NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections



Discovering Portugal's River of Wine

Explore the Douro Valley by Day & Feast at Classic Vineyard Estates at Night

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Trip Details:

Days
8 Days / Apr–Jul, Sep

Price
From $9795

Discovering Portugal's River of Wine

Explore the Douro Valley by Day & Feast at Classic Vineyard Estates at Night

Encounter a rare slice of Old-World Europe on our Dionysian odyssey through romantic wine country. Savor nature, culture and cuisine on a unique adventure that is ours alone. Tapping our years of connections in the Upper Douro Valley, we're pleased to offer this rare personal immersion in a bucolic corner of Portugal where peace and tradition prevail. Watch hawks soar over rugged mountains terraced with ancient vineyards. Wander through olive and almond orchards. Witness 30,000-year-old rock art in the Coa Valley. Paddle the tranquil Douro River, watching the sun glint on the glassy surface as we glide through northern Portugal's Port wine district. After full days of exploration, revel in convivial evenings on centuries-old quintas, the wine estates of the Douro. Within these hospitable family-run inns, gain an inside view on contemporary rural life in Portugal. As our hosts say, "A sua saude"—To your health!

Trip Highlights

Walk & Paddle Through Nature & Time

Wander quiet trails through rugged mountains and olive groves, kayak the Douro River through granite canyons, and marvel at Roman paths and 30,000-year-old rock art

Touch Local Traditions in Untouristed Villages

Through our deep personal relationships in the Douro, you'll get to know our friends and experience daily lifestyles in places few outsiders ever visit

Enjoy Fabulous Regional Food & Free-Flowing Wine

Savor matchless hospitality at boutique inns and vineyard estates, joining family hosts for indulgent repasts of Portuguese cuisine and fine wines



Discovering Portugal's River of Wine Itinerary

Explore the Douro Valley by Day & Feast at Classic Vineyard Estates at Night

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Porto
Day 2	Pocinho / Felgar
Day 3	Miranda do Douro
Day 4	Calcada de Alpajares / Casa do Rio
Day 5	Douro River / Quinta das Mos Copy
Day 6	Coa Valley
Day 7	Valeira Gorge / Porto
Day 8	Porto



Day 1

Porto

Taste Port in Vila Nova de Gaia before dinner above the Douro

- Tour the cellars of Cockburn's Port Lodge during a private tasting
- Join your Expedition Leader for a welcome dinner overlooking Porto's medieval skyline

Our adventure begins in Porto, Portugal's second-largest city and cultural capital of the beguiling North. Scenic Porto sits amid granite cliffs at the mouth of the Douro River and has long been a cosmopolitan trading center. The compact city is rich in architectural heritage from Roman, Gothic, Baroque, Neoclassic and Renaissance eras. This afternoon, we'll meet for an orientation of the week ahead followed by a trip across the river to Vila Nova de Gaia where we enjoy a private cellar tour and tasting at Cockburn's Port Lodge —the perfect start to a wine-soaked week ahead! We then head over to W. & J. Graham's 1890 Lodge for a welcome dinner at its acclaimed restaurant, Vinum, with its glass atrium and open-air terrace perched high on the southern bank of the Douro overlooking Porto's medieval landmarks. Featuring the best local ingredients of the Tras-os-Montes region, Northern Portugal and the Atlantic Ocean, dishes are created for pairing with fine Douro Valley wines.

Day 2

Pocinho / Felgar

Ride the Douro railway through Europe's oldest wine country

- Follow the river 100 miles upriver on the historic Linha do Douro
- Dine with hosts Ana and Jorge at their restored village farmstead
- Walk through almond and olive orchards to a viewpoint above the Sabor Reservoir

