

Secrets of the Douro



Tour Name: Secrets of the Douro

Tour Code: EPDC

Days: 8

Day 1
Sat, 18 Sep

Porto (D)

Welcome to Porto, where you'll be met at the airport and transferred to your contemporary Emerald Star-Ship. This evening, join your fellow guests for dinner on board.

You will remain docked in Porto overnight, allowing you to explore this vibrant city after dark.

Day 2
Sun, 19 Sep

Porto – Pinhão (B,L,D)

Relax on board today and enjoy a full day of cruising through the World Heritage-listed Douro Valley. This fascinating area builds on two millennia of wine-producing history, and viticulture has shaped the surrounding landscape, with small, sleepy villages surrounded by dozens of terraced vineyards. A highlight will be seeing Carrapatelo, the deepest lock in Europe.

EmeraldPLUS

Portuguese cooking demonstration on board

Learn how to make the iconic Portuguese sweet treat Pastéis de Nata (custard tarts) during an on board cooking demonstration. The expert chef will share the story and traditions behind this signature dish and involve guests in an immersive experience.

Day 3
Mon, 20 Sep

Pinhão – Vega de Terrón (B,L,D)

A hidden gem just a few hours from Porto, Pinhão (pronounced 'Pin-yow') is a tiny village in the heart of the Douro Valley, surrounded by vineyards and beautiful countryside. It's a place to take things slowly, sip local Port wine, explore hiking trails, or relax and soak up the charms of Portugal.

Included Excursion

Visit to Quinta do Têdo with wine tasting

Visit the beautiful Quinta do Têdo vineyard, set on the hills surrounding the confluence of the Douro and Têdo rivers. This 18th-century estate is environmentally sound, creating organic produce using traditional viticulture methods. Enjoy tasting their famous Port wine and learning about how they blend traditional viticulture methods with modern technology to create a seamless process. Alternatively, join a guided walk through their vineyards, stopping to admire the beautiful surrounds.

EmeraldACTIVE

Kayak experience in Pinhão

Embark on a kayak excursion along the Pinhão River, taking in the impressive views from the heart of the Douro Valley. You'll glide slowly past patchwork farmland, terraced vineyards and sprawling estates as you traverse this tranquil tributary of the Douro.

EmeraldACTIVE

Guided active walk through the vineyards

Enjoy a guided walk through local vineyards, stopping along the way to admire the surroundings and the views over the Douro River. There are several different possibilities for hiking, to be adopted according to the fitness and desires of the group. Afterwards, join the group for the wine tasting.

Day 4
Tue, 21 Sep

Vega de Terrón – Salamanca (B,D)

Just across the Spanish border, Vega de Terrón is at the junction of the Douro and Águeda rivers. It's the gateway to the ancient city of Salamanca, known as the 'Golden City' for its stunning Renaissance architecture built from Villamayor sandstone, which glows golden, pink, and ochre at sunrise and sunset.

Included Excursion

Guided tour of Salamanca

Founded in Roman times, the ancient city of Salamanca and its World Heritage-listed Old Quarter have an illustrious past, having been held by the Carthaginians, Romans and Moors. Set out on a walking tour, which includes exploring the postcard-worthy galleries and arcades that adorn Plaza Mayor. You'll also have the opportunity to see Casa de las Conchas, a building that has been lovingly decorated with more than 300 shells, and Salamanca's university, one of the oldest universities in Europe, dating back to 1218.

EmeraldPLUS

Tuna music band in Salamanca

The tradition of 'tuna music' dates back to the 13th century, arising from poor university students who would sing in the streets to raise money for their tuition. It showcases a powerful tradition of academic and social life in Spain, with performers dressing in distinctive clothing, including capes with colourful ribbons to represent their school. Enjoy a performance of this unique music from a local group.

Day 5
Wed, 22 Sep

Pocinho – Régua (B,L,D)

The tiny village of Pocinho is around 30km (18.64 miles) from the Spanish border, surrounded by river and mountains. This isolated spot has a population of just a few hundred, with its white-walled and red-roofed buildings all but blending into the landscape. Nearby, museums and archaeological sites will take you deeper into Portugal's history.

Included Excursion

Tour to Castelo Rodrigo

Visit the charming medieval town of Castelo Rodrigo, a small, fortified village perched high on a hilltop. Uncover the secrets of its history, admire its 16th-century walls and walk down charming, narrow medieval streets. Later, try some typical local products and enjoy some free time to explore on your own.

EmeraldPLUS

Port wine cocktail lesson on board

Return to your Emerald Star-Ship for lunch, then enjoy a Port wine cocktail lesson as you cruise down the river. Port wine became popular in the 17th century and is created by adding brandy to wine during fermentation, resulting in a strong, sweet, high-alcohol style that can be used in many delicious combinations.

