



Portugal Trip Notes December 19, 2015-January 1, 2016

The Value of Travel - <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxRainier-Rick-Steves-The-Val>

Headlines/Highlights

From Tom:

- The fun of the three of us together, laughing and joking, touring and seeing new things (like the carriage museum with a great enthusiastic guide who really knows his stuff),
- Sharing little life stories,
- Enjoying that really good Fado singer and the music in a nice setting,
- Crawling around the little streets and alleyways of Alfama - our best day
- Enjoying the good life in our large, private sanctuary (apartment),
- The trip to Sintra on a nice sunny day including that nice lunch with a view in a lovely hotel.

We had it made and life is good.

From Marie:

- Portugal was an amazing experience like all of the other trips with Tom and Diana.
- While I may have had enough fish for a lifetime it was still an amazing cultural experience.
- Some of my favorite days were spent in small towns such as Alfama, Evora, and Obidos.
- In Alfama we listened to Fado while eating traditional Portuguese food,
- In Obidos we walked the cute little streets and explored the ramparts of the castle,
- In Evora we explored Roman ruins and visited a winery.



Here she is, home to NJ again, making us a Grand Marnier Soufflé for New Year's Eve.

Why go to Portugal?

- It's full of history and willing to share.
- It has a load full of 'firsts' and once owned a big chunk of the world so the museums can be staggering.
- The price is very good even before the strong dollar made it even better.
- The Portuguese folks are very accommodating and friendly plus they look good too.
- The flight is short, direct, a good price, and the airport is only 15 minutes from town.
- Taxis are cheap and plentiful.
- Winter off season temperatures can be mild.
- Only downside? The food wasn't found to be anything to write home about.

Highlights pictures



Obidos Village, surrounded by ramparts and full of old houses and vines; street art in our residential neighborhood; Congress Square on the water downtown with their own Arch leading into a pedestrian street.

Christmas in Lisbon!



Daily Missives

Day 1 - Sunday - on our way to Lisbon and Day 2

I need another trip – yes? Rome in November then both Paris for two weeks and Lisbon for ten days in December. I'm going to be lost in January: I'm home until the 18th.

A car service, chauffeured by our friend Ron, brought us to the airport where we completely missed having surprised Marie with giving her a first class seat. She got ahead of us and dug into records with United and found it well before even departing Kansas City.

Marie arrived on Friday evening and we were rushed to look thru clothes, try things on, and then deliver big bird Pandora to friend and babysitter Sue Ann. It was well after midnight when we started calming down. Tom had been successful with the clothing purchases and a coat worked and three or four tops.

Saturday got us up early so we could get to the dentist who donates the work of refacing Marie's front teeth. He is very clear that a kid that doesn't smile doesn't get anywhere and the new teeth about three years ago created a wonderful smile and likely opened doors. He says that when she graduates from Stanford he will give her a mouthful of veneered teeth.

We then hurried off to the hair designer for a new look for Marie and ended the day with an extravaganza of shopping which was again successful with shoes, three tops and two pair of straight leg pants.

No we didn't miss eating. Tom had cooked a special Hungarian beef dish and a few vegetables. This household would never miss eating. Unfortunately it shows on all of us.

So we are currently at the airport for hopefully an on-time departure. If so it will be one of the first for a long time. But if we arrive on time we have a glitch with the apartment that can't be entered till later in the day.

Marie and I have historical novels to read and Tom has a Portuguese language program along with a book of common phrases. I say "why bother?" Since everybody speaks some English, but he is good at languages and it makes his head work and it also makes the locals happy that somebody tried to assimilate.

Day 2 - Monday - Moving into our apartment

One of us managed to crawl thru to the day without a nap. The apartment meeting at 10:30am, meeting Rita the landlady and learning about our 18th century palace where she grew up was a good start to a European adventure. The place was much better than I expected but not as special as Tom expected. This is the norm. Pessimist vs optimist.

Shopping after a lunch and moving in took us until around 2pm. Then a walk thru local parks when all the hills caused some to beg a taxi to the main drag called Avenida de Liberadad and the National theatre district. We found Christmas Day theatre tickets for a musical extravaganza.

Walking restaurant row we found a group drinking the national drink and indulged as we did with a national fish-cheese puff ball later. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ginjinha>
Walking towards the water thru the huge archway at the end of pedestrian row, our appetite wasn't stanchued so we went to my June 2014 hotel called My Story Hotel for a nice dinner of local fare.

It was cold, one of us doesn't care to walk up hills, so a taxi got us home in time for beddy-bye pre 10pm. Very early for the norm but very late for having missed a night's sleep.

Pictures include Marie's new hairstyle, our taste the national Portuguese drink, inside a lovely unique church that was left with some of the 1775 earthquake and fire damage, and the little pillows of cod fish and cheese said to be a national food but which name is unknown to us. And our big living room. Maybe more after some recovery.





Day 3 - the apartment - our home until the 30th

From the web: Noble house, recently refurbished, set in a traditional palace with traces of the eighteenth century, in the possession of the same family for decades. The whole house is lined with tiles of the XVIII century and each division has unique pieces of the family that confer a secular aristocratic atmosphere and design. Among the various details of the house is worth mentioning: the marbles and Portuguese tiles of the XVIII century, crystal chandeliers, centenary wooden floors, 3.5 meters in height, natural light, unique view of the city and a glimpse of the Tagus River. The house is located on the 1st floor of a building without elevator, and has 400 m². The house is fully equipped to make your stay as comfortable and unique as possible. Of all the facilities what stands out is the temperature control (air conditioning / heating), the double glazed windows, a wood fireplace and a gas stove, cable TV, wireless internet. There is a large living room full of natural light with two distinct areas, a social area with sofas (great for entertaining) and a TV area with sofas and a wood burning fireplace. It has a separate dining room with a large table with comfortable seating for 6 people and a gas stove. The kitchen is fully equipped and has a characteristic stove of the XVIII century, a fridge/ freezer and all the necessary cooking utensils for you to prepare your favorite meals. The house has 3 bedrooms, all with closets and bed lights to read. Two of the bedrooms are with full bathrooms, one of the bedrooms has two single beds and the bathroom is equipped with bathtub and the other has a double bed and the bathroom is equipped with shower. The third bedroom has twin beds and a stunning view of the assembly of the republic. There are therefore three full bathrooms (two with shower and one with bathtub). To facilitate your stay we have a place available for free private parking. End.

From Tom: The apartment is very nice but less than the pictures on VRBO. Nice landlady - building is her family home for a few generations - now made into apartments, very reasonable price.

Cooler than we'd seen on [weather.com prediction](http://weather.com) but we had clothes for it. Marie's stuff all worked and her. New raincoat/trench coat is super as you'll see.

From Diana: Did you notice that Diana was pessimistic about the place and Tom was his usual optimistic self? That Diana was pleasantly surprised and Tom was not. It is, however, a very pleasant place to be. The neighborhood is interesting though a bit far away and the place has its challenges but how else can you stay in a historically significant place with a view too. It is not 400 m² of an apartment but that is the entire house. It is huge with 3 bedrooms and baths. I don't think the fireplaces work but yes they are there. The renting agency is not good to work with and the landlady requires cash. What's up with that? She required a big deposit which works for us but how many people want left with 500 euros on the last day?