Today we journey by rail 100 miles up the Douro Valley, one of Europe's oldest winemaking areas. UNESCO has recognized the Alto Douro Wine Region as a World Heritage Site, with wine produced here for more than 2,000 years. The Douro Valley, the only place authentic Port wine is made, is the world's first demarcated wine region, established in 1756. This long tradition of viticulture has produced a cultural landscape of outstanding beauty, shaping the social and economic heritage of the region. Paralleling the riverbank on a small local train on the Linha do Douro line, we reach Pocinho, where we disembark and continue to the sleepy village of Felgar and Casa de Santa Cruz, where lunch awaits. This historic farmstead on the main square has been beautifully restored by the owners, Ana and Jorge, who share a passion for this place that feels lost in time. This afternoon, join our Expedition Leader for a walk beyond the village to a viewpoint over the Sabor Reservoir, wandering among almond and olive orchards and learning about life in this bucolic region as we go. Then return to our peaceful inn where a gourmet dinner awaits.

Day 3

Miranda do Douro

Border culture & rural traditions in Miranda do Douro

- Walk a stretch of the scenic Ecopista do Sabor through the rolling countryside
- Experience a spirited dance performance by the Pauliteiros de Miranda
- Meet the region's cutest residents at Miranda Donkey Conservation Center

Greet the day with an early-morning walk through the bucolic countryside of Portugal's Upper Douro Valley on an easy three-mile section of the Ecopista do Sabor. This scenic greenway in northern Portugal is built along the abandoned track bed of the historic Linha do Sabor narrow-gauge railway, ensuring a gentle grade and river views. Continue to the historic border town of Miranda do Douro in far northeast Portugal on the edge of Spain. Archaeologists have identified human presence here since the Bronze Age, with varied layers of political and cultural influence over the centuries since. Given the town's isolation from the rest of Portugal, ancestral ways of life persist in traditions and even language, with 10,000-15,000 people in the region speaking Mirandese as their native tongue. Here, we enjoy a spirited performance by the Pauliteiros de Miranda, offering a lively window into the cultural heritage of the Miranda do Douro region. Performed in traditional costumes and accompanied by large drums, it was once known as the "dance of swords," although practitioners today use wooden sticks.

Next, we visit the Miranda Donkey Conservation Center, dedicated to protecting an endangered breed from this corner of the country that is Portugal's only native donkey. Known as burros in both Portugal and Spain, these donkeys were once known as the "poor man's motor" in northeastern Portugal, helping farmers with ploughing and carrying goods. We learn how the center combines breeding, research, veterinary care, and partnerships with local farmers to safeguard the Miranda donkey—and how its conservation is intertwined with traditional agriculture, biodiversity and habitat restoration. After an introduction to the program, we tour the center and meet its charming residents up close, with plenty of time to interact with the friendly, shaggy donkeys. Then return to Casa Santa Cruz for another memorable meal and a final night in the peaceful village of Felgar.

Day 4

Calcada de Alpajares / Casa do Rio

Cruise the Douro to a secluded inn among the vineyards

- Follow historic footsteps on the Calcada de Alpajares, an ancient Roman road
- Witness the 8,000-year-old rock art of Fraga do Gato amid the rugged schist landscape
- Sail by private boat to Casa do Rio and taste Quinta do Vallado wines among the vines

Start the morning with a walk on the little-discovered Calcada de Alpajares trail. The cobbled route through rugged mountains is a section of an ancient 5,000-mile-long Roman road, winding across a spectacular landscape. Our path takes us through a fascinating realm of schist arches and quartzite outcrops, past dramatic panoramas and precipitous drops into steep-walled valleys. It reveals traces of an ancient human presence, evidenced in the cave painting of Fraga do Gato, which are over 8,000 years old, and the ancient settlement of Castro de São Paulo, dating back to the Bronze Age and with traces of Roman occupation.

Stop in Barca d'Alva for a picnic lunch, then board a private boat for a cruise downriver to stunning Casa do Rio, our luxury base for the next three nights. This intimate guesthouse is surrounded by the vineyards of Quinta do Vallado, one of the premier producers of table wines in the Douro Valley. Set into a steep hillside with panoramic views over the river below, the contemporary inn enjoys complete solitude. Relax on the terrace or refresh with a dip in the infinity pool following a guided afternoon stroll through the vineyards, with a chance to taste some of the estate's renowned vintages. And if the fine accommodations and glorious setting aren't enough, wait till you taste the gourmet dinner that comes out of the Casa's tiny kitchen!

