

Portugal: Porto, the Silver Coast & Lisbon

Bike Vacation Only

If you're looking for an independent cycling vacation featuring warm Portuguese hospitality, this action-packed self-guided itinerary is it! Explore Portugal's Silver Coast from Porto to Lisbon—pausing in authentic seaside villages to take a refreshing dip in the Atlantic's azure waters, or savoring an included dinner showcasing delectable Portuguese cuisine. From the moment you meet your VBT Local host for an orientation and bike-fitting session, you'll be on your own timetable—cycling from inn to inn, arriving to find your luggage already waiting for you. Linger on the beach at Nazaré, catching a glimpse of its record-breaking waves—or enjoy a vibrant sunset in the historic town of Óbidos with its ancient hilltop castle. With this invigorating self-guided tour of the Portuguese coast, you set the pace of your discovery—with 24/7 local VBT support if you need it.

Cultural Highlights

- Stay in diverse locales—from the spa town of Monte Real to a stylish eco-retreat near the tranquil shores of the Óbidos Lagoon.
- Cycle along the Silver Coast's sandy beaches, framed by Atlantic waves, pine and cork forests, and peaceful rural landscapes.
- Visit Alcobaça's Gothic monastery—a UNESCO World Heritage site founded in the 12th century by Portugal's first king.
- Indulge in Portugal's fresh seafood, tempting pastries, bold espresso, and excellent, affordable wines.
- Spend the night exploring the medieval walled town of Óbidos, long after the day-trippers have gone.

What to Expect

This tour features a mix of easy terrain and moderate hills, making it ideal for both beginning and experienced cyclists. Rides take place on relatively flat, paved roads and bike lanes, with more undulating terrain when crossing the small hills that separate the Atlantic coast from the rolling interior. You will encounter some traffic when entering or exiting historic town centers and along beachside bike paths and lanes. Please verify your bike selection for this tour, as it is not always possible to change bikes once you arrive on tour. Travel with your friends and family—we can accommodate multiple guests on this self-guided vacation. Our 24/7 support system is available as needed.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 15-40 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-5 hours

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

April 66°/64°, May 72°/68°, June 77°/73°, September 81°/75°, October 73°/70°

Average Rainfall (in.)

April 3.5, May 2.5, June 1.5, September 1.5, October 4

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Porto to Monte Real

We suggest arriving in Portugal at least one day prior to the tour start date, as your tour begins promptly at 10:00 a.m. Meet your VBT Local Host and any other VBT guests arriving on the same day at 10:00 a.m. in the lobby of the NH Porto Jardim Hotel. For details, refer to your *Vacation Preparation Handbook*. Your host will be holding a VBT sign. From here, enjoy a scenic two-hour transfer to the historic spa village of Monte Real.

The natural hot springs in and around Monte Real have long been considered curative. Lucky for you, your palatial hotel draws directly from these thermal sources for its soothing spa treatments. Before indulging, you may wish to join a short loop ride to get acquainted with your bike, or take a leisurely stroll around the extensive 60-acre (24-hectare) property. This afternoon, relax at your own pace—perhaps unwind in the Turkish bath, Jacuzzi, or heated indoor pool (spa access and treatments are at your own expense and require advance reservation).

This evening, enjoy an included three-course dinner at the hotel's fine dining restaurant, Paços da Rainha.

Today's Ride Choices

Monte Real Loop (Short Option) — 11 km (7 miles) | Monte Real Loop (Long Option) — 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Short Option:

Designed to help you get comfortable on your bike and stretch your legs after your flight, this easy loop starts at your hotel, passes through the town of Monte Real, and follows quiet, untrafficked roads through surrounding farmland for a scenic ride along the Lis River.

Long Option:

Also intended as a gentle warm-up after your flight, this extended version of the loop begins at your hotel and continues farther into the countryside. You'll ride through Monte Real and follow peaceful rural roads for a longer route along the Lis River.

Non-Biking Options:

After your Welcome Orientation, you may wish to enjoy lunch at your hotel or in town. Later, take advantage of your hotel's spa facilities (spa access is approximately €16; treatments are additional). The property is also surrounded by well-marked walking paths for those who prefer to explore on foot.

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2: Monte Real to São Pedro Moel / Move on Day

Get your first taste of Portugal's coastal beauty as you cycle to the Atlantic Ocean. Travel through pine forests and past fertile farmland en route to the Ervideira Lagoon, a peaceful retreat favored by local families for its calm waters—a perfect spot to pause and enjoy a snack.

Continue with a gentle ascent up a small ridge to the white sands of the sleepy village of Pedrogão, where you can take a refreshing swim in the Atlantic if you wish. Then head slightly inland, riding parallel to the coast past Vieira Beach and into São Pedro de Moel, a graceful seaside village tucked above the surf in a protected cove. Pass the Penedo da Saudade Lighthouse, perched on a rocky bluff where, legend says, a 17th-century duchess mourned her lost husband.