I love the bright sunshine in the apartment, the modern kitchen, and having three bathrooms. Marie having her own side of the apartment is nice too.

A few pictures from the web follow.



Day 3 - Tuesday to Sintra

We woke early and left early for this pre-booked trip. I had done it before but saw and learned more this time.

Sintra Deluxe - Pena Palace & Sintra, Cabo da Roca, Cascais & Estoril - From our tour company - Be enchanted by the fantasy of Pena Palace, a Palace who scored romanticism, and Sintra village that enchanted kings and inspired poets. Highlights:

Pena Palace, a landmark of Romanticism

The charming village of Sintra that enchanted kings and inspired poets

Cabo da Roca, the most western mainland point of both Portugal and Europe have to offer

The villages of Cascais and Estoril

Spend the day in luxury. Let yourself be bowled over the fantasy of Pena Palace, a landmark of Romanticism. Discover the charms of the village of Sintra (cultural Landscape of UNESCO) that enchanted kings and inspired poets, and enjoy the village where you shall lunch. The tour continues by tram* to Colares. Savor the beauty of the landscapes of Cabo da Roca, the most western point mainland Europe has to offer. The day ends by the coast, passing through the villages of Cascais and Estoril. (The tram route between Sintra and Colares is always taken whenever possible from April to October. On the remaining days the tour continues by bus.)

We tried to get the now rare Colares wine with lunch but gave it up at about \$30 for a half a bottle. In the past, there were 200 hectares of Colares wine but now with the summer villa fad taking up land, about 20 hectares remain.

Lunch was included and started with a Portuguese green cabbage soup and then a codfish Portuguese dish with onions, boiled eggs, potatoes and olives. (Some say the Portuguese have a different recipe for every day of the year to utilize cod. The stores have stacks of dried cod.). We followed with a special crusty philo dough of a Sintra pastry filled with an apple mixture and sided with ice cream and strawberries.

I am not sure how we ate it all because we had stopped at a Christmas festival and bought chocolates and every piece was different and special and who can stop.

Bus tour over and it was after 5pm and a full day. We were going to walk much of the way home via Liberdade but one of us decided it was cold so we taxied home. Were the other two grateful? If so I'm not admitting it. 4 o'clock syndrome came about shortly before the bus ride so there were some naps to be had. 4 o'clock syndrome had happened in the morning too.

Pictures include a stack of codfish in the grocery store, A row of tiny little houses in our local area with what they call international flags hanging from the windows, A street mime representing Mozart with a pigeon on his head and seemingly covered from head to toe with pigeon poop, one of the many Beach Estates on our way to Sintra, coastal picture on our way to the rock that sticks the farthest westerly in Europe, and the lunch I described.

I'll save Pena Palace for another time.

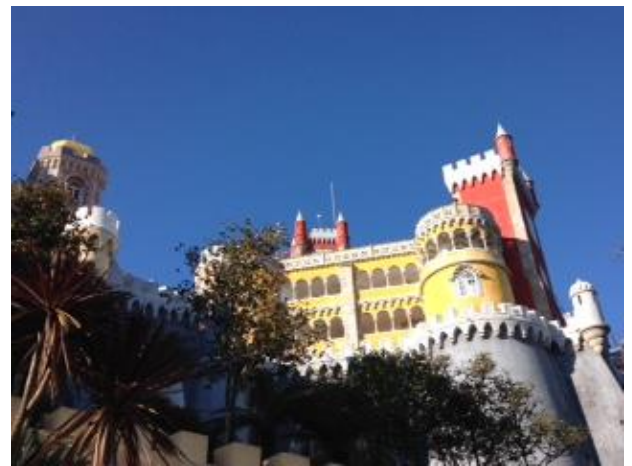


Day 3 - part 2 at Pena palace in Sintra

Like a toy land or Disney inspired play thing, Pena Park and Palace is on a hilltop over 500 meters up. Enough elevation to make Tom slow but he kept going.

When the revolution came and won, royalty left the place exactly as it was and now it's a museum.

We walked around one of the other big palaces in town but chose to use our free time to wander the hilly streets of Sintra instead. Tasting local drink served in a chocolate cup. Looking for a souvenir Christmas ornament. One palace a day seemed sufficient.



Having been fed a big lunch plus lots of snacks, we accepted Tom's offer to grill sandwiches for dinner. Marie had her leftover duck lasagna.

We didn't mind that we could sleep in the next morning as it would be a full day anyway. We will finally get the Lisbon city tour followed on by a Fado show and dinner until midnight.

Pictures include the "front door" and a dining room and a piece of questionable wall art. The chapel was carved alabaster. Before becoming a Palace it was a monastery. I bet the wall art came later.



Day 4 - Wednesday to tour Lisbon finally!

But first, here is a panorama made by Marie of the Rocky point that is most westerly. The souvenir shops had T-shirts printed "West Point."



Now onto Wednesday. There was opportunity to do this tour early morning or in the afternoon and we decided to give ourselves a sleep in. Otherwise known to the Brits as a lie-in.

The overview of Lisbon will be followed almost immediately by a Fado experience which will include dinner and not get us home until after midnight.

Description from the tour company: **Jerónimos' Monastery, Tower of Belém, Monument to the Discoveries, Coach Museum, Alfama & Rossio** – Spend several hours discovering Lisbon with its traditional squares and Discoveries Monuments. Highlights:



- National Coach Museum*
- Jerónimos Monastery*
- Tower of Belem
- Monument to the Discoveries
- Alfama & Rossio

A few hours to discover Lisbon, first of all we will visit the Belém quarter where you will find the most beautiful and historical monuments from the 15th and 16th centuries. A brief stop at the Belém Tower (Torre de Belém) - World Heritage by UNESCO - , point of departure of some of the Portuguese maritime explorations; and on the Monument to the Discoveries (Padrão dos Descobrimentos), built to celebrate the 500th anniversary

of the “death “of Prince Henry the Navigator. Then we visit the church of S. Jerome Monastery (Mosteiro dos Jerónimos) - World Heritage by UNESCO - a masterpiece of the “Manueline” style and the National Coach Museum (Museu Nacional dos Coches) with one of the most important collection of old carriages in the world. Along the river we arrive at Alfama, an old and traditional district, where we will have the opportunity to walk in its narrow streets, and visit a handicraft shop where we'll taste an aperitif of Port wine. Then we will pass by the downtown (Baixa) to admire the most important squares of Lisbon such as the monumental Trade Square (Praça do Comércio); Rossio Square, the heart of Lisbon and the symbolic Restauradores Square. Then we drive along the Liberdade Avenue, the “boulevard” of Lisbon, to finish at Marquês de Pombal Square, admiring the statue of the 18th-century Portuguese statesman responsible for Lisbon reconstruction after one of the most deadliest earthquakes in History, the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake. End.

