

Samantha Trips

Discover Portugal: Culture, Cuisine, & Coastlines

February 21-March 1, 2026

This tour has an optional extension to the Azores from March 1-4, 2026. See the back of the brochure for details.

Tour Director:

Samantha Mandel
Founder & Director
Samantha Trips
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Portugal is one of Europe's most popular destinations for a reason. With an explosive culinary scene, some of the best wines in the world, and a healthy dose of Mediterranean relaxation, Portugal brings an incredible sense of place, history, and architecture. Add to that the lush beauty of vineyards and olive groves, burgeoning offerings in music and the arts, and the uniquely warm welcome of the Portuguese people, and Portugal has something for everyone.

A Note about Your Samantha Trip:

There is built-in flexibility to customize this itinerary. If there is something you wish to do which is not listed here, or you wish Samantha to arrange alternatives for you, Samantha is happy to investigate! Exact itinerary stops may shift based on availability and travelers' interests.

February 21 (Day 1): A Day in Porto!

Discover the nooks and crannies of this city with a top-notch local guide.



Arrive according to your schedule and enjoy a **captivating walking tour** of Porto, Portugal's second largest city! Porto has ensnared visitors' imaginations since the Romans first arrived here, and its winding cobblestone lanes, soaring Gothic cathedrals, and breathtaking views over the Douro instantly fill you with a sense of place. For those who want to arrive one day early, Samantha is happy to help you make arrangements.

Our **hand-picked local guide** will give us an afternoon **insider tour** of this ancient port city at a relaxed pace. From its most sweeping *miradouro* viewpoints to one of the most famous bookstores in the world, our guide will entertain and educate us while orienting us to our home for the next three nights.

In the evening, sit back and enjoy a **specially prepared dining experience of elevated Portuguese cuisine**. Famous for its fresh-caught seafood as well as its cured meats, local cheeses, and creative vegetable dishes, we'll enjoy a smorgasbord sampling of the local delicacies. Have a dietary restriction? Don't worry; all culinary preferences will be carefully taken into account.

Spend the night in comfort in our centrally located, 5-star Porto hotel.

February 22 (Day 2): Discover Porto at Your Leisure!

Today, explore Porto with Samantha as a guide or on your own!



Today, **you have the day free** to set your own pace as you relax into your very own Portuguese adventure! You can sightsee with Samantha or break off on your own.

Samantha will arrange a one-hour **Six Bridges Riverboat Tour of Porto** for all who wish (always worthwhile to see this port city from the water!) and all wine-lovers are encouraged to explore the famous cellars on the Vila Nova Gaia side of the river. Visit the **World of Wine** for an all-senses-on-deck introduction to port wine, take a **wine cellar tour**, or stroll from establishment to establishment for **affordable port wine tastings** (be careful, this stuff is strong!).

Not a wine drinker? Pop into any of the city's numerous **cafés for a pastry** to enjoy al fresco, visit the **Bolhão Market** to try all manner of local delicacies, take the city's **glorious gondola**, tour the **architecturally stunning Palácio da Bolsa**, or visit any of Porto's many famous **photography, art, and history museums**.

Tonight, enjoy a **delicious dinner on your own**. With some of Europe's best chefs and fresh-caught seafood, Porto is known for its cuisine, and Samantha always helps with courtesy dinner reservations!

Want to see a **fado show** before we get to Lisbon? Samantha can help arrange for an intimate experience in Porto.

Spend a second night in comfort in our centrally located, 5-star Porto hotel.

February 23 (Day 3): Douro Valley Vineyard Tours & Wine Tastings!

Soak in valley scenery by coach and boat, tour vineyards, and savor famous wines!



Today, we venture to the **idyllic Portuguese countryside**. The **Douro valley** is a haven of vineyards, olive groves, and river-carved mountain valleys. This region's alpine borders give it a protected microclimate that can reach up to 113° Fahrenheit in summer, but stays at seasonably perfect weather in February!

Our **knowledgeable local guide** will come with us from Porto and share the secrets of this special region, including sharing the evolution and current state of this **important Portuguese industry**. We'll stop at local wine estates for an **intimate tour of the vineyards** from the vintners themselves and (of course), we'll **taste the local wine**. Then, we'll **cruise down the Douro river** to enjoy the valley from the water in an open *rabelo* boat.

