

PORTUGAL – DOURO VALLEY

7-days / 6-nights SELF-GUIDED cycling - departures year round



The majestic Douro valley is an icon of Portugal, with its steep terraced vineyards and picturesque wine villages drenched in sunshine. Explore this UNESCO World Heritage-listed landscape, a must for wine lovers, on this self-guided cycling holiday in the north of Portugal. You start and finish in Porto, one of Europe's most beautiful cities. Carefully selected, easy to moderate rides leave time for sightseeing, relaxing and tasting the great Port wines, Vintage, LBV or Colheita, but also some surprising DOC reds and whites as well as exceptional olive oil. Much of the cycling is along the old Corgo railway line, now a dedicated cycle path offering comfortable rides through villages, forests, pastures and vineyards. From the highlands you descend little by little to the Douro at Vila Real, where you visit Mateus Palace, a masterpiece of Portuguese Baroque architecture. Spend three nights based at the wine town of Peso da Régua and cycle upstream to picturesque Pinhão. Back in Porto your ride past the lodges of the great Port houses, where the wine was transported by traditional wooden boats to mature prior to export, and alongside the river's estuary, an important habitat for migratory shorebirds.

Departures: Daily, year round

Starts & Ends: Porto

Cost from: **\$2230** per person twin share Season supplements \$165 - \$250 apply – ask for details
Single room supplement and solo traveller supplement on request
Upgrade hotels available at extra cost from \$180 - \$225 per person – ask for details

Includes: 6 nights' accommodation in 3-star hotels and simple but clean and comfortable guesthouses; 6 breakfasts; hybrid, multi-geared bike with mobile phone holder, panniers, repair kit, lock & helmet; luggage transfers between hotels; transfers on Days 2 & 6; digital travel documents including route book and GPX files; Mateus Palace visit; emergency telephone assistance hotline.

Not included: Lunches, dinners, drinks, other entrance fees, wine tastings, optional transfers or train tickets on days 4, 5 & 6, personal expenses, gratuities, tourist taxes. Printed route book & maps (one set per room) available for a supplement, ask for details. E-bikes available at extra cost – ask for details.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on (03) 5750 1441 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive in Porto

Make your way to your hotel in the centre of Porto by mid-afternoon, leaving time to explore Portugal's "capital of the North". Porto is a vibrant city, with its compact, walkable *centro histórico*, sophisticated food and wine culture and thriving art scene. Ask about an optional transfer from Porto airport (at extra cost) or take the Metro.

Day 2: Porto, Pedras Salgadas, Vila Pouca de Aguiar & Vila Real cycling @ 38km

Collect your bikes then transfer by vehicle to Pedras Salgadas, a spa town famous for its natural sparkling water. Cycle past thermal baths and join the cycle path built on an old rail line. Follow the rural Corgo valley, dotted with hamlets featuring *espigueiros*, traditional granaries hewn from local granite. From Vila Pouca de Aguiar traverse the forested Corgo valley to Vila Real, a picturesque university town, where you stay the night.

Day 3: Mateus Palace & Peso da Régua cycling @ 33km

The day begins with a guided tour of Mateus Palace, a Baroque-era jewel designed by the Italian architect Nasoni. After a stroll through the extensive palace gardens, re-join the Corgo valley cycle path. Old railway stations, hamlets and hilltop villages line the route through forests and terraced vineyards. Reach Peso de Régua, at the confluence of the Corgo and Douro rivers, where you spend the next three nights.

Day 4: Peso da Regua, Mosteiro & Resende cycling @ 42km

Either take a short train ride, bringing your bikes, or optional transfer at additional cost, to Mosteiro. Cycle back upstream alongside the Douro, left bank then right bank, over bridges and dams, through traditional hamlets and villages, amid vineyards and terraced olive groves. Around each bend of the river, you find delightful scenery with many photo opportunities. If time permits visit the museum dedicated to the *rabelo*, the traditional wooden boat of the Douro River. Return to Régua for your second night.

Day 5: Douro River & Pinhão cycling @ 42km or 55km

Ride upstream into the heart of the Port appellation, the demarcated region of Port wine, to the iconic picture-postcard village of Pinhão. During this ride, you may like to stop at one or more *quintas*, the wineries that have been producing and exporting Port wine to the world since the 18th century. The steep hillsides are covered with terraced vineyards, some dating back centuries and one of the many reasons this landscape is UNESCO World Heritage-listed. Return by bike, by train or optional transfer to Régua for your final night here.

Day 6: Vila Nova de Gaia, Douro Estuary & Porto cycling @ 19km or 38km

Transfer to Porto with your bikes. Cross the Eiffel Bridge to Vila Nova de Gaia, with the great Port lodges lining the river, where the wine is aged prior to export. Ride along the Douro estuary to the ocean and the long sandy beach dotted with granite boulders. Follow the coastline southward via a cycle path alongside the sea to Praia de Granja. Return your bikes here if you like, and return by train to Porto, or cycle back to the city.

Day 7: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast in Porto. Ask about additional nights in Porto or transfer to Porto airport, at extra cost.



Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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