

# BIRDWATCHING TOUR TO PORTUGAL, with Birds & Nature Tours Portugal

## USEFUL INFORMATION

**PASSPORTS** - A valid passport is required. Please check the expiry date on your passport (it needs to be valid for at least six months after your trip return date).

**VISAS** - Citizens of the United States, Canada and the UK do not need to obtain a tourist visa to enter Portugal.

**CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS** - Our trip to Portugal includes most of the necessary expenses. You will want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as taxi rides, gifts, laundry, gratuities, and personal items. While U.S. Dollars and British Pounds may be accepted occasionally in hotels, it is always more convenient to have a supply of local currency for such items. It is best to buy local currency before leaving home, or at the airport or a bank upon arrival in Lisbon. There are also numerous ATM's in cities and towns to get cash. The official currency of Portugal is the Euro (EUR).

**ELECTRICITY** - The electrical current in Portugal is 220-240V (110-120V in the U.S.). Outlets require a standard European plug-adaptor that can best be described as one with two round pins. An international travel plug is useful and can be bought in most airport departure lounges. You may find the following website helpful:  
<http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>.

**INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS** - Our hotels have Wi-Fi connections. Mobile phone access is very good near our lodging locations, but can be intermittent when in the field.

**LANGUAGE** - Portuguese is the primary language spoken in Portugal. Your guide speaks English. English is widely spoken.

**TIME** - Portugal is in the Western European Time Zone. Western European Standard Time (WET) is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) with 1 hour advanced for Daylight Saving between the end of March and the end of October.

**HEALTH** - As of October 2018, no major shots or inoculations are required for entry into Portugal (unless you are coming from areas where yellow fever is endemic). As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with the "routine vaccines", including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT). Additionally, participants should strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B. There is no malaria in Portugal. Generally, insects shouldn't be a problem but it might be wise to bring a repellent in case we encounter a few mosquitoes. Minor intestinal problems are possible so we suggest bringing Imodium or similar in case of an upset stomach. If you

are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the trip safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in their original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medicines. The sun's ultraviolet rays are damaging to the eyes and skin with prolonged exposure. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultraviolet blocking, polarized sunglasses. Bring a few long-sleeve shirts and a broad-rimmed hat. On particularly hot days be sure to increase your intake of fluids. Tap water is safe to drink and bottled water will be available throughout the day, as required.

**CLIMATE** - We can expect mainly warm, sunny weather with average temperatures between 12°C (54°F) and 26°C (79°F). Rain is possible throughout. The wind is very variable and can change between no wind on some days and moderate wind on others (especially near the coast). It is always advisable to check the weather forecast before leaving home.

**FIELD CLOTHING** - Mainly warm and sunny weather is usual at this time of year, so light clothing (including long-sleeved garments and a suitable hat for protection from the sun) are the usual requirements. However, changeable and sometimes cold, windy weather is also possible, so bring a warm jacket, pullovers, etc. Rain is possible at any time, and adequate rainwear is advisable. Light footwear will be adequate most of the time. Some of the hotels included in the tour offer laundry services.

**ACCOMMODATION** - Accommodation throughout the tour will be in hotels with private facilities available in all rooms. Hotels can sometimes overbook, so please be aware that we can't always guarantee our chosen accommodation.

**FOOD** - Breakfasts consist of the usual staple items e.g. coffee, milk, tea, juice, cheese, bread and eggs. Lunch is normally taken in a cafe (where the choices are limited to sandwiches, toasts, soup) or in local restaurants. The cakes and pastries are more varied and the leader will be happy to recommend! Evening meals are in local restaurants or in the hotel and are taken late in Portugal, which allows us to make the most of the daylight hours for birding. The local food and wine are generally regarded as excellent and the leader will be able to give advice. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee that all potential causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regrettably, not be accommodated. Our tours are carefully scheduled to ensure the best possible birding experience and although the leader will do all he

can to make sure the group eats at normal meal times, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to take supplemental food with them. Bottled water, a soft drink or a beer are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. Quality wine is provided at dinner. In addition, we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles. Bottled or filtered water may also be provided in some rooms where we stay.