Afterwards, we'll relax for an **included lunch of traditional, authentic Portuguese farm cuisine** with **wine and olive oil tastings** (don't forget, this region is an important olive oil producer too!). On our way back, we'll disembark to enjoy **panoramic vistas** of the Douro Valley. We'll arrive back to Porto in the evening and continue enjoying the offerings of this culturally bursting city. Samantha will make **optional small-group dinner reservations** at delicious local restaurants so those who wish can continue meeting fellow travelers in small groups.

Spend a third night in comfort in our centrally located, 5-star Porto hotel.

February 24 (Day 4): Stunning Train Ride & Experience *Fado*!

Experience this lively city and enjoy a nonpareil evening of fado!



Today, we board a train for Portugal's bustling capital, Lisbon! The **Porto-Lisbon rail ride** is one of the **most picturesque journeys in the country**, following the Atlantic coast before winding through the Portuguese countryside. In a short three-hour journey through traditional villages and cities, we'll reach our destination.

Once we arrive, Samantha will provide recommendations for lunch on your own in Lisbon. After lunch, we'll meet our **entertaining and knowledgeable local tour guide, Rita!** Adored by prior groups, Rita is a former soap opera star and one of the most educated people you will ever meet, and she will be with us for the rest of our time in Portugal. She will share legends and lore for the city's **eminent neighborhoods of Baixa and Chiado** as we explore the city on foot, and she knows shortcuts to avoid climbing those hills! The city of Lisbon is built on exploration, conquest and adventure, and its fascinating history is the story of how Portugal came to be what it is today. Plus, Rita will share all the locals' favorite spots for a *pastel de nata*, a bite to eat, or a stroll through the park!

Tonight, soak in the city's **musical heritage** with an **included group dinner** at one of Lisbon's famous ***casas de fado***. Known for soulful, spontaneous singing accompanied by traditional and Portuguese guitars, *fado* melodies come straight from the musicians' soul. Samantha will arrange a performance at one of Lisbon's most authentic venues to enjoy the *fado* right alongside the locals.

Stay the night in comfort in our 4-star downtown Lisbon hotel.

February 25 (Day 5): Walking Tour & Explore Lisbon!

See Lisbon with a local guide and enjoy some well-deserved free time!



This morning, you are at leisure to explore Lisbon on your own, or you can join Samantha and our Lisbon guide Rita for a **tour of the medieval Alfama section** of the city. While most of medieval Lisbon was destroyed in the great earthquake of 1755, the Alfama quarter, high on a hillside and home to the cities' Jews, remained untouched. Here, you can wander through narrow streets and hidden alleys and see the city as it used to be. More than that, Alfama is one of the last bastions of traditional local culture in Lisbon and boasts residents who have lived there for generations.

This afternoon, enjoy **free time in Lisbon**. Want to enjoy a *travesseiro* or *francesinha*? Visit the **Castelo de São Jorge** to soak in the city views? Stroll the **botanical gardens**? Try *ginjinha*? Visit the **Tile Museum** or the **Belém quarter**? Lisbon is your oyster!

Tonight, enjoy a **relaxing dinner on your own** or join others for a restaurant recommended by Samantha!

Stay a second night in comfort in our 4-star downtown Lisbon hotel.

February 26 (Day 6): Sintra Castles & Westernmost Point in Europe!

Take a day trip for nature, castles, & ocean views!



No visit to Portugal is complete without a **visit to Sintra**! Today, we board our **private bus with our local guide Rita in tow** to visit this oasis just outside of Lisbon. Here, the Portuguese elite have their summer getaway palaces, and we'll see the softly rolling hills, valleys, and architectural wonders from the road.

Our first stop of the day will be **Pena Palace**, the fairytale castle built by Ferdinand II for his wife the Queen of Portugal. Featuring six different architectural styles and surrounded by nearly 500 acres of gardens, this castle is worth it for the hilltop views alone. Our knowledgeable local guide will share the tragic, scandalous story of the family behind the castle while we marvel at the storybook archways and crenellations.



We'll have **lunch on our own** in one of Sintra's charming cafés (with naturally a pastry or two on the side!), and we'll have time to explore and shop in the idyllic town of Sintra.

After lunch, we'll visit **Quinta da Regaleira**, a palace (mansion, really) that could not be more different from Pena. Built with symbols of alchemy, Masonry, the Knights Templar, and the Rosicrucians, this fanciful Quinta house and gardens is one of the most visited attractions in Sintra, known especially for its **gorgeous gardens** and the **Initiation Well** whose stairs reach deep into hidden passageways.