Pictures include some over the top carriages from the museum noted for the largest known collection, little tourists dressed as Santa Claus, the front of the monastery where there is their famous explorer Vasco de Gama tomb but he is oddly buried elsewhere.

We would go direct to our night tour and Fado entertainment dinner getting home around midnight which meant I'd sleep through my next morning alarm were it not for Tom's nudge.

Fado dinner is the last picture.



Day 5 - Thursday and a food tour.

It's Christmas Eve for most but vacation land for us. Our 4 hour walking history and food tour turned into 6 hours and all that walking, eating and drinking wore us out.

Other than a walk on their Champs d'Elysee called Avenida Liberdade, a visit to a fabulous food market on our own, plus a grocery store stop, we did nothing else. Eat. Eat. Eat.

Tour description: See and taste your way through Lisbon on this three- to four-hour small-group walking tour of the city. With historic highlights, culinary delights and local interaction, this tour offers a unique insight into Portugal's capital. Visit some of Lisbon's famous squares. Explore vibrant, multicultural neighborhoods. Snack on delicious pastries, fresh seafood and Portuguese wine. Learn about the city's heroes and history-makers. Cross the River Tagus on a ferry, and take in panoramic views of the city. Begin your walking tour of Lisbon at Restauradores Square, the perfect spot to hear a bit of Lisbon history. Your informative local guide will tell you about Portugal's Restoration years and what effect this period had on the places you will see during your tour. Get on the move by exploring the magnetic neighborhood of Mouraria, a melting pot of cultures and one of the city's most modern areas, where tourists don't often venture. Pass small churches, mosques and shops selling goods from far-away places. Learn about Fado, Portugal's own music genre that was declared a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, as you walk past the birthplace of the legendary Maria Severa (Fado's first superstar). Next, visit a small, hidden bakery where traditional pastries and coffee will provide you with a tasty treat and another insight into local life in Lisbon. Then, walk past the beautiful Gothic-style Rossio train station, visit Rossio Square (Lisbon's main square) and find out how much the city has changed since the devastating earthquake of 1755 that destroyed 85 percent of the city. Continue visiting historical landmarks, churches and other attractions before stopping again for a taste of Portuguese cheese and locally made marmalade. Then see the picturesque Carmo Square with its beautiful Carmo Convent, and walk up to the top of the famous Santa Justa funicular to enjoy wonderful views. Walk through the trendy old district of Chiado, an aristocratic quarter home to small shopping centers, boutiques, historical cafes and old bookstores. Compare it with Barrio Alto, Lisbon's bohemian district and the center for nightlife. Then take a short ferry ride on the River Tagus toward the picturesque Cacilhas, where Portuguese green wine and freshly caught seafood awaits. Enjoy magnificent views from the south bank before returning to central Lisbon.

Pictures include: Famous for their artsy cobblestones of limestone, the design sometimes mimic the buildings, sometimes are like the ocean waves but always are slippery. Sadly there is talk of covering them with concrete. The Little tiny pastry shop is located in a back alley. It was doing a major business. Yes, that is a doll hospital.

The rare hams that come from black pigs were only fed acorns. This shop also specializes in unusual cheeses and port wines. These were our samples. See Tom in the reflection. The pictured food was called a Romeo and Juliette for the uniquely opposite tastes of cheese and marmalade that went well together.



To be continued.



Day 5 - part 2 of the eating extravaganza.

Aren't we cute? And cold! Despite having climbed the zillion steps instead of taking the elevator. See the castle up on the hill in the background. We had climbed from sea level.

Lisbon is said to have seven hills but I am sure there are more. They have long blocks of stairs and they have many elevators. Trolleys too. We use taxis.

Our tour guide is an anthropology student supporting himself full time guiding. We had three others on the tour. A most interesting well-traveled American family now living in Istanbul who were all reuniting in Lisbon for Christmas. But three of them missed their connection in Boston due to weather and couldn't get another flight out for three days. Making the turn-around illogical so they had to cancel. We were on our Sintra tour with a fellow who had the same problem with his Lisbon connection on his way to South Africa giving him two full days in Lisbon pending another flight with available seating.

We took a ferry ride across the river to a famous Fish restaurant. We ordered an add-on of lobster but in the translation we got this crab. Marie had never tasted lobster but this was likely an even better experience as we learned how to crack and pick out the meat. The lobster experience will have to wait because we had so much other food too.

I'll give you a dessert and say good night.

Then. It's pizza in-house for our Christmas Eve.





Day 6 - Christmas

Easy and lazy day made less guilty by having museums, most sites and many restaurants closed. Even the tour buses were grounded.

We walked a lot and saw much of Chiado area plus parks and window shopping in our residential area of Principe Real.

The oldest known continuously running bookstore as well as their oldest and famous cafe for literary customers was on our list to find and we ultimately did.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caf%C3%A9_A_Brasileira

But only after finding a lovely and lively overlook, a couple elevators which translates to cable car going up a hill, a huge railroad station and then a restaurant.

Our evening was in a 1908 theatre to see a musical production with a name like Banana Republic. There were subtitles but so few as to be of little help. We enjoyed it no matter (until I got edgy halfway thru). We weren't home until after 1am and had to get up early. Ugh.

The row houses with art work on the wall is near to us. They must be very narrow places by the looks of the close-together doors.

The archways are into the Rossio Train Station and there I am in front of the old cafe and book store. Is that their famous poet Fernando Pessoa? Wow. Known as the Flaneur!

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fernando_Pessoa

Description of the theatre: Lisbon's biggest Broadway-style musicals are shown at this theater. Built in 1913, it was modernized and had its façade cleaned up in the early 90s. It's found on one of the city's main pedestrian streets and has popular director Filipe La Féria to thank for its sold-out nights.

We saw the rare Christmas full moon alongside the Rossio Square Christmas tree. Pictured.



Day 7 - Saturday to Evora.

From tour company: Discover the charms of the city of Évora, World Heritage Site, rich in history, architecture and cuisine and visit the well-known "Herdade do Esporão" winery. We embark on a one-day voyage through the city of Évora – UNESCO World Heritage –, a mosaic of culture, history and traditions. Leaving Lisbon behind, we cross the bridge over the Tagus before, within a few kilometres, a pleasant landscape takes shape, dotted with cork oaks, olive groves and vineyards. In the distance, we pass walls before their whiteness tells us we have arrived in Évora. Here, wander the narrow streets and take the time to savour masterpieces of past eras and the key monuments of Évora: the Roman Temple, the Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral, the Church of São Francisco and its Chapel of Bones as well as the University. There is also the chance to explore the deep variety of handicrafts produced across the Alentejo including the renowned pieces in cork, ceramics and copper. Furthermore, take the opportunity to engage and experience the depth and breadth in the ingredients for some of the most defining dishes in the Portuguese gastronomic range. Following lunch, in the afternoon, we set off in direction of the peaceful city of Reguengos de Monsaraz. Here we visit one of the most historical and important wine cellars in the country, named "Herdade do Esporão", and also where we get to taste the traditional Setúbal moscatel. At the end of this marvelous day, we make our return to Lisbon.