**SMOKING** - Most clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment of all, please be sensitive to the group and respect our no smoking policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when otherwise in the close company of other participants.

**LUGGAGE** - Please check baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour. If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard-shelled suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please ensure that no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself. As a general rule, in addition to using luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the inside of each piece of luggage.

**PHOTOGRAPHY** - Scenery and memory shots will be plentiful and simple to obtain. Although there will be occasions when bird photography is possible, a birdwatching tour is not normally the best means of pursuing this aim. Bring all your film or memory cards with you as it may be difficult to find precisely what you need during the tour. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture and dust-proof bags, as a precaution. "Digiscoping" is perfectly compatible with the tour, though it is recommended you bring your own telescope as the leader's telescope is not available for this activity. There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos of birds, other animals and scenery and the leaders will do all they can to accommodate anyone wishing to do so. If you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

**TRANSPORT** - Transportation will be by minibus driven by the leader. Participants should be able to ride in any seat in the vehicle.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE** - Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be expensive. Please note that Birds & Nature Tours Portugal is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS** - Remember to bring personal medication, alarm clock, insect repellent, small rucksack or shoulder bag and binoculars. Optionally, we recommend

you bring telescope and tripod (if you have them), camera, film or memory cards, spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide and possibly swimwear. If the weather is fine (and sometimes temperatures can be around 30°C (86°F) at this time of the year), you might want to consider taking your swimming costume as some of the hotels have swimming pools. The most effective insect repellents are those containing at least 35% of the active ingredient diethyltoluamide (DEET). The higher the percentage, the greater the effectiveness. Care must be taken to avoid getting the repellent on to optical equipment as it dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. A reasonably effective alternative, which isn't corrosive, is Mosi-guard, produced by MASTA, and we recommend this. It is available in most high street chemists and drugstores (including those at the airport). New products containing tick and chigger repelling chemicals are particularly effective. Camping supply stores sell such products containing permethrin 0.5%, which must be applied directly to clothing in advance of wearing and allowed to dry. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings. Please make sure you never to spray insect repellent inside the vehicle or when you are standing close to other participants – it may drift on to their optical equipment. Although Portugal is a safe country, please do not leave your binoculars, cameras or anything else of value in view inside the minibus when this is unattended.

**TIPPING** - Tips are at your discretion.

**PACE OF TOUR AND DAILY ROUTINE** - The tour is not strenuous: leisurely walking is the only physical requirement. Virtually all the walking is fairly easy and on good paths or tracks. The pace of the tour is relaxed. Our daily routine will largely be dependent on weather conditions. Normally we have breakfast before departing for the day's main birdwatching excursion. We stop for lunch in a roadside cafe or restaurant. We will return to our hotel in time to shower before going for dinner in nearby towns or at the hotel (as previously mentioned, dinner is usually taken late in Portugal, between 20.00-20.30).

**SUGGESTED READING** - BIRDS: Svensson, Lars, Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom. Collins Bird Guide. Second edition (in the US: Birds of Europe, Princeton Field Guides, Princeton University Press, Second edition). Note: this field guide is also available as a smartphone/computer app., entitled "Collins Bird Guide App."

MAMMALS: MacDonald, David and Priscilla Barrett. Mammals of Britain and Europe. Collins Field Guide (in the US: Mammals of Europe, Princeton Field Guides, Princeton University Press).

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES: Speybroeck, Jeroen and Wouter Beukema, Bobby Bok, Jan Van Der Voort and Ilian Velikov. Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Britain and Europe. Bloomsbury.

**CONTACTS BIRDS & NATURE TOURS PORTUGAL** - E-mail: [booking@birds.pt](mailto:booking@birds.pt) - Phone: (+351) 913299990 - Website: [www.birds.pt](http://www.birds.pt)