

Portugal

A Stunning Country with an Ancient Wool Route

A legendary haunt of shepherds and witches, 20,000-year-old stone carvings, medieval castles, cobblestone villages, kaleidoscopic hand painted tiles, historic textiles, and other fine arts.



May 1 – 17, 2023
With a possible optional extension
in Lisbon



“Uncommon Textile Journeys
that Change Lives”



Bem Vindo a Portugal!



The Ancient Wool Routes of Portugal



Wool has been critical for warmth and protection since ancient times while the culture of wool is inseparable from the raising and herding of sheep. Wool is interwoven with the memories of flocks crossing the mountains expertly guided through harsh landscapes and isolated mountain villages where people survived in large part by practicing ancient weaving traditions.

Dating back to the 13th century, routes between Spain and Central Portugal were followed by these shepherds and their flocks creating pathway between where the Merino sheep were raised to where the wool fabrics could be manufactured. This is a route filled with traditions and the rich culture of the inhabitants. The trails have united Spanish and Portuguese mountains, shepherds, weavers,

manufacturers and traders dating back to medieval times. Since the 18th century, the sheep were sheared, and the wool washed and collected in Spain. The men would then cross Spanish Extremadura following the Portuguese mountains paths to end their trek at the Covilhã factories where the wool could be manufactured. Today, this Wool Route ends at the old Veiga Royal Factory, which is now the Wool Museum in Covilhã, which we will visit.

In addition to the wool routes between Spain and Portugal, shepherds have traveled with their flocks from inland Portugal into the Serra da Estrela mountains looking for better pastures in the spring for centuries. We will follow some of these ancient herding routes on our journey through Portugal.

Textiles in Portugal, Then and Now...



Textiles were an important cottage industry in Portugal for centuries, mostly using cotton, linen and flax. Spinning, weaving and dyeing were all important elements of textile production practiced in Portugal beginning with the cotton industry in the late 1700's. Around that time, textile factories with their large-scale looms led to textile mills replacing the previous methods of manufacturing and Portugal has stayed in the



forefront of textile production ever since. Many other countries have closed their factories and shut down textile production. However, Portugal continues to develop and grow its traditional textile industry for the past four hundred years. Today, this industry accounts for 10% of Portugal's exports. The label "Made in Portugal" is still identified with quality, innovation and sustainability with such factories as Capuchinhas and The Burel Factory keeping traditions alive.

Andrea Wong, Portuguese Knitting Expert, Author & Our Instructor



For the past 20 years, Andrea has taught thousands of knitters in the USA and abroad the technique of the centuries-old Portuguese Style of Knitting that leaves both of your hands free for your needles. She is the author of the definitive resource *"Portuguese Style of Knitting – History, Traditions and Techniques"* and has produced three DVD's. Her mission is to make this style of knitting available to the world through educational resources and affordable knitting tools. As the foremost expert on the subject, she teaches at venues all around the US, is published in a variety of knitting magazines and is the lead designer for her business, *Andrea Wong Knits*. Read more about Andrea Wong on Page 5...

Our Accommodations in Portugal

Fortunately for us, Portugal offers a wide and often historic range of unique possibilities for lodging. From a 19th century palace to an Augustinian monastery dating back to the 12th century; a wine estate to a mountaintop lodge, we are sampling some of its most diverse and special options.

Avenida Palace Hotel

Our magical journey in Portugal begins with a stay in a hotel that is called a palace for a reason. It commands attention from even the most jaded passerby. It is said that the grandeur may leave you breathless with its magnificent marble floors, crystal chandeliers and tall columns. All of this is ideally located in the very heart of the historic center of Lisbon.

Who could ask for more?



Pousada Mosteiro de Guimaraes

Spain has its paradors and Portugal has its pousadas. Throughout history, both countries have been home to many fortresses, stately castles, and monasteries. However, over the years, many of these structures no longer served their original purpose. So rather than letting them fall to ruin, Portugal has converted these treasures into accommodations with modern conveniences. We are staying at an ancient 12th century Augustinian Monastery, the flagship for the entire pousada endeavor, and still considered to be one of the most elegant of all of Portugal's pousadas.