After our final palace visit, we head to **Cabo da Roca**, the westernmost point of continental Europe. The stunningly blue surf crashing against these dramatic cliffs is a sight to behold!



Tonight, enjoy a relaxing dinner on your own or with fellow travelers.

Spend a third night in comfort in our 4-star downtown Lisbon hotel.

February 27 (Day 7): Learn to Cook Like a Local!

Today, we learn how to make authentic Portuguese cuisine and enjoy some final time in Lisbon!



This morning, we'll delve into the Portugal's famed gastronomic tradition by **learning how to cook!** We'll join local chefs to **prepare a delicious 3-course meal** using traditional

recipes. Using locally sourced, seasonal ingredients, we'll collaborate on our repast, then feast on the fruits of our labors!

This afternoon, we'll enjoy some last free time in Lisbon. So much to do, so little time! Visit that last museum? Buy that last souvenir? Or, just enjoy a last relaxed dinner on your own!

Spend a fourth night in comfort in our 4-star downtown Lisbon hotel.

February 28 (Day 8): Cork Factory & Évora's Roman Ruins!

Visit the ancient Roman city of Évora and see an incredible cork factory!



Portugal's Alentejo region is the biggest producer of cork in the world, and today we will **leave Lisbon** with our **dedicated guide Rita in tow** to explore a **cork forest and factory**! Over 60% of cork exports in the world originate in Portugal, so cork production is truly unique to this region. We'll tour both the forest and factory, learning about **every aspect of cork production** and the **economics of this local industry**.

After exploring the cork factory, we'll enjoy **lunch (and shopping!) on our own in the authentically Portuguese town of Évora**. Évora has it all: monumental churches, medieval cathedrals, Roman ruins, terrific tiles, unforgettable gastronomy, and top wines. Rita will take us on a **walking tour** to discover the fables and secrets of this storied city. We'll walk the **2,000 year old Roman ruins** from the time of Emperor Augustus, and visit the famed **Capela dos Ossos (Chapel of Bones)**, a chapel decorated with the remains of more than 5,000 human corpses...!



After our unique walking tour, our private bus will take us to our historic abode tonight near the city. **Situated in a historic convent dating back to the 15th century, our 5-star hotel** features indoor and outdoor swimming pools, full spa facilities, and eight hectares of beautiful gardens. After we've had time to freshen up, our hosts will give us a **tour of the historic premises.**

Tonight, we'll convene as a group one last time to enjoy a **sumptuous group farewell dinner** in our hotel's top-rated restaurant.

Spend the night in comfort in our 5-star historic Évora hotel.

March 1 (Day 9): Departure Day

Make your way home on your own schedule OR extend!



Tonight, our private bus will bring us from Évora straight to the Lisbon airport to catch morning flights. For anyone who wishes to extend their time in Lisbon, our bus will make a second stop in downtown Lisbon, and Samantha would gladly help with extension arrangements at our regular Lisbon hotel.

For anyone who wishes to extend to the Azores, read on to hear more about this special tour!

Other Highlights:

- **Avant-Garde Food:** Portuguese food is known for its Michelin-starred chefs, sophisticated palate, and fresh, Mediterranean combinations. You won't be disappointed!
- **Optional Cultural & History Overview Sessions:** Learn all about Portuguese society, history, & cuisine before you go with Samantha!

Extend to the Magical Azores!

March 1-4, 2026



March 1 (Extension Day 1): Transfer to Stunning Ponta Delgada!

Leave the hustle and bustle of the mainland for the magic of São Miguel Island.



Those of us who are extending will fly out from **Lisbon at 2:05pm** and **arrive to Ponta Delgada at 3:35pm**. After our early start, today is a day to rest and recuperate, so we'll check into our centrally located, 5-star hotel and enjoy **free time in Ponta Delgada**.

Ponta Delgada is the capital of the Azores and it is known for its flourishing culinary scene, striking 3-arched city gates, fascinating museums, lush botanical gardens, vibrant

marketplaces, and charming island architecture. Samantha recommends easing into your arrival by **grabbing an ice cream** and **strolling the waterfront or the park at Jardim Botânico António Borges**. For the bold among us, you can also **swim in the ocean** right out front of our hotel!

This evening, enjoy a leisurely dinner on your own with Samantha's recommendations. Ponta Delgada is one of the culinary capitals of Portugal and you'll be spoiled for choice!

Stay the night in comfort in our 5-star Ponta Delgada hotel.

