the seasonal pathways used by shepherds as they moved their flocks to higher pastures and dwellings (*brandas*) in warm months and lower pastures and dwellings (*inverneiras*) in cold months. From the summer hamlet of Branda da Avelreira, you will head out on a wide rocky dirt track through fields and past long-horned cattle to descend into the Rio Vez Valley, a U-shaped glacial-cut expanse littered with large, smooth granite boulders. You'll cross the Rio Vez and pass the stone dwellings of picturesque Branda do Furado and later ascend a wide grassy path to a steep rocky climb. This ancient cobbled path through a majestic oak forest past mossy stone walls leads to the pinnacle of today's hike in the Serra da Peneda. Take time to soak in the rugged mountain vistas, keeping a watch for vultures overhead. When you're ready, follow the stone cairns through high pastures where shepherds often tend to their herds. Through an open pine forest, follow an ancient stone path known locally as a *carreteiro* for its past use as an ox-cart trail. Still today, it is marked by centuries-old wheel ruts. Numerous summer dwellings point the way to the mountain village of Porta Cova, a short distance from your final destination, Padrão. This small hamlet is known for its *socalcos*,



perfectly preserved terraces of deep fertile soil held in place by heavy stone walls. They are an astonishing sight in this rugged mountain terrain.

Padrão embodies the typical mountain community of old Portugal. Compactly arranged, the communal-like houses make the most efficient use of space, keeping maximum land available for farming. Padrão and villages like it are

many things to the local people: an entry into the surrounding fields for farming, a starting point into the mountains for grazing, a private space for families, and a meeting place for neighbors. Despite their remoteness, they were designed with brilliant intention for function and sociability.

If you wish, you may join your affable taxi driver here for a lift to the lovely village of Sistelo. But we recommend you continue walking for another hour. The cobbled path is downhill, bordered by stone walls with spectacular views of farming terraces. Lush grape arbors, vineyards, vegetable gardens and their farmers lend a beautiful rustic ambiance to the day's final leg. Once in Sistelo, you can rest your feet and grab a drink at a local bar, then join your driver for a transfer to Guimarães. En route, pause to marvel at the hilltop church of Bom Jesus in Braga, one of the most important pilgrimage sites in the country. Its spectacular Baroque stairway of some 600 steps zigzags upward. Some of the chapels on the stairs' many landings date to the 14th century.

Arrive in Guimarães later today in time for dinner. Birthplace of the Portuguese kingdom and a UNESCO World Heritage site, the city is a treasure trove of history and a revered point of pride for locals. There'll be time to explore tomorrow when you're joined by a guide. Tonight, you'll have many dining options before retiring to your room in the heart of the city.

Hotel da Oliveira, Guimarães

Located in the historic center of Guimarães on one of the city's beautiful *praças*, or squares, the Hotel da Oliveira is one of the great boutique hotels of the world. It is perfectly located within walking distance of the city's most iconic site, the Castelo de São Miguel. This restored period *pousada*, or inn, retains its historic charms—bare stone walls, exposed beams, timber flooring—amidst luxurious accommodations that have been crafted with fine touches. The onsite restaurant

offers carefully prepared traditional cuisine and the bar is the ideal spot to unwind after a discovery-rich day.

DAY 4

Guided walking tour of Guimarães; 2–3 miles, easy



Guimarães enjoys a stunning setting, surrounded by emerald hills. This gracious city is the birthplace of Portugal, as it was here that Afonso Henriques declared himself king in 1139. The place of *his* birth, the Castelo de São Miguel, originally built to deflect Moors and Normans in the 10th century, lords over the town with its massive square keep and imposing battlements. It was the Battle of São Mamede in the nearby countryside that determined Portugal's fate as Afonso led his troops to victory. For several decades after, the city was the national capital until the needs of the famous Reconquest required the seat of government to be moved to Coimbra.

After a hearty breakfast today, you will join a local guide for a three-hour walking tour that traces the city's rich history. From your hotel on the Largo da Oliveira, the main square, stroll over to the Church of Our Lady of the Olive Tree, founded by Henriques and named for a centuries-old olive tree that is said to have lit the altar lamp with its oil. After time to admire the interior, walk up the cobbled lane of Rua de Santa Maria, passing the Convent of Santa Clara and many stately houses adorned with ornate Baroque statuary. You will pass the 15th-century Paço dos Duques, or Palace of the Dukes of Braganza, before arriving at the Castelo de São Miguel. Take some time to admire its battlements. (If you wish, you may return later on your own to visit the interior of the palace and castle at your expense.) Your route back to your hotel passes through the Couros district, named for the small river that once fed a thriving leather and tanning industry.

