

PORTUGAL – DOURO VALLEY

8-day / 7-night centre-based group **GUIDED** walks through rustic vineyard covered landscapes - **NEW**



A UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the oldest demarcated wine regions of the world, the Douro Valley is a vast, wild expanse of terraced vineyards built up from the banks of the Douro, the 'gold' river. For over 2000 years the delicious and complex fortified wines called port have been produced in the region, traditionally shipped to Porto in flat-bottomed boats called *rabelos*. A 'must-do' in any trip to the Douro Valley is a visit to a local *quinta* (wine estate) and vineyard to sample the famous port, as well as a chance to cruise on the river or wind along the banks by rail to the magnificent city of Porto on your free day.

This centre-based guided walking holiday, which was new last year, explores the sleepy villages of the upper Douro valley, walking amongst the hills clad with vines, and into the rugged mountains of the Serra do Marão.

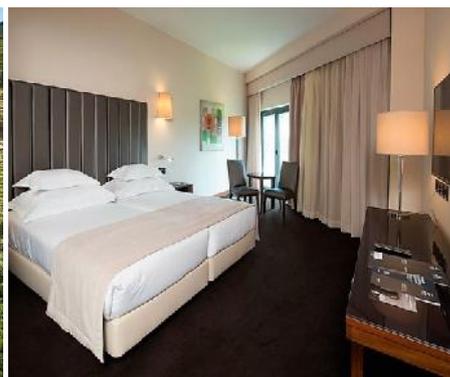
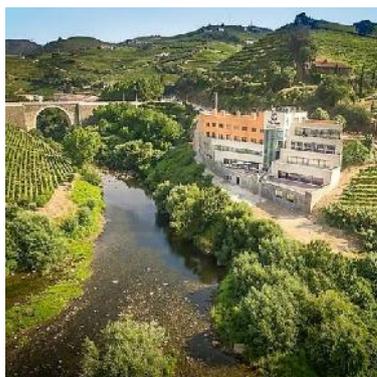
Cost from: \$2275 per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$695

Departures: 22nd, 29th March; 5th, 12th April; 24th, 31st May; 7th, 14th June; 6th, 13th September 2020

Included: 7 nights in comfortable hotel room with ensuite bathrooms, 7 breakfasts, 7 evening meals, experienced walks leader, 5 guided walks, local transport to and from the walks.

Not Included: Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary, personal expenses, transport / excursions on the free day. Airport transfers from Porto at set times can be pre-booked at extra cost and we recommend you take these – ask for details when booking.

Accommodation: **Hotel Vila Galé Collection Douro** is a 4-star hotel positioned on the hillside over the Douro River, with captivating views of the river and vineyards. There are 38 spacious ensuite rooms, an indoor pool, an outdoor Jacuzzi, and a panoramic balcony.



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary: *The itinerary each day is determined by the walk leaders and could be subject to change.*

Day 1: Arrival day – Plan to arrive at the hotel by mid-afternoon. Your guides will meet with you and your fellow walkers after dinner tonight to discuss the walking routes planned for this week.

Day 2: Above the Douro – After a short transfer to the outskirts of Régua, walk along ancient tracks through terraced vineyards, hamlets and villages with panoramic views of the Douro and Régua. The harder walk climbs to the distinctive white church of Loureiro before descending through woodland to the river bank. The easier walk passes closer to the river's extraordinary terraced sides before reaching the promenade, to cross the Douro on the beautifully restored metal bridge, 'Ponte Metálica'. Take time to explore Régua and the 'Museu do Douro'.

Day 3: Ancient villages of the Tarouca Valley - Head to the high moorland area south of Lamego, dotted with large boulders and livestock grazing. The easier walkers start at the hamlet of Parafita before traversing the hillside to wander through the ancient village of Mazes where the church bells ring to the tune of 'Ave Maria'. The harder walkers start at the hamlet of Ribabelide, at almost 1000m, and make a circuit to the deserted settlement of Antas before passing through the narrow gorge of the Rio de Santo and descending to Mazes. Both walks descend to Lazarim to visit the new museum of masks, carved for the village's Shrove Tuesday carnival.

Day 4: Serra Marão - Choose from the easier or harder walk today. Our highest point of the holiday is where both walks start, just below Serra do Marão, 1415m. On a clear day there are panoramic views in all directions as far as Spain and Galicia. The easier walk descends through tree-covered slopes passing a hilltop chapel, and mountain villages to finish at Fontes. The harder walk follows the ridge along rough tracks and through rocky terrain, ascending two summits. Then descend through moorland, woods and through hamlets before arriving the village of Carvalho with its grand houses and fertile gardens.

Day 5: Free Day: No walks are organised. You may like to take an excursion to visit the old hillside city of Porto, famous for port wines and its vibrant history. Take a cruise down the Douro or meander through the narrow streets of the old town through to the grand plazas of the Avenida dos Aliados.

Day 6: Vineyards and Valleys to Pinhão: - Head for the village of Favaios where the vineyards produce Moscatel. We have the opportunity for a tasting and view the landscape from the balcony in the museum of bread and wine. Both parties start their walks in this historic town passing a local bakery where you can see wood-fired ovens and buy bread that's still warm. The harder walk climbs to the small chapel of Santa Barbara before following the route the easier walkers have taken down to the village of Vilarinho da Cota. As we descend, the dramatic and complex amphitheatres of vineyards open up in front of us clinging to the hillside. The harder walkers continue to the Rio Douro viewpoint 'Miradouro Casal de Loivos' before descending to Pinhão.

Day 7: Serra do Marão Villages - Today's walks pass through the woods and mountain villages of the eastern slopes of the Serra do Marão. The harder walk starts in the village of Soutelo passing through woods to arrive at the tiny hamlet of Póvoa da Serra continuing on wide tracks under the dramatic black crags of the Serra do Marão before joining the easier walk route. We arrive at the vineyards and village of Sedielos, and the coach.

Day 8: Departure day – Tour ends after breakfast.

Our one-hotel holidays offer a choice of two guided walks each day – usually an easier walk or more challenging option – you decide which one best suits your interests and fitness levels. There is a free day midweek.

Footpath information



Easier Walks: 5 to 10km on good but occasionally rough paths and tracks. With up to 400m of ascent in a day.



Harder Walks: 9 to 16km on good but occasionally rough paths and tracks. With up to 580m of ascent in a day.

Outdoor Travel offers centre-based guided walking holidays in several areas of Portugal, France or Italy including **Provence**, the **French Riviera**, in the beautiful **Cinque Terre**, **Umbria**, **Dolomites**, or **Amalfi Coast**. Other destinations include **Croatia**, **Turkey**, and **Ireland**. Similar walks are available in many areas of England, Wales and Scotland including the **Coast-to-Coast** walk, the wild **West Highland Way** or **South Downs Way**.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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