March 2 (Extension Day 2): Crater Lakes & Light Hikes!

Today, we will see the island's top natural sights by bus and on foot!



Today, we board our **private bus** and meet our **phenomenal local guide** to see some of the island's most stunning natural sights. First, we head to the **Sete Cidades region**. This region boasts some of the world's most picturesque sights—photos truly can't do them justice!

We will first take in the **Caldeira das Sete Cidades**, a 7-mile round volcanic crater housing two crater lakes, one green and one blue. We'll have the opportunity to go for a short hike or two to admire the scenery from every angle, and we'll ooh and ahh at the view of the mountains against lakes and sea.

Next, we'll enjoy an **included buffet lunch** (there will be something for everyone!), and we'll continue on to the **north coast cliffs and natural thermal pools at the village of Mosteiros** to see some of the island's most remote and majestic views (don't worry, all of this is within an hour from our accommodations, so we'll be off the bus more than on!)

After visiting Mosteiros, we'll return to Ponta Delgada with time to explore the city's variegated offerings.

Stay a second night in comfort at our 5-star Ponta Delgada hotel.

March 3 (Extension Day 3): Tea Factory & Hot Springs!

See a gorgeous tea plantation and soak in a delightful hot spring.



This morning, we once again board our private bus with our local guide, this time heading to the east side of the island. A short drive will take us to **Europe's only tea plantation!** We'll enjoy a **tea factory tour** to learn all about the growth, production, and history of tea, and afterward we'll have the opportunity to **do a tea tasting**. Any who are interested can do a **stunningly beautiful one-mile hike** through the tea plantations.

By this point we'll be hungry, so we'll continue on our way for an **included lunch of the island specialty, cozido das furnas!** This is a traditional meat and vegetable stew cooked underground in the hot springs using volcanic heat. Dietary restrictions will be accommodated as usual.

After lunch, we'll visit **Terra Nostra, one of the island's most famous hot spring sites.** The volcanic water is a steady 104° Fahrenheit, and the waters are rich in iron and other minerals that are beneficial for the skin. (Note that these iron-rich waters can stain your swimsuit, so bring a dark-colored suit or an old suit you don't care about!)

Not only are these hot springs relaxing and beautiful, but they are situated in the middle of **the largest and most beautiful botanical garden** on São Miguel, featuring more than 260 species of camellias, an extensive exhibit on native flora, and much more. Soak in the hot springs? Stroll the gardens? Both? You decide! We'll have plenty of time.

After our relaxing stop, we will see the one-of-a-kind **Lagoa das Furnas**. Surrounded by steaming vents and pools of bubbling hot water where we can see pots cooking stew such as we had for lunch, this lake is known as the crown jewel of São Miguel island because of its tranquility and surrounding floral vegetation. You can relax by the lake, or those who want to stretch their legs can do a short walk by the lake through peaceful bamboo forests.

After our full yet tranquil day, we'll head back to our home base of Ponta Delgada via a gorgeous south coast drive to enjoy another delicious meal on our own.

Stay a third night in comfort at our 5-star Ponta Delgada hotel.

March 4 (Extension Day 4): More Stunning Scenery & Farewell!

Today, we'll see some last stunning scenery and a fascinating ceramics factory before departing.



This is our last day on the island, and we'll make the most of it! In the morning, we'll leave our hotel to visit **Cerâmica Vieira**, a fascinating ceramics factory where we can see every stage of the ceramics production process including artists painting each item by hand. The artists are friendly and open to pictures! We'll have time to shop for hand-painted souvenirs if desired.

Then, we'll head to the stunning **Lagoa do Fogo** for a last taste of the nature for which the Azores is famous. Lagoa do Fogo is a crater lake within the Água de Pau Massif stratovolcano and one of the must-see sights for visitors to São Miguel. After a **delightful seaside lunch on your own in Vila Franco do Campo** (and perhaps a **small hike** if time permits), our bus will bring us directly to the airport. We'll arrive in time to catch evening flights.

Sleep in your own bed tonight, dreaming of your next Samantha Trip!



About Samantha: Samantha Mandel is a seasoned guide and travel organizer who has developed and guided educational experiences for adults and high schoolers all over the world. Based in Massachusetts, Samantha has a dedicated fan base due to her meticulous trip planning, knowledgeable guiding, and boundless enthusiasm (for reviews, see the back of the brochure). Samantha holds a Linguistics degree from Dartmouth College, and speaks 5 languages including Portuguese. In her spare time, Samantha is a 4-season hiking leader for the Appalachian Mountain Club, for whom she leads many outdoor-themed weekends. This will be Samantha's fourth tour to Portugal.

