

INTRODUCTION

Portuguese cuisine is characterised by rich, filling and full-flavoured dishes and is closely related to Mediterranean cuisine.

In 15th century new and exotic fruits, nuts, spices and plants from the new land were discovered by the explorers.

Mostly Portuguese used the olive oil to cook and also to flavour their meals. Spices and herbs are very much used in Portuguese cuisine such as Garlic, Parsley, coriander and many more.

Most of the Portuguese prefer dishes like their casseroles, grilled fish and meat, and their stews and their salads, rice and potatoes get always accompanied by the Bacalhau dish.

Portugal opt for the fresher options such as sardines which are freshly caught, meat of freshly hunted wild boar which is cooked slowly and suckled pigs from the localized butchers place.

Traditional Portuguese dishes are often made from simple ingredients, based on regional produce with an emphasis on fish.

Portuguese recipes are characterised by their use of a wide variety of spices, for example, piri piri (a spicy chilli pepper), vanilla, cinnamon and saffron.

Portuguese cuisine is more of influenced by India, Africa and Spain which made it different from the nearby Mediterranean countries.

Southern part is been influenced by Moorish and Arabs and old tradition of fig sweets and almonds.

Sweet pastries are very popular.

Fresh fish and shell fish are to be found on virtually every menu.

The most typical desserts are cinnamon-flavoured rice pudding, flan, and caramel custard, but they also often include a variety of cheese.

PEOPLE

The Portuguese are a south western European population.

Their origin mainly is from Atlantic Europe, Western Europe and the Western Mediterranean.

Their religion is mainly Roman Catholicism, language is Portuguese. Portuguese language is derived from Latin.

The Romans were an important influence on Portuguese culture.

Portuguese communities can be found in many diverse regions around the globe.

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According to the last certified survey which happened in Portugal in 2011, it showed that 10,561,614 of people were living in Portugal.

Most Portuguese have typical Mediterranean features like brown eyes, dark hair, and a height of less than 6 feet.

About 97% of the Portuguese population identify themselves as Roman Catholic.

In rural and urban areas manners tend to be elaborate, especially in forms of address. When the Portuguese greet each other, they generally expect to be kissed on both cheeks, or exchange handshakes.

Portugal is also home to a growing number of immigrants, like Africans, Eastern Europeans, Brazilian and Asians. Mostly around Lisbon, Porto and Algarve.

LOCATION & CLIMATE

Portugal is located mostly in the western part of Europe and on the Eurasian Tectonic Plates.

The area of Portugal is 92,391 sq km (35,672 sq mi), together with the Azores (Acores), Archipelago and Madeira and Porto Santo.

The land of Portugal extends 561 km N-W and 218 km N-W. Portugal is surrounded by Spain on the N and E and by the Atlantic Ocean on S and W.

The total boundary length of Portugal is 3,007 km (1,868 mil), of which 1,793 km (1,114 mil) is coastline.

Generally the climate in Portugal is neither too hot nor too cold.

Portugal experiences similar temperatures to Spain though the effect of the climate on the vegetation.

During winter average daytime maximum is about 16°C (61°F) approximately 5-6 hours of sunshine per day.

Spring months gradually warm up with average maximum temperatures reaching up to 22°C (72°F) for approximately 10 hours of sunshine per day.

During summer temperature is around 25°C (78°F) and 11 or 12 hours of sunshine per day.

sometimes temperature goes up to 40°C during summer due to the South and East which are controlled by the subtropical anticyclone that allows temperature to rise.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in Portugal is based small to medium and also large scale.

There are small sized family owned single lands and in other hand there's also large scale farming which is focused on exporting.

Crop yielding and animal output is very low because of agricultural investment, use of fertilizers and the uneven land and the contract system.

The main crops grown in Portugal are cereals (wheat, barley, corn and rice), potatoes, grapes (for wines), olives, and tomatoes.

Portugal has been exporting tomato paste wines and cork, and now has become one of the largest exporters of it.

Portugal is known for its famous selections of wines such as dessert wines, Port and Muscatel.

There are about 70 types of fishes which have together influenced the food supplies such as sardines, horse mackerel and hake.

Portugal is one of the world's largest producers of wine and cork.

FOOD CULTURE

Each region of Portugal has its own traditional dishes, including various kinds of meat, seafood, fresh fish, dried and salted cod (bacalhau).

Portuguese cuisine has always featured the flavours and textures of the Atlantic kitchen and is also affected by the Mediterranean cuisine.

Portuguese cuisine has always been prepared in traditional way with some simple ingredients, which are produced in local areas.

Portuguese introduced many herbs and spices to European such as ginger, coriander, saffron and pepper. Potatoes, pineapple, coffee and rice were also introduced between added ingredients.