DiscoverMORE \$57 per person

Archaeological tour by 4x4 at the Côa Valley Museum (extra expense)

The tour begins at the Côa Museum, a vast open-air rock art collection of the Côa Valley. Board your jeep and drive to the area where the abandoned Côa dam was being built, and onwards through a landscape marked by the construction work that determined the recent history of the Côa rock art. The final part of the tour is on foot. Activity level: Difficult/Active, Duration: 3.5 hours.

Day 6
Thu, 23 Sep
Régua - Porto (B,L,D)

Get an insight into Portuguese life in Régua, a busy town that sits at the western edge of the Port wine growing region. It is steeped in winemaking culture and has been an important trading and transport centre since the 18th century. Backed by the stunning Serra do Marão mountains, it promises dramatic scenery and a welcoming atmosphere.

Cruise to Porto in the afternoon, where you'll remain docked overnight, allowing you to explore this vibrant city after dark.

Included Excursion

Guided tour of Lamego

On today's included excursion, you'll visit the marvellous Baroque village of Lamego, a place that has been shaped by Portugal's devout Catholic faith and centuries of winemaking. Nestled among the terraced slopes of the Douro Valley, the elegant town is infused with Baroque style. Stop to admire the picturesque Shrine of Our Lady of Remedies, a structure that stands gracefully over the town. Its hundreds of zigzagging stairs are decorated with tiled friezes and climb out of a tailored garden resplendent with a variety of trees.

EmeraldPLUS

Rural lunch at a local quinta

Enjoy a rural lunch at a local Quinta, a famous wine estate in the Douro, which is certain to be a highlight of your trip. A traditional meal will be served and beautifully accompanied by local entertainers

EmeraldPLUS

Mosaic tile painting lesson on board

Colourful painted tiles, called azulejos, are everywhere in Portugal. Learn about their origins, place in Portuguese culture and how they are created during a mosaic tile painting workshop on board. This hands-on experience will immerse you in Portuguese artistic traditions. You'll even get to take home your azulejos as a souvenir.

EmeraldACTIVE

Walk down the steps of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies

From the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies, an important pilgrimage site on a hill above Lamego, walk down 686 cobbled steps to reach the centre of the village. This Baroque, zig-zag staircase offers spectacular views and is lined with small chapels and shrines dedicated to various saints and martyrs.

DiscoverMORE \$57 per person

Visit to Mateus Manor House (extra expense)

Built in the 18th century, Mateus Manor House is one of the finest representations of Baroque architecture in Portugal. Consisting of the main house, the gardens, a winery and a chapel, you may recognise these wonderful dwellings from the label of Portugal's famous rosé wine. Enjoy a guided tour of this spectacular estate.

Activity level: Moderate, Duration: 2.5-3 hours

Day 7
Fri, 24 Sep
Porto (B,L,D)

Located at the mouth of the Douro River, Porto is a fascinating and eclectic mix of modern and ancient architecture. Famous for its export of Port wines, it's easy to imagine how British merchant ships would have once clustered together in the medieval harbour, waiting to take their produce across the water.

Included Excursion

Guided tour of Porto

Your included coach tour of the coastal city will introduce you to its highlights, from the bustling waterfront to its colourful buildings and iconic bridges. It will touch on the fortified structures of Castelo da Foz and Castelo do Queijo, a building whose pentagonal façades overlook the ocean.

EmeraldPLUS

A cruise through Porto

This evening, a charming evening cruise will shine a different light on Porto's skyline.

EmeraldPLUS

Guided active walk in Porto

For those who wish to see the charms of Porto on foot, this active walk through the town will bring you closer to the vibrant daily life of the locals. Cross the old iron bridge back to Porto city to admire the Porto Cathedral and visit the Old Town and São Bento railway station.

DiscoverMORE \$61 per person

Visit to Quinta da Aveleda (extra expense)

Explore the fairytale-like property of Quinta Aveleda, a renowned sparkling wine producer with a 150-year history. A highlight of this tour is the estate's enchanting gardens. After your tour, enjoy a wine and cheese tasting followed by some free time.

Activity level: Moderate, Duration: 4 hours

DiscoverMORE \$161 per person

Guided bike tour to the Atlantic (extra expense) A guided e-bike tour is the easiest and most attractive way to discover the wonderful city of Porto. Enjoy a few hours cycling along the Douro River until you reach the Atlantic Ocean. The path is flat, and there will be several stops along the way for commentary and photo opportunities.

Activity level: Moderate; Duration: 4 hours

Day 8
Sat, 25 Sep

Porto (B)

After breakfast, it's time to say farewell to your Emerald Star-Ship and fellow guests, taking memories of terraced vineyards and authentic Portuguese culture with you.

This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions for further information.