Hotel Rural Casa dos Viscondes da Varzea

Here is our chance to experience the rural hospitality of Portugal nestled deep in the Douro. Surrounded by vineyards, orchards, and olive groves with amazing views, Viscondes da Varzea is an aristocratic country manor dating back to the 17th century. Its architecture exemplifies Portugal's Gothic-Manueline architecture including a chapel with a baroque altar, ancient wine cellars and the olive oil press that is still used today. Antique furnishings are found throughout.



Hotel Berne

Location, location, location – it's all about the location! Situated in the heart of Serra da Estrela, in the picturesque village of Manteigas, the Hotel Berne offers a calm retreat with only 17 rooms. Here we can relax in harmony with nature in simply decorated rooms with balconies and views over the forested landscapes of the mountains. The restaurant, with its large windows, offer panoramic views and serves regional Portuguese and international dishes. We can cozy up in the bar after a long day of touring with its inviting fireplace.

Pousada Marvão

This charming, rustic pousada is found in the fortified village of Marvão, arguably the most charming of Portugal's medieval towns in Alentejo. Sitting up high and spread out in four traditional medieval houses of the village, it enjoys extraordinary panoramic views over Spain and the Alentejo plains from the restaurant.

Convento do Espinheiro Hotel & Spa

Set on 23 acres of gorgeous countryside at the edge of Évora, our hotel is a lovingly restored 15th century convent with a contemporary addition. The property was often used by Portuguese Kings when they would visit the city. It is surrounded by beautiful gardens and a pool making it the perfect spot for enjoying the Portuguese countryside.

Sintra Marmoris Palace

Nestled among 14,000 square meters of private gardens and located inside of the protected Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, we have this restored 19th Century manor house all to ourselves. The views of the surrounding area, including Sintra's Moorish castle, are breathtaking. It is the perfect place to relax by the pool and listen to the birds. It even has wooded hiking trails, yet it is located only a 7-minute walk from the historical center of Sintra.





16th Century Belém Tower in Lisbon

Monday, May 1 Arrive Lisbon

We are meeting today at the Avenida Palace Hotel in Lisbon. ** Upon arrival at Lisbon Airport, you will transfer on your own via taxi to the hotel at your leisure. Our accommodation for two nights was built in 1892 by renowned Portuguese architect Jose Luis Monteiro as Lisbon’s first luxury hotel with ornate columns and carved stone arches. The building was restored to its original romantic Belle Époque style in the 1990’s and features sumptuous, palatial interiors. Its location on the cobblestoned streets in the heart of the city is perfect for exploring this vibrant and atmospheric city. This evening, we’ll meet for a welcome drink and orientation. For those that would like to, we can dine as a group (cost not included) in this magnificent city. Overnight at Avenida Palace Hotel. (No meals included)



****You will need to be in Lisbon by 5PM for a group orientation.**

*If enough people are interested, we can organize an optional extension in Lisbon.

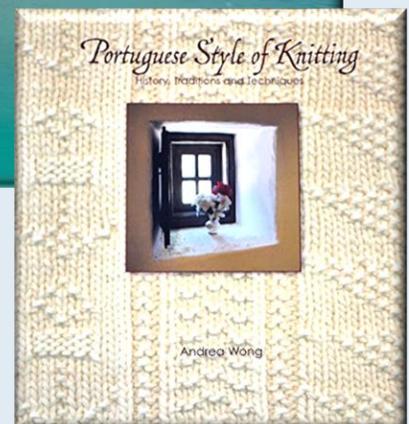


Tuesday, May 2 Exploring Historic Lisbon & an Intro to Portuguese Knitting

This morning, we'll enjoy a half-day guided tour of historic Lisbon. There are so many things to see and do in the city and we will see many of the highlights. While it would be impossible to see it all, we will do our best to take in Lisbon's unique flavor. Lisbon is also famous for its lace, knitting, tiles, wool, and woven blankets. We have a special visit with Rosa Pomar at her shop Retrosaria Rosa Pomar, where she produces and sells yarns made exclusively from Portuguese wool. Here she will give us an introduction to Portuguese knitting technique and its history. Rosa is also an author and expert on the history of Portuguese sheep, wool production, and its importance in the economy of the country.

