

PORTUGAL SNAPSHOTS



Almost everywhere you go in Portugal, there's an image waiting to be captured. Whether you've brought your iPhone, your fancy SLR camera, or the moment itself seers deep inside your memory bank, Portugal is a land of breathtaking and memorable sites. Even on a dreary day as the sun naps behind the clouds, mother nature is still ready for her close-up. Reclaiming a bench once meant for lovers, she lounges in her best moss and lichen gown warning you not to disturb her sanctuary.□



Porto, Portugal's second largest city, sits majestically along the *Douro* river estuary in the north. Storybook buildings rise with the surrounding mountains, wasting no space as they jut up against each other like passengers in a crowded elevator. It's the perfect backdrop for moviemakers looking to shoot any time period since the advent of electricity. One gets the sense that nothing much has changed over the years. The surrounding twisting valleys with grape terraces etched into the earth still produce the world's finest ports. Locals go about their business, dodging the tourists that have gone to one tasting too many. It's got everything one could want—great food, great wine and the promise of great romance.□



Not far from Lisbon, the *Palácio de Pena*—or Pena Palace—emerges through the thick fog, its vibrant colors refusing to be obscured by the tenacious mist. Built in the Romanticist architectural style, this—quite frankly over-the-top castle is said to have inspired King Ludwig II's German castle, *Neuschwanstein*, which then inspired Walt Disney to create his castle in Disneyland. While you wait for the fog to clear, spend some time in the nearby village of Sintra at one of their many cafés. Make sure to try some *Pasteis de Nata*—those heavenly egg custard tartlets that should make everyone's top five list of things to taste in Portugal. Sintra even pushes the envelope with their *Queijadas*, a riff on the traditional egg custards made with the addition of cheese.□



If you were paying attention in fifth grade history class, you'd know that the Portuguese made some of the greatest discoveries in the new world. Vasco da Gama and Ferdinand Magellan might ring a bell. They are just a couple of the explorers represented on this monument.

Located on the coast near other important sights like Jerónimos Monastery and the Belém Tower in Lisbon, this monument faces the sea, the ship being led by Prince Henry the Navigator. As its rose-tinted stone pierces the azure sky, one gets the sense that this ship could sail with just one big push.



Have you ever passed by a window and wondered, “What’s the story here?” Perhaps this is the home of a woman who must trade her body in order to make enough money to care for her sick young son. Or maybe it’s a man with an underwear fetish who likes washing his neighbors dirty clothes. It’s possible that an old woman, widowed too early in life, takes in laundry to help supplement her income. Or it could simply be that a young family lives here and their dryer is broken.□

Images tell us stories. Choosing the right thousand words is the tricky part.