



Porto & the Douro

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Best Places to Eat

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Why Go?

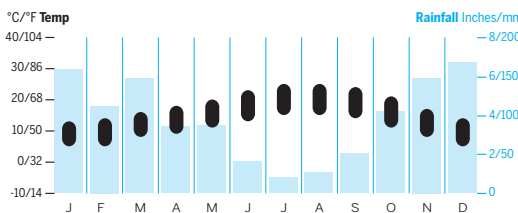
The face of the Rio Douro always changes. One day it's deeply grooved, folding and rippling in swells. The next it's dimpled glass with just a sheen of wind providing definition but not obscuring the reflection of the granite bluffs, fortresslike wine caves, medieval stone houses and steep, terraced mountain vineyards that seem to have been engineered by some superhuman force.

The river is dynamic precisely because of the sheer diversity of the province it has defined. Romantic Porto, Portugal's second-largest city, is at its mouth; the world's oldest demarcated vineyards are close to the source; and scores of friendly villages and towns in between have always relied on it for water, food and commerce. Its legacies are the intricately carved cathedrals, baroque churches, palatial *quintas*, beaux-arts boulevards and 18th-century wine cellars that are all here, ripe for the tasting.

Note that a few towns in this chapter are not actually in the Douro region, but lie along the Rio Douro.

When to Go

Porto



June 24

Festa de São João, Porto's biggest party: music, fireworks and plastic mallets

July

For 18 years Vila Do Conde has hosted Curtas, an edgy short-film fest

August–September

Lamego's Festa de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios runs for weeks

Highlights

- 1 Wine-taste your way around the picturesque vineyards of the **Alto Douro** (p395)
- 2 Lose yourself amid the medieval alleys and riverfront promenades of Porto's cinematic district, **Ribeira** (p359)
- 3 Sample a tawny at a port-wine lodge in **Vila Nova de Gaia** (p366)
- 4 Relax beside the Rio Tâmega and its medieval bridge in the charming town of **Amarante** (p385)
- 5 Come face to face with Palaeolithic artwork at **Parque Arqueológico do Vale do Côa** (p397)

