



Portugal Trip Notes - Running and Touring – Lisbon to Porto to Geres
June 3 – 16, 2014

I asked myself why when I signed up. I asked myself why all during the trip too. Looking back at the trip, I'm just sure it was meant to be. See www.facebook.com/RunQuestTravel. A trip for the record books. A trip to remember for a very long time.

This is part 2 – Just after I was told “Don't Look!”

Later – the same day but long after the stream crossing(s):



Good hike except for the hairy stream crossings where four boys at one time helped me climb boulders and cross. Then we got on the wrong side and had to do another crossing. The engineer built a bridge. It was getting dark. First I thought I'd die - smile - then once I got it done I was proud of myself even though I felt pretty silly.



Now stairs I can do! Water, no!
Below – an easier time. I can't recall
what we were doing but just because
they were in running clothes doesn't
mean we weren't touring. These boys
live – live! – running. Or how else
could they win the world's toughest
footrace, The Badwater!



But once crossed, with the help of a human chain of four good looking boys, life was good again.



Another day and an easy crossing and thus I can feel on top of the world. Life is good.



Daddy and son in the hot springs. Harvey endorsing Coke (a joke!) Marie enjoying the waters.



A real Roman bridge at a Roman relics museum. The drive was a highlight to find something like 200-250 goats being herded. The statuary was on the water of Ponte de Lima where we started our hike on the Camino de Santiago.



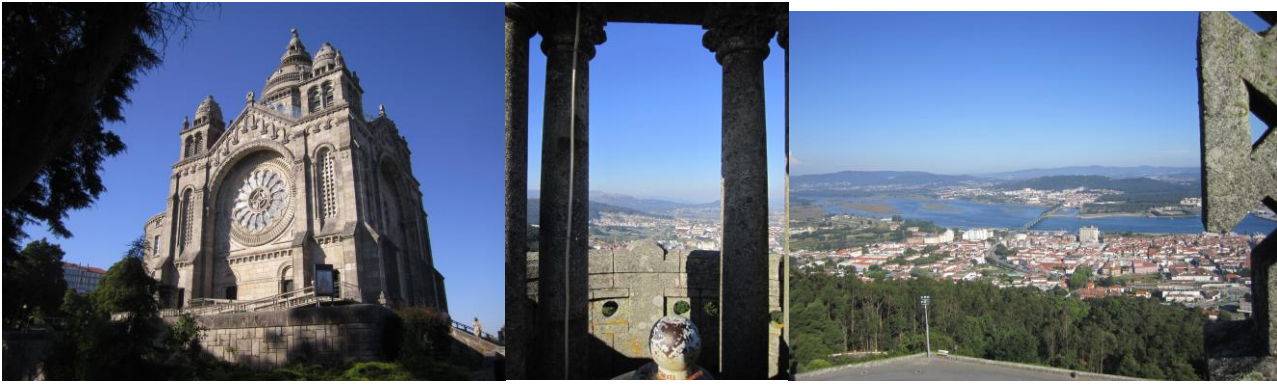
Ponte de Lima town was pretty small; the statute leading into the Camino de Santiago was life-size. I think this house was where we snatched a bunch of Loquats which I discovered that I loved and would later buy a huge bag full and ate them all. I like cemeteries. Hope there's no connection to my being a pig about Loquats.



The sign was appropriate. While the trail was great, the heat was close to 98 degrees and I thought Revolta was correct. The boys hit the streams and swimming holes but clearly still suffered. It was almost too hot to enjoy the sight of all these fit bodies. Notice that they were most all sunburned. I'd have taken off my top too had I enough to flaunt.



Carlos' wife brought the van and lunch to the end of our trek. We believe these rows of ovens were for the pilgrims' warmth but we sure didn't need them. It was hot enough to cook pizzas.



High up on a hill above Ponte de Lima stands this church that claims to have the best view in the world. After many steps to the tower, we might agree that it's pretty darned good to see various towns, villages, the river which flows into the ocean – all visible.

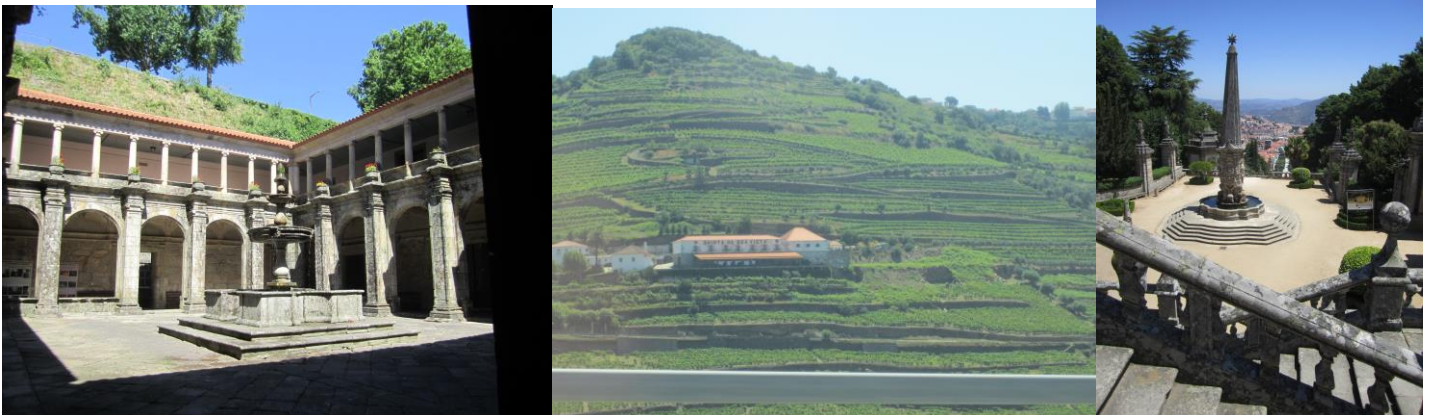


As a final goodbye, we would all go off to the home of Carlos Sa and his wife where she again prepared a feast.