FESTIVE FOODS

Portugal has always lived in a traditional way and has followed the culture and their different events all around the North to the South.

They have many festivals, such as religious festival, traditional dancing fairs, music festival, and regional fairs.

These festivals are not only attended by local people but also tourists, festival brings you different types of dish and wine used in every particular festival.

SANTO ANTONIO, LISBON (NIGHT OF 12 TO 13 JUNE)

This party is the main party which lasts for at least three weeks, this festival is also known as Festas de Lisboa.

Alfama and Madragoa are the two districts where this lively party is celebrated with some 50 street parties.

You can taste homemade Sardines on bread with a glass of red wine or sangria.

SEAFOOD FESTIVAL, OLHÃO, ALGARVE (AUGUST)

This festival lasts for about one week and is held Algarve fishing village called Olhão.

In this festival people come across the fisherman's of Olhão village and talks to them about their experience and enjoy live concerts on a hot summer evening.

This festival is already famous for its seafood class. Many preparations are made by different types of fishes.

ENCONTRO COM O VINHO, LISBON / ENCONTRO COM OS SABORES (NOVEMBER)

Meat with the wine/ meat with flavours is known to be the largest fair that brings wine and food producers together.

1500 wines are kept at the International Lisbon fair for tasting.

Competition is held where the best quality wine is awarded with the prize.

People who visit this fair also come across the types of cheese, ham, chorizos and olive oil producers.

FOOD OF PORTUGAL

Portuguese cuisine must be one of the few foods that doesn't have as good a profile as most of the other European cuisines.

Portuguese prefer dishes like their casseroles, grilled fish and meat, and their stews and their salads, rice and potatoes get always accompanied by the Bacalhau dish.

At the centre of the cuisine of Portugal lies the use of fresh ingredients with simple preparations so as to preserve their vibrant flavour.

Most places in Portugal opt for the fresher options such as sardines which are freshly caught, meat of freshly hunted wild boar which is cooked slowly and suckled pigs from the localized butchers place.

There are many selections, styles and innovations in most of Algarve, Porto and Lisbon and most regions of wines.

Douro valley where other global cuisines which are available widely and most opportunistic chefs add a new age variations to the Portuguese traditional cuisine.

The ingredients being of wide variety, the Portuguese can cook foods with better textures and flavours so there is absence of complexity to preparations.

CALDO VERDE SOUP (NATIONAL DISH)

The most traditional of Portuguese soups is as simple as it gets: onions, potatoes and kale, cooked with garlic and olive oil. Nothing says winter comfort food like a good serving of caldo verde in a traditional clay pot. This soup would normally be served with a slice of "linguiça" (typical smoked pork sausage) and cornbread.

It comes from the place Vinho Verde, Green wine.

cabbage from Galecia, couve galega.

This particular cabbage is responsible for the landscaping of the particular area such as minho and northern Portugal.

Cabbage is cultivated underneath vines and in Lisbon backyards.

The cabbage has to be sliced very small and finely for serving with soups.

complement for green soup is broa de milho, a type of dense crusted northern maize bread. sliced sausages such as chourico or salpicão, are to be placed in bowl prior to service in which case the soup is poured over the complements.

DAIRY PRODUCTS

Portugal is a traditional country which follows organic foods rather than packed foods.

Milk is one of the main parts of Portugal food, which make different varieties of cheeses.

Milk from Cows and Ewes are used mostly.

OLIVE OIL

There are about 316,000 of hectares are planted with olive trees, which are care by 190,000 farmers.

There are five regions known to be growing most of the olives.

Tras-os-Montes, Moura, Norte Alentejano, Beira and Ribatejo.

BACALHAU (NATIONAL DISH)

It refers to salted cods in Portuguese, the native food of Portugal.

Bacalhau is most common in Portugal, and in Spain (Galicia).

Salted cods are treated as a delicacy.

It is consumed on distinctive occasions like Christmas Days or during the Week of Holy.

There are 365 methods of cooking bacalhau, one for every day of the year.

Bacalhaus are generally served along with a good portion of potatoes.

SWEETS AND PASTRIES

Portuguese have always been fond of sweets and snacks.

Many of the Portugal sweets making, usually like Barriga de freira (nun's belly), Papos de anjo (angel's chest), Toucinho do céu (bacon from heaven) and other syrup desserts holds high content of eggs and sugar.

Macapão sweet is made with almond paste and stained sugar molded.

These deserts were usually seasoned with vanilla and cinnamon.

Many of the country's typical pastries were created in Middle Ages monasteries.