Day 5

Douro River / Quinta das Mos Copy

Kayak the upper Douro through a narrow granite gorge

- Paddle a seldom-traveled stretch of the upper Douro through a tranquil tableau of vineyards
- Join the Cabral family for a homemade lunch at their boutique winery
- Swim in the infinity pool and relax at our secluded vineyard hotel overlooking the Douro

We greet the morning with anticipation: It's time to meet the river at eye level! We first drive to Foz do Sabor, where we get fitted to our kayaks and become comfortable with maneuvering them, with plenty of helpful pointers from our Expedition Leader. Launching from a sandy beach, we find our paddling rhythm, gliding downstream through a scenic stretch of river with steep, rocky banks rising on either side. The river narrows considerably, and it feels a bit like we're paddling through a rock garden as we guide our kayaks between the granite walls. Be sure to look up periodically, as this area is frequented by an array of raptors—we could see the Egyptian vulture and the Griffon vulture, Europe's largest vulture species. Once we're through the gorge, the river widens again as we paddle past a tranquil tableau of vineyards interwoven in a tapestry of oak forests and olive orchards.

After a few hours, we reach our takeout point at Freixo de Numao, then make a winding drive into the hills high above the Douro where a special lunch and winery tour are in store at Quinta das Mos, a boutique winery producing outstanding white and red table wines and olive oil. Our hosts, the Cabral family, provide a huge homemade repast along with a warm and gracious welcome. Before we leave, there's a chance to purchase bottles of both wine and olive oil to take home—you won't find it anywhere else! Return to Casa do Rio with time to relax before another sumptuous dinner on the terrace.

Day 6

Coa Valley

See Paleolithic rock art preserved from a dam's rising waters

- View horses, bovines and other figures carved into the rock more than 20,000 years ago
- Tour the Coa Museum with an archaeology expert
- Sample local olive oils and learn about the process, from harvesting to pressing, from an artisan producer

Today offers an encounter with the layered history and culture of the Coa Valley, which contains one of the world's most important ancient rock art sites. On a visit to the Coa Valley Archaeological Park, learn from archaeology experts about the extensive Paleolithic drawings near Vila Nova de Foz Coa, discovered in 1991 and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. The park contains some 5,000 engraved drawings of horses, bovines and other animals, and human and abstract figures, dated from 22,000 to 10,000 B.C. and documenting continuous human occupation from the end of the Paleolithic Age. The entire region was slated to be inundated by a dam under construction at the time of discovery, but after intense public pressure, the project was halted to preserve the extraordinary discovery. We'll see one of the rock art sites up close, a tiny sampler of the most remarkable open-air ensemble of Paleolithic art on the Iberian Peninsula.

Afterward, we'll head to the Coa Museum for a guided tour and lunch at the stylish museum cafe, followed by an olive oil tasting. Meet a local producer who teaches us about the entire process, from harvesting to the final product (with plenty of samples to taste). Back at Casa do Rio this evening, another starlit dinner on the terrace awaits.

Day 7

Valeira Gorge / Porto

Paddle through Valeira Gorge beneath the Douro's terraced vineyards

- Cruise past historic wine estates, including Quinta do Vesuvio and Quinta de Vargellas
- Kayak between steep schist slopes covered in grapevines
- Return to Porto for a farewell dinner featuring regional wines

Transfer by van this morning to the river, where we board a private motorboat for a relaxing cruise down the Douro to our paddling put-in at Ferradosa. Along the way, we pass some of the Douro Valley's most magnificent quintas—the traditional wine estates of the region— including Symington's Quinta do Vesuvio, built in 1565, and Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas, established in 1820. Launching our kayaks from a small beach, we embark on a peaceful paddle between steeply terraced schist mountains covered in grapevines. We're bound for Valeira Gorge, a narrow, rugged canyon carved over millennia, where we often see raptors soaring overhead. Once we arrive at our take-out point of Foz do Tua, head ashore for a light lunch on the riverbank, then return to Porto by van to complete our journey. A festive farewell dinner awaits, with fine Portuguese wine and vivid memories flowing freely on our last evening together.