Highlights:

- Évora Historical Centre - UNESCO World Heritage
- Roman Temple
- Romanesque Gothic Cathedral
- Bones Chapel



- University
- Visit and Wine Tasting at the well-known Herdade do Esporão Cellar.

Pictures: The Bones Cathedral. That's the temple of Diana. I also found a manhole cover "Diana Gas". The cork bags were a big hit.

Long day. Spaghetti and salad compliments of Chef Tom for dinner. Gads but it's late! Such fun.



Day 7 - part 2 about Evora

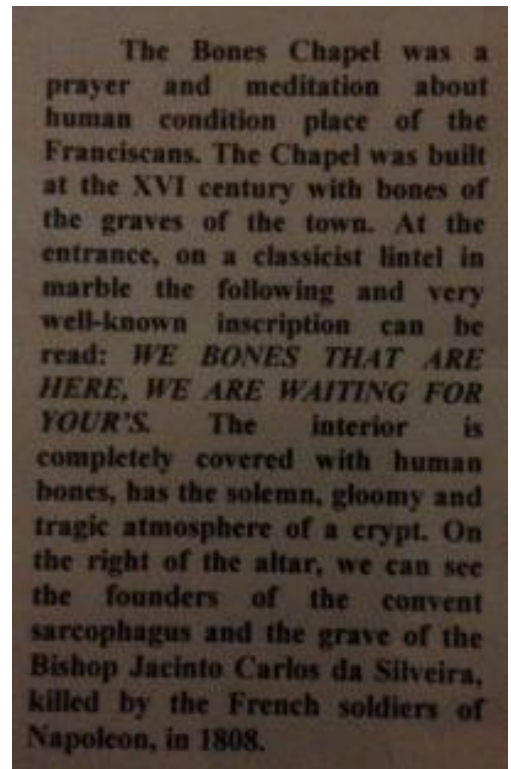
Some asked about the Bones Chapel. I added a picture of the description.

This day gave us a surprisingly good meal, wine, visit by the owner, and a gift of homemade grappa or eau d'vie. Wonderful vegetable soup, then meat of the black pig that gets fed acorns, finished by a soufflé. All the wine you want.

Onto the wine tour where the facilities were modern and uniquely decorated. At each end of the long row of wine barrels were tiles painted as a forever continuation of vineyards.

We drank, ate, and bought. I was asked about the cork bags too. And their price which was anywhere from 25 to 80 for small bags. There were even umbrellas.

I'll end with the best manhole cover found on this trip. Lisbon's logo of a ship with supposedly crows at either end. This logo is also seen in the cobblestone decorations if one isn't so immune to seeing the art work.





Day 8 - Sunday to the Castle Sao Jorge and then old town for Fado.

This was basically a free day. I made a list of all the potential things we could do and after a vote everyone agreed that we needed to go up to the top of the hill and visit the castle and then walk through the old historical area called Alfama that remains original despite the 1775 earthquake.

I was worried. I am a free guide and I reminded Tom and Marie that they might get what they paid for. I only got lost once so I turned out to be a bargain.

The hill is really very high so we voted to take a taxi to the top where we stayed much of the day before walking down through the old narrow streets of the historical quarter.

I had in mind that we needed to see a more traditional Fado and can you believe our luck but we got that in too.

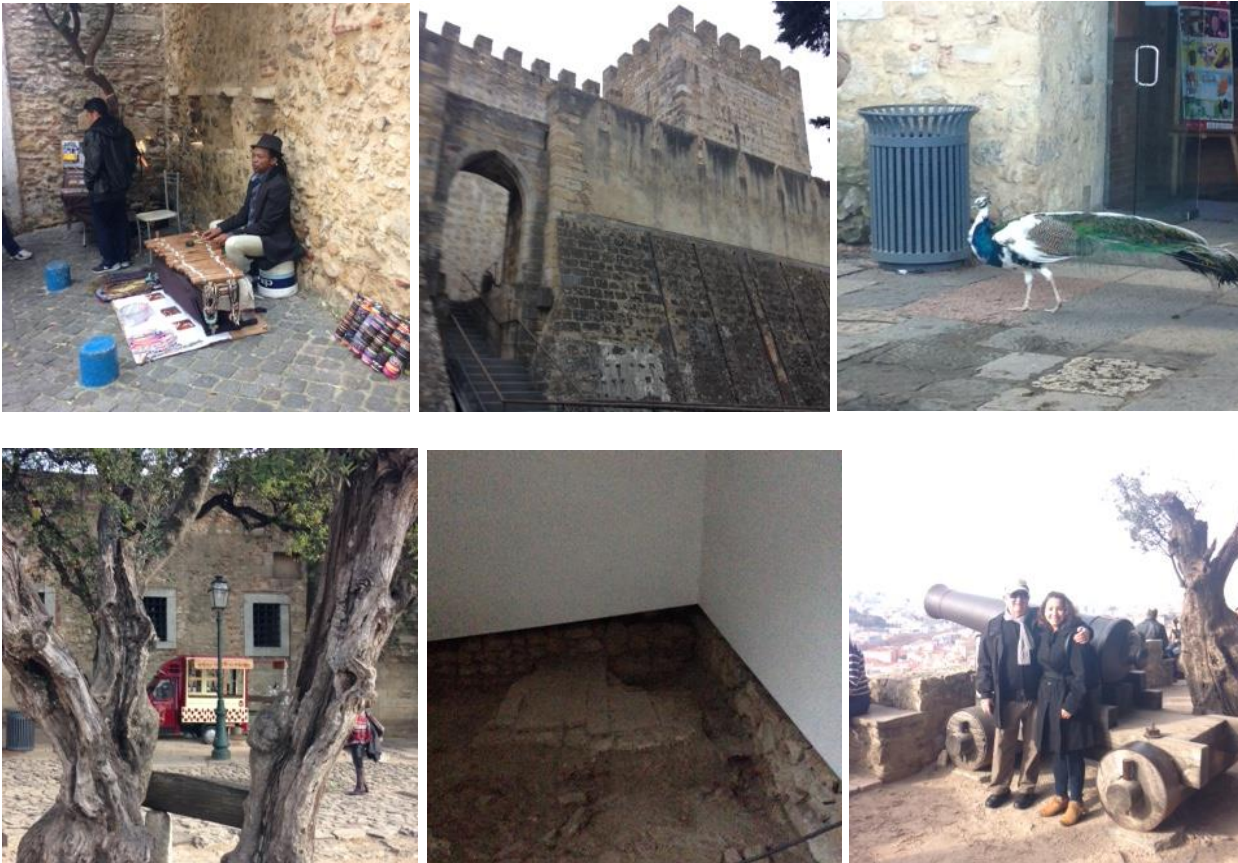
Even better yet – both Tom and Marie separately said that this was one of their best days yet.