You will have the afternoon to spend as you please, shopping or dining around the Largo da Oliveira. Return to the Paço dos Duques or Castelo de São Miguel to delve more deeply into the city's past. Browse the fascinating exhibits at the Museu Martins Sarmento, a rich repository of archaeological finds from the region. For some peace and tranquility, climb aboard the cable car for a 10-minute ride to a 2,000-foot peak simply known as "Penha." Your ride casts you afloat in the air over the back gardens of Guimarães residents and delivers you to



walking trails, grottoes, cafés and lovely picnic spots with fantastic views. This evening, you may find a restaurant for dinner on your own.

Hotel da Oliveira, Guimarães

DAY 5

Transfer to Pinhão with guided visit en route to Casa de Mateus in Vila Real. Douro Valley: Provesende to Pinhão; 4.6 miles, easy to moderate, 1,700-ft cumulative elevation loss

After breakfast, transfer for about an hour to Vila Real, a busy town perched upon the edge of a gorge. Here, the striking Casa Mateus Palace, a masterful Baroque *solar*, or manor house, boasts what may be the finest formal gardens in Portugal. On a guided visit, you will see the ornate chapel, the wood-paneled library with its collection of 2,000 parchments and royal charters dating back five centuries, and several other richly adorned rooms with period furnishings. In the garden, admire richly textured topiary originally laid in the 1930s and 40s, including a visitor favorite: an aromatic 115-foot tunnel sculpted from tightly planted cedars.

Continue to the village of Provesende in the heart of the wine-growing Douro River Valley. In this unassuming little hamlet, Porto's 17th-century wine elite established the regulations for port production. Before getting underway, partake of a traditional home-style lunch at Papas Zaide, a tiny restaurant in the main square*. Then set off on your walk into the Douro Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Descend a gentle hill, traversing the area's famed terraced vineyards, olive trees and stone walls, with views of the sparkling Douro River. From the pretty whitewashed village of São Cristóvão do Douro, continue to Pinhão on the banks of the river. Here, we have scheduled a winery tour and port tasting for you at the Quinta do Bomfim, across the street from your hotel. This family-owned *quinta*, one of the region's many wine estates that dot the countryside, has been making port for five generations. This evening, savor dinner in your hotel's elegant dining room, the award-winning Rabelo restaurant.

**Should you choose to start your tour on a Wednesday, your included restaurant lunch on Day 5 will be replaced with a picnic lunch due to the closure of the restaurant on Sundays.*

Vintage House Hotel, Pinhão

With a tranquil location alongside the legendary Douro River, the Vintage House Hotel offers a gracious and elegant experience. During your stay, you can lounge under the palms by the outdoor pool, enjoy the stunning vista of soft sloping hills and the lilted river from the terrace as you linger over breakfast, and relax in its elegant, airy restaurants under gentle arches. End your days in a sophisticated and spacious room with all the amenities you'll need for comfort, including a balcony overlooking the Douro River.



DAY 6

Douro River private boat excursion. Winery visit with tasting. Douro Valley: Casal de Loivos to Pinhão; 3.9 miles, easy to moderate, 150-ft cumulative elevation gain and 1,150-ft cumulative elevation loss

To get a true sense of the beauty of the Douro River and the terraced hills that guide its course, you will follow breakfast today with a private two-hour boat excursion (by sail or motor, conditions permitting). Meet your captain, Paolo, at the Pinhão dock and embark on a leisurely morning among breathtaking vistas of sloping river banks blanketed with vineyards and dotted with charming white *quintas*. Along the way, Paolo will regale you with stories and history of the region that he knows so well. After, continue into the hills with Paolo to his family's historic *quinta*. Operating since the 18th century, it is one of the valley's oldest. Despite the estate's modern look and feel, the family proudly produces wine using the most traditional methods, providing you a more intimate glimpse into Douro viticulture. You are Paolo's guests for lunch, a generous spread of ingredients sourced from his family's farm and paired with its wines.