This evening we have a real treat in store! Because she is so incredibly talented and literally "wrote the book" on Portuguese Style Knitting, we are bringing Andrea Wong all the way from the US to be our special textile guest for the next few days. She is so much fun, full of stories and offers a wonderful historical perspective! This evening, she will give us an orientation to this style of knitting and begin to teach us the techniques that we will use over the next few days to knit a fabulous project. This workshop is suitable for everyone regardless of knitting experience.

Andrea's mother, Maria José Romanelli Amadeo, taught her how to knit when she was seven years old. Andrea was born in Brazil and several years after marrying her husband, she moved to New York in 1991. When Andrea came to the U.S., people asked her to teach them how to knit in the Portuguese Style, so due to popular demand, she was able to turn what she loves to do into a business of passion. Overnight Avenida Palace Hotel. (B)



"I love what I do, and it makes me happy to be able to share my passion with others. I recognize the potential in each one of my students. With my customizable approach, I've seen my students' self-esteem and skill set consistently rise."

~ Andrea Wong



Wednesday, May 3

Train to Porto and on to Guimaraes

After breakfast, we will take a mid-morning fast train to Porto taking in the lovely countryside as we whiz along. Upon arrival, we will be met by our private driver and head out into the countryside. (We'll explore the vibrant city of Porto on another day.) After lunch outside of the city, we make our way to Guimaraes, one of Portugal's finest historic cities and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is also known as the Birthplace of Portugal since Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal was born here. Today Guimaraes thrives on weaving, cutlery manufacturing and tanning. Handiwork is still practiced in the form of embroidery, ox yokes and linen.



Our accommodations for the next three nights are at one of Portugal's most iconic pousadas, Pousada Mosteiro de Guimaraes. Originally an ancient 12th century Augustinian Monastery, the hotel occupies an idyllic position with views overlooking the town of Guimaraes and offers the perfect blend of Portuguese history and culture with elegant luxury. Its hallways are wide enough to ride horses through as they did in the olden days. During our

stay, we can relax in its formal gardens, cloisters, granite fountains, swimming pool and its lake. Famous Portuguese *azulejos* (tiles) are everywhere with some dating back to 1747. This evening, we will knit some more with Andrea at our hotel followed by dining as a group in the pousada's excellent restaurant. Overnight at Pousada Mosteiro de Guimaraes. (B,D)



Thursday, May 4

Local Portuguese Arts: Embroidery, Lace and Dolls



After breakfast, we visit the studio and shop of Isilda Parente who founded her atelier in 1985 with the mission of keeping the tradition of Viana do Castelo embroidery alive. Isilda mastered the traditional stitches and patterns, and then introduced new textures, colors, and modern designs into her work. Her two sons and daughter-in-law have joined her in this quest which has ensured the continuity of her life's work. Isilda's handmade embroideries are certified by Portugal's Adere-CERTIFICADA and have won numerous national awards. She has even received the Citizen of Merit award for her remarkable and valuable contribution to the revitalization of this local craft.

Following lunch in Viana do Castelo (cost not included), we will visit the Bobbin Lace Museum of Vila do Condo housed in Casa do Vinhal built in the beginning of the 17th century. Lace making has existed since the early 1600's when women made lace while their men were out at sea. Over time, lace became a valuable source of income for the area. The museum takes us on a journey from the oldest types of lace through modern designs. If we are lucky, we may see lacemakers working on their craft during our visit. Here is found the "largest bobbin lace in the work" as designated by the Guinness World Records.



When we return to our hotel, we are met by Amélia Gomes, the artist behind *Bonecas Namorar*. She and her daughter make dolls/sculptures that are constructed in plaster, wire, and paper. Each figure reflects an expression of enchantment and sweetness, as if they were declaring their love. "They are very flirtatious. They are sweet and innocent," describes Ana Gomes who, together with her mother, Amélia Gomes, developed this concept of a doll built and painted by hand, with motifs from the *Lenços dos Namorados* (Valentine's Handkerchiefs). These embroidered handkerchiefs are a tradition that

