

Republica Portuguesa

Did You Know?

- Many historians believe that Portuguese sailors reached what is now the United States decades before Columbus did. Dighton Rock, found in the Tauton River in Massachusetts, is covered in Portuguese carvings that might predate Columbus's discovery.
- The oldest sauropod dinosaur footprints in the world were found in Portugal. The giant *herbivore* (plant eater) left the tracks 175 million years ago.
- Portugal's Iberian lynx is the only European big cat. It is one of the world's most endangered felines.
- In Portugal, if you pinch your earlobe and shake it gently while raising your eyebrows it means something is very good.
- There are four representatives in the government to represent Portuguese citizens living in other countries.
- The University of Coimbra is over seven hundred years old. It's one of the oldest universities in Europe where students still study.
- Lisbon's 25 April Bridge across the Tagus River is very similar to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge and was built by the same company that constructed San Francisco's Oakland Bay Bridge.
- Bartolomeu de Gusmão invented the world's first hot air balloon in Lisbon in 1709. The balloon contained a candle to heat the air and make the balloon rise.

Flag

The flag of Portugal was most recently adopted on 30 June 1911. The white and blue shields in the center stand for different events in Portuguese history, especially battles to win its independence. The yellow castles symbolize victories over the Moors in Portugal's earliest days. The white dots inside the shields represent Christ's importance in Portugal and his aid in battle. The yellow sphere in the background represents Portuguese explorers and their discoveries. The green in the flag stands for hope, and the red celebrates the courage of the nation's heroes.



National Image

The *Galo de Barcelos* (Rooster of Barcelos) is one of the most popular themes of Portuguese folk art. The rooster is part of a legend about a weary traveler who was mistaken for a thief and sentenced to death. As his last wish, he asked to be taken to the home of the judge who sentenced him. He prayed that the cooked chicken sitting on the table would stand up and crow to prove his innocence. To everyone's surprise, that is exactly what happened. Images of the rooster appear throughout Portugal and represent honesty, trust, and integrity.



People and Places

Land and Climate

Area (sq. mi.)
35,556
Area (sq. km.)
92,090



Portugal is on the west coast of the Iberian *Peninsula* (a piece of land surrounded mostly by water but still connected to the mainland), which it shares with Spain. Spain is the only country that borders Portugal. Portugal is about the size of Hungary or the state of Indiana. Portugal's western and southern border is the Atlantic Ocean. There are 1,114 miles (1,793 km) of coastline. The Tagus (Tejo) River, which runs from Spain to Lisbon, divides the country into two zones. In the north are mountain ranges. The climate is cool and rainy, though summers may be warm. In the south, the land is less rugged, with hills and valleys. The southern climate is warmer and more moderate. There are long dry seasons in some parts of the south. Crops can be grown on about 25 percent of Portugal's land, and about a third is covered with forests. The Azores and Madeira islands, in the Atlantic Ocean, are also part of Portugal.

Population

Population
10,825,309



Most Portuguese trace their roots back to areas around the Mediterranean Sea. The population also includes descendants of the Moors from northern Africa. Many people from Portugal's former colonies in Africa and Brazil have migrated to Portugal. Today, there are large numbers of people from China and east Europe (particularly Romania and Ukraine) living in Portugal as well. It is common for Portuguese citizens to leave Portugal to look for better jobs in other countries. Two-thirds of the population lives near the coast, and nearly one-third of the population (including most older people) lives in the countryside or in small towns.

Language

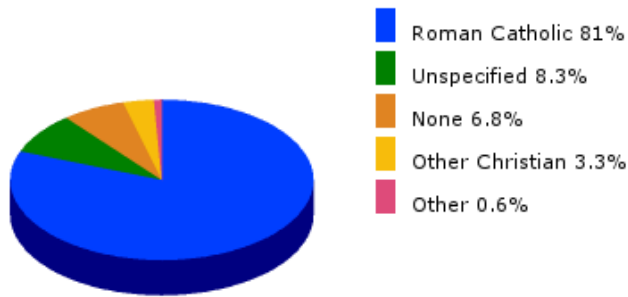
The Romans brought the Latin language with them to Portugal in 27 BC, and modern Portuguese is based on this Latin. More than 200 million people throughout the world now speak Portuguese as a result of Portugal's colonization. Several different *accents* (ways of speaking) can be heard on the mainland and in the islands. Many Portuguese speakers also understand Spanish because the languages are similar. English and French are taught in schools.