We were also lucky about a Tour Guide up at the castle. We hadn't realized that the 4 PM tour was to be in Portuguese. But no one showed up needing a Portuguese tour but plenty of people we solicited liked the idea of staying for an English guided tour and it was absolutely perfect.

Pics include a reminder to me that our old fashioned almost works bath and toilet are lots better than the hole in the ground. But the castles palace was pretty upscale to have any kind of toilet.

There were about 20 peacocks, some cats, and supposedly more of a menagerie that we missed. Scenery was amazing. The wine cart that said "wine with a view while you walk" pretty neat.

Confession. I'm tired. I'll send something of our Alfama walk and Fado dinner and you'll see why. Later. Maybe.



Day 8 - part 2 from the castle to old town Alfama and Fado

The devastating earthquake of 1755 was one of the worst known in the world. Thousands of people died and much of the town had to be rebuilt. They died first from the earthquake, secondly from the fires created by all the candles in the churches, and next by the tsunami. But subject of this is the Alfama old area and much of it remains from the days of the Moors. We walked it all.

When I was here before, the Alfama area was celebrating their big June festival. And it was quite different not only from being very hot then to very cold now.

When Tom and I were here in the 70s probably it was the same streets, same restaurants, the grandparents of today's Fado singers, but that is too far back of the memory bank.

The pictures tell the story that we stayed up in the castle through dark and climbed up onto the ramparts and saw these wonderful lights of Lisbon looking over toward the tower of Belen and the bridge called the bridge of 25 April (which was the revolution date) and was built by the same engineer as the Golden gate Bridge.

The tiles were found in the museum and show how little was left to excavate from the 1100s.

Then we were off to get lost a little while, finally finding these small cobbled streets of Alabama and pretty much interviewing every bottle restaurant in the area. We couldn't have been happier with the choice as the music was good, the food was probably better then we could expect, and the price was right.

We did find it their Cathedral in between the castle tour and Fafo. Does that confession make up for my getting lost?



Day 9 - Monday to Fatima with add on of Obidos Village etc.

Weather turned warmer to the low 60s but wet. The famously designed limestone cobblestones are equally famous for being slippery.

The first drive was through green hills and valleys with both old wind mills and new Wind turbines. Portugal is said to be the most sustainable in Europe with their Azores heading the worlds list. (The old windmills have converted to homes or cafes or businesses. <http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-azores-leading-top-100-world-sustainable-green-destinations-award/>)

End of Obidos. All the pictures were from in town. A little town given to the queen as a wedding gift. Along with a palace (now a posada) and much of the valley.

Oh, congrats! Marie even got up into the ramparts. They were slippery and I had managed a long walk around on my prior trip. I gladly stayed with Tom this time.

Two from the bus were 15 minutes late returning from Obidos and didn't seem to care. In fact they continued doing the same tardy game all day.

Worst and momentarily frightening, at our next stop, walking to Alcobaca on the slippery cobblestones, we heard an awful thud and realized one of our tourists had fallen. After 15 minutes it was decided she was ok. She went to and stayed in the bus while we toured.

Next up - a couple of dramatic monasteries then Fatima.



Day 9 - part 2 of the Fatima trip.

Fátima Sanctuary, Óbidos, Batalha and Alcobaça Monasteries & Coastal town of Nazaré – from 8:30am to 8:30pm is a very long day. It was interrupted by rain off and on but we were ready with raincoats and umbrellas.

Description: Explore the Portuguese countryside and villages on an unforgettable to the Fatima Sanctuary. Highlights:

- Fatima Sanctuary
- Nazaré, a traditional fishing village
- Óbidos Village
- Batalha Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)
- Alcobaça Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)

Description - We depart first to encounter Óbidos and meet its medieval walls, rustic white houses and the rich and varied local traditions of the town. We also take the opportunity to visit the Castle Inn-Hotel. We then leave Óbidos for Alcobaça to take in the imposing monastery church, the first Gothic church to be built in Portugal and home to the tombs of the ill-starred lovers D. Pedro and D. Inês de Castro. We then head onto the picturesque and colorful fishing town of Nazaré for lunch. There's also the chance to find out something about the legends and traditions of this town. When possible, we go to Sítio, to marvel at its wonderful views out over Nazaré and its beaches. We then move onto Batalha to visit the monastery church, a Gothic masterpiece with the most finely worked stained-glass windows. Finally, we reach the Our Lady of Fátima Sanctuary, an altar of the Christian faith and site of world pilgrimage. There is also the Chapel of Apparitions with its portrayal of Our Lady of Fátima. Take the time also for the location of the Basilica with the tombs of the three witnesses, and the Church of the Holy Trinity, the fourth largest in the world by capacity. You have

some free time to attend mass. Travelling through this colorful agricultural region, we return to Lisbon. End.

To be continued



Do you see all the rain? The little duckies? I LOVE the austere churches. Ending with a Santa.

Day 9 - part 3 into Fatima

I wonder if the pilgrims know their candles wilted. Also a picture of the new modern sanctuary.

Fatima is not the Fatima that we saw in the 70s. Tom thoughtfully referred to it as a religious industrial complex. It started as three little children seeing an apparition and it has grown to a rather large town hosting millions of pilgrims who buy candles and souvenirs.

Pilgrims have a long path they use while on their knees going to Fatima. Ah, belief is amazing. I hope it worked for them.

Back to the day before, here is Tom's message to Pat: Last night we all agreed was the culmination of our best day yet. We'd spent the afternoon up on top of the big hill (there are lots of them - maybe seven like Rome) at the castle where we had a nice lunch with a view of the city, then walked down the narrow, steep, windy streets in the old town (Alfama) and found a very nice restaurant that also had the native musical - Fado. I had a dish called spicy shrimp. Spicy? - Very! - Shrimp - no. They were actually langoustines and about four times bigger than normal shrimp. I had to peel them myself which was pretty messy but quite tasty. The sauce was fiery and also under some tiny fried

potato balls. Took a lot of wine and water. The big gal with the big voice gave us a song that made our visit and the guitar players (a regular six string and a Portuguese one as well - very talented guys). The apartment is serving us well and our bedrooms and baths are separated so plenty of privacy. Marie's a delight as usual and we're having a good time. End.

Note that it's Alfama and not Alabama as spell check prefers. Sorry.