Carlos Sa was our second guide for the second half of the trip. He created a 3 day event on this nature trail in Geres National Park. Wow! Why they let me come along, I can't imagine.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UopQI2HBv-k>

Article: After Losing 66 Pounds, Runner Wins A 135-Mile Ultramarathon Through The Hottest Place On Earth <http://www.businessinsider.com/carlos-sa-win-ultramarathon-2013-7>

After the tour – I stayed on in Porto for some touring



Their wine country is truly amazing and of course we had more sampling.



See that ancient olive tree? There were plenty of them. I would enjoy the steps of the pilgrimage again as well as the view and then reward myself with a bag of cherries that I ate all of by myself. Later I'd find loquats and eat a whole bag of them too. Darned if I know why I didn't get ill but maybe it was all that added alcohol.



Itinerary for Jeronimos' Monastery, Tower of Belém, Monument to the Discoveries, Coach Museum, 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 deadliest earthquakes in history, the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake.

Itinerary for Fátima Sanctuary, Óbidos, Batalha and Alcobaça Monasteries & Nazaré out of Lisbon - 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.



Itinerary for Minho Tour (Braga & Guimarães) in Northern Portugal - out of Porto.

Enjoy Portugal's lush and green landscape of mountains, valleys and rivers. This unique tour, starts in Braga, one of the oldest religious cities in the world, with its sanctuaries that constitute the faith triangle: the Cathedral and the Sanctuaries of Sameiro and Bom Jesus. After a delicious lunch (included in the tour) the tour continues to Guimarães, the cradle of Portugal with its unique historical centre – UNESCO World Heritage.

As it turns out, it was a festival day and we were in the midst of parades and costumes in Guimaraes.





Itinerary for Wine Tour "Douro Valley"

This tour of Portugal's scenic Douro region will delight your senses from the beginning until the end. The Douro River winds itself throughout the country, where the world-famous Douro wine has been produced since the 3rd century. From lush hills to sparkling water, from vineyards to the sloping river banks, these breathtaking sights are a Portuguese treasure. Port wine, appropriately named after nearby Oporto, is the signature product of the region, championed by the golden triangle of Port - Amarante, Lamego and Pinhão. Among many other mini-adventures, during this tour we will visit "Raposeira", "Tedo" and "Aveleda" Wine Estates. Sparkling wine - Raposeira Cellars: Visit to the original cellar, dug on blue granite rock, where some of the best Portuguese sparkling wines are produced (guided visit and wine tasting) Douro: At lunch it will be served a table of Douro wine Port: Tedo Vineyards: Part of the first demarcated wine region in the world, place where the famous Port Wine is produced (guided visit and wine tasting). "Vinho Verde" (Green wine): Aveleda Vineyards: In the demarcated region of Green wine (unique between this region and Spain), guided visit to the gardens, bottling halls and tasting of wine with locally produced cheese.



Though I have loads more pictures, I'm running out of space and am now two trips behind . . .

Notes home – until I lost WiFi connections

I'm in Portugal! An almost new adventure. (I was in Lisbon, the Algarve and Fatima in the 70s.) Why? When I was asked it was almost like I was making excuses. Marie my pacer friend called and suggested that I wanted to go with her friends on a running adventure in Portugal. When I realized that there was a lot of running and her friends were world-class runners, I wrote Harvey the organizer to explain my age, my slowness, and my limitations. He conversed with the second organizer Carlos and came back to suggest that my traveling resume might make me a good part of the team. I later realized that there was another reason that they were willing to accommodate me. They are training for the world championships and need hundreds of miles of training and they didn't mind going forward and then running back to get me.

But still, did I need another trip?

Getting here

In the throes of jet lag, I should remind myself that I get jet lag over just this short trip so why do I think I want to go to Myanmar? Or Hong Kong? I don't sleep on airplanes despite the lie-flat seat and I make myself keep going the first day, so one is up for something like 24-36 hrs.

I flew into Frankfurt and then backwards to Lisbon. And then I will fly home out of Porto. This was so the ticket pricing was more reasonable. If that is possible to call what I paid reasonable.

Frankfurt can be more than a pain in the tush. After a long long walk and often times no jetways so you're carrying your stuff up and down stairways, you wait in line at passport control. After another long long walk you get to be cleaned your bag if you checked one and even if you didn't you have to go through security control again. And dump your booze and dump your water and stand in more lines. Why they keep having to go through my bag I don't know. Then, despite having legal connection times, I have never figured out how someone who isn't a very fast walker can make it to the other end of the terminal where they booked you. Hurry hurry and then wait for the delayed flight. Do I sound like I'm getting tired of traveling?