originated in the 17th century in the Minho region of Northern Portugal as a symbol of love and devotion among Aristocrats. But by the 18th century they became part of the popular culture. When a young woman had a particular man in mind for marriage, she would embroider a handkerchief made of cotton or linen embroidered with love-related motifs of birds, flowers and hearts just for him and often including a written message. If he wore her gift in public, he was hers. Ana and Amélia have woven this tradition into the making of their dolls. "As we are both from Vila Verde, we live in the parish of Cabanelas and we developed this concept, we decided that we could transpose it into a tribute to our municipality, and promote the local culture, of the Valentine's Handkerchiefs." We will have a wonderful chance to learn about this tradition and to work with Amélia in this craft at our hotel.



Overnight at Pousada Mosteiro de Guimaraes. (B)



Friday, May 5

Exploring Old Town Porto, an UNESCO Site

Today we have a full day to explore the Old-World Charm of Porto. Set on a hillside overlooking the water, the city is where the Douro River flows into the Atlantic Ocean. It is a city known for its architecture, food, wine, and culture. In fact, it is one of the world's oldest demarcated wine regions in the world. Porto also boasts some of the best examples of decorative *azulejos* (painted tiles) in the entire country. On a guided half-day tour, we will explore the labyrinth of narrow, crooked alleyways that date back to Medieval times. Famous remains of 12th century ramparts can be seen, as well as two of the city's original gates.



In the afternoon, you will wander on your own so that you can visit the sights that interest you the most. You might opt to taste some of the city's most iconic port wines. Or you can visit the incredibly ornate churches of the city, museums, or maybe just relax in one of Porto's many cafes. The choice is yours. In the late afternoon, we will return to our hotel where we will have a final knitting workshop with Andrea. We can then work on our projects throughout the rest of the journey. Overnight at Pousada Mosteiro de Guimaraes. (B)





Saturday, May 6 Gold Museum, a Castle & on to the Douro Valley

This morning, before leaving this northern region of Portugal, we travel about 40 minutes north to the town of Travassos to visit *Museu do Ouro* (The Gold Museum).

Dating back to 1730, the museum housed in an old gold foundry is dedicated to the goldsmiths of Travassos where they have been working with gold since ancient times, particularly creating iconic filigree objects. The secrets of this technique have been passed down over many generations. The museum also houses archaeological finds from the Copper age and artifacts of Sabará's glory years. Here we will have a private visit with an expert guide.

Then we are on our way to the Douro Valley, the birthplace of port wine, and some of the most visually stunning scenery found in all of Portugal! This enchanted valley is a tapestry of twisty canyons, steep terraced hillsides, bucolic farms, and sleepy villages perched along the Douro River. En route, we stop at Palácio de Mateus. The iconic castle may look familiar as it is featured on the bottles of Mateus rosé wines (see photo above). Built in the first half of the 18th century, the palace classified as a National Monument in Portugal and is a living museum. It is nestled in exquisite gardens and is considered one of the finest examples of Baroque-style architecture in all of Portugal. We'll have a chance to wander and taste some of the exquisite wines here.

We stay for three nights in the heart of this magical realm indulging in its natural beauty, culture, and fine wines. Our accommodations are Viscondes da Varzea where gracious rural hospitality reigns in a restored 17th century country manor with all the antique furnishings befitting this special haven. Tonight, we dine as a group at our hotel. Overnight at Viscondes da Varzea. (B,D)





Sunday, May 7 A Day of Spectacular Scenery & Great Wines

Today is our day to celebrate the world-famous wines of the Douro Valley. Even if you don't imbibe, the day is sure to delight with its sights and learning about the history of the area. First, we enjoy a morning relaxing at our hotel and its lovely grounds.

Then we're off to one of the Douro Valley's best wine producing estates, Quinta do Panascal. The winery dates back to the 18th century and is the most important estate of the highly esteemed "Fonseca Guimaraens." Considered one of the best wines in the world, it has been classified as a Grade A, the highest award given to a quinta. Here we will have lunch along with the opportunity to tour the estate and to taste its fine wines.