Other pastries were created by nuns in the 18th century, which they sold as a means of supplementing their incomes.

Each town has its own local specialty. With names such as papos de anjo (angel's double-chin) and barriga de freiras (nuns' belly), Portuguese sweets aren't only delicious, they're undoubtedly heaven-sent.

WINES

Portugal has been the world seventh largest wine producers.

Famous you can find are Port and Madeira wines.

Romans and Greeks are the one who familiarized wine to Portuguese people.

There are two most famous wine regions, Douro valley and Pico Island.

DOURO & PORTO WINES

This region is famous for its Port wines all over the world.

Douro valley produces wines and ships it to Porto.

40 varieties of grapes are used to make Port wines.

Red and Wood aged are the two categories in wine here.

The Wood aged port are ready to use once bottled which contain Tawny ports, the Red ports are deep in colour and develops after bottling.

CHEF RUI PAULA (DOC AND DOP RESTAURANTS)

Rui Paula was born in 1967 in Oporto

He use to go for his holidays to his grandmother from whom he got influenced, where he developed a deep understanding and love for cooking.

In 1994 he opened the Cepa Torto restaurant in Alijo with his wife Cristina Canelas.

He had the knowledge of traditional cuisine but he wanted to learn more about modern cooking and gastronomy which led him to work in some great hotels and with great foreign chefs.

DOC RESTAURANT

Super sleek and stylish, DOC is a part of brand new breed Douro restaurant, which all seems to have opened in 2007.

The hip crowd is served hip food – tradition seems to meet modernity without a problem in the kitchen, in the presence of chef Rui Paula.

There are two sides of his restaurants, one a show cooking room and formal traditional dining room.

DOP RESTAURANT

Degustar e Ousar no Porto or DOP for short is the philosophy surrounding the culinary practices of head chef and owner Rui Paula.

Restaurant, with capacity for 65 people is provided with the latest equipment and has two distinct and complementary spaces.

Show cooking, where the service is faster and more economical, and a traditional but innovative cuisine and dining room.

chef himself goes to every table to meet his guest and take feedback from them.

CHEF RUI PAULA COOKING FUNDAMENTALS

1. Memory is the main source of inspiration. Memory of aromas and flavours that recreate themselves in new combinations to reach gustatory emotions we otherwise keep in remembrance.
2. Gastronomy has to have an emotional root, a link to the cultural context. Ours has the Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro and the Douro Litoral universe.
3. There is no good cooking without quality products. We give preference to environmentally friendly local products, harvested in their right time, respecting the nature cycles.
4. Regardless of the combinations made or the equipment used, to preserve the genuine flavour of the product is the most important thing.
5. Food should be tasty and healthy. When conceiving the menus, we favour the use of fresh vegetables, extra virgin olive oil, dairy products, sea fish and meat in contained quantities.
6. Cooking technology and techniques should be at the service of emotion.
7. Each dish must summon all senses.
8. Customer satisfaction is our main objective and service has to be above reproach.

A guide to traditional Portuguese cuisine

Discover the diverse flavors and unique culinary traditions of the sunny Iberian Peninsula with our complete guide to Portuguese cuisine.

If you like seafood and a Mediterranean diet, then you'll likely enjoy Portugal's vibrant food culture. But beyond fish, you can look forward to discovering a wealth of delights that vary from region to region. This features everything from rich cheeses and unique bread to smoky sausages and sweet pastries; all rounded off with delicious Port, of course.

To give you an idea of what culinary treats are in store, this guide to Portuguese cuisine includes the following information:

An overview of Portuguese cuisine

Portugal's role in world exploration and colonization began as far back as 1279 when King Diniz invested in expanding the country's navy. By the late 1300s, Portuguese sea captains were among the best in Europe and had successfully completed many expeditions. They were the first European country to dock in China, Japan, and Ethiopia, bringing back with them many new, exotic products. As a result, the Portuguese played a major role in food globalization. They brought rice and tea from Asia, coffee and peanuts from Africa, and pineapples, peppers, tomatoes, and potatoes from the New World. The Portuguese also brought coriander, pepper, ginger, curry, saffron, and paprika to Europe.

Portuguese cuisine, woman eating in Portugal

Due to the country's long and extensive history of colonization, you can find Portuguese influences in cuisines throughout the world. For instance, Brazilian cuisine features its own versions of Portuguese dishes, while regional specialties in Macau and Goa also incorporate Portuguese flavors. Furthermore, the nation is credited with introducing corn on the African continent. Tea also became fashionable in England in the 1660s after the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza (Catarina De Bragança) brought her preference of leaves from the colony of Macau to the English court.