Harvey was at the airport to meet me, but I didn't know to expect him and didn't see him so we met up in my hotel lobby a bit later. He seems to be a really super nice guy.

Adventure Tourist

Without even unpacking or cleaning up I hurried out to the first available mini bus tour of Lisbon. Some people claim that Lisbon is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. It certainly is historical and it does count up there but I'm not sure that it's in my top five or 10. Yet.

We not only drove quite a bit of the city but we had stops at places such as the monastery, the famous coach museum that is the best collection in all of Europe, at the old turret on the water at Belem, and a tasting of port wine in conjunction with our walking tour of the oldest section of Lisbon called Alfama where the streets are so narrow as to not allow any cars and where the famous Fado music and singing goes on. It is overlapping festival time in Lisbon so the Alfama area was quite busy.

In 1755 Lisbon had such a massive earthquake that perhaps 90% of the city was lost. This old section remained.

Like Sydney or like San Francisco, Lisbon seems to be surrounded by water ways, both the ocean and a river. Even one of their bridges was built by the same company as the Golden Gate Bridge and has some of the same appearance. (I wonder if I would be able to walk across it assets only a mile or two.). Another bridge is the longest in Europe at 19 km. There's a lot of big hills too.

A problem with tours shows how multicultural it is: at least five languages were used. Portuguese (5th language of the world), English, Spanish or Italian, French, German and amazingly the guide was able to help the Maltise.

My hotel

Harvey says I'm going to love the hotel that is in old town at the start of the trip. But I came in a few days early and found a wonderful deal at the Sheraton (thank you Loudean). It is at a center location and I have gold frequent stay status and they gave me a premium room on the 19th floor overlooking the water, the town, and the bridge. Just as importantly they gave me free Wi-Fi which is very valuable in Europe. Very tech and nice features like electric bedside controlled room darkening shades tho I'm grateful to be rooming alone with all the glass bathroom walls. Sweet to shower among mirrors and a view of the water. Helpful to have TV news piped into the bathroom.

The next day/tomorrow

Though I have been to the famous Fatima it was in 1970s and I'm told that they have the built an all new sanctuary. Fatima is the center of Catholic faith and pilgrims come from all over the world and I presume they still do their journey on their bloody knees to get up to the top of the stairs of the sanctuary. Even better I have an all day trip that will take me to other important sites in the history of Portugal. One is the small village of Obidos with Medieval walls and little whitewashed houses. And ramparts of nearly two miles that calls my name. Lunch and a tour will be in Nazare, a fishing village. Will have two other important stops that are on the UNESCO world heritage list. One is a Gothic church and the other is a monastery at Batalha. You would think all these stops to see religious sites would put a little holiness in me but I confess that they typically turn me off about all the money that was spent in the name of religion. I'm still burning about Avignon and the 13 Cardinals having so much money that they went across the river to build magnificent estates.

I have little respect for these Fly Over type tours so I almost surprised myself to do one. Yet I'd gone to Jerusalem. Maybe I needed Fatima too.

The name of the grocery store I stocked up at was Pingo Doce. They had a big table stacked with slabs of salted cod. I need that pic!

Questions

What are the huge blooming purple trees? Jacaranda. The streets are lined with them.

What's the Pombal? With a book festival. Apparently a politician whose statue is in the roundabout so the area I'm in is the Pombal area.

Next to hike up the hill to see the castle. There are many hills in Lisbon.

Win a few - lose a few.

Friday brought the monsoons with the locals claiming they'd never seen such horrid weather. It should have been 30° not 14°. Unfortunately the heavy rains came after I climbed up to the castle, the ramparts, and over very slippery limestone cobbles on the way up in damp weather already. (The Wall Street journal just had a full page article about the beautiful artsy but dangerous cobbles here.)

Yet I housed myself in their cafe and got well-fortified even tho the alcohol at a point couldn't keep me warm or dry under the outdoor spanning and leaking umbrellas. I attached plastic to my backpack and went on with only an umbrella eventually drenching my legs and arms.

The views were amazing and near 360 degrees at the top and definitely 360 during the climb. Which was warming in the earlier 61 degree weather. It didn't stay warm.

As the floods came I watched those in skimpy clothes and sandals simply walk through it. Ahhhh youth. While I hunkered down under a huge umbrella and a sheet of plastic with a quiche and glass of red wine. And no let up in sight until around 8pm.

Thursday was full of adventure and gratefully dry since I was treated to ramparts to climb and miles of cobbled villages to explore. Lovely shore line and 365 feet of cliffs rivaling those of Rio de Janeiro yet still rather poor economy and abandoned buildings seaside.

I bet the rains wouldn't have stopped those poor soles on their knees journeying to Fatima. Oh so wonderful is the belief. Oh so sad are those of us who see religion as commercialized and politicized. (Did we cause the need for commercializations?). Thank you to those who so generously gave to the churches so we pions could enjoy the richness of your giving. It would be difficult for me to ever give to a church. I hope I'm reasonably generous in other areas of my life as I've no doubt there is a God and we get what we give. Do we need religion? Probably. But I wonder what will happen to folks such as those majority in Prague who readily say they are atheists



Since I was drenched and yet near the area of my next hotel I hunted it down and they readily agreed to let me sit in their lobby to dry out. With Internet and a glass of vintage port and a warm spot I happily sat for nearly an hour. While there I negotiated a larger room because I had heard that the rooms were extremely tiny.

