



Understand Portugal

PORTUGAL TODAY 472

A snapshot of the nation at a crossroads, plus key books, films and music for delving deeper into Portugal.

HISTORY 474

Conquerors and kings, demagogues and visionaries, natural disasters and coups d'état: the story of Portugal is anything but dull...

RELIGION 489

The horrific Inquisition, super-secret societies and the great mystery of Fátima are all chapters from Portugal's fascinating religious saga.

ART & ARCHITECTURE 494

Portugal encompasses 10,000-year-old rock art, dazzling Manueline cathedrals and cutting-edge masterpieces, plus world-famous works by artisans, painters and poets.

SAUDADE: THE PORTUGUESE BLUES 510

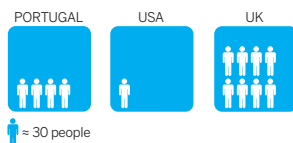
That nostalgic, difficult-to-translate melancholy has shaped Portuguese film, music and literature, and even the national identity, in profound ways.

SPECTATOR SPORTS 514

Passion for football runs deep in Portugal, home to some of the world's top players. Bullfighting, Portuguese-style, also has its followers.



population per sq km



Portugal Today

- » Population: 10.7 million
- » Unemployment: 9.6%
- » Highest point: Torre (1993m)
- » Largest Portuguese community outside Lisbon: Paris
- » Number of Portuguese speakers worldwide: 260 million

In a tiny windswept hamlet in northern Portugal, goats still trundle through the dusty streets while elderly widows in black keep watch over the village square against the backdrop of a medieval castle. The hill-sides nearby bear the terraced vineyards that were probably planted by the Phoenicians, centuries before the Romans arrived. The latest buzz here revolves around the upcoming Festa de São João, where villagers will decorate statues of Catholic saints with flowers and process alongside the bishop through the streets, followed by much feasting and celebrating at the country fairgrounds.

Meanwhile, a few hundred kilometres away, a group of young friends has gathered at an art opening in the city. Mingling and cocktails are the order of the evening, then a dance party in the bar below the gallery. But after a flurry of text messages, the group heads to the seaside suburbs for a late-night meal in a chrome-and-glass lounge perched above the crashing waves. Later, around 1am, when things begin to pick up, they'll head for the new club that just opened, where a DJ from LA is spinning.

The once-great seafaring empire of Portugal is today a country straddling two very different worlds. In simplest terms, it's the struggle between old and new, long-standing tradition versus widespread modernisation – a conflict that plays out daily in many different ways and in many different settings. And no matter one's age, ideology or socio-economic status, every person in Portugal has a stake in the outcome.

Traditional villages across the country are at the forefront of this clash, as younger generations – seeking educational and job opportunities, or simply a more modern way of life – abandon the small settlements where they grew up and strike out for the city. Yet even the cities face demographic shifts. The young and upwardly mobile largely favour

Top Books

- » **The Inquisitor's Manual** (António Lobo Antunes; 1996) Story about life under Salazar.
- » **Baltasar & Blimunda** (Jose Saramago; 1982) Darkly comic 18th-century love story.
- » **The Book of Disquietude** (Fernando Pessoa; 1982)

Top Films

- » **A Lisbon Story** (1994) Wim Wenders' love letter to Lisbon.
- » **Letters from Fontainhas** (1994–2006) Pedro Costa's art-house trilogy set in Lisbon.
- » **Capitães de Abril** (Captains of April; 2000) Overview of the 1974 Carnation Revolution.

Top Albums

- » **Fado em Mim** (2002) Mesmerising fado album by the legendary Mariza.
- » **Art of Amália** (1998) Compilation by one of fado's greats.
- » **Re-Definições** (2004) Catchy album by hip-hop artists Da Weasel.