In recent years, Portugal has struggled with economic inequality and, consequently, health and nutritional challenges. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) found that a diet high in trans fatty acids, sugar, and salt has led to an increased rate of obesity, diabetes, and malnutrition in the country. As a result, the Portuguese government is now working to promote more nutritious food and beverage choices. Despite this, however, the recent Global Nutrition Report found that Portugal still needs improvement in order to become a healthier country.

The Portuguese diet

Portuguese cuisine is primarily based on hearty peasant food and a Mediterranean diet. Seafood lovers will no doubt enjoy the impact of the country's long Atlantic coastline on traditional dishes. Flavors and ingredients also vary across the different regions of Portugal.

BREAKFAST

In Portugal, breakfast is called pequeno almoço, which means 'little lunch'. People tend to eat this before 9:00 in the morning. As its name suggests, it is indeed a small affair, often consisting of fresh bread with butter, ham, and cheese or jam. People also eat breakfast cereal mixed with milk or yogurt and fruit. Morning beverages usually consist of coffee, milk, and tea.

Breakfast is traditionally just coffee or milk and a bread roll with butter, jam, cheese or ham.

Pastel de nata

Sweet pastries are also very popular for breakfast in Portugal, particularly freshly-baked pastel de nata which are one of the country's classics. People love to enjoy these with a shot of espresso in the morning or even as an afternoon treat.

Lunch

Lunch (almoço) gets much more attention in Portugal and often lasts more than an hour, between 12:00 and 14:00. Even when eaten in the workplace, lunch is a social occasion. Both lunch and dinner in Portugal typically have three main courses, including soup. A common Portuguese soup is caldo verde ('green broth') which consists of pureed potato, onion, and garlic.

Dinner

You'll be thankful for your long, substantial lunch as you wait for dinner time to arrive in Portugal. Dinner (jantar) is usually eaten between 20:00 and 21:00, and sometimes even later on weekends. As mentioned, it consists of at least three courses and includes soup. Sometimes soups are even served as the main course. One such soup is sopa de marisco, which is shellfish soup with wine.

Portuguese cuisine, dinner table in Portugal

Other Portuguese cuisine specialties include caldeirada, a stew made with several types of fish, and carne de porco a Alentejana, pork covered with clam and tomato sauce. Although main dishes in Portugal usually feature meat or fish, peixinhos da horta is a mainstay vegetarian recipe.

Snacks

Anyone who is happy to graze all day will enjoy lanche in Portugal. While the word looks similar to lunch, it actually means 'snack'. It isn't uncommon to snack between breakfast and lunch in Portugal. For instance, you might not have already had your pastel de nata for the day.

PORTUGUESE CUISINE, MOTHER AND DAUGHTER EATING PASTRY

As well as enjoying a morning snack, the Portuguese will often head to the café for another sweet or savory bite at around 16:00. Popular snacks to eat during this time include pastéis de bacalhau (codfish cakes), rissóis de camarão (shrimp turnovers), torrada (thick, buttery toast), and tosta mista (grilled ham and cheese).

SPECIAL MEALS IN PORTUGUESE CUISINE

Like all countries, Portugal has a range of special meals that people enjoy at particular times of the year to mark certain occasions. Below are some of the most traditional ones that you may come across.

CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER

The Portuguese call Christmas Eve dinner Consoada. This is one of the most important dinners of the year and the national dish of bacalhau (dried, salted cod) is a favorite for the occasion. The tradition of eating bacalhau on Christmas Eve originated from a time when Portugal was a primarily Catholic country and religious followers were not supposed to eat meat the day before Christmas. Since vegetarianism wasn't really a concept for most of Portugal's history, they considered eating fish to be the same as abstaining from meat completely. And before the days of refrigeration and quick transportation, cured cod meant easier access to fish for everyone.

BACALHAU DA CONSOADA

Portuguese rice pudding, arroz doce, is a typical dessert that you will find on the Christmas table. During this time, people also enjoy eating sonhos and filhós; both of which are similar to doughnuts, as well as turnovers with a sweet or savory filling called azevias. And don't be too shocked if you're served a plate with a treat in the shape of a snake, either. This is just the Lampreia de Natal which is made from egg yolk, sugar, and almonds. Finally, if you don't think that you have room for all of these treats in just one sitting, then you might want to sample some of them at a Portuguese Christmas market instead.

NEW YEAR'S EVE MEAL

If you didn't get to enjoy enough fish throughout the year, then you will certainly make up for it on New Year's Eve in Portugal. In this case, it is often bacalhau cozido; boiled cod with simple potatoes and cabbage cooked in water. Notably, the Portuguese tend to keep this dish simple in anticipation of the many desserts they will enjoy after midnight mass.