In the late afternoon, we board a traditional boat, the *Rabelo*, for a private two-hour ride along the Douro River. These small crafts were the "nautical horses" used to carry barrels of Port Wine from Alto Douro to the cellars in Vila de Gaia. For many centuries, there were no practical roads or railways along the vineyards, so the *Rabelo* was the only way to transport this precious cargo. This method of transporting cargo continued until the 1960's.



We'll sail along the picturesque Douro River in a traditional boat while sampling some more of Portugal's Nectar of the Gods. Overnight at Viscondes da Varzea. (B,L)



Monday, May 8 Lamego, Traditional Patchwork Blankets & Knitting

Today we immerse ourselves in the beauty and textiles of Lamego, one of the most beautiful cities in Northern Portugal. Lamego was historically famous for its patchwork blankets, but they have all but become a forgotten art in the region. However, there are still a few craftsmen who have kept the tradition from extinction. We will spend some time this morning with one of these local artists in his workshop where we learn about this disappearing craft. He has created these blankets all his life and works on an ancient loom.



Following our private visit and lunch, we will see the sights of the thousand-year-old city of Lamego. It has long been a favorite of merchants and gypsy traders from Cordoba.



The narrow winding streets and tree-lined boulevards abound with medieval landmarks. There has been a cathedral here since the 6th century. The city gained wealth over the centuries due to its location on the trading routes between the Douro and the Beiras where its legendary wines were a commodity. Overnight at Viscondes da Varzea. (B)



Tuesday, May 9 The Legendary Wool and Sheep of Portugal

Today is a very full day. We are bound for the dramatic mountains of Serra da Estrela, a landscape of charming remote villages, forest and granite boulders and lots and lots of sheep! In fact, the sheep raised in these mountains are the heart and soul of this region. They have historically provided a lifeline that allowed humans to inhabit such an inhospitable and harsh region by providing wool, meat, and milk. Here is a link to a very interesting article about these special sheep and their impact on the region: <https://nelsoncarvalho.com/serra-da-estrela-wool/>

Our first stop is a very special woolly visit to Capuchinhas, a cooperative of four women from Serra do Montemuro. In an old school outside of Campo Benfeito, a small village in the mountains, they produce clothing on manual looms using traditional methods, but with contemporary design. The materials they use are 100% Portuguese sheep wools from Serra da Estrela. Included in the production is burel which is pressed sheep wool that creates a fabric used for the

traditional *Capucha* (the cape used by shepherds to shield them from the cold and rain) which has given them their name. They also weave with linen and wool.

The women seek to preserve their heritage through their weaving. *"We preserve the past, reinvent fabrics and patterns, color wool with natural dyes and create pieces suited to current times. Day after day, we have the responsibility of creating original, elegant, sophisticated clothing in our hands and, above all, with the identity of the it kind of envelops us: the mountains, the dreams, the smell and the colors."*

They also dye some of the

wool they use with local elements such as walnut leaves, nettles, tree lichens and ferns to create cozy and earthy colors. We will have time to immerse ourselves here in woolly wonder.

Bottom left photo ©Vitor Silva

Bottom right photo ©Ricardo Duarte



Next, we have a unique opportunity to be up close and personal with the sheep, shepherds, and the famous cheese of the region at a mountain farm. Sheep farming has played a key role in the sustainability of depressed rural regions of Portugal, especially in the Serra de Estrela. At the farm, we have the chance to learn about the famous regional cheese, from the pasture to the table, surrounded by an incredible mountain landscape. We will accompany the shepherd into the grazing fields where the Bordaleira sheep roam. This sheep breed lives only in the Serra da Estrela mountains and has had a presence in the region for centuries. The local people have tamed them for their wool and their milk, and we'll have a chance to become acquainted with them first-hand. We also get to taste the homemade cheese, honey, and Portuguese wine. Bordaleira sheep produce the only milk used to make this ancient Portuguese cheese.