Can You Say It in Portuguese?

Hello	<i>Ola</i>	(oh-LAH)
Good-bye	<i>Boa-tarde</i>	(BOH-uh-tard)
Please	<i>Faz favor</i>	(FAWSH fuh-VOR)
Thank you	<i>Obrigado</i>	(o-bree-GAH-doo)
Yes	<i>Sim</i>	(seeng)
No	<i>Não</i>	(nowng)

Religion



Source: *The World Factbook 2016*. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2016.




The majority of Portuguese are Roman Catholic, but only a small percentage attends church regularly. People tend to be more religious in the northern part of the country than in the southern part. Catholics from around the world come to Fátima, a town where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared several times to three young children in 1917. When babies are baptized, they are each given a *padrinho* and *madrinha* (“godfather” and “godmother”). Godparents are selected to help children understand their religion and to take care of them if their parents die. The Portuguese have the freedom to join any religion they choose. There are small numbers of other Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews in Portugal.

History




Time Line

800 BC	
700 BC	Celts from central Europe settle the Iberian Peninsula; eventually Greeks and Carthaginians also settle in the south of the peninsula
218	The Second Punic War begins and continues for 16 years; the Romans eventually defeat the Carthaginians
210	Romans invade, and what is now Portugal becomes part of the Roman Empire
AD 700	
AD 711	Muslim Moors from northern Africa invade the region; many inhabitants convert to Islam
1100	
1143	Portugal is recognized as an independent nation under King Afonso Henriques



1270	Most of modern Portugal's boundaries are established when Afonso III reconquers lost territory; eventually the territory is named after the city of Portucale (the basis for the name Portugal)	
1400		
1419	Prince Henry the Navigator gathers explorers to claim new territories for Portugal and to develop trade routes	
1441	The first ships return from West Africa with gold, beginning Portugal's colonization in Africa	
1492	Thousands of Spanish Jews settle in Portugal to escape religious persecution	
1494	The Treaty of Tordesilhas is signed, dividing the unexplored world between Spain and Portugal	
1496	Jews are forced to leave Portugal or convert to Christianity	
1498	Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama discovers a route to India leading to colonization in other parts of Asia and boosting the important spice trade	
1500		
1500	Pedro Álvarez Cabral claims the coast of Brazil for Portugal	
1539	The Spanish Inquisition reaches Portugal; 1,400 people are condemned for <i>heresy</i> (denying what the Catholic Church said was true)	
1580	Spain invades Portugal; many Portuguese territories are lost	
1600		
1640	Many Portuguese rebel against Spanish rule; Portugal regains its independence	
1755	A large earthquake hits Lisbon, killing five thousand people immediately; many more die in the following weeks from fire, disease, tidal waves, and famine; the city is almost completely destroyed	
1807	Napoleon invades Portugal, and the Portuguese royal family is transferred to the colony of Brazil	
1808	British forces arrive to help the Portuguese defeat the French	

1816	Portugal is run by a Regency Council led by British general William Beresford	
1820	The Portuguese rebel against the British Regency	
1822	Portugal is again ruled by a <i>monarch</i> , a king or queen	
1900		
1910	The monarchy is officially replaced by a <i>democratic</i> (government by the people) republic	
1911	Portugal adopts a new constitution separating the Catholic Church and the government	
1916	About 40,000 Portuguese troops are sent to fight Germany in World War I; many are killed as a result of poor training and faulty equipment	
1926	A military <i>coup</i> (an overthrow of the government) brings António de Oliveira Salazar to power; Portugal's government goes from a <i>democracy</i> to a <i>dictatorship</i> (a government with one person controlling the entire country)	
1939	Portugal remains <i>neutral</i> (it doesn't choose one side or the other) when World War II breaks out, but it allows the Allies to build military bases in its territory	
1949	Portugal joins the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	
1955	Portugal is admitted into the United Nations	
1961	Protests erupt in the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea, and Mozambique; the cost of fighting wars in its African colonies strains Portugal's budget	
1968	Salazar's government loses power, ending Europe's longest <i>dictatorship</i>	