I'd sent an email to Harvey to tell him where I was and shortly he showed up with Felix and Hugo. Felix is on the tour as I am and Hugo had come in from Helsinki to act as a tour guide also since he is Portuguese and a noted runner. I see that his Facebook page has a picture of the four of us at the hostel. Hugo Manuel Pinto. They arrived dripping wet, having been out in the pouring rain for a rather long run. In fact they had been by my hotel to check on me. It was a reminder that I am not in a group where I fit and yet they were being extremely kind to me.

We walked the couple of blocks to the hostel where everyone else is staying. It earns its reputation as being quite elegant for a hostel and I probably could have survived there but I have no interest in using the bathroom down the hall. I also like some free time and some privacy. They were having a late dinner at the hostel and I was invited but it seemed much too late for me and I still had some streets and new areas I wanted to walk.

The streets are rather amazing with all the cobblestone walkways set in decorative form. Many of the streets are quite wide with either side having double walkways lined with trees and parks and fountains. A number of streets have been turned into pedestrian ways and one even with their own small arch d'triomphe leading into a huge square placed waterside and surrounded by covered shopping arcades such as seen on rue rivoli in Paris. While their 1755 huge earthquake allowed them to do some rebuilding, it was not with a plan such as you see in Paris or in Barcelona. There are buildings of the elegance of Paris or Barcelona but there are also some junk concrete buildings that might remind you of Vietnam. I thought of Berlin with their odd mixture of new and old. I was reminded that Portugal has had a very long recession and it shows. The amount of greenery and preserved parks even with the purple jacaranda trees are commendable. The amount of hills and walkways or elevators to help climb them would remind you of San Francisco. It is certainly a good destination but probably not in my top five or 10.

At least one of our guests will be missing the first tour day due to a canceled flight out of Boston. Had I realized she was booking the way she did, through a third party and using an off-brand unknown airline, I would have protested. For less than \$200 more she could have been on a major Star Alliance airline and would have been put on the next flight in an hour or two. Fortunately she will arrive before we leave Lisbon.

The people of Lisbon seem to be more conservative than other Hispanic folks. I haven't seen as much as the typical tubbiness nor the flamboyant colors of dress that are fairly common in Hispanic cultures. I've also found a lot of English speakers and a kindness not always found in tourist areas. My Sheraton Hotel is in the business district so I might find it different in my new area the next two days.

This afternoon (Saturday) we start our tour at 4 o'clock with a meet and greet at the hostel. Harvey says he has a lot of gifts for us which I know to include T-shirts, water bottles and a Spi belt. If it is anything bulkier than that my limited suitcase size will require abandoning it. We then start a three hour walking tour of the old town and fado area at 5:30. Harvey claims he has found another something to do at 8:30 which would require delaying dinner until 9:30pm. This gives me a head start to know to carry extra food. It also reminds me that these boys don't need to sleep because I know we have to leave quite early for our trip to the old palace town of Sintra.

And so it goes. Of course I am not only glad but also flattered to be here with this group. I'm told when we reach Porto that the famous runner and our local tour leader named Carlos will not be able to be with us for the first half day because the president of Portugal has asked to meet him. This is not only more evidence of his resume but also gives us a chance to meet someone else -- his fill-in sounds like an equally interesting person.

Where is that Romeo and Juliette story? I sent videos around of the gloriously huge but austere church where the tombs of the Portuguese love story remains:

This church is attached to a Monastery. The largest church in Portugal, austere, yet ripe with stories from 1100s. The Romeo and Juliet story dates from 1300s when the prince loved his wife's lady in waiting. Even after his wife's death his father the King could not let him marry his love for political reasons. The prince persisted so the king had the woman murdered. Little did the king know that they had already been secretly married. The prince was inconsolable. A couple years after her death he was still inconsolable. He had his dead lover sat on the throne and crowned queen even in death. This church contains their two huge and glorious tombs complete with pictorial of their meeting and their later meeting in the life after.

Why some Lisbon residents are scared of the city's famous sidewalks

They are beautiful. They are slippery when wet. Yet they are works of art and a highlight of Lisbon. http://m.europe.wsj.com/article_email/in-lisbon-some-residents-fear-citys-distinctive-sidewalks-1401675907-1MyQjAxMTA0MDAwNTEwNDUyWj

Surely they won't ever allow the old folks to have them paved over!

Sunday - the first full day.

Saturday showed me that the boys never tire. After a 10k and a walking tour, our dinner didn't start until 9:15. I bowed out at 11:15 and I heard they went out until 3am. Up at 7 and they looked fine.

We were late to the 3-hour tour which morphed into a 2-hour tour maybe because everything will always be late or maybe because Harvey, in his generous and flexible nature, gave us entry to the 5pm 10k. Maybe I did 6 of the 10 and got back in time to jump the line with the boys for free beer.

Diana the Dynamo? I don't think so!

My hiking buddy Steve knows I need time between hikes and dinner. Did I? I not only didn't get an hour between hike and dinner but we stay in running gear until near midnight.

Then friend Pat tried to call me "Diana the dynamo" to which I replied that Diana the Dynamo feels dynamited right now. Five hours only near a bed doesn't keep my fuse lit.

At that, I should quit! For the time being. I go home to Marie arriving immediately. She leaves and then we depart for the Italian Dolomites hiking trip.