About Samantha Trips: Samantha Trips is a boutique tour operator that cares for each traveler personally, brings community members together through educational travel, and tailors experiences to individuals. Founded in June 2022, Samantha Trips have met with [rave reviews](#). Despite being a young company, many travelers have completed their fourth or even fifth Samantha Trip! Samantha Mandel is the founder & director of Samantha Trips. Samantha Trips will offer tours in 2026 to Sicily, Bryce & Zion, Iceland, Norway & Denmark, and more. To check out other Samantha Trips experiences, visit samanthatrips.com.

Early-Bird Pricing (check postmarked on or before August 25, 2025):

- 9-Day Tour: \$4,799/person
- \$999 surcharge for single occupancy

Regular Pricing (check postmarked after August 25, 2025):

- 9-Day Tour: \$4,899/person
- \$999 surcharge for single occupancy

Azores Extension Pricing:

- 4-day Extension: \$1,769/person for double occupancy
- Single Supplement: \$299

Samantha Club Travelers: If you are in the Samantha Club, you are eligible for a \$100 discount, and if you register for a second Samantha Trip in the same calendar year, you will be eligible for yet another \$100 combo discount!

Help Finding a Roommate: If you wish to be paired with a roommate, Samantha is happy to assist based on availability and preferences. If you choose this option, please pay the single occupancy surcharge and Samantha will refund you if a suitable roommate is found. You will always have the opportunity to speak to potential roommates before finalizing a match.

Paying in Installments: If you wish to split your payment into two equal installments, you may do so for a \$100 surcharge, split evenly across both payments. The second installment is due on September 15, 2025.

Deadline to register: September 15, 2025

Note: This trip has 27 spaces and it has historically filled quickly. Spots will be filled on a first-pay, first-serve basis.

The following is included in the price:

- Hotels
- Community experience & good company
- Local tour guides in Porto, Douro Valley, Lisbon, Sintra, and Évora
- Private bus for Douro Valley, Sintra, and Évora day trips
- Train transfer between Porto and Lisbon
- Douro Valley Wine Tastings & private river boat cruise
- Lisbon *Fado* Experience and 6 Bridges River Cruise in Porto
- Private cork factory tour
- Cooking class in Lisbon
- Pre-trip seminars on Portuguese history, society, language, & cuisine
- Personal attention from Samantha before, during, and after the tour
- Breakfast every day and 5 additional group dining experiences
- Entrance to Pena Palace, Quinta da Regaleira, & Chapel of Bones

The following is included in the Azores extension price:

- 3-night stay at a centrally located, 5-star hotel in Ponta Delgada
- Private bus or minibus & expert local tour guide
- Tea Factory entrance, tour, & tasting
- Two lunches including *cozido das furnas* lunch
- Breakfast every day
- Entrance to hot springs and botanical gardens with towel rental
- Personal attention from Samantha before, during, and after the tour

To secure your spot:

- 1) Complete the online registration form and travel waiver here:

<https://forms.gle/8IgUh2R9ND9nxG5b7>

Note: You are not registered until your payment is received, and spots will be filled on a first-pay, first-serve basis. Space for this trip is projected to fill quickly.

- 2) Write out your deposit check for the correct amount (see pricing information on the previous page). Checks should be made out to “Samantha Trips, LLC” with “Portugal 2026” in the memo line. Checks can be mailed or dropped off to:

Samantha Trips, LLC
24 Braeland Ave, #2
Newton, MA 02459

Venmo can be accepted to @samanthatrips for an additional 2.3% fee (please add this to your payment). Deposits of \$1,000 + 2.3% fee = \$1,023 can also be Venmo'ed to @samanthatrips to save your space, and then you may follow up with the balance in a check.

Refund Policy: Withdrawals before September 15, 2025 will incur a \$500 cancellation fee, after which Samantha will refund all deposits made on your behalf that can be retrieved from vendors. No refunds will be possible after September 15, 2025. Travelers are highly encouraged to purchase travel insurance policies that meet your specific needs, and Samantha is happy to advise. Should the trip need to be canceled, Samantha Trips will return all deposits that can be retrieved from vendors and will not charge a cancellation fee. Should the trip not receive enough registrants to run, Samantha Trips will return all deposits in full.

FAQs

Why travel with Samantha Trips?