1974	A military group, led by General António de Sp'nola, takes control of the government in the Revolution of the Carnations; <i>democracy</i> is restored and most colonies are granted independence	
1975–76	Over a million Portuguese colonists leave Africa, many of them with no possessions at all	
1976	The constitution is revised to give the president more power and to allow all women to vote	
1982	The government is officially no longer run by the military; the constitution is revised to reduce the role of president	
1986	Portugal is admitted into the European Community, which later becomes the European Union (EU)	
1999	Portugal's last colony, Macau, is <i>ceded</i> (given) back to China	
2000		
2002	Portugal's currency, the <i>escudo</i> , is replaced by the <i>euro</i>	
2005	About 27 wildfires rage in Portugal, destroying homes and land and killing at least 15 people; members of the EU step in to help	
2008	In a controversial move, the government votes to bring Portuguese spelling more in line with Brazilian practice	
2011	Portugal becomes the third European Union (EU) country (after Greece and Ireland) to apply for EU financial aid to help manage its debt; hundreds of thousands of workers go on strike to protest raising taxes and government spending cuts	
PRESENT		

Early Colonization

Because of its location on the edge of the Iberian *Peninsula* (a piece of land surrounded mostly by water but still connected to the mainland), Portugal has been conquered and occupied by many cultures. Two of the most important groups were the Romans and the Moors. Both left a lasting impact on Portuguese culture. The Romans came to Portugal in 210 BC. They added the whole *peninsula*, including what is now Portugal, to the many territories already under their control. The Romans didn't ask the *indigenous* Lusitanians (those already living on the *peninsula*) if they wanted to join their empire. The Lusitanians did not welcome Roman rule. A warrior chief named Viriato led the fight against the Romans. He held the Romans back from fully claiming the *peninsula* for decades until he was murdered by three of his servants who were paid by the Romans to betray him. Viriato is remembered in Portugal as the nation's first great hero.

Once the Romans conquered the entire *peninsula*, they organized it into *provinces* (similar to states), each governed by a group of Roman leaders. Portugal also became a part of the Roman Empire culturally, a process called *romanization*. Schools were opened where students learned Latin (the language of the Romans) and Roman skills like brick making and iron smelting. The Romans brought new ways of building roads and bridges, and they also introduced Christianity.

Eventually, the Romans began losing their control over the Iberian *Peninsula*. Various groups moved in and challenged the Romans. In AD 711 the Muslim Moors from northern Africa took control. Many people converted to Islam, the religion of the Moors. Farmers learned to grow crops that the Moors brought with them, such as citrus fruits and rice. The Moors spoke Arabic, and soon Arabic words became part of the Portuguese language. Many cities in Portugal still have Arabic names. The Moors maintained a large presence in the Iberian *Peninsula* for the next 250 years.

Reconquest

When the Moors began fighting among themselves for control of the Iberian Peninsula, the Christians, who were gaining power in the northern part of Portugal, took the opportunity to rise to power. The war was long and hard, but the Christians eventually dominated. It is said that in 1085, Alfonso VI, king of the Christian kingdoms, won the battle for Seville in a game of chess against Seville's Moorish leader. Alfonso then turned to other leaders in Europe for help in driving out the Moors. He was aided by Henri of Burgundy and his forces.

In exchange for Henri's help, Alfonso allowed him to marry his daughter Teresa, and Henri was given the territory called Portucale (por-too-KAH-le) County. This became what is now Portugal. Alfonso Henriques, Henri and Teresa's son, eventually set out to make Portucale its own kingdom. His mother didn't want Portucale to become independent, so the two went to war. Alfonso Henriques defeated his mother's armies, and in 1143, Portugal declared its independence. Organizing the territory was a long and rocky process. A series of kings stabilized Portugal and prepared it to become a powerful nation.