Tonight, stay at an oceanfront property located just steps from the cliffs. This welcoming hotel offers sweeping Atlantic views, a rooftop terrace, and spa services available by reservation at check-in. After settling in, enjoy a stroll along the scenic cliffside boardwalks—an ideal vantage point for watching the sun set over the sea. Choose from several restaurants within walking distance, or dine at the hotel's restaurant while enjoying panoramic ocean views.

Today's Ride Choices

Monte Real to São Pedro Moel — 43 km (26 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's route descends from Monte Real along paved roads through farmland, then climbs gently over a low ridge before reaching the Atlantic coast. Once at the ocean, turn left and follow a paved bike lane south, paralleling the coast through the beach town of Praia de Vieira. Just before arriving at your hotel in the small seaside village of São Pedro de Moel, you'll pass the Penedo da Saudade lighthouse, perched on a rocky promontory above the waves.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3: São Pedro Moel to Alcobaça / Move on Day

You depart São Pedro de Moel's cobbled streets and join a dedicated bike route through fragrant pine forests paralleling the coastline. Portions of this historic Atlantic pine forest were first planted in the 13th century by King Afonso III to halt dune erosion. Centuries later, it supplied timber for the caravels of Portugal's Age of Discovery.

Your route brings you to Nazaré, a seaside town famous for its sweeping crescent beach and big-wave surfing. It was here that Garrett McNamara rode a record-breaking 100-foot (30-meter) wave at Praia do Norte. Today, its bustling promenade and many restaurants offer the perfect setting for a seaside lunch, where freshly caught seafood is always on the menu.

From Nazaré, continue cycling past the marina and turn inland to follow a riverside bike lane along the Alcobaça River. A gentle ascent brings you to the historic city of Alcobaça, home to a magnificent 13th-century Cistercian monastery. This UNESCO World Heritage site, with its unique portal and rose window, was built to commemorate the 1147 conquest of Santarém from the Moors and holds the tomb of King Pedro I.

Your ride concludes at the Montebelo Mosteiro de Alcobaça, a prestigious historic hotel set within the Rachadouro Cloister of the monastery complex. Here, you'll meet our professional mechanic for a bike check and any needed adjustments. This afternoon, enjoy the hotel's amenities, including its indoor pool, or stroll through town. Dinner is on your own this evening—either at the hotel's fine-dining restaurant or at one of several nearby eateries in the charming town center.

Today's Ride Choices

São Pedro Moel to Alcobaça — 40 km (25 miles)

What to Expect:

The route departs the town of São Pedro de Moel with a short stretch of cobbled street before joining a paved, dedicated bike lane that alternates between pine forests and coastal sections offering ocean views. In the busier town of Nazaré, use caution on the steep descent through narrow streets and along the beachfront bike lane (you will ride on the sidewalk for a few hundred meters). After leaving town, turn inland onto a flat, paved road, then follow a riverside bike lane and quiet country roads as you gradually ascend to the town of Alcobaça.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Alcobaça Loop to São Martinho do Porto / Stay Put Day

Enjoy a Stay Put Day in Alcobaça, with the option to relax in town or venture out on a scenic loop ride. If you prefer to linger in this historic city, you'll find plenty to explore—from the magnificent Monastery of Santa Maria and its peaceful cloisters to the Museu do Vinho de Alcobaça, which celebrates Portugal's winemaking heritage. You might stroll along the Alcobaça River, browse local shops, or unwind with a coffee in the lively monastery square.

For those eager to ride, today's loop begins in the tranquil countryside, where quiet rural roads wind through green valleys dotted with orchards, vineyards, and whitewashed villages. A gentle climb leads to the peaceful hamlet of Famalicão before the terrain rolls down toward the Atlantic coast. Soon, you arrive at São Martinho do Porto—a charming resort town whose unique, shell-shaped bay has drawn visitors since the 19th century. The bay's calm, protected waters and golden sands make it an inviting spot to pause for coffee, lunch, a stroll, or a refreshing swim.

After your seaside break, follow the Alcobaça River inland through serene farmland and riverside hamlets, soaking in the tranquil rhythms of rural life. Cap off the ride with a visit to Pastelaria Alcoa, famous for its *doces conventuais*—rich egg-based pastries inspired by centuries-old recipes created by the Cistercian nuns of Alcobaça. Then, enjoy the relaxed energy of the monastery square as the afternoon sun lights up its limestone façade. Dinner is on your own again this evening, with several excellent options just a short stroll from your hotel.