Itinerary

Tue Jun 3

6:10pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#8838 operated by Lufthansa

Harvey arriving Tuesday and at Living Lounge Hostel, Rua do Crucifixo, 116, 2nd floor, Tele: 00351 21 346 0178 info@livingloungehostel.com

Wed Jun 4

7:45am Arrive Frankfurt for plane change

9:10am Depart Frankfurt FRA via UA#8846 operated by Lufthansa

11:10am Arrive Lisbon LIS

Airport shuttle for approx. 5 Euros or taxi for 8 Euros. About 6 km. Tele: (351)(1) 312 04 13

Hotel Sheraton Lisbon – 1st of 3 nights
Rua Latino Coelho, 1, Liston 1069 Tele 351 21 3120000 www.sheratonlisboa.com/
www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=292

Hotel: The Sheraton is located in one of Lisbon's most privileged business areas, just 15 minutes from Lisbon's Portela International Airport and 10 minutes from the city's downtown Baixa, where you can admire the magnificent Augusta Street and Rossio and Comercio Squares. Easily accessible by train, bus, car, or metro, we are surrounded by cinemas, theatres, art galleries, and shopping centers.

Sat Jun 7

Am Move to tour hotel for start of tour
<http://www.runquesttravel.com/upcoming-events/>

8:00am Marie arrives from Boston via Sata Intl (flight canceled at last minute so she was one day late – same problem for another runner out of Toronto on Sata)

Hotel My Story Hotel Ouro – 1st of 2 nights
Rua Aurea 100, 1100-063 Lisboa Tele: 351-21-340-0340
E-mail: ouro@mystoryhotels.com Website: www.mystoryhotels.com
Wi fi free and in rooms; No coffee in room - take coffee pot

Hotel is in Lisbon's central historic district

Check in starts at 3pm, however if you would like to check in earlier I will try to make arrangements. When we meet in Lisbon you can tell me what time you would like me to organize transport for you from the Sheraton Lisbon to My Story Hotel Ouro. The other guest will be staying at Living Lounge Hostel (Rua do Crucifixo, 116 – 2nd floor) and Lisboa Tejo Hotel (Rua dos Condes de Monsanto, 2) both of which are a short walk away.

4:00pm We will have a special meeting with all the guest at Living Lounge Hostel.

Harvey, host and owner of RunQuest Travel

Hugo will also be joining us as a guide. He is Portuguese and speaks English fluently. He is presently working in Finland as a scientist but is specifically flying to Portugal for the week with RunQuestTravel as a guide.

Summary: World travelers are given much advice about navigating an unfamiliar area by bus, train or metro; because for many people, traveling by foot is not an option when there are many sights to see, often within a limited time span. However, as runners, we already know one of the best ways to discover an area's unique offerings is by foot. When we travel, we often find amazing hidden secrets on our morning runs, noting the area or crossroads to return later that day for further exploration. The only thing that might make it better would be running with a local guide each morning.

At RunQuest Travel, we harness that adventurous desire to explore a new region with a coordinated group excursion hosted by world-class athletes. While the travel is organized, the running routes, times and distances are tailored not only to our guests but also the unique offerings of the locale. Each daily run will be led by an experienced runner and running coach with firsthand knowledge of the area. Runs will highlight either a specific venue or attraction, or provide you with a general overview of what might interest you later that day during your free time. We offer non-running related group excursions as well. Please join us for an incredible running adventure, steeped in authentic history and culture. We promise it will be an experience of a lifetime.



Saturday, June 7 – Arrive in Lisbon

8:00h-14:00h: Greeted at Lisbon airport by Harvey (trip leader) or Sofia or Patso (local guides), who will provide transportation to the hotel or [Living Lounge Hostel](#).

Lisbon hosts 40 museums, one of the highest concentrations of museums in the world, including the **Gulbenkian Museum** (with an art collection spanning 5,000 years) and the **Museu Nacional do Azulejo (National Tile Museum)**, featuring beautiful ceramic tiles as they would have originally appeared, including a panorama of the cityscape prior to the 1755 earthquake. (The estimated 9.0 magnitude quake destroyed much of Lisbon and wiped out nearly a third of the population.) At the highest point, you'll find **São Jorge Castle**, built by the Moors in the 11th century and the royal residence for three centuries.

Three miles west of downtown Lisbon is Belém, whose structures survived the 1755 earthquake. Erected in the early 16th century, the **Monastery of Jerónimos** was closed in 1837, forcing the Catholic monks to find creative ways to earn a living. The result is a delectable egg custard tart. **Casa Pastéis de Belém** is said to continue to use the secret recipe passed down from the monks, and though you can find a decent imitation at nearly any café, it's worth seeking out the original, served fresh and warm. Nearby, the **Belém Tower** was a welcome sign for sailors returning from their voyages. Both the monastery and the tower are fine examples of Portugal's Manueline architecture, featuring decorative, carved stonework.

18:00h: 5-10k run exploring Lisbon along the waterfront and through the historic **Alfama district**, noted by travel guru Rick Steves as "one of the most photogenic neighborhoods in all of Europe." Although its complex corridors and winding alleys were designed to thwart invaders trying to reach the castle, they will provide a fun adventure for our coterie.



20:00h: Dinner prepared by a local chef: savor a colonial-influenced, authentic Portuguese cuisine, possibly featuring the national dish — salted cod — like a *pastel de bacalhau*, or fried potato-and-cod croquet.