Discoveries

When things quieted down at home, Portugal began to look outward. For years, explorers had searched for a way to sail to India to bring back valuable spices. Countries were also eager to claim lands that hadn't yet been discovered. In 1419, Prince Henry the Navigator gathered together the best ship builders, map makers, sailors, and navigators. His goal was to sail as far as possible, beyond the world that people knew at the time. There were many myths about the unknown. Some believed that humans couldn't survive in most of the world, that it would either be too hot or too cold. Others believed that the world was flat and that foolish sailors would simply fall over the edge. Henry's first discoveries were small—*uninhabited islands* (islands where no one lived). But soon his ships were returning from West Africa with gold and slaves.



Although Henry died in 1460, Portugal continued to send out explorers. One of their biggest accomplishments came in 1498, when Vasco da Gama reached India. Portugal then had control of the slave and gold trades with Africa and the spice trade with India. The small nation became powerful and wealthy.

Salazar

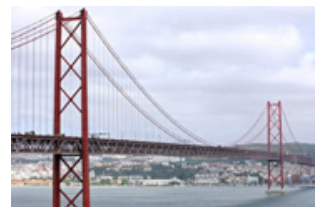
By 1926, Portugal's government was again having troubles. A military uprising took over the government. In 1932, António de Oliveira Salazar became prime minister and established a *dictatorship*, a government in which one person has all of the power. This would be one of the longest *dictatorships* in European history, lasting 36 years. Although Salazar was a strict ruler, Portugal made some progress during this time. Roads, airports, harbors, and hospitals improved. A lot of the money Portugal owed to other countries was paid off, and dams and bridges were built. But Salazar's government did not allow freedom of speech, and Portugal was cut off from the rest of the world by Salazar's strict rules. Portugal also lost many of its colonies, and wars broke out in Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea. The people in these colonies rebelled against Portuguese rule, so Portugal sent troops to put down the rebellions.



Tired of the fighting in Africa, a Portuguese military group took control of the government in 1974. This change in power was called the Revolution of the Carnations after the red carnation flowers placed in the barrels of the soldiers' guns to celebrate the victory. General António de Spínola took control and established *democracy* (government by the people) in Portugal once more. This is the same form of government that continues today.

Portugal Today

Today Portugal has no overseas colonies. Most were granted independence soon after the revolution. Its last colony, Macau, was returned to China in 1999. In 1986, Portugal joined the European Community, later called the European Union, an organization that works toward unifying and strengthening Europe. Portugal is still one of the poorest countries in the European Union, but the economy is growing and leaders are hopeful that it will overcome *inflation* (rising prices), national debt, and unemployment. One of Portugal's most important investments is in developing power sources to replace oil, such as wind, *solar* (powered by the sun), and *hydroelectric* (using the energy from running water) power.



Lifestyle

Games and Sports

Soccer is by far the most popular sport in Portugal. There are TVs all over, and when the national team plays, nearly everyone watches the match in their workplace. Almost every town has a soccer team, and almost every person has a favorite professional soccer club. Most boys play soccer; girls play field hockey, badminton, and *andebol* (a cross between soccer and basketball).

Portuguese love to spend time at the beach swimming, and many young people surf or dive. In the summer, families and even kids in daycare centers may spend the better part of a month going to the beach or to swimming pools. Kids also love playing PlayStation and computer games, surfing on the internet, and playing a game called *matraquilhos*, in which little playing pieces represent soccer players.

Portugal is famous for its horses. Portuguese bullfighters show off their horseback riding skills by dodging the charging bull. In Portugal, the bull is not killed as it is in other countries. At certain kinds of bullfights, young people form a line and grab the bull by its horns when it charges, trying their best to hang on and slow or stop the bull. Bicycle racing, especially the Tour de France and the *Volta a Portugal* (Tour of Portugal) are followed closely. Many types of auto racing are popular, and people gather along raceways or in front of televisions to watch.