GRILLED FISH IN PORTUGAL

Portuguese families often dedicate an entire table to sweet treats on New Year's Eve. According to tradition, this smorgasbord of delights is kept full for several days to welcome any visitors. Among them is often the bolo rei (king's cake). This contains dried fruits and is garnished with crystallized fruits, and made to resemble a crown.

EASTER MEAL

Easter is an important religious holiday in Portugal and a time for most people to enjoy a big, delicious lunch with their families. They'll often eat cabrito, a roasted lamb served with roasted potatoes and chestnuts. Folar is a type of traditional Easter bread that is made from a special flour and filled with various sausages. Some of them also have eggs on top. For sweets, you'll certainly encounter a lot of chocolate almonds around the holiday. Easter in Portugal is also synonymous with Pão-de-Ló, a cake that can be dry or moist, depending on the region you are in.

FESTIVAL FOODS

The Portuguese celebrate their culture and religious traditions with big festivals. While they hold these throughout the year, most fall between May and July. Of course, special foods are essential to these festivities. For instance, during the Feast of Saint Anthony festival (dia de Santo António) on 12 June, the Alfama district of Lisbon is the place to go for grilled sardines. The tradition celebrates the story of how a fish emerged from the sea to listen to the 13th-century saint when the locals wouldn't.

POPULAR INGREDIENTS IN PORTUGUESE CUISINE

Portuguese cuisine incorporates a wide variety of meat, seafood, vegetables, and fruits. Regionality also plays a big role when it comes to the types of food and cooking methods used throughout the country. Below is an overview of the most common ingredients that you are likely to come across in both Portuguese homes and restaurants.

MEAT, SAUSAGES AND HAM IN PORTUGAL

Portuguese has been very precise about their meal, like pork is the main meat that every Portuguese would like to have on his table.

Wasting was never into Portuguese people, odd pieces while trimming is used in many varieties of sausages, some done with the garlic.

Smoked ham is called presunto. Porco com ameijos is called spicy casserole, which is made by combining some form of seafood and braised pork.

Beef is also used in good quantity in Portugal and mostly it's tougher and leaner than North American beef.

Meat of young animal is also approved; lamb, suckling pigs, veal and kid.

Chicken eggs are used for delicious rich deserts. Some Portuguese deserts use of meats as thickener and most fish dishes are topped with meat and cooked in pork lard.

Eggs are also used for garnish like, on fish casserole and codfish cake.

Portuguese cuisine features a lot of different meats (carne) with a strong preference for pork. Some different meats that you will often find on menus include the following:

Borrego – lamb

Cabrito – goat

Carne de porco – pork

Entrecosto – rib

Febras – pork steaks

Fiambre – ham

Espetadas – kebabs marinated in wine and garlic

Pato – duck

Perdiz – partridge

Peru – turkey

Presunto – prosciutto ham

Porco preto – Portuguese domestic pig

Vaca – beef

Vitela – veal

A popular Portuguese meat dish is Bife à Portuguesa which is a grilled steak prepared in a Port sauce. Meanwhile, leitão assado da bairrada (roasted pig) is a beloved pork dish. Portuguese cold cuts and sausages (charcutaria and enchidos) are also commonly enjoyed throughout the country and the nation has long and varied traditions when it comes to how they are prepared, seasoned, preserved, and even consumed. Other popular sausages include farinheira, a smoked variety, and alheira, which is from Trás-os-Montes and traditionally served with fried potatoes and a fried egg.

FISH AND SEA FOOD IN PORTUGAL

The Portuguese are proud of their fish with bacalhau (codfish) being the star of the country's cuisine. Two classic cod recipes are Bacalhau a gomes de sa (cod with potato, egg, and olives) and pasteis de bacalhau (little cod cakes). Sardines (sardinhas) are also popular and served at every Portuguese barbecue and celebration. linguado (sole), salmonete (red mullet), mexilhões (mussels), polvo (octopus), and peixe espada (swordfish) are also commonly found across the country.

With extended coastline you find, tuna, cod, clams, eel, octopus, swordfish, sardines, sea perch, crab and shrimp.

Fish here are served poached, grilled, fried-deep fried, stewed (usually done in clay pot), even roasted.

One of the most demanded and signature of Portugal, dried salted cod is imported.

Salted cod gets imported from Canada, Ireland, Newfoundland, Denmark, Scotia and Norway.

VEGETABLES IN PORTUGAL

Interestingly, before the Portuguese brought potatoes back from the Americas, chestnuts were a staple food in their cuisine. Nowadays, potatoes and other starchy vegetables, leafy greens, and beans are common within Portuguese cuisine.