Rave-Reviewed: For reviews about what makes a Samantha Trip experience special, see the back of the brochure or read public reviews on [Samantha Trips' Google Business profile](#).

Personalized Care: Samantha runs a local business, so she provides each traveler with personalized care before, during, and after the trip. Her goal is for you to have a good time! She works hard to tailor trips to each traveler, with itineraries and daily schedules that are more flexible than most tours.

Fabulous Community: Unlike other tours made up of strangers from all over the country, Samantha Trips travelers are usually locally connected. Samantha places strong emphasis on community-building, and many travelers join with lifelong friends or make new ones while traveling.

High-Quality Itineraries and Guides: Samantha Trips offer hand-crafted itineraries, with each stop personally selected and vetted by Samantha and composed into a cohesive whole. All guides are also hand-selected.

I have friends/family who want to come. Do they have to live in a particular community?

No! Samantha Trips' only requirement is that travelers be 18+ with a valid passport.

What will the weather be like in Portugal in February?

February is spring in Portugal, everything is in bloom, and the weather is seasonably perfect! Therefore, Samantha usually brings groups at this time. Most of our destinations will have highs around 60° (even the Douro Valley, known for its furnace-like heat in summer!), and the buzzing tourist crowds will be fewer.

What kind of hotels will we stay in?

Portugal is all about comfort and relaxation, and our hotels will be luxurious. We will stay at 5-star hotels in Porto and Évora and a top-rated 4 star hotel in Lisbon. The Porto and Lisbon hotels are located right in the middle of downtown and walkable to all attractions. Samantha has personally visited many hotels in both cities and chose establishments with top-notch concierge service and facilities.

How many times will we change hotels?

Only twice! We will spend three nights at our hotel in Porto (or four for those arriving early), four nights at our hotel in Lisbon, and one at our unique historic hotel in Évora. Unlike other travel destinations that require long bus rides or constant shifting of lodging, Portugal is a small country and excursions are doable as day trips. You can settle into your room, relax, and enjoy your vacation!

What if I want even more time in Lisbon or Porto?

Lisbon and Porto are fascinating cities and Samantha encourages you to extend! She will be happy to help you extend your stay in either of our hotels at our group rate if you want more time to explore.

I am coming on the trip but I'm not sure if I want to do the Azores extension.

When is my deadline to decide?

No problem! You can sign up for the main trip now, and the deadline to decide about the Azores extension is September 15, 2025.

Do you need a minimum number of people to run the Azores extension?

Yes, the Azores extension requires 10 participating travelers to run.

I want to come on this trip! What should I get started on besides registering and paying?

Make sure your passport will remain valid through the end of June 2026.

Can Samantha help me with my flight bookings?

Of course, Samantha is always happy to advise if you have questions!

How much do flights cost for our dates?

As of the time of the writing of this brochure, multi-city flights into Porto and out of Lisbon are available for \$681 via Boston and around \$781 via Charlotte.

Why doesn't Samantha book flights for the group?

Many travelers choose to come early, stay late, use miles, fly in and out of different locations, or upgrade, so individual flight bookings allow everyone to be flexible. Group pricing on flights are also often higher than individual prices since airlines take the average price of lower- and higher-priced seats in group bookings.

What pre-trip education will be offered?

Samantha will offer a series of pre-trip seminars on Portuguese culture, society, history, language, and cuisine for those who are interested. These will be great opportunities to meet fellow travelers before the trip!

How about the food? Will Samantha accommodate my dietary restrictions?

We will be traveling to culinary meccas with delicious options, and Samantha expects to be able to accommodate most dietary restrictions on this tour. If you have concerns about your diet or if your diet is particularly complex, please speak with Samantha in advance.

Will Samantha give us information about what to pack and how to prepare?

Yes! She has taken many groups abroad, and will tell you everything you need to know - packing lists, using money in Portugal, health and safety, insurance plans, phone plans, etc.

What is the maximum number of travelers you can take?

27.

What is the minimum number of travelers you need to run the trip?

18.

How many people will there be per hotel room?

The base price assumes double occupancy. If you don't know anyone on the trip but wish to have a roommate, Samantha is happy to pair you up according to availability and your preferences (in this case, please pay the single surcharge and it will be refunded if a suitable roommate can be found). If you would prefer your own room, Samantha is happy to accommodate you. There is an extra cost of \$999 associated with a single room. You will always have the opportunity to speak with any potential roommate matches before finalizing.