Today's Ride Choices

Alcobaça Loop to São Martinho do Porto — 45 km (28 miles)

What to Expect:

Descend gradually from Alcobaça into the river valley, then follow a dedicated bike route to the Atlantic coast and the beach resort town of São Martinho do Porto. Navigate town streets and bike lanes to reach the town's scallop-shaped bay before returning along a peaceful riverside route to Alcobaça.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Alcobaça to Foz do Arelho, Lagoa de Óbidos, and Arelho / Move on Day

Today's ride promises a spectacular blend of countryside charm and coastal beauty. Depart from Alcobaça and pedal westward through peaceful farmland and fruit orchards, where the landscape is dotted with traditional whitewashed homes and rolling green hills.

Soon, you'll arrive once again in São Martinho do Porto. Circle the scallop-shaped bay and follow the coastline south to Salir do Porto, home to one of Europe's largest sand dunes. From here, continue along a cliffside path toward Miradouro da Foz do Arelho, a scenic overlook offering breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean and the shimmering Lagoa de Óbidos.

At the overlook, consider taking a short stroll along the *Passadiços da Foz do Arelho*—a series of wooden boardwalks with steps that wind through dunes and low cliffs, offering dramatic coastal vistas. Then, continue downhill to the seaside town of Foz do Arelho, nestled between the ocean and the lagoon. This relaxed resort town boasts several beachside cafés and restaurants—an ideal place to stop for a refreshing drink or a leisurely lunch with a view.

Afterward, follow the tranquil shores of the lagoon, where ocean waters mingle with the estuary in a serene, protected habitat for birds and wildlife.

Your day concludes at the Rio do Prado Hotel, a stylish and eco-conscious retreat located near the hamlet of Arelho. Surrounded by nature and just minutes from the lagoon, this sustainably designed hotel offers the perfect setting to unwind—perhaps with a stroll through the gardens, a visit to the natural pool, or a drink by the fireplace. Dinner is on your own this evening, and with few dining options nearby, the hotel's acclaimed restaurant, Maria Batata, is a convenient and excellent choice.

Today's Ride Choices

Alcobaça to Rio do Prado Hotel — 51 km (32 miles)

What to Expect:

Descend gradually from Alcobaça into the river valley, then follow a dedicated bike route to the Atlantic coast and the beach resort town of São Martinho do Porto. Navigate town streets and bike lanes to reach the town's scallop-shaped bay, then follow a scenic ridge that runs parallel to the coastline. Reaching the village of Salir do Porto, begin a steep 2-kilometer (1.2-mile) ascent, followed by a more gradual climb of approximately 5.5 kilometers (3.4 miles) to the route's highest point at 158 meters (518 feet). From here, enjoy a thrilling descent into the beach town of Foz do Arelho, located at the mouth of the Óbidos Lagoon. Continue riding for another 13 kilometers (8 miles) through farmland and peaceful villages over gently rolling terrain to reach your hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Arelho to Óbidos / Move on Day

Today's ride offers two scenic options to reach the hilltop town of Óbidos, both beginning directly from your hotel and tracing the tranquil shores of the Óbidos Lagoon. The shorter route turns inland after a peaceful stretch along the lagoon's edge, while the longer option continues west to Praia do Bom Sucesso—where sweeping views of the Atlantic meet the calm lagoon waters. Here, cafés and restaurants provide a scenic spot for a seaside break before you turn inland.

Both routes lead through farmland and charming villages as you make your way toward Óbidos. With its narrow cobbled lanes, whitewashed houses, and striking medieval walls, the town feels like a step back in time. Once gifted by King Dinis to his queen in the 13th century, Óbidos earned the title *Casa das Rainhas*—"House of Queens"—and still exudes a regal charm.

Tonight's accommodations lie just outside the historic walls in a former convent turned boutique hotel, home to one of the world's largest private book collections. After settling in, you may wish to stroll the town's medieval ramparts for sweeping views of the countryside and coast—or admire the imposing walls of Óbidos Castle, a 12th-century fortress that now houses a luxurious pousada. Meander along cobbled lanes lined with whitewashed cottages and vibrant bougainvillea, and don't miss the chance to sip *ginjinha*—a local cherry liqueur—served in a chocolate cup, a beloved town tradition. As evening falls and the day-trippers depart, Óbidos takes on a quiet, storybook charm. Dinner is on your own tonight—choose from inviting bistros and wine bars nestled within the old city walls, many offering

candlelit tables, regional specialties, and warm hospitality in historic surroundings.