Potatoes are one vegetable which is on the top of the table on vegetable list. They are used in every meal, stews type dishes, with meats, seafood and fish.

Some vegetables that you will likely see in recipes include the following:

Azeitonas – olives

Batatas – potatoes

Batatas fritas – fried potatoes

Cherovia – a type of parsnip that grows in Portugal

Couve – cabbage

Ervilhas – peas

Feijoa – beans

Portuguese cuisine features several different vegetable-based soups. These include caldo verde (cabbage and potato soup), sopa de feijão verde (green bean soup), sopa de grão (chickpea soup), and sopa de legumes (vegetable soup).

FRUIT IN PORTUGAL

Locally grown seasonal fruits also crop up on a regular basis in Portugal. Of course, as well as eating them fresh, people also include them in jams, liqueurs, and other desserts.

Orchards and vineyards are the area from where Portuguese enjoy their fruits, like oranges, apples, figs, peaches, melons, limes, etc.

Pineapple and banana are imported fruits which also play an important part of fruit consumption.

These fruits are eaten when in ripe state, a lot eaten with cheeses in lunch before the desserts.

These fruits include the following:

Ameixas – plums

Cerejas – cherries

Maçã – apple

Pera – pear

Uvas – grapes

CARBOHYDRATES IN PORTUGAL

Portugal has several unique types of bread (pão) that vary by region. Here are some to look out for at your local bakery (padaria):

Pão Alentejano or pão de cabeça – made from wheat flour and baked in a wood oven; used in dishes that are typical to the Alentejo region, such as migas (bread-based dumplings) and açorda (a bread-based soup)

Broa de milho or pão de milho – cornbread from Northern Portugal

Bolo de caco – soft bread from the island of Madeira

Bolo de caco – made from flour and sweet potato and cooked on a hot stone

Papo-seco or Carcaça – small bread rolls for sandwiches

Fatias douradas or rabanadas – the Portuguese equivalent of French toast that uses very thick sliced bread

Pão de deus – a sweet bread roll with grated shredded coconut on top

Rice (arroz) dishes are also common in Portuguese cuisine and usually include fish or meat. Rice is also served as a sweetened pudding in the recipe for arroz doce.

Just like bread and wine, every region in Portugal has its own type of cheese (queijo). Many, but not all, have protected designation of origin (DOP) labels. The most famous cheese in Portugal is queijo da serra, a sheep cheese comparable to brie. People often enjoy it with Port wine. In the Alentejo region, you can try serpa, a sweeter cheese. The region is also famous for Queijo de Nisa and Queijo de Évora.

The Trás-os-Montes region of northern Portugal produces a hard and slightly spicy goat's cheese called Queijo de Cabra Transmontano. Other strong varieties, such as cabreiro and queijo da ilha (similar to parmesan cheese) can also be found on the Azores Islands.

HERBS AND SPICES IN PORTUGAL

Due to Portugal's history in spice trading, Portuguese cuisine features more herbs and spices than other dishes from the Iberian region. You'll typically find fresh coriander (coentros), mint (hortelã), and parsley (salsa) in recipes across the country. Coriander is often a key ingredient in soups and sauces and pairs nicely with fish and clams. It is also one of the ingredients used in the popular dish Açorda à Alentejana.

PORTUGUESE CUISINE, PORTUGUESE STEW

Similar to Spain and Italy, Portuguese cuisine uses a lot of garlic and olive oil. Many recipes also call for onions, bay leaves (louro), rosemary (alecrim), pepper (pimenta), lemon (limão), and paprika (colorau/pimentão-doce). In fact, paprika is a popular addition to meat marinades and roasts, and the Portuguese traditionally add it to their chorizos (chouriças). It is also used in the production of certain cheese varieties, which gives them a distinct color and flavor. The hot chili pepper variant, Piri-Piri, which originally cultivated in Mozambique, is also very common throughout Portuguese-speaking countries.

SAUCES AND CONDIMENTS IN PORTUGAL

Piri-Piri spice is also used to make a spicy and tangy sauce that is typically served with chicken. Portuguese chimichurri sauce, called molho cru, has also been used in Portuguese cuisine for many centuries. People pour it over bacalhau assado (baked cod), as well as other fish dishes and grilled meats. You can also use it as a marinade for grilling meats, chicken, and shrimp. Interestingly,

Portuguese sauce (made with curry and coconut milk) is not used in traditional Portuguese cuisine. It actually comes from Macau and is likely the result of Portugal's colonization there.

PORTUGUESE WINE

When sampling Portuguese cuisine you might want to consider pairing your food with a local drink. Portugal is home to two wine-producing regions that are protected UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These are the Alto Douro Valley Wine Region (Douro Vinhateiro) and the Pico Island Wine Region (Ilha do Pico Vinhateira). Unsurprisingly, Portugal produces a wide variety of wines, which each have their own distinctive personality.

