

PORTO

Clockwise from top left:
explore the region by train;
the city sprawls across the
Douro River; a woman sells
chickens at the central
market; traditional
Portuguese azulejo tiles;
navigate Porto by tram; the
view as you float on by;
beautiful decor found within
the main station; try a
glass of port or two;
freshly picked grapes

Portugal's second city lent its name to the wine that made it famous and there's no better time to explore its enduring charm and eponymous tippie, says Emily McAuliffe

Why go? With long sunny days and temperate nights, summer is Porto's time to shine. The banks of the Douro River burst with activity as travellers flock to cafés and bars, while others make for the parks to enjoy a rolling schedule of markets and live music. At every turn, colour and movement fill the streets. Better still, it's one of the continent's most affordable holiday destinations, providing the perfect excuse to splurge on good food and wine, including, of course, the award-winning vintners of the Douro Valley.

What to do Porto is a walkable city that begs you to get lost. In the cobbled backstreets you'll find washing flapping from balconies and vibrant street art adorning the time-worn buildings. The art carries through to Rua de Miguel Bombarda, which serves as the main thoroughfare of the city's arty district. From here, carry on to the pretty Crystal Palace Gardens before heading downhill to the river. If you're hungry for seafood, take a right when you hit the Douro and jump on the tram towards its mouth. Catch the small cross-river boat (£1.20pp one way) to the fishing village of Afurada and follow your nose to the restaurants grilling freshly caught fish on the street. Afurada is on the same side of the river as the port cellars, so settle in at a wine house such as Graham's *grahams-port.com* (bookings essential) or Taylor's *taylor.pt* for an afternoon tasting. In the city, visit the Casa do Infante Museum, the birthplace of Prince Henry the Navigator, before making your way uphill to the city's main avenue, Avenida dos Aliados. Tackle the 200-odd steps of the Clérigos Tower *torredosclerigos.pt* for superb city views or simply admire the dramatic baroque architecture from the Passeio dos Clérigos urban park.

Where to stay? Luxe travellers and wine lovers should head for the hills of Vila Nova de Gaia to bunk down at The Yeatman 00 351 220 133 100, *the-yeatman-hotel.com* one-time winner of Food and Travel Hotel of the Year. It's home to a two-star Michelin restaurant and one of the largest collections of Portuguese wines in the world. If you prefer a more central location, the InterContinental Palacio

das Cardosas 00 351 220 035 600, *ihg.com* is another chic pick, overlooking Praça da Liberdade. Equally well-located is the Flores Village Hotel & Spa 00 351 222 013 478, *floresvillage.com* which offers a spacious back garden and spa area that is ideal for relaxing after a day of sightseeing. For a boutique option, try the plush M Maison Particulière 00 351 227 661 400, *m-porto.com* where its ten suites are all elegantly decorated.

Where to eat and drink? Porto's gastronomic scene is becoming increasingly sophisticated while still keeping true to its roots. The city is the proud home of four Michelin-star restaurants and also includes a mix of traditional *pastelarias* (patisseries) and *tascos* (taverns) as well as modern dining options. Enjoy a candlelit supper in a home-style dining room at Camafeu 00 351 937 493 557 where dishes include juicy octopus plucked straight from the ocean. Tapabento 00 351 222 034 115, *tapabento.com* also serves quality Portuguese cuisine with a modern spin. Venture out of the historic centre and book a table at Casa Agrícola 00 351 226 053 350, *casa-agricola.com* in the upmarket suburb of Boavista. The bar area doesn't look like much but the elegant upstairs dining area serves wonderful monkfish and steak. To taste Porto's signature cocktail, the port tonic, plus a range of domestic wines, take a seat at the altar at Capela Incomum 00 351 936 129 050, a beautiful wine bar set in an old chapel.

Time running out? Check out Mercado de Bolhão, the city's central market. It's a two-storey maze of stalls and shops selling flowers, fish, port and everything in between. The 19th-century building is at its liveliest on Friday and Saturday mornings.

Trip tip It would be criminal to leave the city without trying its famous *Francesinha* (little Frenchie) sandwich. It's loaded with pork, steak, bacon and smoked sausage then smothered in melted cheese and a delicious tomato, beer and piri piri sauce. Santiago 00 351 220 417 880, *caferestaurantesantiago.com.pt* is touted as having one of the best in the city.

Travel information

Currency is the euro. Time is GMT. Flight time from London is around 2.5 hours. The cost to carbon-offset is £3.25. For more details visit *climatecare.org*

Getting there

TAP Portugal offers daily services to Porto Airport from London Gatwick. *flytap.com*

easyJet also flies to Porto from Gatwick and Luton. *easyjet.com*

Resources

Visit Porto is the city's official tourist board and is packed with details to help you make the most of your stay. *visitporto.travel*

Further reading

Prince Henry the Navigator: A Life (Yale University Press, £18.99) tells the story of the visionary prince born in Porto who supported many of Portugal's global endeavours.

AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURES AND RAINFALL

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min C	5	6	7	9	11	14	16	15	14	12	8	7
Max C	14	15	17	18	20	23	25	25	24	20	17	14
mm	5	5	3	4	1	6	1	2	5	5	5	7