Is the trip geared towards a particular fitness level?

Travelers usually encompass a range of ages and fitness levels, and therefore this trip is not designed to be physically demanding. That said, Portugal is hilly and many sites will include walking on cobblestoned surfaces and/or with an incline. In

order to participate in every trip activity as listed in the brochure, travelers should be able to walk one mile at a time and 1-3 miles in a day on cobblestoned, sometimes hilly surfaces. Our walking tours will move at a roughly 2 mile per hour pace, which is a relaxed pace for most adults with normal mobility. If you are not sure if meet these requirements and you wish to participate, please reach out to Samantha to discuss possible accommodations/modifications. Samantha always does her best to make travel possible for all.

I have a question that's not answered here!

Feel free to get in touch with Samantha at samantha@samanthatrips.com or (617) 564-1003.

What do travelers have to say about Samantha Trips?

Samantha's trips are wonderful fun. I've been to Portugal and Iceland with her. She's thorough in ensuring we see impressive highlights, learn about the culture, and taste delicious local cuisine. Her prep sessions cover everything from logistics and packing to language, history, and literature. Her amazing ability to create a family feel, support each individual's needs, and share her joy of travel goes well beyond any trip I've taken with any other tour group. Friends who know Portugal are very impressed when I tell them about the breadth of experiences and sites included in our Samantha Trip. She created memories for a lifetime and I heartily recommend her trips!

-LL

Amazing itinerary, extremely thoroughly and well-planned as well as real-time adjustments to accommodate changing customer needs and interests, weather, etc. Incredibly informative guides, wonderful trip leader and great group chemistry and camaraderie ... a mix that will be hard to beat! In fact, one measure of how phenomenal the trip was is that 10 days later we are STILL talking about it.

-Joe H.

Could not imagine a better tour leader out there!! Samantha's meticulous attention to detail and continuous planning, enthusiasm, care and compassion, and eagerness to share knowledge were all above and beyond!

-Joan H.

We did a lot (but not too much) every day and the variety of activities ensured that there was something for everyone each day. The food was great, both the organized meals and the restaurants Samantha recommended. The hotels were awesome and clearly places where locals stay. Everything Samantha did to foster cohesion in the group brought the group together. The camaraderie was one of the most enjoyable aspects of the trip.

-Gina H.

SOOOOO organized. Nothing was left to chance. Samantha's footwork in preparation showed through. Although the bus rides seemed long on paper, between the landscapes and the guiding the miles flew by.

-Mark K.

Excellent itinerary and pre-trip information was invaluable. Samantha attempted to meet everyone's needs beyond what I have ever experienced.

-Barbara K.

Extremely organized. Not bored at all. I loved that there was not a lot of down time. Samantha is a phenomenal guide! Every question that the group had she had an answer for! She kept us updated on time to arrive at a destination and the amount of time we had at the destination. The guides (hand-picked) were fabulous also. She was just GREAT! The whole trip was a blast! Sorry but I don't think it can improve; it was perfect.

-Lisa F.

The trip was amazing!! It is one we will be talking about for a long time. Samantha's directions and planning all proved to be spot on. I cannot even answer what my favorite part of the trip was; there were too many memorable moments.

-Tom and Marla C.

It was an absolutely wonderful experience thanks mostly to Samantha and also to the awesome guide and great group of fellow travelers. I LOVED the immersive tour experience and SAMANTHA.

-Eva P.

Everything was well planned and coordinated. I enjoyed that our days were reasonably full, but not overloaded.

-Dave N.

This was the first time I have traveled with a tour group. I was hesitant to be with a large group of people, and it was a wonderful group of mixed ages. Everyone had a youthful spirit and was excited to try everything. Great selection of activities for all levels to participate, and excellent local tour guide was appreciated. Planning was outstanding. A very positive experience!

-Desiree F.

This was a first group trip for us. It set a high bar for any future trips we might do! We felt that every aspect was well covered. Samantha picked great locations to visit, prepared the group well in the meetings before the trip, and we met new people that we enjoyed spending time with.

-Bridgida K. and David F.

"It was the best group trip that I have been a part of. Samantha was our smiling leader, always on top of the details for each participant and the group, making sure

things happened smoothly. We were in good hands with Samantha, she is extremely knowledgeable.”

-Jane D.

“Wonderful trip. I loved it, loved it, loved it. Amazing sights, great people, good weather, good food, knowledgeable guide. The fact that this trip had so many travelers from Newton and the surrounding area was a bonus. It was nice to have the opportunity to meet the travelers in advance of the trip.”