Our mountain lodge for the next two nights is about an hour and a half drive from the farm. Location is everything and we have the chance to stay in the heart of Serra da Estrela in the charming village of Manteigas. Situated in a town of red-roofed white houses that cling to the verdant slopes, our accommodations are simple, but the views are divine. We'll dine as a group tonight in the dining room with a spectacular panorama overlooking the mountains. Overnight at Hotel Berne. (B,D)

Sheep photo ©Rosa Pomar

Wednesday, May 10

Burel Wool Factory and Baskets

This morning after breakfast we depart for the Burel Wool Factory. Here we have a guided tour of the factory where we can learn the secrets of the textiles from the Serra. We discover what it takes to make one of the most traditional fabrics of this region – the burel. The villages in the mountains of Portugal have relied upon the wool industry since the 19th century. However, the competition for less expensive fabrics pushed many of the factories into bankruptcy. That is where Isabel and João came in. They bought an old wool factory with its original antique machinery and created employment for local seamstresses by weaving burel, a traditional natural fabric used in Portugal for over a thousand years. By doing so, they are helping to revive the local economy while keeping a centuries-old tradition alive. Thus, the Burel Factory was born and thrives today due to their efforts.

After lunch, we travel to Gonçalo where the people have worked with wicker and chestnut saplings since ancient times, molding the material into different forms of art. It is believed that this age-old tradition existed here from a time long before the Roman occupation of this area when baskets were used as everyday utensils. Thus, basketry is a centuries-old tradition and remains a main activity in the village. In fact, it is believed that most basket weavers throughout Portugal have their roots in this town. Starting in childhood, the people of Gonçalo have learned the craft of braiding wicker with the knowledge and tools that have been passed down from generation to generation thus creating the famous "Basket of Gonçalo." Historically, it was viewed as so important that it was often taught to children by artisans that were hired by parents.



We have the good fortune to meet Fernando Pereira whose entire life is linked to basketry. From an early age, he learned the art of molding chestnut saplings, creating different types of baskets for many diverse uses. He will tell us all about this craft, its history and about the influence the art of basketry on the local economy. Overnight at Hotel Berne. (B,L)

Thursday, May 11

Wool, Embroidery and Clay



The magical town of Marvão

buy Spanish Merino wool. These paths were used from the 16th century to the early 20th century ending in Covilhã where the wool was sold to wool factories. Here we find the *Museu de Lanifícios* housed in a former royal textile factory. We can see massive dyeing vats along with wooden spinning machines, looms, and unique woolen cloth.



Next, we carry on to Nisa to visit the *Museu do Bordado y do Barro* (Museum of Embroidery and Clay). In Nisa, embroidery has long been recognized for its extraordinary beauty and intricacy and is crucial to their economy. Girls learn the art of embroidery at a very young age creating

pieces for their trousseau. At the time of their wedding, they would sell these embroideries to get money to buy or build their house. There has been an equally deep-rooted pottery tradition in the region for centuries. The clay formation of the local land provided the raw materials. The tradition is still alive with three potteries in Nisa. What makes this pottery so unique is the use of small fragments of white quartz for decoration in the clay. Most of the work in both crafts are done by women and the museum showcases fine examples of each art form.



Finally, we arrive in nearby Marvão, a fairytale walled village of whitewashed buildings sitting high above the surrounding countryside. Visiting the town is like walking into a dream. It was once a border town heading to Spain with quite a rich history. Boasting spectacular views of Spain and an ancient castle, this town is one of the most attractive medieval villages in Portugal full of winding cobbled streets. Tucked away on one of these lanes lies Pousada Marvão where we will stay. Parts of the building date back to the 13th century and have been converted from several medieval buildings. There is no grandeur or elegance here, just cozy wood fires offering complete relaxation. We will dine as a group tonight in the dining room with its incredible views. Overnight at Pousada Marvão. (B,L,D)

Friday, May 12

A Tapestry Museum and Lusitano Horses



This morning we venture out to visit nearby Castelo de Vide, a hidden gem of the Alentejo. Sitting high on a hill overlooking the countryside, it is a mosaic of dazzling white houses, red tile roofs and flower-lined lanes which are a joy to behold. Its historic old quarter is considered one of the best preserved in Portugal. Inhabitation dates back thousands of years as evidenced by a plethora of megalithic sites in the area. Castelo de Vide also has an impressive Jewish Quarter or *Judiaria*. At the end of the 15th century the village attracted a significant number of Jewish people that were being persecuted by the Catholic Church in Spain during the Inquisition. Much of this rich history remains.