After, your host will drive you either back to your hotel or to the starting point of today's walk, depending on your energy! If you wish to walk, begin at the small village of Casal de Loivos in the hills. The views from its *miradouro*, or Douro viewpoint, are considered the best of the valley. From here, enjoy a leisurely downhill to the valley floor, passing the Quinta da Roêda, where you



may stop for another tasting if you'd like. Once you arrive back at the river, follow its shores back to your hotel. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Vintage House Hotel, Pinhão

DAY 7

Transfer to Porto. Guided walking tour of Porto; 2–3 miles, easy

A taxi takes you to Porto this morning, about 1½ hours away. Upon arrival at your hotel, a luxurious spa property on the picturesque Rua das Flores, or Street of Flowers, you will meet a guide for a three-hour food tour and orientation walk of this authentic city. Porto has long benefited from commerce, whether providing provisions to medieval crusaders on their way to the Holy Land, importing goods during Portugal's famed Age of Discovery, or exporting its fortified port wine to Britain. The grand yet unpretentious architecture you'll see was built on that wealth. Your hotel is on the edge of the city's Cathedral district, putting the city's mammoth church within easy reach. As you explore, you'll sample the flavors of a city heralded for its cuisine. Stop at a local café for a drink and appetizer. Settle in at a traditional *taberna* for lunch, perhaps trying codfish *pataniscas* (fritters) or the classic *francesinha* (pork and beef sandwich with melted cheese and a spicy sauce). And cap off your moveable feast at one of Porto's historic cafés for coffee and dessert.

This afternoon is free for you to return to the sites that interested you during your tour. Or perhaps you'll step into the São Bento train station to admire its artful display of *azulejos*, Portugal's famed painted tiles. Linger in the Ribeira district, where *rabelos* (small wooden boats) bob on the river's currents. These modest vessels laden with casks transported wine to Porto from the *quintas* upriver until the railroad came along. Admire the girders of the Ponte de Dom Luís I bridge, designed by an apprentice of Gustave Eiffel. Or head over to Vila Nova de Gaia across the river, where wines brought downriver from the valley are still matured and prepared for shipping at local *armazéns*, or wine lodges.

Flores Village Hotel & Spa, Porto

Situated on the Rua das Flores, or Street of Flowers, on the edge of Porto's Cathedral district, the Flores Village Hotel & Spa is the ideal spot from which to explore the historic city of Porto. The boutique property, a restored 18th-century

manor house, was awarded the 2016 Luxury Hotel & Spa of the Year by Luxury Travel Guide for its lush offerings and exemplary services. Its location on Vitória Hill within the city's UNESCO World Heritage site ensures that its interiors are historically preserved as carefully as its exteriors. The garden and courtyard are the epitome of outdoor elegance. The plush and beautiful rooms provide all the amenities you'll need for an enriching stay. Take time to relax in the sauna, Roman bath or hammam.



DAY 8

Departure from Porto

After breakfast, you may depart at your leisure.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Itinerary Overview

PLEASE NOTE: Your detailed Route Notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these Route Notes may list a number of accommodation options, your specific accommodations are listed below. Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

STARTING POINT

Porto (airport, train station, or city hotel), Portugal

Based upon individual arrival times

(Due to planned visits, lunch, and an afternoon walk, guests arriving by air or rail on Day 1 of the tour must arrive in Porto by 10:00 a.m.)

NIGHT 1

Casa da Fecha

Lugar de Parada Lindoso

4980-453 Parada/Lindoso, Portugal

Tel 011 351 912 669 952

Email patriciaimperadeiro@gmail.com

casadafecha.pt

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service (washer only) available.

