

DOURO RIVER VALLEY

8 Days | Porto to Porto

★★★★★ 4.2/5 81 reviews



Feedback



8 days



2 countries



UNESCO

An extraordinary journey designed for culturally curious travelers.

As you follow the Douro River through Portugal and into Spain, you'll cruise past steeply terraced hillsides, quaint villages and acres of ripe vineyards. Enjoy private tastings of Port. Explore Porto's historic Ribeira district, home to iconic rabelo boats, cutting-edge cuisine and a thriving art scene. Wind your way through the dramatic landscapes of the UNESCO-designated Douro Valley, heading ashore to visit charming quintas and meet the winemakers who operate them. In Salamanca, Spain, you'll see the city's famous university. Return to Portugal with a visit to the fortified village of Castelo Rodrigo and historic Guimarães. There's no better way to discover Europe's best-kept secret than this scenic and all-inclusive river cruise!

Uniwold also offers an 11-day version of this itinerary, featuring additional excursions in Lisbon and Coimbra. [Click here](#) for more information.

[PORTO TO PORTO](#)

Note: The itineraries presented are subject to modification due to water levels, closures because of public holidays or other uncontrollable factors. Every effort will be made to operate programs as

planned, but changes may still be necessary throughout the cruise. This day-to-day schedule is subject to change. Your final day-to-day schedule will be provided onboard on the first day of your cruise.

DAY 1 PORTO (EMBARK)

Arrive in Porto, the port city at the mouth of the Douro.

Note: For Arrival, Departure and Transfer details, please visit Uniworld.com/transfers. For Port Location details, please visit Uniworld.com/ports.



DAY 2 PORTO, ENTRE-OS-RIOS

Portugal's second city (after Lisbon), Porto gave its name to the nation's most famous export, Port wine, and to the nation itself. Today, choose to explore Portugal on foot or by panoramic drive.

In the evening, a special Captain's Welcome Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you.



Choose between...

PORTO PANORAMIC TOUR

Of course it is the longtime hub of the Port wine trade, but Porto is also much more. Take in the UNESCO-designated, 19th-century Stock Exchange Palace, seeing its famous Moorish Revival Arab Room, during your panoramic tour. Get a feel for this vibrant town, which is simultaneously profoundly urban and moodily romantic. Colorful multistory townhouses sheathe the hills that climb precipitously from the Douro estuary, medieval alleys snake through UNESCO-designated neighborhoods enclosed by 14th-century walls—which were erected on Roman foundations—and baroque church towers crown the hilltops. The river itself cuts through the city on its way to the ocean, marked by a series of iconic bridges along the way. It meets its final destination at Foz do Douro, a district whose name translates to "Mouth of the Douro." Our tour will take us all the way here, where you can admire the *passeio alegre* with its promenade inspired by French architecture, see the Castelo do Queijo that juts out over the Atlantic, and drive down Boavista Avenue.

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or

DO AS THE LOCALS DO: PORTO WALKING TOUR

Depart by coach for Mosteiro da Serra do Pilar, where we will begin our long walk around town. Cross the upper level of the Ponte Dom Luis, Porto's eye-catching bridge, and arrive at the Cathedral "Sé." From there, we'll walk to the Sao Bento Station to see its famous azulejos murals, which portray the city's rich history. After that, head up the hill to Santa Catarina Street, a bustling shopping street full of beautiful cafes, shops and historical landmarks. To fuel our jaunt around Porto, we'll then stop at the Bolhão Market for a taste of an important local treat and one of the

city's biggest industries: canned fish. Finally, we'll make our way to the Clérigos Quarter on the way back to the ship through Ribeira.

DAY 3 ENTRE-OS-RIOS, RÉGUA

Today is all about wine, which has been cultivated in the Douro River Valley since ancient Roman times. Get a crash course on the history of Port during your visit to the Douro Museum.



Featured Excursions

DOURO MUSEUM

The Douro Valley is the oldest demarcated wine-growing district in Europe. Why? What makes Port the wine it is? Learn about the region's unique geology and winemaking history—Romans planted vines in this region 2,000 years ago—at the Douro Museum. Exhibits laid out in buildings that were once home to Port winemaker Real Companhia Velha let you see how the process of making Port evolved over the centuries: You'll find the tools of the trade and even a rabelo (a boat that carried wine from the vineyards to Porto) on display. An interactive map shows where the *quintas* are and how the region developed; and by sniffing vials of concentrated fragrance, you can learn to identify the many aromas that a good Port exhibits. It's fun and informative—plus you can sample some regional Douro wine.

LAMEGO HERITAGE TOUR

Discover the wonders of a special town right in the gateway of the Douro Valley, Lamego. Lamego is known for a beautiful sanctuary dedicated to our Lady of "Remédios," planted on top of one of the city hills and reachable by a gorgeous staircase with 686 steps. During this experience, you'll discover the importance of Lamego's heritage to the valley. This is a very important area for the production of delicious sparkling wines and cold cuts, which you'll be able to taste in the cozy and regionally typical atmosphere of a place called *Presunteca*, or the "Ham Library".