-Lesley M.

An amazing, educational, super-fun trip and CONGRATULATIONS on a job exceptionally well done! We are fans :-)) Extraordinary guides and leadership, warm, personal, super-prepared attention to detail by the leaders, and excellent orientation sessions. Now that I think about it, those three prep sessions were essentially a mini-course in Portuguese history and culture, so kudos to Samantha for bringing that alive. Guides, Samantha especially, were attentive to the needs of individuals, checking in with everyone constantly. Communication was excellent in all stages of planning and at all stages of the trip.

-Jim H.

"Superb. Would be happy to travel anywhere with Samantha! She was steady, patient, helpful, informative, and inspired confidence and community building. I hope to continue to see her.”

-Lorri L.

"I have been on several group trips before and this trip was even better than I expected. The value was excellent and I especially enjoyed making new friends in my community!”

-Lisa J.

All the details were taken care of, so we could just sit back and relax and enjoy! Just an awesome trip. Samantha had checked out everything ahead of time and had so much knowledge about the destination, in addition to our tour guide. She took care of any developing situation immediately, ensuring everyone had a good time. She was always cheerful and upbeat.

-Marie-Louise P.

Meticulous planning; Samantha is a born tour leader!

-Harvey N.

I learned more about Iceland on this trip than I thought possible, and formed several new friendships! We received a lot for the cost. I was VERY pleased with the program! This might just be the best trip I've ever taken... and I've traveled a lot!

-Ron S.

As long as timing works for us, you can pre-book us on any future trips you do! Superb! I'll admit I had some reservations going with a group of people I did not know, but it turned out to be very enjoyable. I look forward to maintaining some new friendships that I wouldn't have made without the trip.

-Ken B.

I would follow Samantha anywhere! I loved this trip! I'll be coming on your next one wherever you go!

-Carol Ann F.

Well organized in advance by Samantha but flexible as needed; terrific guide, and driver; variety of activities and experiences in a variety of locations; right group size. I loved that most of the participants were relatively local and all were interesting. Make this a staple of your offerings!

-Celia M.

Far better than most organizations offer. Samantha is a gifted leader and organizer.

-Steve L.

What Participants Had to Say about Traveling with Samantha:

Samantha made the trip for me. Her preparation was flawless!

-Carol Ann F.

Superb. Samantha obviously put her heart and soul into planning the trip and her enthusiasm is contagious. She's a gem! She's smart, very well-informed and an exceptional people-person. I observed her making connections with everyone on the trip and she always made herself available for any questions, guidance, etc. She played an important role in setting the tone in an extremely positive, upbeat way.

-Ken B.

Hard to imagine her doing a better job!

-Ron S.

Wow! The best. Overwhelming thorough research, preparation, personally scouting all the sites ahead of time, preparing the group mentally, educationally, and logistically, friendly, playful, knowledgeable, helpful, always checking in with people. Samantha should be proud of her work on this trip! She handled everything with grace and professionalism.

-Jim H.

Phenomenal; loved her enthusiasm and clear attention to details in advance and during the trip; she seemed to check in with everyone individually every so often and was very responsive to questions, concerns in advance and during the trip.

-Celia M.

Samantha is truly wonderful. Her enthusiasm and scholarly approach is infectious. Brava! Our guide was a performer. Between him and Samantha, it was really a college course in our destination's history. Very well-led.

-Annie L.

Samantha is a terrific trip planner and guide. Her wonderful personality, her gift with people, her deep appreciation of history and languages and her impeccable research and planning really made the trip. I highly recommend it!

-Amy B.

Excellent. She prepared us well in advance, selected interesting and varied activities and sites for us to visit, was flexible along the way...wanted everything to go well and made it happen. Her attention to detail was outstanding. I appreciated the email updates and reminders in the days leading up to the trip. She did a great job circulating around the group during each day to check in with people, too.

- Lisa H.

S-T-E-L-L-A-R. The best!!!

-Susan R.

We used every minute to enjoy and explore. Samantha and our guide kept us on track so that we didn't miss anything, while allowing us time to relax. Samantha has such amazing energy. She managed to keep us all happy and organized. She's smart, kind, and is a good part of the reason my wife and I decided to take the trip.

-Jim R.

Samantha is the best. Her enthusiasm is infectious, the group of people was great, and our guide was excellent.

-Jim S.