



[EXPERIENCES]

DOURO REALLY LIKE IT

Port may be one of Portugal's most famous exports, but reasons to visit the city it's named after extend far beyond wine tasting. Head to Porto for beautiful architecture, rich history, local beers and a forward-thinking food scene

2 HRS 20

Flight time
from London

13°C

Average temp
in November

270,000

people live
in Porto

PRECIOUS CARGO: Porto's wine-carrying 'barcos' sail down the River Douro as dawn breaks. In the background is the famous double-decker Luís Bridge

📷 Michele Falzone/Getty

WHAT TO DO

WALK THE LUIS BRIDGE

Cross the double-decker Luís Bridge from Porto to Vila Nova de Gaia for amazing views of the surrounding area, plus a deep-dive into the city's history. Designed by Gustave Eiffel in 1886 a year before his career-defining work on the Eiffel Tower, it's named after the then-king of Portugal Luís I. Soak in the views or swerve if you're scared of heights; it's a staggering 190ft above the River Douro below.

VISIT THE DOURO VALLEY

If you can spare a whole day, a trip to the bucolic Douro Valley is a great way to learn about port. You'll find plenty of operators offering packages that take you around the area, but you can also arrange to visit specific wineries like the historic (and utterly gorgeous) Quinta do Bomfim estate [from £22]. But if you're only here for a flying visit, book yourself for a tour at the Graham's lodge [from £10] in the city instead – and make sure you eat at its absolutely stellar restaurant Vinum, too. [symington.com](#)

LEARN TO MAKE SOAP

Alongside port, Porto is also famous for soap. But these beautiful bars aren't like the slimy lumps you've got lurking in your shower; nay, these are lovingly hand crafted, floral-scented chunks of fragrant heaven. Claus Porto is one of the city's most famous, longest-standing soap emporiums, and now you can even concoct your own creations, whether you want to make soap, perfume, or recreate one of the shop's iconic printed wrappings. It's time to lather up. [clausporto.com](#)



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GETTING THERE

Ryanair flies from Stansted to Porto from £32 return. For more information and to book, visit [ryanair.com](#)



WHERE TO EAT

LETRARIA

Enter this taproom and beer garden by Portuguese brewer Letra and you'll be greeted by 16 taps of new-school Portuguese beers ranging from fruit-infused IPAs to red ales and sours. But head downstairs and it opens up into a beer garden that feels like an oasis. There's another bar there, too, so you don't have to navigate the stairs clutching your pint. *R. da Alegria 101; cervejalettra.pt*

MERCADO BEIRA RIO

If it's street food you're after, there are a few markets to be found around the city, but Mercado Beira Rio, next to the river at the bottom of Vila Nova de Gaia, offers an eclectic mix of traditional Portuguese and newer-school international traders, wine stores, retail and more. Stop by for a decent version of what's become Porto's staple snack, the *francesinha* – a kind of croque madame made with white bread, cheese and cured meats, topped with a fiery gravy. *Av. de Ramos Pinto 148; mercadobeirario.pt*

SEMEA BY EUSKALDUNA

Semea [pictured] is the more accessible sister to the Basque-influenced, tasting-menu-only restaurant Euskalduna Studio. Menus change almost daily, but expect modern takes on eclectic dishes: on our visit, we tried everything from a classic bacalhau salad to brioche with foie gras, stuffed veal tongue and cuttlefish stew. There's a long list of Portuguese wines, too, from classics to new-school pét-nats, topping out at €40 a bottle, with most hovering around €22. *R. das Flores 179; semeabyeuskalduna.pt*

📷 (dish) Diogo Rocha; (hotel) Luís Ferraz



WHERE TO STAY

INPÁTIO GUEST HOUSE

Sweet and simple yet still sophisticated, this impeccable guest house in the city centre makes for a calm space in which to recharge for even more exploring. Stone walls are offset with crisp white linen; there are cookies in the communal space; and owners Olga and Fernando are warm, friendly and full of excellent recommendations. *From £90pn. inpatio.pt*

HOTEL INFANTE SAGRES

If you're looking for a bright, breezy, tastefully decorated and central hotel, Infante Sagres is perfectly located for food, drink and nightlife, and walkable to most of the city-centre restaurants and bars mentioned previously. Decor in the lounges and hallways harks back to the historic port houses of Vila Nova de Gaia, rooms are luxurious without going overboard, and its restaurant, Vogue Café, serves ambitious, modern European menus. *From £160pn. infantesagres.com*

TOREL 1884

See how the other half live, sleep in this outrageously good-looking 19th-century palace [pictured], with its high ceilings, enormous windows, and original sweeping staircase. Tear yourself away from the overtly comfortable rooms and their bathtubs for a meal at the hotel's brilliant 32-seat wine bar and restaurant, which dishes up tapas-style small plates of locally sourced produce. With surrounds this plush, your only problem will be finding a reason to leave. *From £163pn. torelboutiques.com ♦*