NIGHTS OUT: QUINTA DINNER

Travel up winding roads with spectacular views—and breath-stealing drop-offs—for a traditional dinner bursting with regional flavors. Your hosts: the owners of a local *quinta*, a Portuguese analogue for the French "chateau" or English "estate."

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DAY 4 RÉGUA, POCINHO, VEGA DE TERRÓN

Go medieval today at Castelo Rodrigo, both the name of a hilltop castle as well as the village that surrounds it. The view from the top is incredible and the village is a charming place to ramble, relax and replenish. Alternatively, lace up your hiking boots and unleash your inner Indiana Jones with an up-close gander at some prehistoric carvings at an archaeological park.



Choose between...

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF THE CÔA VALLEY

Ready for an expedition worthy of Indiana Jones? Today's your chance. In the 1990s, scouting for a proposed dam project on the Côa River revealed an astonishing collection of prehistoric carvings, among them horses, deer and aurochs that span eons. The oldest images etched into the schist walls around the river date to approximately 22,000 to 20,000 BC, with younger carvings ranging from the Epipaleolithic, Neolithic and Bronze ages to the 17th century—images that represent human interaction with the natural world for more than 30,000 years. Learn about this amazing area and see the original rock art for yourself when you visit the Côa Valley with your knowledgeable guide. It will be an illuminating adventure. Note: Exploring these sites will require sturdy hiking footwear and considerable physical fitness: You'll take a four-wheel drive down dirt roads and hike into rocky and hard-to-access locations.



CASTELO RODRIGO

Ride through wonderfully scenic countryside—the region is noted for its honey, which derives its flavor from the fields of wild lavender and the almond groves you'll pass—to Castelo Rodrigo, the name of both a castle and the village it shelters. The castle ruins stand high atop Marofa Mountain, telling the tale of border strife and Portugal's struggle for independence in a single structure. Construction on the citadel began in 1209 under the auspices of the king of Leon, but it became part of Portugal within a century—though its local lords sided with Spanish rulers from time to time over the next four centuries. That's why the palace adjoining the castle lies in ruins: Outraged citizens destroyed it after its lord sided with Castile. Take in the amazing view from the ancient stone walls, then step down through the tiny cobbled lanes of the village, passing the old pillory, the Manueline church, and the town's market square. It's not all history, of course. You'll also get to sample delicious local treats, such as honey, almonds, olive oil and cheeses, and a newly restored tea-house invites you to relax over a cup of tea or a cool drink.

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DAY 5 VEGA DE TERRÓN (SALAMANCA), BARCA D'ALVA

Today, you can visit the historic university town of Salamanca—the “Golden City”—famous for its sand-colored buildings and abundance of churches. Feel the centuries fall away as your ship winds its way through the pristine, dramatic UNESCO-protected landscapes of the Douro River Valley.



Featured Excursion

SALAMANCA - THE GOLDEN CITY AND SPAIN'S OLDEST UNIVERSITY

Called the “Golden City” for its tawny sandstone buildings, Salamanca boasts a dozen beautiful and historic churches, including two cathedrals: the new one, built in the early 16th century, and the Old Cathedral, which dates to the 12th century and can only be entered from the New

Cathedral. Walk with your guide through Plaza Mayor, lined with wonderful baroque buildings, to the university, which was founded by Alfonso IX in 1218. The ornate plateresque façade is stunning, and the interior rooms you see are equally beautiful. You'll have time to browse through the shops on Rua Mayor or enjoy a bite to eat on your own before we drive back to the ship. Your guide can recommend some excellent places to dine, whether you're looking for a typical tapas lunch or want to stroll the stalls of Salamanca's food hall (one of Spain's best).

DAY 6 BARCA D'ALVA, RÉGUA

Head ashore for a choice of excursions, including a tasting at a prestigious Port wine estate or a vineyard hike with a wine tasting at a local quinta.



Choose between...

LOCAL QUINTA GUIDED TOUR WITH TASTING

As you journey through the hills to a local quinta, a prestigious Port wine estate, you will see a unique landscape that has been shaped by wine growers for two millennia. The stone terraces curving around the steep slopes hold soil that is largely the creation of human intervention: People have laboriously broken up the native silver schist stone over the centuries and turned it into usable sandy earth; it's called "anthroposoil." The process of producing Port wine is a fascinating blend of tradition and modernity; the steepness of the slopes requires that grape vines be tended almost entirely by hand, but the wine itself is made using the most modern techniques. You'll tour the state-of-the-art facility and sample some exceptional Ports in a tasting room whose wall of windows looks out over spectacular views of the Douro Valley.

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VINEYARD HIKE AND WINE TASTING AT A LOCAL QUINTA

Although many Port wine estates are owned by international corporations nowadays, the tradition of the family-owned estate remains strong. Start this expedition in pretty Pinhão, heading up into the hills to a family-owned quinta, where you can get a firsthand look at how the vineyards are tended and grapes harvested. Although some 80 varieties of grapes are approved for the creation of Port, six grape varieties dominate. Discover which ones are grown here and learn why.

