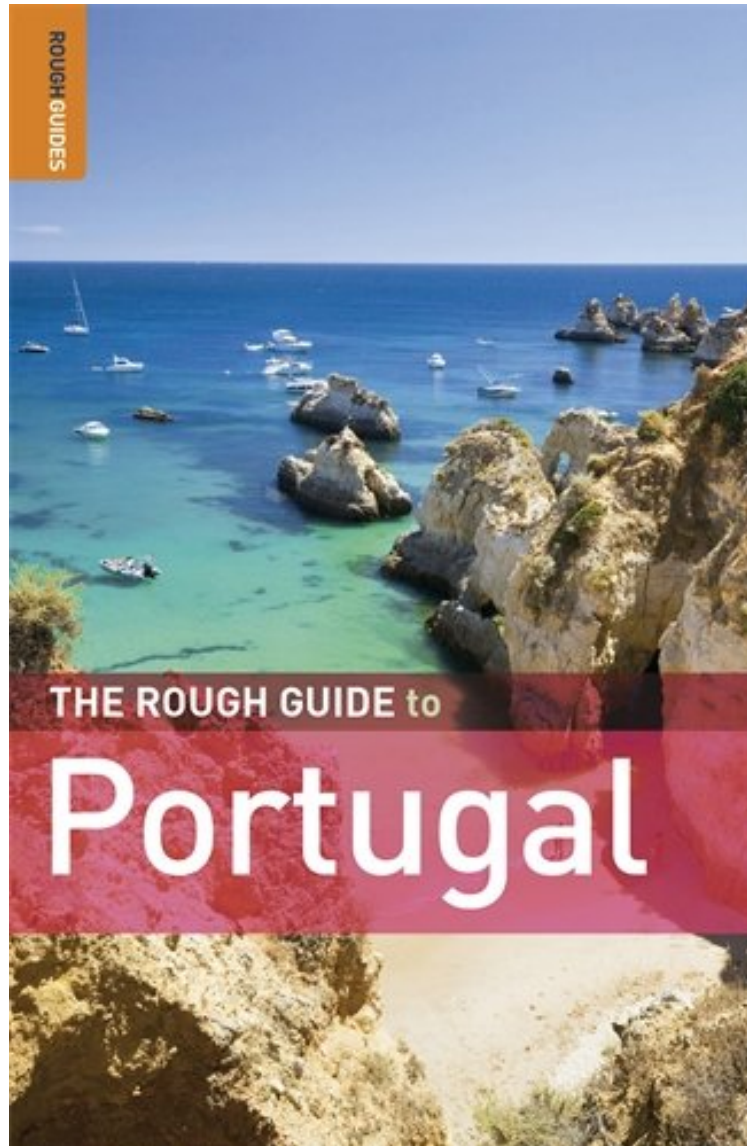


(Library ebook) The Rough Guide to Portugal

The Rough Guide to Portugal

John Fisher, Matthew Hancock, Jules Brown
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John Fisher, Matthew Hancock, Jules Brown : The Rough Guide to Portugal before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rough Guide to Portugal:

78 of 78 people found the following review helpful. Rough Guide (9th ed.) vs. Lonely Planet (2nd ed.) By Roy Gordon This review compares the Rough Guides Portugal (9th ed.) with Lonely Planet Portugal (2nd ed.). We just returned from 2.5 weeks in Portugal. This was our first trip to Portugal and we took and used extensively the Portugal books from Lonely Planet and Rough Guide. We didn't visit the Algarve or Alentejo, concentrating on Lisbon and