NIGHT 2

Peneda Hotel

Lugar de Peneda

Freguesia de Gavieira

4970-1590 Arcos de Valdevez, Portugal

Tel 011 351 251 460 040

Email reservas@penedahotel.pt

penedahotel.pt

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 3 & 4

Hotel da Oliveira

Rua de Santa Maria

Largo da Oliveira

4800-443 Guimarães, Portugal

Tel 011 351 253 514 157

Email reservas@hoteldaooliveira.com

hoteldaooliveira.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 5 & 6

The Vintage House Hotel

Rua António Manuel Saraiva
5085-034 Pinhão, Douro, Portugal
Tel 011 351 254 730 230
Email reservations@vintagehousehotel.com
vintagehousehotel.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 7

Flores Village Hotel & Spa

Rua das Flores, 139
4050-266 Porto, Portugal
Tel 011 351 222 013 478
Email info@floresvillage.com
floresvillage.com
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

ENDING POINT

Flores Village Hotel & Spa, Porto, Portugal
At leisure after breakfast

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available, on-request, from May 1 through June 30 and September 15 through October 31, 2018 (*for best availability, choose a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday start date. Should you choose to start your tour on a Wednesday, your included restaurant lunch on Day 5 will be replaced with a picnic lunch due to the closure of the restaurant on Sundays*). Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table. Please also note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Porto to Parada on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

TOUR PRICE

| 2018 departures | Per person 2–3 guests | Per person 4+ guests | Single + | Solo Surcharge |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------|--|
| May 1–Jun 30 & Sep 15–Oct 31 | \$3,898 | \$3,398 | \$785 | Not available for solo travelers |

STARTING POINT

Porto (airport, train station, or city hotel), Portugal

Based upon individual arrival times

(Due to planned visits, lunch, and an afternoon walk, guests arriving by air or rail on Day 1 of the tour must arrive in Porto by 10:00 a.m.)

ENDING POINT

Flores Village Hotel & Spa, Porto, Portugal

At leisure after breakfast

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate with challenging sections with an average of 4–7 miles of walking per day. This itinerary also includes informative walks with local guides in both Guimarães and Porto. Throughout this tour, cumulative elevation gains are up to 1,350 feet and cumulative elevation losses are up to 2,700 feet. The first portion of the tour is in the remote Peneda-Gerês National Park. Walks here follow a variety of terrain that is often roughly maintained and may not be well marked—over hard-packed trails, paved-granite paths and stairways, and cobbled routes—through villages, forests, and pastures, past agricultural terraced landscapes, and over shallow river crossings and high-elevation routes marked by stone cairns. Some of these routes are quite steep and rugged and will require your careful attention. This is a secluded area of northern Portugal; it is unlikely that you will pass others along your trails so you need to be a confident, sure-footed, and self-sufficient walker; a handheld GPS unit will be provided at your orientation meeting for additional reassurance. Walking sticks are highly recommended to aid with steep ascents and descents and uneven rocky trails involving loose rocks that are often slippery, especially when wet or mossy. Following an interlude in Guimarães, a UNESCO World Heritage site, the second portion of the tour traces the soft contours of the Douro River Valley along gentle hills, terraced vineyards and olive groves, with opportunities to break up your easy-to-moderate, mostly downhill walks with wine tastings and a relaxing boat excursion. Your tour concludes with a guided walk through the authentic streets of Porto. Reaching these locations requires transfers of up to 2 hours. Remember: preparation is key to your enjoyment; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more rewarding your experience will be!

INCLUSIONS

- » Breakfast daily, six lunches (days 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7), and three dinners (days 1, 2, and 5); beverages not included
- » Guided visit to Casa de Mateus in Vila Real (day 5)
- » Winery tour and port tasting at Quinta do Bomfim (day 5)
- » Winery tour and wine tasting at historic family *quinta* (day 6)
- » Douro River private boat excursion (day 6)
- » Guided walking tours of Guimarães (day 4) and Porto (day 7)
- » All accommodations while on tour

- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed Route Notes (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure), a handheld GPS unit and maps (provided at your orientation meeting)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » A Guest Information Form to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » Route Notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however additional tips are always welcome. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

Porto (airport, train station, or city hotel), Portugal

Based upon individual arrival times

(Due to planned visits, lunch, and an afternoon walk, guests arriving by air or rail on Day 1 of the tour must arrive in Porto by 10:00 a.m.)

Upon arrival in Porto, a local representative will meet you at either the Porto Airport, the Porto Campanha Train Station or Porto São Bento Train Station, or a Porto city hotel and transfer you 1½ hours to the village of Parada in the heart of Peneda-Gerês National Park, where you will spend the first night of your tour. En route, you will stop in the small town of Ponte da Barca for last-minute items before a brief visit to the village of Lindoso, best known for its 13th-century medieval castle and its dozens of 19th-century *espigueiros*.