Day 10 - our last full day and onto the Knights Templar tour

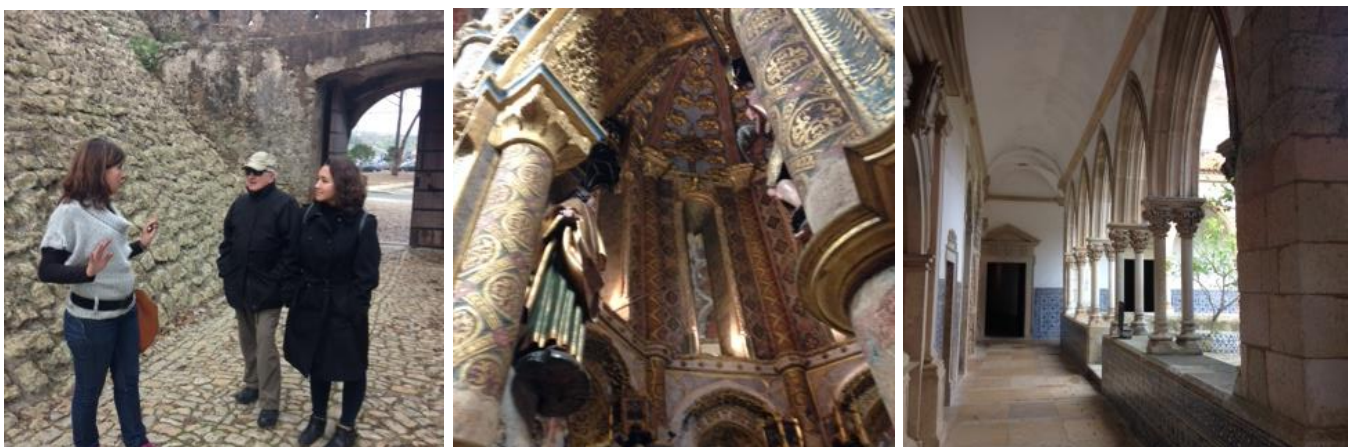
We needed and found a private guide with car and would give her excellent recommendation: Gloria Ribeiro at Lisbon Secrets 351934357400 info@lisbonsecrets.com <http://lisbonsecrets.com>

From website: On this historical tour from Lisbon, spend a lovely day in the charming Portuguese villages of Constância and Tomar, and discover the history of the Knights Templar, a Christian military order that played a role in the great battles of Europe during the Middle Ages. Visit Almourol Castle, built by the Knights Templar, and the Convent of Christ, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and former Templar stronghold. Highlights

Knights Templar day trip

Explore the Portuguese villages of Constância and Tomar
See the incredible Convent of Christ, a World Heritage Site
Take a boat to Almourol Castle and explore inside
Visit the church of Santa Maria do Olival in Tomar.

To be continued.





Day 10 - part 2

Some believe that the Knights Templar after being basically closed down by the Pope later became the Masons. You might recognize the history from the Dan Brown books, first in DaVinci Code.

I love this. Wandering through 1100 to 1300s history.

Our tour continues - description from a website: head to one of the most mystical places in Portugal, Almourol Castle, which was built by the Knights Templar to defend the boundary line below the Tagus River. Take a boat ride on the river to the castle, where you'll have half an hour to explore and soak up the medieval atmosphere. Next, enjoy the drive in a comfortable minivan to the beautiful village of Constância, known for being one of the places frequented by famous Portuguese poet Luís Vaz de Camões, who wrote the epic poem *Os Lusíadas*. With your expert guide, take a walk in Parque Constância, one of the most magnificent parks in this region of Portugal, and enjoy the contact with nature, just like the Templar Knights did. Here you will also taste a typical delicacy made from almonds and eggs (included). Your next stop is the beautiful city of Tomar, one of Portugal's historical gems. The city was built according to the rules of the Knights Templar, with four religious monuments constructed around the city to form a perfect crucifix. The most impressive of these monuments is the ensemble of the Castle of Tomar and the Convent of Christ, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built by the Templars in the 12th century. Visit the castle and convent with your guide. You'll spend a good part of your day in Tomar, where you can enjoy lunch at a local eatery (own expense) and walk to popular Tomar attractions like the Gothic-style Church of Santa Maria do Olival, built in the 12th century as the pantheon for the Knights Templar.

From Tom: We've just returned from an all day trip with a really nice young gal guide, in her car, about an hour and a half from town. We went to the Castle of Tomar and the Convent of Christ which was The Knights Templar second edition. Most unusual. She really knew her stuff and was very enthusiastic and good lookin' too. Had a typical Portuguese cafe meal with local red. Sort of a stewed pork with some root veggies - gave it about a 4 1/2. Yes. The food here leaves a bit to be desired. Anyway, we get picked up in the morning around 7:45 and fly home around 10:15. Be it ever so humble.....

Lunch: one of us had squid. Two of us tasted it. Our 1 liter pitcher of red wine costs 3.60 euros. Amazingly good for amazingly cheap.

Tom reluctantly climbed but not to the very top. See him in the courtyard.

Lovely day. Good last day. Gloria was a good find and I'd hire her again. And maybe I will.



Final thoughts

The trip home went easily. Our last tour guide set up a taxi for morning pick up at the apartment, the airport check in was easy and the airport amazingly new and convenient (only about 15 minutes ride), the flight was on time for once, and the lie-flat seats well used by all as we were in recovery mode. Arriving in Newark we were met by friend and limo driver Ron, and home for New Year's Eve. Marie went to the airport for her trip home mid-day New Year's Day.

Left to do: More market visits, the tea museum in a historic home setting, inside the Jerome Monastery, Hop-on Hop-off bus, ride some of the huge elevators, find more food tours.

Itinerary

Fri Dec 18 – Marie

2:44pm Depart Kansas City MCI via UA#3311
6:28pm Arrive Newark EWR

Sat Dec 19 - Marie

10:00am Dr. Margiotta dentist – take gifts
2:00pm Cozmo hair designer

Sun Dec 20 - All

5:30pm Depart home via a car service
8:30pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#64

Mon Dec 21

8:10am Arrive Lisbon LIS



Shuttle service ordered through apartment site

10:30am Meet Rita or representative at apartment
Rita – owner at ritamascarenhasdelemos@gmail.com Tele: 00351919848449 or 00351929144947

Apartment Principe Real Palace by RE - <http://www.vrbo.com/1491919ha> – 9 nights
Address: Rua Quintinha #27, 1st esquerdo, 2715-311 Lisbon Portugal

Management Ema Freitas – Front office manager emafreitas@rent-experience.com

Tele: +351 962 012 810 at Rent Experience +351 213 420 036 a: Rua da Boavista, n^o78, A. 1200-068 LISBOA
www.rent-experience.com and info@rent-experience.com

Also Gonçalo Correia Teles Ribeiro [<mailto:goncaloribeiro@rent-experience.com>]

Gonçalo Ribeiro, Chief Executive Officer, +351 918 829 542

Location - This fantastic apartment is located in the neighborhood of Principe Real which is increasingly a cosmopolitan area with streets filled with palaces, gardens and viewpoints. It is a place full of life and great for those interested in the arts because here you can find several clothing stores, designer boutiques, antique shops and museums. This apartment is very close to the Assembly of the Republic and to Baixa-Chiado, it is an area of excellence for exploring Lisbon on foot, because in just 7 minutes you can find yourself in the garden of Principe Real or Cais do Sodré, where you can take the tram No. 15 to Belem or train to Cascais to go to the beach. There are two metro stations very close to the house (1 km), they are the Rato Station and the Cais do Sodré Station. At 100meters from the apartment there is a local market where you can purchase the freshest products and delicacies that Lisbon has to offer. At this distance there is also the garden of Praça das Flores filled with local shops, outdoor cafes, restaurants and bars. In the garden of Principe Real, on Saturdays is organized a craft fair and it also has several small kiosks with terraces where you can enjoy a good cup of tea or simply relax in one of the benches in the garden while your children play in the playground. Another garden that you should visit and that is just a 11min walk from the apartment is the garden of the Viewpoint of São Pedro de Alcântara, located on the border with the Bairro Alto, with a fantastic view over the city of Lisbon. This is a great place for a drink before going to the vibrant Bairro Alto in the evening. 200m from the apartment you will also find several grocery stores, tobacco shops and cafes where you can buy the newspaper to follow the news or buy any ingredient missing to complete your meals at home.