You've probably heard of Port wine, which gets its name from the city of Porto. There are several varieties of Port wine, and some of the most popular are Tawny, White, Ruby, and Late Bottled Vintage (L.B.V.). The second top exported Portuguese wine is Vinho Verde which is made from slightly under-ripened grapes.

But if you're not a wine lover, don't despair, as Portugal has a long-brewing history. Although it isn't as well-known as some of its European counterparts, the country's beer culture, called Cervejaria, is widespread in all regions. Furthermore, there are several local brands that are popular with both locals and visitors alike.

CATAPLANA DE MARISCO

The national dish of bacalhau (dried and salted codfish) is just one way to get your seafood fix in Portugal. Another option is Cataplana de Marisco, a popular fish or seafood stew that takes its name from a clam-shaped copper pot called a cataplana. This regional dish of the Algarve actually has Moorish origins. Roast suckling pig (leitão assado da bairrada) and Porco Preto are classic Portuguese pork dishes. The latter consists of black Iberian pig that is raised free-range in the central and southern regions of Portugal. Tripas à moda do Porto, meanwhile, is a rich meat dish that contains tripe, beans, and sausage, and is a specialty in Porto.

THE MOST FAMOUS PORTUGUESE DESSERTS

Sweets are synonymous with pastries in Portuguese cuisine. In fact, the country produces at least two hundred different types of them. Many of their recipes date back to the 17th and 18th centuries when nuns in Portuguese convents made pastries. That's why some have names such as toucinho do céu (heaven's lard) and barriga de freiras (nun's belly). Perhaps the most well-known and beloved, however, is the pastel de nata, a small custard tart sprinkled with cinnamon.

PORTUGUESE CUISINE, PORTUGAL DESSERT BAKERY

The Aveiro region produces ovos moles (egg paste pastries) which you might see in the shape of shells that decorate tarts, pies, and cakes. Other popular Portuguese desserts include pão de ló (a light sponge cake), palha Abrantes (a sweet candy made of loose egg threads), and pão de rala of

Évora (a sweet, round bread made with almond-based dough and a white pumpkin center). If pastries don't satisfy your dessert craving, though, Arroz doce is a traditional rice-based dessert that is famous throughout Portugal.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN PORTUGUESE CUISINE

Although Portugal is only a small country, distinct regional influences do exist when it comes to the nation's cuisine. As a result, your food experience will largely depend on where you live in the country.

NORTHERN PORTUGAL AND PORTO

Typical dishes from the north of the country are heavy and filling. Trás-os-Montes, a region in the top right corner, proudly claims to be the original creator of feijoada. This bean stew is now popular throughout Portugal. Here, you will also find alheira, a smoked sausage made with poultry, bread, and fat. Arroz de cabidela, meanwhile, is a rice dish that is made with chicken or game that is cooked in its own blood.

PORTUGUESE CUISINE, PORTO WINE BARRELS

Tripe dishes, such as the famous tripas à moda do Porto, are specialties around Porto. Of course, Port wine also originates in the Alto Douro Valley Wine Region in northern Portugal. Vinho Verde wines are also produced in the north.

CENTRAL PORTUGAL

Central Portugal claims to have the best oysters in the country, which come from the Aveiro estuary. You'll also find a lot of game meat on menus across the region. One classic dish is Pastel de Molho da Covilhã, a filo pastry stuffed with ground meat braised in onions and bay leaves. Another recipe from the area is bucho, a savory blend of rice and pork meat that is cooked inside a pig's stomach. The local version of the fish stew, caldeirada à Ria de Aveiro, is also famous here and includes ginger powder and pork.

ALENTEJO

Recipes from Alentejo usually include lamb or pork, but trout is also popular. The region is also proud of its specialty of bread and açordas or sopas de pão (bread and bean broth soup) which is great for dipping Alentejo bread. You can easily identify the local Évora cheese, too, as the circular and small shape is traditional in Alentejo. You can enjoy this slightly yellow cheese ripened, hard, or semi-hard. Alentejo is also one of Portugal's top wine regions and is home to eight wine-producing subregions.

LISBON

Sitting on an estuary near the ocean, fish and seafood are always on the table in Lisbon. Sardines are a symbol of the city and have been part of the local diet since the Moors conquered the city in the early 8th century. These days, you can buy beautifully designed sardine tins and enjoy eating tinned sardines (conservas) with different garnishes in cafes and bars.