Day 8

Porto

Depart Porto after a week along the Douro

- Transfer to the airport for homeward flights

Our Dionysian odyssey through romantic wine country comes to a close today. A transfer to the airport is included to meet your departing flight.



Discovering Portugal's River of Wine Accommodations

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Casa de Santa Cruz

Located on the village square, this historically significant farmhouse built in the mid-1700s has been painstakingly restored as a boutique inn by our family hosts, Anna and Jorge.



Casa do Rio

Part of the Quinta do Vallado wine estate in Portugal's Upper Douro Valley, Casa do Rio offers new luxury accommodations in six stylish suites, surrounded by vineyards with 180-degree views over the river below.



The One Monumental Palace

Set in a restored 19th-century palace on Avenida dos Aliados, this five-star Porto hotel pairs grand architecture, Michelin-starred dining and a serene spa with light-filled, marble-appointed guest rooms.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/portugal-hiking-kayaking-wine-adventure/accommodations.

What Makes Cultural Journeys Different?

Discovering Portugal's River of Wine

Let's face it, there are a lot of European trips out there to choose from. But we know of none like this one. Designed for the more active traveler who loves history, nature, authentic local culture, and great food and wine, this delve into the less-visited Upper Douro River Valley has no peer. Learn why:

1 **No One Else Offers This Trip!**

When we say there's no other trip like this one, we mean it. We were the first to offer kayaking trips on Portugal's Douro River, and we have refined this unique itinerary—which now mixes paddling with hiking and cultural exploration—over the years through personal connections with our friends who make wine in the Douro Valley. Wander ancient vineyards and orchards, paddle the sun-drenched river, then revel in food and wine with our hosts at historic quintas each night...you can only enjoy this special opportunity with Natural Habitat Adventures!

2 **A Rare Opportunity to Experience the Douro River at Eye Level**

You're not likely to see other paddlers on the Douro, since boat traffic in this little-visited region consists mostly of small local craft and the occasional sightseeing vessel. Periodically, we pass a larger river cruise ship farther upstream. Our quiet, water-level perspective on the shoreline, birdlife, olive groves and grape terraces offers a peaceful encounter you won't get elsewhere.

3 **Travel with Just 12 Guests**

Our small group offers an intimate opportunity to explore more remote locales and stay in small, traditional settings that bus-based tour groups and river cruise ship passengers don't have access to. Far from the bustle of Porto and the lower Douro, which most visitors limit their travel to, we have a tranquil experience on and off the river, essential to rewarding nature travel.

4 **Visit Three UNESCO World Heritage Sites**

Our itinerary includes three very different World Heritage Sites of global distinction. We begin in the Historic Center of Porto, built along the hills above the mouth of the Douro River with a rich 2,000-year history marked by various conquests and numerous monuments. The majority of our time is spent in the second World Heritage Site, the Alto Douro Wine Region, which is the world's oldest demarcated wine region. And the third is the Prehistoric Rock Art Sites of the Coa Valley—see #5 below.

5 **Guided Tour of the Coa Valley Museum & Archaeological Park**

Learn from archaeology experts about the extensive Paleolithic drawings discovered in the Coa Valley in the late 1980s, which were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. Start with a guided tour of the museum, then travel by van and on foot into the Archaeological Park containing thousands of engraved drawings of horses, bovines and other animals, and human and abstract figures, dated from 22,000 to 10,000 B.C. With our local guide, we examine rock art sites in detail, evidence of continuous human habitation in the valley for millennia.

6 **Stay in Luxury Inns on the Vineyard Estates of the Douro Valley**

The historic *quintas*—wine estates—of the Douro Valley are a highlight of our trip. Many are centuries old and still run by the farming families who have grown grapes and made wine in this region for generations. Some produce other local products as well, such as olive oil, nuts and preserves. Staying on a quinta is an experience well off the typical tourist track!