Next, we visit a magnificent museum in nearby Portalegre which is housed in the Castelo Branco Palace. *Museu da Tapeçaria de Portalegre Guy Fino* (Tapestry Museum) is dedicated to the conservation and preservation of Portalegre tapestries and is named after the factory founder Guy Fino. He was one of the most respected and important entrepreneurs in the wool industry. He brilliantly blended the traditional Portalegre tapestry stitch with contemporary innovative creations. The museum showcases over 7,000 colored threads used in these tapestries.

Not far from the museum is the village of Alter do Chão. Here we find Alter Real, the world's oldest stud farm, founded in 1748, and the birthplace of the majestic Lusitano horse. We'll learn about the continuing mission of cultural preservation of the genetic heritage of these magnificent horses originally used for bull fighting. We may even take a horse-drawn carriage ride.

We should have time in the late afternoon to wander the winding streets of Marvão at your leisure. Overnight at Pousada Marvão. (B)



Saturday, May 13

Arraiolos Tapestries and Rugs



Today we travel southwest (1 ½ hours) to visit the *Centro Interpretativo do Tapete de Arraiolos* also known as The Rug Museum. The town of Arraiolos is known for its exquisite carpets which have been made since the 12th century using ancient techniques. The rugs are not tied like oriental carpets. Rather, the women of Arraiolos embroider the wool in gros point on a linen canvas. The designs show an influence from Turkish and Persian rugs and became all the rage for the aristocracy and upper-class Portuguese households in the 18th century. The streets of the town are lined with shops selling these tapestry rugs and it is not uncommon to see the local people making the carpets in front of their homes. This interesting village itself dates to the 2nd or 3rd century and has a quiet charm with its castle and convent. We have a special visit here and will linger in the museum seeing the exhibits and learning about these rugs. We can even see the underground pits through glass flooring where the dyeing of the wool dates to the 13th and 15th centuries.

Our accommodation for the next two nights is Convento do Espinheiro Hotel & Spa, a luxury restored 15th century convent where we can pamper ourselves. We dine as a group tonight. Overnight at Convento do Espinheiro Hotel & Spa. (B,D)

Sunday, May 14

Ancient Évora, Wine & a Wool Factory in Monsaráz



This morning we have a guided tour of Évora, a UNESCO designated walled town and one of Portugal's best preserved. Here we delve into the past visiting the historical part inside the 14th century walls. It is truly enchanting and filled with rich history dating back to before the Romans arrived in 59 BC. We will spend the morning discovering its many treasures.

Following lunch, we'll head to Monsaráz perched high above the countryside overlooking olive groves

below. The village was settled way before the Moors arrived in the 8th century and it still holds much charm. Here we'll explore the sights before heading to *Fabrica Alentejana de Lanifícios* (Wool Factory of Alentejo), founded in the early 19th century. It is the last remaining hand-loom producer of handwoven floor rugs made of wool. In fact, the New York Times has recognized it as "only one of three original secular wool handicrafts to still exist in Europe." Its blankets and wool products were



originally used by local shepherds to ward off the cold. Their colors of yellow, brown, orange and red are closely linked to the fields of flowers in Alentejo. The designs and motifs echo the typical house architecture of the region. To end this perfect day, we visit Adegas Jose de Sousa, one of the oldest and most traditional wineries in the Alentejo. Here we will see the magnificent Adegas dos Potes, a unique cellar where 114 clay amphorae are conserved and used to produce the most special wines along with a wine tasting of the unique Alentejo wines. Overnight at Convento do Espinheiro Hotel & Spa. (B)



Photo middle right: ©www.cityguidelissbon.com/place/mizette-fabrica-alentejana-de-lanificios
Bottom left: ©https://www.winetourismportugal.com/en/catalogue/wineries-vineyards/ade-gas-jose-de-sousa/



Monday, May 15 Megalithic Wonders, Cork, and a Palace

We depart the Alentejo today bound for picturesque Sintra on the far side of Lisbon. We have a bit of ground to cover but will make interesting stops along the way. Our first visit is a cork plantation where cork represents 75% of the farm. The Alentejo is known as Portugal's Cork Country and it is here that produces more than half of the world's total cork. At the farm, we can learn all about cork, one of the most sustainable agricultural systems in the world and its importance in Portugal. While we think of wine stoppers, cork is also used in clothing, shoes, furniture, fashion accessories and many other everyday uses. We'll tour the vineyard estate ending with a tasting of their wonderful wine and walnuts.