north. Both books were good, but overall we preferred the Rough Guide book. It was better organized and more up to date. Its writing was more incisive, lively, and witty. Here are some details as I saw them: LP maps often covered a wider area and had more detail than the RG maps, but they were in smaller type and often difficult to read. On more than one occasion a cab driver pulled out his spectacles to read the LP map. Rough Guide had more up to date phone numbers. LP did not have the up to date area codes (the leading 0 has been changed to a 2). In addition, for many properties in the north they had a 5 digit phone number, when now they are all six. More disturbingly, they have no update on their website for either the corrected area code or phone numbers. In fact, there was no Portugal update to the guide at all. (I'm not talking of the 'unverified travelers' reports.) LP provided more detailed information about the nitty-gritty details of traveling, e.g., money, trains, internet access, etc. RG presented the towns around Aveiro better. It was through it that we learned of Sao Jacinto, Torreira, and so on. These were not indexed in LP. We didn't discover that LP had some information on them until much later because it was more hidden in the Aveiro section. Since we had already decided to not stay in Aveiro we didn't think to look there. Although they were also in the Aveiro section of RG, they had their own headings and were also indexed. Similarly, RG highlighted Belmonte in the mountains. This town was interesting in itself and also in that it now holds one of Portugal's largest remaining Jewish communities and its new synogogue. Jews had previously worshipped secretly in a town house until 1974, now replaced by the new building. (I'm writing this using a mouse pad I purchased at the Belmonte castle for \$1.50 with images of columns from the Mosteiro da Batalha!) I also preferred RG's treatment of Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela and of Parque Natural de Montesinho. We used several recommendations for restaurants and accommodations from the books. Their batting averages were about the same: good but not great. One African dance club listed in both books was now a female strip place, as my wife discovered when seeing if the cab had taken us to the right address. (I was waiting in the cab.) I felt they were generally too generous in their evaluation of hotels and restaurants. Both books had several failings common to them and to other guide books that we've used. Nearly all the accommodations and restaurants are in tourist areas. We were fortunate to stay in Lisbon in a residential district. It was comforting to leave in the morning and not be surrounded by hordes of fellow tourists. Similarly, we were the only obvious tourists in the local restaurants, some of which were excellent. Nor were we out in the sticks where a car was required. We were right off the #28 tram line, recommended as the best tram to ride simply for riding it in both books. Several other times during the trip we stayed and ate outside the centro area. In some cases a car would have been needed, but we were only several km out of center. In any case, I think both books should offer more 'out of centro' possibilities, especially when transportation is available. LP is out front in saying that its reviewers do not stay at all the hotels or eat at all the restaurants they list. I would like it if the reviews would be initialized with the reviewers initials for the ones that they personally tried. This would also allow us to see and evaluate each reviewer's tastes and standards as our trip progressed, not to mention to see which places they really tried. One LP writer (not an author of this book) in discussing restaurants wrote: "As one of those LP writers I can tell you that it is not physically possible to eat even a 'little bit of a meal' in each of those restaurants :-). What we all tend to do is eat at a broad cross-section within the norms of natural eating times and visit the other restaurants and talk to the owner or even the diners if it can be done discretely. In the same vein we don't sleep at every hotel!" Talk to the owners! Now there's something for an unbiased, disinterested evaluation! Both books are oriented to train travelers, but they should have some more info on driving too, which is not expensive. For example, neither had a mileage chart between major cities and, more importantly, neither had a chart of expected driving times. Using the 'N' roads which look like major highways can take quite a bit of time because they are mostly two lane roads, often twisty and hilly, and can have a lot of SLOW truck traffic. You'd probably be better off driving on the back roads, both for time and scenery, and for that small village, local feel. But you'd never know it from these books. This complaint isn't restricted to just LP and RG, of course. In addition, both books were quite short on history, culture and demographics. How religious are the Portuguese? (We were asked on several occasions whether we were 'religioso'.) What is the median and mean income of each of the areas (even of Portugal as a whole) and how does this compare to the rest of western Europe. What are contemporary middle-class Portuguese characteristics? It wouldn't have taken more than an additional 10 or 15 pages for such information, and it would have made our trip more meaningful. In sum, again, both guides were good with room for improvement, with our preferring the Rough Guide overall.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Skipped on ink
By Jacqueline
I have been having a horrible time reading this book. I got the kindle version of Lonely Planet and realized in a travel book, I just have to have the physical book. This book uses a font that is probably an 8 versus 12 and the ink is so light, that I have found just reading this book is a misery. I am an avid reader and do not have problems reading any other books. I will buy another guide book because this is just a chore to read.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Details about Portugal
By Mary G. Corson
Like the Rough Guide for Spain that I bought some years back, The Rough Guide to Portugal is a great go-to source for very detailed information while on a trip. They do tell it like it is! And they present information on places that other guides do not necessarily delve into. Downside: a black and white presentation, no color pictures, a very thick, heavy book that does not lend itself to being carried around during the day. Glad I had it as a reference to use at night while planning the next day's activities.