Holidays

Carnaval (which means “goodbye to meat”) is celebrated right before *Lent*, a time when many Catholics give up meat on Fridays and *Ash Wednesday* (the first day of Lent) to prepare themselves for Easter. Each town celebrates *Carnaval* a little bit differently, but they all have colorful parades, costumes, dances, and street parties called *arraiais*. *Carnaval* is a noisy time, with fireworks going off throughout the day. Each year a *Carnaval* Queen is chosen, and she gets to start the festival the next year. After *Carnaval*, Portuguese celebrate Easter. Traditional foods are an important part of Easter. Friends and family gather to share special meals like roast lamb, *folar* (a kind of bread stuffed with meat and colored hard-boiled eggs), candied almonds, and other sweets.



Christmas is an exciting time in Portugal. Families and friends get together to decorate, sing carols, and prepare special feasts. In the early hours of Christmas Day, there is a special feast called *consoada*. Santa Claus is not a big part of Portuguese Christmas celebrations, but this is slowly changing as more people adopt this tradition. Portuguese children usually leave their shoes out for baby Jesus or Father Christmas to fill with small presents and treats. On 6 January, Portuguese celebrate the end of the Christmas season by eating the *bolo-rei* (king’s cake). The cake is round with a hole in the middle and looks like a crown. A bean is baked inside, and whoever finds the bean in their slice plays for the *bolo-rei* the next year.

Food

Food is a big part of Portuguese life, and many Portuguese spend more money on food than on rent. Most food is purchased fresh daily at local markets. Since Portugal is so close to the sea, fish and shellfish are eaten often. One of the most popular dishes is *bacalhau* (dried salted cod fish). People say there are enough recipes for *bacalhau* to cook it differently each day for a whole year. Other commonly eaten fish are sardines, mackerel, and swordfish.



Pork is an important element in the Portuguese diet, and most parts of the pig are eaten. Lamb, beef, chicken, and rabbit are also common. Chicken is cooked in many different ways, such as in *cabidela* (chicken with rice boiled in blood). Soups are common too. *Caldo verde* (made with potatoes, cabbage, olive oil, and sausage) is a rich green color and probably the most famous soup. Portuguese primarily use onion, garlic, salt, and bay leaves to season their food; pepper, cinnamon, and saffron are sometimes used too.

Breakfast, *pequeno almoço* (meaning “small lunch”), is usually coffee with a pastry, toast, or cereal. Lunch (*almoço*) is the main meal, and dinner (*jantar*)—usually eaten at 8 or 9 p.m.—is a bit lighter. Sweets are popular, and Portugal has countless different kinds. Portugal is famous for its wine, and people often drink it with meals.

Schools

Adult Literacy
96%

In Portugal, school starts at 8:30 a.m. and lasts until 3:30 p.m. Portuguese are required to attend school from ages 6 through 15. After that, students choose if they want to attend high school and college or train for a career right away. In Portuguese schools, children must study two foreign languages; English is required to be one of them. They start learning English in first grade. In seventh grade they start the second language. Most children choose to study French, but Spanish and German are also popular. Children can go to public schools for free, but many choose to go to private schools they pay to attend. Most of these schools are Catholic. Because many parents work long hours, the government pays for students to take part in some extracurricular activities at school from 6 until 7 p.m. Portuguese children must study hard if they want to go to a university after high school. It is difficult to get into a university, especially to study for careers like medicine.

Life as a Kid

Kids who live in cities spend a lot of their time at home, watching television, using the internet, playing games, chatting online, or text messaging on their cell phones. Boys get together in their neighborhoods to play soccer. Girls like to jump rope and ride their bikes. In the countryside, kids sometimes go fishing in a nearby river or camping in the mountains or near the beach. Almost all Portuguese kids enjoy swimming in the ocean whenever they get a chance.

If their parents or grandparents don't work, then they pick them up at school. If their families can afford it, some kids go to practice sports after school. If not, they go home and do their homework, play games or soccer with their friends, take a bath, eat dinner, and go to bed around 9:30 or 10 p.m.