7 **Indulge in Fabulous Food and Wine**

On this trip, food and wine will be among your most memorable experiences! Our hosts at each quinta (the wine estates where we stay) take great pride in filling us with hearty repasts of homemade local fare and endlessly flowing local wines—in addition to its famous Port, the Douro Valley produces noteworthy table wines, too. From fresh oranges, almonds, honey and olive oil to farm-raised lamb and pork and artisan cheeses, much of what we enjoy is raised right on or near the estates where we stay. If you're a traveler who's decidedly a gourmand, this trip will delight your palate! (And...*all* the wine is included! No extra charges to worry about.)

8 **A Seasoned Expedition Leader & Outstanding Local Guides**

Nat Hab is known worldwide for employing the best-trained, highest-quality guides in the industry, and that's certainly the case in Portugal. Your Expedition Leader is an accomplished paddler and kayaking instructor, always at the ready to assist with your comfort, convenience and safety. And our local guides are resident experts when it comes to knowing the hidden corners and rich history of the Douro region, where they've worked for years—not to mention exceptionally hospitable and attendant to your every need. **Read our Expedition Leader bios** and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

9 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Outstanding Portugal Experience**

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you receive our exclusive guarantee, clearly stating that we will meet the lofty expectations we set in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise for yourself!**

10 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $9795

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

Discovering Portugal's River of Wine Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Apr 25 - May 2, 2027	$9795	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
May 4 - May 11, 2027	$9795	
Jun 2 - Jun 9, 2027	$10095	
Jun 11 - Jun 18, 2027	$9795	
Jun 30 - Jul 7, 2027	$9795	
Jul 9 - Jul 16, 2027	$9795	
Sep 2 - Sep 9, 2027	$10095	
Sep 11 - Sep 18, 2027	$9795	
Sep 20 - Sep 27, 2027	$10095	
Sep 29 - Oct 6, 2027	$9795	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
May 16 - May 23, 2028	$9995	
May 24 - May 31, 2028	$9995	
Jun 1 - Jun 8, 2028	$9995	
Jun 9 - Jun 16, 2028	$9995	
Jun 17 - Jun 24, 2028	$9995	
Jun 25 - Jul 2, 2028	$9995	
Jul 3 - Jul 10, 2028	$9995	
Sep 1 - Sep 8, 2028	$9995	
Sep 9 - Sep 16, 2028	$9995	
Sep 17 - Sep 24, 2028	$9995	
Sep 25 - Oct 2, 2028	$9995	

See https://www.nathab.com/cultural-journeys/portugal-hiking-kayaking-wine-adventure/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and local guides, all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on final day, most wine, Port and other alcoholic beverages, all kayaking gear, some gratuities, airport/train station transfers for those arriving on Day 1 and departing on the final day, scenic train journey in the Douro Valley, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Important Information About This Trip

This unique trip (and we don't use the term "unique" lightly) is so much more than a hiking and paddling adventure. It's a thorough immersion in a slice of rural Portuguese life that very few travelers are fortunate to experience. Through our longstanding local connections in the Douro Valley, we have been able to craft a one-of-a-kind itinerary that gets into natural and cultural settings totally off the typical tourist trail. By focusing on the upper section of the Douro River, we're away from busier areas, offering an encounter with regional traditions and lifestyles you'd be unlikely to discover on your own or on a more standard tour. We stay in small family-run inns, often part of a wine estate, enjoying fabulous home-cooked fare and free-flowing wine, both red and white table wines and the famous ports of the world's first demarcated wine region. You'll get to know your hosts, enjoying convivial conversation and insights into local life you won't find elsewhere.

Please note, only four single kayaks are available per departure and need to be reserved in advance (at no additional charge). They will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are interested, please let our Adventure Concierge team know as soon as possible. Please be aware, however, that final assignments will be made at the discretion of our Expedition Leader and based on the best interest and safety of the group.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Porto. **You must arrive by 1 pm on Day 1** in order to participate in the afternoon activities.

You may depart Porto at any time on the final day.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

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