Description - Noble house, recently refurbished, set in a traditional palace with traces of the eighteenth century, in the possession of the same family for decades. The whole house is lined with tiles of the XVIII century and each division has unique pieces of the family that confer a secular aristocratic atmosphere and design. Among the various details of the house is worth mentioning: the marbles and Portuguese tiles of the XVIII century, crystal chandeliers, centenary wooden floors, 3.5 meters in height, natural light, unique view of the city and a glimpse of the Tagus River. The house is located on the 1st floor of a building without elevator, and has 400 m2. The house is fully equipped to make your stay as comfortable and unique as possible. Of all the facilities what stands out is the temperature controle (air conditioning / heating), the double glazed windows, a wood fireplace and a gas stove, cable TV, wireless internet. There is a large living room full of natural light with two distinct areas, a social area with sofas (great for entertaining) and a TV area with sofas and a wood burning fireplace. It has a separate dining room with a large table with comfortable seating for 6 people and a

gas stove. The kitchen is fully equipped and has a characteristic stove of the XVIII century, a fridge/ freezer and all the necessary cooking utensils for you to prepare your favorite meals. The house has 3 bedrooms, all with closets and bed light to read. Two of the bedrooms are with full bathrooms, one of the bedrooms has two single beds and the bathroom is equipped with bathtub and the other has a double bed and the bathroom is equipped with shower. The third bedroom has twin beds and a stunning view of the assembly of the republic. There are therefore three full bathrooms (two with shower and one with bathtub).

Settle in by noon, shop, maybe go on the hop-on and hop off bus for an overview tour, walk shore area or up into Alfama, maybe take trolley #28.

Try for theatre tickets for Christmas day.

Confirmed and pre-paid with Grayline/Cityrama. Receipts/tickets in file.

- 1) Tuesday, Dec 22nd – **Sintra Deluxe Full Day Tour with lunch** – Pickup: Principe Real Palace Hotel at 08:30 am – Price p/ person: €85.00 – Total: €255.00 | ID: 156270
- 2) Wednesday, Dec 23rd – **Lisbon Classic PM Half Day Tour** – Pickup: Principe Real Palace Hotel at 2 pm – Price p/ person: €35.00 – Total: €105.00 | ID: 156270
- 3) Wednesday, Dec 23rd – **Lisbon by Night Half Day Tour** – Pickup: Principe Real Palace Hotel at 7:30 pm – Price p/ person: €79.00 – Total: €237.00 | ID: 156271
- 4) Saturday, Dec 26th – **Évora Full Day Tour with lunch** – Pickup: Principe Real Palace Hotel at 8:30 am – Price p/ person: €86.00 – Total: €258.00 | ID: 156270
- 5) Monday, Dec 28th – **Fátima Full Day Tour with lunch** – Pickup: Principe Real Palace Hotel at 8:30 am – Price p/ person: €88.00 – Total: €264.00 | ID: 156270

Tue Dec 22

Sintra Deluxe - Pena Palace & Sintra, Cabo da Roca, Cascais & Estoril – 9 hours and only on Tuesday – 8:30am pick up at apt

Be enchanted by the fantasy of Pena Palace, Palace who scored romanticism and Sintra village that enchanted kings and inspired poets. Highlights:

- Pena Palace, a landmark of Romanticism
- The charming village of Sintra that enchanted kings and inspired poets
- Cabo da Roca, the most western mainland point of both Portugal and Europe have to offer
- The villages of Cascais and Estoril

Description - Spend the day in luxury. Let yourself be bowled over the fantasy of Pena Palace, a landmark of Romanticism. Discover the charms of the village of Sintra (cultural Landscape of UNESCO) that enchanted kings and inspired poets, and enjoy the village where you shall lunch. The tour continues by tram* to Colares. Savor the beauty of the landscapes of Cabo da Roca, the most western point mainland Europe has to offer. The day ends by the coast, passing through the villages of Cascais and Estoril. (The tram route between Sintra and Colares is always taken whenever possible from April to October on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On the remaining days the tour continues by bus.)

Wed Dec 23

Jerónimos' Monastery, Tower of Belém, Monument to the Discoveries, Coach Museum, Alfama & Rossio – 4 hours - Available 9:00am and 2:30pm – Booked afternoon PLUS Fado at night 2:00pm Pick up at apartment

Spend several hours discovering Lisbon with its traditional squares and Discoveries Monuments.

Highlights:

- National Coach Museum*
- Jerónimos Monastery*

- Tower of Belem
- Monument to the Discoveries
- Alfama & Rossio

Description: A few hours to discover Lisbon, first of all we will visit the Belém quarter where you will find the most beautiful and historical monuments from the 15th and 16th centuries. A brief stop at the Belém Tower (Torre de Belém) - World Heritage by UNESCO - , point of departure of some of the Portuguese maritime explorations; and on the Monument to the Discoveries (Padrão dos Descobrimentos), built to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the “death “of Prince Henry the Navigator. Then we visit the church of S. Jerome Monastery (Mosteiro dos Jerónimos) - World Heritage by UNESCO - a masterpiece of the “Manueline” style and the National Coach Museum (Museu Nacional dos Coches) with one of the most important collection of old carriages in the world. Along the river we arrive at Alfama, an old and traditional district, where we will have the opportunity to walk in its narrow streets, and visit a handicraft shop where we'll taste an aperitif of Port wine. Then we will pass by the downtown (Baixa) to admire the most important squares of Lisbon such as the monumental Trade Square (Praça do Comércio); Rossio Square, the heart of Lisbon and the symbolic Restauradores Square. Then we drive along the Liberdade Avenue, the “boulevard” of Lisbon, to finish at Marquês de Pombal Square, admiring the statue of the 18th-century Portuguese statesman responsible for Lisbon reconstruction after one of the most deadliest earthquakes in History, the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake.

Evening - Lisbon Fado Night – 3 ½ hours – 7:20pm pick up at apartment

Description: You'll be picked up from your hotel and taken directly to the central monument – Marquês de Pombal, Av. Da Liberdade, Rossio e Terreiro do Paço. Our next stop is a panoramic overlook where we'll have a jaw dropping view of the Discovery Monuments Padrão dos Descobrimentos, Torre de Belém, and Mosteiro dos Jerónimos. Then we'll visit the Lisbon bridge and the Cristo Rei. Finally we'll have dinner at a traditional Portuguese restaurant complete with “Fado” and Folklore dancing.