After dinner, visit local restaurants uphill from the **House of Fado Museum** to sample Portuguese fado, Lisbon’s traditional folk music describing the fate of lost sailors and the loves they left behind.



Sunday, June 8 – Day trip to nearby Sintra

Located 15 miles (24 km) northwest of Lisbon at the base of a mountain range, the fanciful city of Sintra was described once by fairy-tale authority Hans Christian Andersen as “unrivalled, the most beautiful and lauded part of Portugal,” claiming parts are “a fairy-tale vision.” Complete with castles and luscious gardens, Sintra was classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1995, notably for its unique cultural landscape. It features many palaces, including the thousand-year-old **National Palace of Sintra** located in the city center (look for its unmistakable double domed chimneys), the summer home for Portugal’s royal family built in the 15th century on Moorish remains.



National Palace of Sintra. photo courtesy Emigus:
www.europeanroyalresidences.eu

You will also see, from many different vantage points, the hilltop **Pena Palace**, aka **National Palace of Pena**, built in 1839 around the remains of a 16th-century monastery. The location is said to be where King Manuel observed the return of explorer Vasco da Gama from his two-year voyage to India in 1499; thus, the King was inspired to replace the wooden monastery with a stone palace. Recognized as one of the first examples of 19th-century architectural Romanticism, it is the last place the Royal Family hid before fleeing during the 1910 revolution.



Pena Palace. photo courtesy Nuno Cardal: www.europeanroyalresidences.eu

9:00h: Transport with Sophia, Patso and Harvey by van from Lisbon to Sintra.

10:00h: Run 10k in the natural forest around and in Pena Palace Park, which houses over 500 different species of trees from the four corners of the world, some of which no longer exist in the countries from which they originated. Designed to incorporate natural treasures and provide breathtaking views, the park promises surprises at every turn, including lakes, waterfalls, chapels and integrated vestiges from the Jeronimo monks.

12:00-13:00h: Savor a lavish picnic lunch including great local offerings prepared by Sofia.

14:00h: Wine and cheese tasting at a local shop, followed by an opportunity to explore the village.

16:00h: Explore the magnificent estate of wealthy Brazilian merchant António Augusto Carvalho Monteiro: **Quinta da Regaleira**. Built in the Romantic revivalist style, it combines Gothic, Manueline and Renaissance architecture. Descend the spiral staircase at **Capela da Santíssima Trindade** (Chapel of the Holy Trinity) to see where it leads.



Photos, left to right: interior of Quinta Regaleira, exterior of Quinta Regaleira, spiral staircase at Chapel of the Holy Trinity

18:00h: Dinner in Sintra

Photo: Cabo da Roca: Europe's westernmost point

21:00h: Enjoy a dramatic sunset from cliffs 140 m (460ft) above the Atlantic Ocean at **Cabo da Roca**, Europe's westernmost point.

Return to hostel/hotel in Lisbon for overnight accommodations.

Hotel My Story Hotel Ouro – 2nd of 2 nights

Monday, June 9: Travel via train from Lisbon to Porto

8:00h: Catch the train to **Porto**, Portugal's second-largest city and the "Capital of the North," where we will be greeted by Carlos Sá (professional runner and local guide).

With a distinct working-class charm, Porto is deemed a World Heritage Site, as the old town survived the 1755 earthquake surprisingly intact.

12:00h: Lunch in the sophisticated and relaxing **Foz do Douro** district, a National Heritage site on the north bank of the Douro River where the river meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Photo: City of Porto: known for its Old World



charm

14:00h: Admittance to Hotel/Hostel.

16:00h: Cross the Douro River via the **Ponte Dom Luís I** bridge, a double-decker iron arch bridge built by Teófilo Seyfrig, who previously engineered construction of another arched bridge in Porto (Ponte Dona Maria Pia, upstream) under the direction of designer Gustave Eiffel. The Dom Luis Bridge, rising 150 feet above the river, was the longest iron arch in the world when it opened in 1886, and today, allows metro, auto and pedestrian transit access to a popular tourist destination. . . . the **Vila Nova da Gaia**, the wine caves of Porto. Experience a port-wine tour and tasting, to learn how the sweet, fortified wine is produced 60 miles upstream in the Douro Valley and aged here. Port wine, often served with dessert, originated in the Douro Valley and is one of Portugal's most famous — and delicious — exports.

18:00h: Feel free to explore on your own some of the sights featured in this [European Best Destinations 2014](#) video. Check out the monuments in Porto's **Avenida dos Aliados** (Avenue of the Allies) in the city center, stretching from the granite and marble **Câmara Municipal** (City Hall) atop the hill, all the way down to the **Praça da Liberdade**, a square featuring an equestrian statue of King Pedro IV.

Nearby, find the oval-shaped church with the disproportionately tall bell tower: the **Igreja e Torre dos Clérigos** (Clérigos Church and Tower). The Italian artist and architect Nicolau Nasoni, who was buried on site, spent three decades working on this church and tower, reclaiming it in the Baroque style. Climb 225 steps to the top of the bell tower for an amazing view.

You might also want to swing by the **Lello & Irmão bookstore**, one of the most beautiful bookstores in the world. Its grand staircase and stained glass ceiling are worth a peek.