DAY 7 RÉGUA (GUIMARÃES), PORTO

Explore Guimarães, the town where Portugal was born. Its well-preserved architecture and stylish young residents make it a pleasure to visit.

In the evening, a special Captain's Farewell Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you.



Featured Excursion

GUIMARÃES CITY TOUR

“Portugal was born here.” So the sign on the city wall proclaims. Guimarães was home to the first king of Portugal, Afonso I, who managed to win his kingdom’s independence in the 12th century from neighboring suzerains. The wonderfully well-preserved Old Town, with its unique architecture (houses here combine granite with half-timbering) and charming little plazas, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; overlooking it is the grand castle that appears on Portugal’s coat of arms. Rove with your guide from the castle toward the beautiful main square, the Largo da Oliveira, and to the splendid Monastery and Church of Our Lady of Oliveira and the 14th-century Gothic Padrão do Salado. But remember that despite these historic beauties, Guimarães has the youngest population of any city in Europe, so the pedestrian area is full of lively and fun cafés and shops.

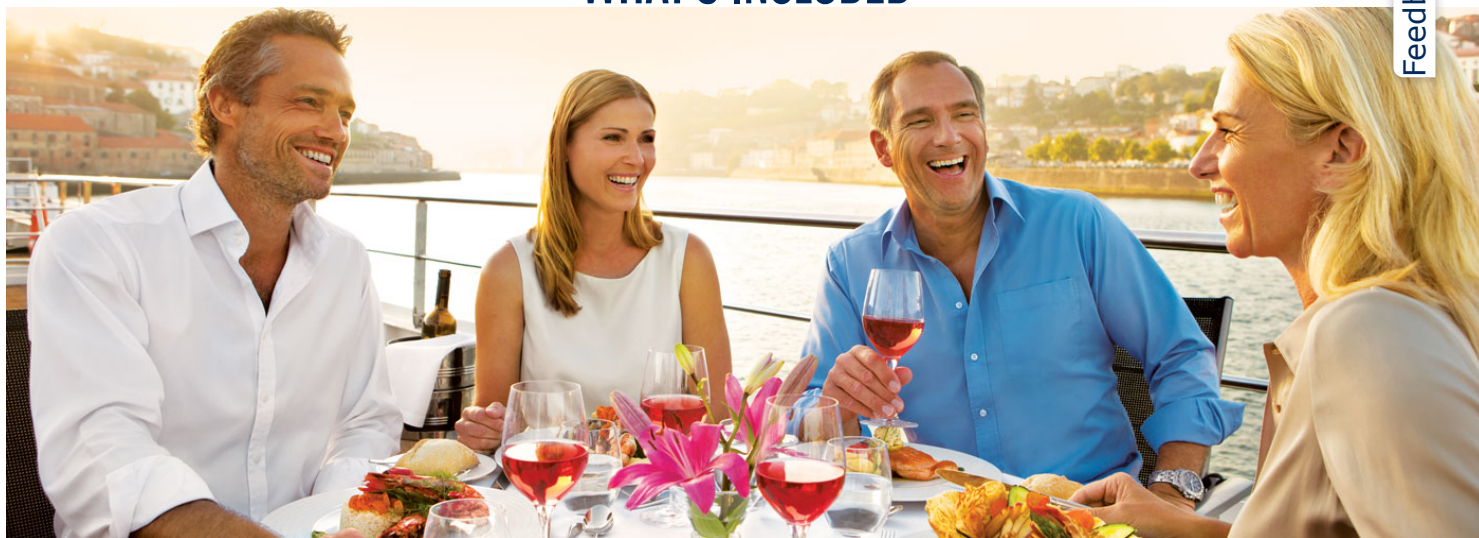
DAY 8 PORTO (DISEMBARK)

If your cruise/tour package includes a group departure transfer or if you have purchased a private departure transfer, you will be transferred to Porto Airport for your flight home.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

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DINING

All meals onboard, prepared using the finest and freshest ingredients

Welcome and Farewell Dinners

Unlimited beverages onboard, including fine wine, beer, spirits, specialty coffee and tea, soft drinks and mineral water



EXCURSIONS

6 days of excursions, all fully hosted by English-speaking local experts

Guided "Do as the Locals Do" program

State-of-the-art Quietvox portable audio-headset system on all excursions



ACCOMMODATIONS

7-night cruise in a riverview stateroom on the chic *S.S. São Gabriel*

Beautifully appointed riverview staterooms and suites with hotel-style beds, draped in fine linens with a choice of pillows

Free Internet and Wi-Fi access



EXPERIENCES

2 countries: Portugal & Spain

Multiple UNESCO World Heritage sites

Services of an experienced Uniworld Cruise Manager

Group Transfers are included on arrival and departure days (please see terms and conditions for transfer guidelines)

Gratuities for onboard personnel (ship staff, crew, Cruise/Tour Manager) are included during the cruise/tour

Captivating onboard local entertainment

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