Thu Dec 24

10:30am Meet at Praca dos Restauradores for 3 ½ hour food and wine walking and ferry tour. Paid and vouchers in file. Near to Rossio Square, at SE end of Avenida da Liberdade.

Description: See and taste your way through Lisbon on this three- to four-hour small-group walking tour of the city. With historic highlights, culinary delights and local interaction, this tour offers a unique insight into Portugal's capital. Visit some of Lisbon's famous squares. Explore vibrant, multicultural neighborhoods. Snack on delicious pastries, fresh seafood and Portuguese wine. Learn about the city's heroes and history-makers. Cross the River Tagus on a ferry, and take in panoramic views of the city.

Begin your walking tour of Lisbon at Restauradores Square, the perfect spot to hear a bit of Lisbon history. Your informative local guide will tell you about Portugal's Restoration years and what effect this period had on the places you will see during your three- to four-hour tour.

Get on the move by exploring the magnetic neighborhood of Mouraria, a melting pot of cultures and one of the city's most modern areas, where tourists don't often venture. Pass small churches, mosques and shops selling goods from far-away places. Learn about Fado, Portugal's own music genre that was declared a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, as you walk past the birthplace of the legendary Maria Severa (Fado's first superstar).

Next, visit a small, hidden bakery where traditional pastries and coffee will provide you with a tasty treat and another insight into local life in Lisbon. Then, walk past the beautiful Gothic-style Rossio

train station, visit Rossio Square (Lisbon's main square) and find out how much the city has changed since the devastating earthquake of 1755 that destroyed 85 percent of the city.

Continue visiting historical landmarks, churches and other attractions before stopping again for a taste of Portuguese cheese and locally made marmalade. Then see the picturesque Carmo Square with its beautiful Carmo Convent, and walk up to the top of the famous Santa Justa funicular to enjoy wonderful views.

Walk through the trendy old district of Chiado, an aristocratic quarter home to small shopping centers, boutiques, historical cafes and old bookstores. Compare it with Barrio Alto, Lisbon's bohemian district and the center for nightlife. Then take a short ferry ride on the River Tagus toward the picturesque Cacilhas, where Portuguese green wine and freshly caught seafood awaits. Enjoy magnificent views from the south bank before returning to central Lisbon.

Shop for Christmas dinner. Multiple museums.

PM? If time on our own, add castle hilltop tour and check on special restaurant on top of hill.

Fri Dec 25

Christmas – a problem as most tours and places are closed. Asking about a private tour like we did in Barcelona but so far NOT on Christmas. Plan a special meal to cook and eat IN. Walk the streets, go up elevators, take trolley, go up funiculars.

9:30pm Try for the Theatre musical show. Must go to theatre and box office to try for tickets.

Sat Dec 26

Évora – Explore the Ancient Roman City of Évora, awarded as a UNESCO World Heritage Site - Roman Temple, Cathedral, Bones Chapel, University & Market, Wine Tasting – 10 hours with 8:30am pick up at apartment

Highlights:

- Évora Historical Centre - UNESCO World Heritage
- Roman Temple
- Romanesque Gothic Cathedral
- Bones Chapel
- Évora's XVI-century University
- Visit, tour and Wine Tasting at the well-known Herdade do Esporão Cellar

Sun Dec 27

Open for food tasting tour or the many street markets on Sunday. Museums open. Get reservations for a special dinner?

Mon Dec 28

Fátima Sanctuary, Óbidos, Batalha and Alcobaça Monasteries & Coastal town of Nazaré – 10 hours with 8:30am pick up at apartment

Explore the Portuguese countryside and villages on an unforgettable to the Fatima Sanctuary.

Highlights:

- Fatima Sanctuary
- Nazaré, a traditional fishing village
- Óbidos Village
- Batalha Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)

□ Alcobaça Monastery (UNESCO World Heritage Sites)

Description - We depart first to encounter Óbidos and meet its medieval walls, rustic white houses and the rich and varied local traditions of the town. We also take the opportunity to visit the Castle Inn-Hotel. We then leave Óbidos for Alcobaça to take in the imposing monastery church, the first Gothic church to be built in Portugal and home to the tombs of the ill-starred lovers D. Pedro and D. Inês de Castro. We then head onto the picturesque and colourful fishing town of Nazaré for lunch. There's also the chance to find out something about the legends and traditions of this town. When possible, we go to Sítio, to marvel at its wonderful views out over Nazaré and its beaches. We then move onto Batalha to visit the monastery church, a Gothic masterpiece with the most finely worked stained-glass windows. Finally, we reach the Our Lady of Fátima Sanctuary, an altar of the Christian faith and site of world pilgrimage. There is also the Chapel of Apparitions with its portrayal of Our Lady of Fátima. Take the time also for the location of the Basilica with the tombs of the three witnesses, and the Church of the Holy Trinity, the fourth largest in the world by capacity. You have some some free time to attend mass. Travelling through this colourful agricultural region, we return to Lisbon.

Tue Dec 29

25th April Bridge & Christ the King – 3 hours but don't know if it'll run in December yet

Cross the Ponte 25 de Abril in the only Open Top Bus in the city to take in the breathtaking view of Lisbon from the top of the Cristo Rei Monument.

Highlights: " April 25 Bridge and Christ the King " is the result of a partnership between Cityrama Gray Line Portugal and the TST (Transportes Sul do Tejo) in order to bring to market new tourism prospects , without ever losing sight of our true nature : the perfect host and ambassador of excellence in Lisbon. More than a visit to Christ the King this product is based on the transmission of new sensations and experiences. Cross the bridge April 25 panoramic bus, only one in Lisbon to enjoy one of our city's most stunning views, it is an unforgettable experience and an asset to our visitors.

Wed Dec 30 – all

7:45am Set up taxi

10:15am Depart Lisbon LIS via UA#65

1:40pm Arrive Newark EWR

Thu Dec 31

New Year's Eve - Open

Fri Jan 1 - Marie

12:15pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#4567

2:44pm Arrive Kansas City MCI

Links:

Neighborhoods and safety warning:

http://travel.usnews.com/Lisbon_Portugal/Neighborhoods/

Diana's June 2014 trip to Lisbon and Porto:

https://remote-phx2.carbonite.com/Access/C4851022-F171074/Portugal%20Trip%20Notes%206-14.pdf?token=S73910241_U3838490_C4851022_A9335117-5CA3-4B84-AE75-5312A88C9F95

See picture/posters at:

http://www.allposters.com/-st/Lisbon-Posters_c121056_.htm

Best Things to Do in Lisbon | U.S.News Travel

http://travel.usnews.com/Lisbon_Portugal/Things_To_Do/

Grayline local tour company booked for most tours: <http://www.grayline.com/things-to-do/portugal/lisbon/>

Things to do and pretty pictures too

<http://www.golisbon.com/blog/category/events/>

For emergency card to carry:

Apartment with Tom and Diana Burton, Marie Parker

Principe Real Palace by RE

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