Society

Government

Capital

Lisbon

Head of State

President An'bal Cavaco Silva (outgoing)

Head of Government

Prime Minister António Costa



Portugal's government has three parts, or branches. The *legislative* branch makes the laws. Portugal's legislature, the Assembly of the Republic, has 230 members, who are elected every four years. The president and the prime minister lead the *executive* branch, which is in charge of managing the country. The president of Portugal is elected by the people. The president has the power to *veto* (say no to) laws that the Assembly has approved, to break up the Assembly, and to choose the date for new elections. The prime minister serves as the head of the government and is usually the leader of the majority party. The *judicial* branch (courts) decides if the laws follow the constitution. The voting age is 18.

Money and Economy

Currency

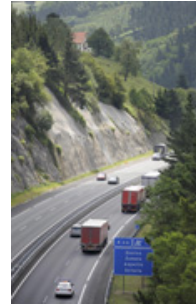
Euro



Portugal's economy is growing slowly, and it is still one of the poorest countries in western Europe. Portugal's main products are cork, timber, canned fish, citrus, and wine. Although there are many farmers in Portugal, much of its food has to be bought from other countries because of agreements in a European Union (EU) treaty. Other important goods, such as clothing and leather shoes, are made in factories. Tourism is also a big part of Portugal's economy because millions of people visit each year from other countries. They spend money on hotels, transportation, food, and other items. Portugal was hit hard by the global financial crisis of 2008. Three years later, it became the third country (after Ireland and Greece) to apply for a financial *bailout* (loan to avoid bankruptcy) from the EU. The Portuguese currency was the *escudo* but is now the *euro*, a single currency used throughout much of Europe.

Getting Around

Most people travel by car and at very high speeds on the highways. Car accidents are a leading cause of death and injury. In big cities, people use taxis, buses, and trains. Most avoid driving in the city because of the heavy traffic. Lisbon and Porto have subways so that people can get around quickly and inexpensively. Outside of major cities, people travel by car, bus, or train. Gas is expensive, so most drive small cars. There are highways in most parts of Portugal that also connect it to Spain. Ferryboats connect Lisbon with Almada and other cities across the wide Tagus River.



Culture Facts & Contacts

Portugal's Castles

There are dozens of castles scattered throughout Portugal. One of the most famous is the castle in Guimarães. Built in the 10th century, it was the first piece of territory (called the *Condado Portucalense*) ruled by Portugal's first king, Afonso Henriques. Because of this, many Portuguese see the castle as a symbol of their country's foundation and independence. The castle of St. Jorge is located in Portugal's capital city, Lisbon. It looks out over the city and the place where the Tagus River meets the Atlantic Ocean. It was built in the Middle Ages to protect the city from invasions.



The castle of Almourol is located on an island in the middle of the Tagus River. It belonged to the Order of the Templars, a group of Christian knights. Curious visitors go to this castle to learn about legends of the Christian knights and the Moors who fought there. One famous legend tells of a Moorish man and a Christian woman who fell in love and *eloped* (ran away to get married) from the castle. People say that the couple can be seen standing on top of the castle's tower on the night of St. John the Baptist, 23 June.

Learn More

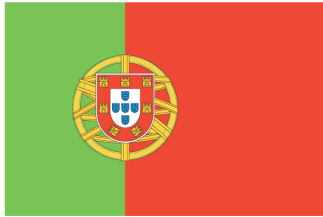
Contact the Embassy of the Portuguese Republic, 2012 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036; phone (202) 332-3007; web site www.embassyportugal-us.org. Or contact the Portuguese Trade and Tourist Office, web site www.visitportugal.com.

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Portugal



Portugal and Spain both share the Iberian *Peninsula*. A peninsula is a narrow piece of land surrounded mostly by water but still connected to the mainland.

The Portuguese Republic includes the mainland, the Madeira Islands (west of Morocco), and the Azores Islands (about 800 miles, or 1,290 km, off the Atlantic coast).

Lisbon is Portugal's capital and largest city.



SPAIN