Today's Ride Choices

Arelho to Óbidos (Short Option) — 22 km (14 miles) | Arelho to Óbidos (Long Option) — 35 km (22 miles)

What to Expect:

Arelho to Óbidos (Short Option):

Depart directly from the hotel onto a quiet paved road. In just 0.6 kilometers (0.4 miles), turn onto a 3-kilometer (1.8-mile) stretch of hard-packed gravel path skirting the lagoon—car-free and scenic. From there, pedal through peaceful farmland and picturesque villages to the hilltop town of Óbidos. Use caution as you approach the town's narrow, cobbled streets.

Arelho to Óbidos (Long Option):

Depart directly from the hotel onto a quiet paved road. In just 0.6 kilometers (0.4 miles), turn onto a 3-kilometer (1.8-mile) stretch of hard-packed gravel path skirting the lagoon—car-free and scenic. After a short return to pavement, rejoin the gravel bike path for an additional 4.4 kilometers (2.8 miles), enjoying tranquil views of the lagoon. Continue west to Bom Sucesso Beach, then loop back inland. A gentle climb leads through farmland and charming villages before reaching Óbidos. As always, exercise caution on the busy, cobbled streets upon entering the town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7: Travel to Lisbon / Your VBT Vacation Ends

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel in Óbidos. At 10:00 a.m., complimentary transportation will bring you—along with any other VBT Self-Guided guests—to our post-tour hotel in the heart of Lisbon: Figueira by The Beautique Hotels. The scenic transfer takes approximately one hour. If you wish to be dropped off at another location in Lisbon, please notify your Local Host at the beginning of the week.

From the hotel, you may continue with your independent travel plans. For more details, refer to your *Vacation Preparation Handbook*. Depending on your destination, it may not be possible to return to the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to fly home immediately following the tour, we recommend contacting your airline directly for check-in time requirements.

If you prefer to linger in Óbidos and make your own way to Lisbon, both the train and bus stations are approximately a half-mile (850 meters) from your hotel. We recommend taking the bus, as the train is a slow local service.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Termas de Monte Real (Day 1)

The grand and elegant Termas de Monte Real is situated among 60 acres of landscaped gardens and woodland in the historic village of Monte Real. Its full spa facilities, including a Turkish bath, sauna, Jacuzzi, and heated pool, are drawn from the same thermal waters that first brought visitors here generations ago. During your stay at this air-conditioned property, stroll the walking path, bike the tree-lined byway, swim in the outdoor pool, and linger on the lake, taking in the property's natural splendor and clean air. Settle in to the Paços de Rainha Restaurant for the fine Mediterranean and Atlantic cuisine of the Silver Coast.

Hotel Mar e Sol (Day 2)

The Hotel Mar e Sol's prime location overlooking the Atlantic and the beautiful Penedo da Saudade lighthouse makes it the ideal Silver Coast accommodation. Operating since 1966, this welcoming, air-conditioned property enjoys a long tradition of hospitality. The pleasures of São Pedro Moel are right outside your door, whether it's a stroll on a coastal footpath, a ride on a bike trail, or a walk to the historic center. A half-dozen restaurants are just a short distance away, but at the hotel, the chef is happy to prepare his award-winning Seafood Rice for you at the O Penedo restaurant. A treatment at the Cubo D'Água spa might be in order after a day of exploring.

Montebelo Mosteiro de Alcobaça (Days 3-4)

Step into the magic of history at the Montebelo Mosteiro de Alcobaça, set within the newly revitalized Rachadouro Cloister. Ingeniously designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Souto Moura, this 5-star hotel blends seamlessly with the Monastery of Alcobaça, one of the Seven Wonders of Portugal and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Take advantage of the indoor pool, spa, and fitness center, and savor the flavors of Portugal in its fine-dining restaurant, where ancient and modern details combine for a unique

décor.

Rio do Prado Hotel (Day 5)

Rio do Prado, a sustainable eco-designed hotel in the heart of Óbidos, offers guests a serene experience in a private zero waste environment. The hotel fuses luxury accommodations with the natural landscape. This secluded resort features a magnificent greenhouse, farm to table dining, a garden bar, spa facilities with yoga classes and massage, two outdoor pools, superior lodging options, complimentary WiFi, and air conditioning.

The Literary Man (Day 6)

Located just on the edge of the Óbidos city walls, this stylish boutique hotel occupies a former convent. The interiors perfectly reflect the hotel's name: its walls are lined with some 45,000 books, making it a literary lover's dream. In the Gin Bar, drinks are named after celebrated writers, and throughout its hallowed rooms, comfortable seating invites you to grab a title off a shelf and settle in. During your stay, you might enjoy your evening on the outdoor patio and select a Portuguese wine from the cellar. Everything about this air-conditioned haven for bibliophiles evokes the simple comfort and solace of books. Even the natural woodwork and neutral fabrics of the guestrooms—ideal complements to the historic building's stonework, wooden beams, and wrought iron—ensure there'll be little to distract you from a good read.