The **Casa da Musica** (pictured below) is located northwest of the city centre near the Boavista Rotunda, and is open for tours on Mondays. The 12-story, irregularly shaped white concrete structure was designed by world-renowned Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas with acoustics in mind, and hosts nightly concerts with subsidized ticket prices.

Photo: Casa da Musica

20:00h: Dinner in Porto (location TBD)

It is said one can find a good *Francesinha* sandwich (Little French Girl) only in Porto: within the folds of two slices of white bread lay wet-cured ham, linguíça (smoke-cured pork sausage seasoned with garlic and paprika), fresh sausage like chipolata (breakfast style sausage), steak or roast beef, covered with melted cheese and a hot, thick tomato and beer sauce (is Port the secret ingredient in the sauce?), served with french fries.

Photo: Typical Porto fare: Francesinha sandwich

22:00h: 12k Night Run in Porto, reminiscent of the annual [Meo Urban Trail Porto](#) Night Race shown here. Bring your headlamp.

Hotel Hotel da Bolsa – 1st of 2 nights

Rua Ferreira Borges, 101, Porto, Portugal, 4050-253

Tele from US 866-332-3590 From Europe 800-97-33-42-26

Tele: 351 222 026 768 web: www.hoteldabolsa.com

Wi Fi available in public areas



Tuesday, June 10 (Portuguese National Day/Camões Day): Beach Porto

10:00h: 15k coastal beach run

Enjoy waterfront gardens, boardwalks, rocky outcrops, cafés and perhaps a 17th century fortress **Castelo do Queijo**, complete with drawbridge and cannon pointing toward the sea, as we traverse the beaches of Porto on our morning run.



12:00h: Lunch at a Beach Restaurant (location TBD). Enjoy free time in the afternoon.

If you don't return to the beach, you might try other local sights, such as a favorite tourist option of strolling the **Cais da Ribeira**, the riverfront. Or, visit the **Serralves Foundation Contemporary Art Museum and Park**, which houses not only a contemporary art museum, but also a beautiful park (noted as a romantic place to wander) and a bright pink Art Deco mansion. Since Porto is a city defined by commerce, you might check out the beautifully decorated rooms featuring timeless craftsmanship of the **Palácio da Bolsa (Stock Exchange Palace)**.

If you prefer shopping, you can head to the **Rua da Santa Catarina**, or history buffs might check out the **Casa do Infante** where Henry the Navigator was born. At age 21, Henry planned and conquered parts of Morocco for Portugal, thus initiating a period of Portuguese maritime power. The building is restored to its old customs house status, and includes some Roman mosaics.

São Francisco Church is the only Gothic church in Porto; reports indicate it took 900 pounds of gold to redecorate the interior in the Baroque style.

20:00h: Dinner in Porto (location TBD)

Hotel Hotel da Bolsa – 2nd of 2 nights

Wednesday, June 11: Travel from Porto to Parque Nacional da Penêda-Gerês (Penêda-Gerês National Park, or simply, Gerês) by way of Braga

It's a two-hour drive by van to Portugal's only National Park, but we will break up the trip to Gerês by stopping in the city of Braga along the way. Founded by the Celts in 300 B.C., the historic city of Braga became a Roman center in 27 B.C. as the Roman Empire tried to connect the Iberian peninsula to Rome. With the decline of the empire, Braga was alternately controlled by the Suevi (a Germanic confederation of people in first century A.D.) and later, the Visigoths and Muslims. Braga was reconquered by the Christians in the mid-11th century.

9:00h: Depart for Braga by van.

10:00h: Visit monuments in Braga.

The diocese (or Se) of Braga is the oldest and most respected in Portugal, as it dominated the religious landscape for centuries. About three dozen historic churches reflect this heritage. We will visit the **Sé de Braga (Braga Cathedral)**, the oldest in Portugal, whose construction began in 1070 and features Gothic arches (15th century) but Baroque towers (17th century) and Romanesque and Manueline influences, as well. Adjacent chapels added in the Middle Ages include the **Capela dos Reis (Chapel of the Kings)** built in 1374 where the parents of the first Portuguese king were buried, and the **Capela da Piedade (Chapel of Piety)**, built in 1513 for Archbishop Diogo de Sousa.

However, the most notable structure in Braga is a masterpiece of European baroque architecture and the most photographed church in Portugal: the **Santuário do Bom Jesus do Monte (Bom Jesus Sanctuary)**, located three miles east of town. Built in 1784, the twin-spired church sits atop a magnificent zigzag staircase incorporating the Stations of the Cross, a Stairway of the Five Senses and a Stairway of the Three Virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity). Each landing has a fountain. The steps symbolize the spiritual journey believers must undertake (overcoming your senses and embracing the three virtues) to gain salvation. Pilgrims will climb the 600 stairs on their knees.



Photo: The Sacred Stairs of Bom Jesus in Braga
Other monuments, chapels, bridges, museums, and castles abound. Braga is Portugal's third largest city, after Lisbon and Porto.

12:00h: Pack lunch, and travel from Braga to Gerês (40 mins by van)

Gerês is in the northeastern part of Portugal bordering Spain, and is the only protected land in Portugal to receive the designation of National Park. In 1997 the two governments created a Gerês-Xurés Cross-border Park, promising to mutually protect the land and the plant and animal species inhabiting it.