Upon arrival at your first guesthouse in Parada, our local Rep will introduce you to your host for the night, Patricia, over a light lunch and orientation meeting, ensuring you are comfortably settled and answering any questions you may have. Your maps and handheld GPS unit will also be provided at this time. Our local Rep will then accompany you on a warm-up walk before leaving you to dine independently (on a homemade dinner prepared by your host) at your guesthouse.

In order to arrange your arrival transfer and orientation meeting, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

Please note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Porto to Parada on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport (OPO; also known as Porto Airport), Portugal
aeroportoporto.pt

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

By Air: TAP Portugal (flytap.com), Portugal's national airline, operates a twice-weekly direct flight between Newark and Porto, in addition to regular, direct flights to Lisbon (from Boston, Miami, Newark, and New York (JFK)), from where you can easily and inexpensively connect to Porto by air (in 1 hour) or rail (in 2½–3 hours). United (united.com) also offers direct flights from both Newark and Washington, D.C. (IAD) to Lisbon. Numerous other airlines offer flights with one or more stopovers on the way.

If spending pre-tour time in Porto, you may reach the city center in a number of ways, the most convenient being by taxi. Readily available outside the arrival and departure terminals, a taxi from Porto Airport to the city center takes approximately 25–30 minutes and costs approximately 25–30 euros. Make sure the meter is turned on at the beginning of the journey and always ask for a receipt. Rates increase by 20% in the evening hours (9:00 p.m.–6:00 a.m.), automatically reflected by the taxi meter.

You may also reach the city center via metro, shuttle, or public bus; please visit aeroportoporto.pt/en/opo/access-parking/getting-to-and-from-the-airport/public-transportation for specific information on these methods of transport.

If traveling between Lisbon and Porto by train: there are two different train services connecting Lisbon and Porto; the Intercidades (IC) and the Alfa Pendular (AP), both requiring reservations. The Alfa Pendular service is recommended as it is faster and offers a high standard of comfort and facilities including free Wi-Fi, more leg room, and on-board snacks and beverages offered at your seat (the IC service also offers free Wi-Fi while snacks and beverages are available in the bar car). Both train services are direct and depart from the same train stations. The Alfa Pendular train journey takes 2.5 hours while the intercity train service is just over 3 hours. There are numerous daily departures in each direction.

In Lisbon, all trains services stop at the Oriente Train Station and most (but not all) stop at the Santa Apolonia Train Station.

- *Santa Apolónia Train Station (Estação da Santa Apolónia):* conveniently located in the heart of Lisbon at the foot of the Alfama district, this is Lisbon's oldest train station. Most international trains depart from here, along with trains to main cities in Portugal.

– *Oriente Train Station (Estação do Oriente)*: built by master architect Santiago Calatrava with a roof of glass and steel made to look like a row of trees, this major train, bus, and metro station is one of the most stunning modern sights in Lisbon. With 75 million passengers per year, it is also as busy as Grand Central Terminal in New York, providing travel connections to the whole of Portugal, and an obligatory stop for just about every train that passes by Lisbon. Local service is available from here to Lisbon’s Santa Apolonia Train Station on several regional/urban trains arriving from different towns.

In Porto, all train services stop at the Campanha Train Station; this station is to the east of Porto and is outside of the city limits. São Bento is the central Porto station (located just a few minutes’ walk from this tour’s final hotel) and a second train must be caught from Campanha to São Bento. This is a short train journey of less than 10 minutes and there are multiple departures per hour. The journey from Campanha to São Bento is included in the ticket price and a further ticket is not required.

For further rail information, including reservations, up-to-date schedules, and fares, please visit the website of Comboios de Portugal (CP), the national railway of Portugal, at cp.pt/passageiros/en. We recommend making train reservations in advance for major train routes. Please note that tickets from Comboios de Portugal can typically only be reserved up to 60 days in advance.

You may also contact Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website at raileurope.com. Please note, however, that only vouchers (without guaranteed seat assignments) are provided by Rail Europe for Portuguese train journeys. Upon arrival in Portugal, you would need to go to a ticket office to exchange the voucher for an actual ticket with an assigned seat. Moreover, an extra fee would be charged and should your desired train be sold out, you would be forced to choose the next available train.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Although it is possible (depending on your point of origin) to arrive in Porto by 10:00 a.m. on Day 1 of the tour, you may wish to arrive a day early to recover from jet lag and feel more refreshed. For hotel and restaurant suggestions in Porto or Lisbon, please visit uk.visitportoandnorth.travel or visitlisboa.com.