From here is it on to impressive *Almendres Cromlech*, the most significant megalithic monument in Portugal. It was constructed during the Neolithic period between 5,000 and 4,000 BC and is the oldest known in Europe. The site consists of a double circle of standing stones and is the largest one in the Iberian Peninsula.



The entire area around Évora is dotted with megaliths. We will follow the "Megalithic Route" to explore a few of these sites found in Montemor-o-Novo. We hope to visit Gruta do Escoural, a series of caves which contain several cave paintings and rock carvings dating back 13,000 years. There is also a most unique chapel known as Capela-Anta de São Brissos. Built into a 5,000-year-old dolmen, it is a chapel from the 1600's. Quite a sight to see!

The next stop to stretch our legs en route to Sintra is the charming town of Palmela with its fortified castle with amazing views. Our final destination is the charming town of Sintra. Here our accommodation is at the lovely Sintra Marmoris Palace where we have this restored 19th Century manor house all to ourselves. We'll dine like royalty as a group tonight in their exquisite dining room. Overnight at Sintra Marmoris Palace. (B,D)

Tuesday, May 16

Exploring Sintra



“Celts worshipped their moon god here, the Moors built a precipitous castle, and the 18th century Portuguese royals swanned around its dreamy gardens.” ~Lonely Planet

The last day of our journey is a magical one in an enchanted place. Sintra... it is like a scene from a fairytale and a feast for the senses. As the town is rather hilly and congested with traffic at times, we will enjoy a guided half-day tour of the highlights by *tuk tuk* (a motorized three-wheeler) to make the day easier. We'll visit the main sights as a group in the

morning and in the afternoon, you may wander at your leisure. Most people come here for a day trip from Lisbon, so we are lucky to stay two nights in Sintra when things quiet down in the evening and we can drink in the atmosphere. Overnight at Sintra Marmoris Palace. (B)



Wednesday, May 17 To Lisbon for Flights Home

Sadly, our journey must come to an end, and we must bid farewell to Portugal. You will transfer on your own to Lisbon Airport for your flight(s) home. (B)

Land Costs Include:

- 16 Nights, double occupancy (all in individually atmospheric accommodation - no large impersonal chain hotels!). Single accommodations available at additional cost (see below)
- Private tours and museum visits
- Fiber arts workshops including all materials (all workshops are optional – you need not participate in all of them)
- Private 19-passenger Mercedes mini-coach and local expert guide
- Private visits and demonstrations with talented artisans, knitters, weavers, and textile designers
- Daily breakfast (B) 3 lunches and 7 dinners as described, lunches (L), dinners (D)

Land Costs Exclude:

- Any air transportation
- Meals not designated on the itinerary
- Any item not specifically included in your program including snacks, extra personal beverages & bottled water, etc. other than during designated meals, alcoholic beverages
- Excess baggage fees, laundry, and other items of a personal nature not specifically listed
- Tips for your guide, drivers, hotel porters and other service staff
- Additional insurance of any kind

Cost: \$5,765 USD Per Person Based on Double Occupancy; \$ 5,565 Per Person for Non-Fiber artist
If you prefer a single room, there is a single supplement of \$1,495**

**Accommodations for this tour charge basically the same rate whether there are one or two people sharing the room. Thus, the Single Supplement is rather costly. Please contact us with any questions.
Single accommodations limited to 7 travelers. Shared accommodations (unless by a couple) limited to 8 travelers.

Save Your Spot!

**Please call our office for details or questions!
800.369.3033 (from US Only) ~ 970.728.6743**



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Loom Dancer Odysseys

does not believe in large group, bargain or "ordinary" tours. Instead, we strive to immerse the creative and adventurous traveler into the wondrous world of global fiber arts with quality cultural encounters. Our typical group size is limited to 12-16 participants to allow for a more hands-on, intimate travel experience.

Be a creative traveler, not a tourist.