The Rough Guide to Portugal is the essential travel guide with clear maps and coverage of the country's unique attractions. The Rough Guide to Portugal guides you around the fashionable cities of Lisbon and Porto, takes you hiking in the hills of central and northern Portugal, and covers every beach along the Algarve, making it the ideal companion whether you're on a city break, beach holiday, or cross-country. The guide unearths the best sights, hotels, restaurants, and nightlife across every price range — from backpacker hostels to beachfront villas and boutique hotels. You'll find specialist coverage of Portuguese history, art, and literature and detailed information on the best markets and shopping for each region. The locally-based Rough Guide author team introduces the best vineyards, country taverns, and fado clubs and provides reliable insider tips, whether you're driving Portugal's roadways or shopping for linen and lace. Explore all corners of Portugal with authoritative background on everything from Porto's architecture to surfing at Peniche, and rely on handy language tips and the clearest maps of any guide. Make the most of your holiday with The Rough Guide to Portugal.

There is nothing rough about Rough Guides...well written, thoroughly researched Sunday Times
About the Author
Mark Ellingham set up Rough Guides in 1981, and wrote the first edition of the Rough Guide to Portugal the following year. John Fisher has also been involved with Rough Guides from the start and is the author of several other titles, including Mexico, Spain and Greece. Graham Kenyon also co-authored Rough Guides to Spain and Greece before changing professions to become an IT specialist in the City.
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Where to go and when
Since Portugal is so compact, it's easy to take in something of each of its elements - northern river valleys, southern coast, and mountains - even on a brief visit, whether you rent a car or make your own way by public transport. Scenically, the most interesting parts of the country are in the north: the Minho, green, damp, and often startling in its rural customs; the sensational gorge and valley of the Rio Douro; the remote Trs-os-Montes; and the wild, mountainous serras of Beira Alta. For contemporary interest, spend at least some time in both Lisbon and Porto, the only two cities of real size. And if it's monuments you're after, the whole centre of the country - above all Coimbra, vora and the Estremadura region - retains a faded grandeur dating from the Age of the Discoveries in the sixteenth century and from the later gold and diamond wealth of Brazil. The coast is virtually continuous beach - some 800km of it - and only on the Algarve and in a few pockets around Lisbon and Porto has there been large-scale tourist development. Elsewhere, a number of beach areas have seen casual development on a relatively small scale, these resorts remaining thoroughly Portuguese, with great stretches of deserted sands between them. Perhaps the loveliest beaches are along the northern Costa Verde, around Viana do Castelo, or, for isolation, the wild stretches of southern Alentejo. It must be added, however, that the Portuguese coast is the Atlantic and can often be windswept and exposed. If you like your swimming warm, the only area where the water approaches Mediterranean temperatures is the eastern Algarve, where a series of sandbank islands, the ilhas, protect the shore. Swimming aside, when you go matters little. The entire country is warm from April to October, if slightly erratically so in the rainy north, while the Algarve is amazingly mild throughout the year - it hardly has a winter and January can be delightful when the almond blossom is out. The Serra da Estrela, in contrast, features winter snow for skiers, while further north winter is wet and the wind biting cold - this is no time for extended journeys around Trs- os-Montes. Throughout the year, escaping the crowds, outside the Algarve and Lisbon, is little problem. Especially on the Algarve, booking accommodation is essential in high season; elsewhere, however, you should find rooms with little difficulty throughout the year except at festival times when even the smallest towns and villages can fill up quickly.