ENDING POINT

Flores Village Hotel & Spa, Porto, Portugal

At leisure after breakfast

There are no walks scheduled for the last day of the tour. You may depart the final hotel after breakfast and prior to the hotel's checkout time of 11:00 a.m. The hotel staff can assist with any taxi transfers you may require.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport (OPO; also known as Porto Airport), Portugal
aeroportoporto.pt

LEAVING THE TOUR

Please refer to the "Getting to the Starting Point" section for assistance with travel arrangements.

POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

There is a multitude of hotels to choose from; however, you may wish to stay at Flores Village Hotel & Spa where you spend the final night of the tour. Country Walkers would be pleased to make a reservation on your behalf. Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible. The cost is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies. These rooms are reserved as a service for you and include a service charge. Better rates may be available online; however, please note that if you make your post-tour reservation directly with the hotel, you may not be able to secure the same room as assigned to you for the night on tour (Country Walkers uses "Double Rooms"). Please call for current rates.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*, which guarantees peace of mind for every guest. From the moment your reservation is confirmed, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, Self-Guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip early.

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

If you have not already gone through our reservations process, please note that the method by which Self-Guided Adventures are reserved differs in important ways from typical scheduled tours. We encourage all guests to refrain from purchasing plane tickets or making contingent plans until they receive confirmation from us. Here's how the process works:

1. **Reservation Request.** The process begins when you make a reservation request for this tour, either online at countrywalkers.com or by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. Please note the online form does not on its own constitute a final reservation or a guarantee of tour space. If you use the form, one of our Tour Consultants will call within one business day. Outside of 90 days prior to the tour start date, a \$350 per person credit card authorization is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost, pre-authorized to your credit card, is required. If we are unable to accommodate you on your preferred dates/tour (or an alternative of your choice), this payment is fully refunded.
2. **Reservation Request Receipt.** Upon receipt of your deposit and preferred tour start dates, you will be provided with an emailed reservation request receipt, stating your reservation number and reconfirming the details of your reservation request (tour name, departure date, and tour price), while we get working on securing availability with all the hotels.
3. **Confirmation.** Our goal is to confirm your reservation request within five business days; however, this may take longer for a variety of reasons. All of our accommodations are available on a request basis; we

do not hold blocks of rooms and, therefore, must confirm availability at the time of your request. If at all possible, we recommend you provide a range of back-up tour start dates at the time of your initial request. Once your reservation is confirmed, a Tour Consultant will contact you and your credit card will be automatically charged the \$350 per person deposit (or full payment if within 90 days prior to your tour start date). Once you have received our official confirmation, you can make flight reservations.

4. **Final Payment.** Final tour payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As pricing is determined over a year in advance, we may be forced to change our listed price over time. However, please note that once your reservation is confirmed, we will always honor the price quoted when you booked.

TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel Availability: Since we typically use small, boutique properties for Self-Guided tours, securing availability can sometimes prove challenging, especially on short notice. (Again, we encourage guests to book early and be flexible.) On some tours, if our standard property is not available, we may have alternate hotels of equivalent quality that we have approved. We'll book one of these alternates if the standard property is not available. If the hotel or room type requires a surcharge, we will contact you prior to reserving it. We will not reserve non-approved properties.

Room Category: We typically book standard rooms. If you are interested in upgrading your room type, please contact a Tour Consultant. Please bear in mind that upgrades are not available at every hotel; surcharges will be determined once we know what's available. Triple rooms (or rooms with two beds) can be a rarity. Should you desire such an accommodation, we may need to offer two rooms—supplements may apply. Please allow us extra time to sort the options out.

ORIENTATION MEETING & TRANSFERS

Though Self-Guided tours are a predominantly private experience, there are occasions where you may be in contact with others. Because guests are allowed to pick their own start dates, there may be other Country Walkers travelers staying in the same properties as you or even starting on the same date. For this reason, we may need to combine your orientation meeting with that of other

guests or ask you to share on-tour transfers. This does not mean you need to walk together.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Cancellations must be made in writing. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.