13:00h: Admittance to a unique and charming hotel in Penêda-Gerês National Park

14:00h: Run 15 km in Penêda-Gerês National Park
Check out [Carlos Sá's Trail Adventure video](#): we will run through one of the world's most rugged, rocky and beautifully serene mountain terrains, featuring biodiverse flora and fauna, valleys with rivers and waterfalls, and breathtaking landscapes.

Photo: Carlos Sá enjoying the mountain top vista

17:00h: Visit community olive oil mill, and learn about regional products. Though protected land, Gerês integrates civilization with nature; you will meet people who truly live off — and love — the land, as they have for centuries.



20:00h: Dinner in Hotel in Gerês

Hotel Empresa Hoteleira do Geres, Lda aka Hotel Universal - 1 or 2 nights
Avenida. Manuel Francisco da Costa, 115 Geres, Portugal 4845-067
Tele: 253 390 220 Web: www.ehgeres.com Wi Fi available in public areas



Thursday, June 12: Gerês National Park / Gerês-Xurés Cross-border Park

9:00h: Trekking 5 km and running 15 km on Roman road to Spain. Keep your eyes open for 2000-year-old mile markers, which are inscribed with their position and name of the current (then) emperor. If we are lucky, our intrepid guide-dog from the Spanish village will accompany us again as we run on Roman roads.

Gerês is one of the few areas in the world where wild horses, or Garrano ponies, roam free, and they are among the park's most famous inhabitants. Native to the region since the Celtic era in the first century B.C., they were nearly extinct by the mid-20th century due to domestication efforts. The Portuguese government began to rebuild the herds in this area in the 1940s, in what would later (1970s) become the national park.

12:00h: Post-run dip in the natural hot springs.

After completing our run, we can relax in one of many beautiful natural hot springs direct from the mountain.

14:00h: Lunch: regional food

16:00h: Visit **Museu da Geira (Museum of Geira/Roman Road)**

Located in the Penêda-Gerês National Park and opened in June 2013, the Museum is dedicated to the specific Geira linking Braga to Astorga, Spain, approximately 30 km of which is protected. Constructed around the Roman Road so as not to impede travelers, the museum focuses on Roman planning and analysis, construction methods including extracting stones and building bridges, and evolution from the Iron Age to the Roman Age.



20:00h: Dinner in Hotel

Hotel Empresa Hoteleira do Geres aka Hotel Universal – 2nd of 2 nights

Friday, June 13: El Camino de Santiago (The Way of St. James)

For any world traveler's bucket list: retrace one of the ancient pilgrim routes to Santiago de Compostela (the tomb of the apostle St. James the Great) in northwest Spain. Earliest records indicate the pilgrimages began in the ninth century, gaining great popularity during the Middle Ages. While routes emanate throughout Europe, all paths converge at the tomb.

The most popular route is Camino Francés, The French Way, which is about 500 miles (805 km) long. The second most popular route is Camino Portugués, The Portuguese Way, starting at Sé Catedral in Porto all the way to Santiago de Compostela, Spain; totaling roughly 141 miles (227 km) and often taking about 12 days (covering 20-40 km, or 12-24 miles per day).

8:00h: Travel by van from Gerês to **Ponte de Lima** (1:30h)

10:00h: Run 15 km portion of **Camino Portugués**, including, perhaps, one of the most challenging parts of the trail: the **Labruja hills**. Look for the telltale Camino de Santiago marker — the scalloped shell — on both signage and waypoints along the trail, as well as on the person of any pilgrim you may encounter.



12:00h: Pack lunch and travel to home of Carlos Sá in Braga.

14:00h: Lunch in home of Carlos Sá

16:00h: Travel to Hotel in Porto

Hotel Hotel da Bolsa – return for 1 night

Rua Ferreira Borges, 101, Porto, Portugal, 4050-253 Tele from USA 866-332-3590
See above

Saturday, June 14: End of RunQuest Travel trip

6:00h: Transport via van to airport in Porto for return flight home.

Thank you for joining us! Savor your memories, share pictures and tales from your journey, and dream of future RunQuest Travel adventures!

Hotel Sheraton Porto – 1st of 2 nights - 2 rooms with 1 night room for Marie
Rua Tenente Valadim 146, Porto, 4100-476 Portugal Tele (351) (22) 0404000
<http://www.sheratonporto.com/en>

Hotel is located in the heart of the business district, offers you the opportunity to explore and connect with the best kept secret in Europe! Unique, exquisite and authentic, Porto is, like its wine, a treasure to be slowly appreciated. Enjoy the convenience of being only a short walk away from city's rich heritage, where you connect with 800 years of history and experience Port Wine directly from its birthplace.

OPO airport is 7 miles or 20 minutes via metro at 1.45 Euros or 25 Euros taxi

Sun Jun 15

10:25am Marie departs OPO to Lisbon, thru Ponta Delgada, Boston, to Pittsburgh

Mon Jun 16

6:00am Depart Oporto OPO via UA#9004 operated by Lufthansa

9:40am Arrive Frankfurt FRA for plane change

11:20am Depart Frankfurt FRA via UA#969

1:55pm Arrive Newark EWR

Contacts:

Harvey Lewis of RunQuest Travel at Living Lounge Hostel from June 3rd. Info above.

And at info@runquesttravel.com or through Kelly O'Dell 740 248 1273

Carlos Sa – 00351 922 059 193

Hugo Manuel 00 351 913 558 573

Sofia and Pinto – info@youtour.pt