Some of the most iconic recipes in Portuguese cuisine are from Lisbon. The pastel de nata (custard tart) was supposedly invented in Lisbon's grand Monasterio de Jerónimos in Belém, which was next door to a sugar cane refinery. The national dish, bacalhau com broa (cod baked with cornbread) also has its roots in Lisbon. Moreover, one of the country's most dynamic and varied wine regions runs from Lisbon northward along the coast.

SOUTHERN PORTUGAL

Local dishes in the Algarve region feature a lot of shellfish. Conquilhas à Algarvia, for instance, is a dish with clams, fried onions, garlic, and sliced Portuguese sausage. You can also find pastries made with sweet marzipan or figs. These doces finos are sculpted into different shapes and are a point of significant regional pride in the Algarve. If you head inland towards the Montanhas region, you will mostly find eel or trout in seafood recipes. The main focus here is on alheiras, veal sausages, poultry, and ham.

TRADITIONAL PORTUGUESE DISHES

Find out about traditional Portuguese specialities such as the famous salted cod dish, bacalhau, as well as sardinas assadas, caldo verde and more....

Fish

Many of Portugal's dishes are fish-based due to the country's situation on the Atlantic. The most famous fish dish is salted cod, bacalhau, which it is said can be cooked in 365 different ways. Each region has its own bacalhau speciality, for example bacalhau à Gomes de Sá from Porto (salted cod, potatoes and onions topped with eggs and onions) or bacalhau à bras from Estremadura (salt cod, potato, onion and scrambled eggs). Other popular fish includes sardines, especially grilled (sardinhas assadas), sea bass, octopus, squid (often stuffed), anchovies and swordfish. Shellfish such as mussels, prawns, oysters, lobsters, crabs and clams are also very popular.

MEAT

One of the most popular meats in Portugal is pork, which can be cooked in a variety of ways. Roast suckling pig (leitão assado) is a speciality of Central Portugal. Another popular pork dish is the carne de porco à Alentejana, which consists of pork marinated in wine and garnished with clams.

A common meat dish is the cozido à Portuguesa, a sort of hotpot of beef, sausages, potatoes, vegetables and rice. Grilled skewers of beef with garlic (espetada) are often served, as is aromatic

grilled chicken (frango grelhado), seasoned with piri piri, garlic and olive oil. Feijoada, a meat stew with kidney or butter beans, is a dish popular throughout Portugal.

SOUPS

Soup is served at most meals. Seasonal vegetables, fish and meat are used to make a variety of soups. One of the most famous Portuguese soups from Minho is the caldo verde, which consists of a mashed potato base, green Galician cabbage, olive oil and black pudding (torra) or slices of sausage, such as chouriço and salpicão. Bread soups (açordas) where shellfish and vegetables are added to thick slices of bread are found in all regions.

In the south, gaspacho, a soup of tomatoes, cucumber, onions, garlic, chillies and vinegar, is popular. Caldeirada is a fish soup made of water, tomatoes, onions and garlic and other ingredients that traditionally will depend on the fisherman's catch.

CHEESES

Portuguese recipes do not include cheese (queijo) so it is eaten by itself either before or after main dishes. The majority of Portuguese cheeses are made from goat's or sheep's milk. The most famous cheese in Portugal is most probably the Queijo da Serra, made from ewe's milk in the Serra da Estrela. This cheese is made in the winter and traditionally the milk is coagulated with thistle (flor do cardo). Monte, a cheese from Trás-os-Montes in northern Portugal, is a smooth, creamy cheese made from cow's and ewe's milk.

There is a wide variety of Portuguese cheeses, especially made from goat's or sheep's milk.

Usually these are very strongly flavoured and fragrant.

Traditional Portuguese cuisine does not include cheese in its recipes.

Serra and Queijo do Alentejo are two most commonly used cheese made from Ewes milk.

These cheeses are mostly decent with red wine like Dao and also go well with apple and walnuts.

Queijo da Azeitão and Queijo da Serpa are also some of the good cheeses you will find in Portugal.

Flamengo is one cheese which is offered to the tourists who come to Portugal.

DESSERTS

Many of the desserts in Portugal are rich egg-based specialities, often seasoned with spices such as cinnamon and vanilla. A popular dessert is the arroz doce, a rice pudding flavoured with cinnamon and lemon. The Portuguese have a variety of cake and confectionary specialities that can be found in a pasteleria or confeitaria. Northern specialities are rich, very sugary and often flavoured with cinnamon, whereas in the south the sweetmeats reflect the local harvest of figs and almonds.

Throughout Portugal variations of the pão de Ló can be found; this rich sponge cake can be flavoured with lemon, Madeira, port wine, cinnamon or orange juice.

10 TRADITIONAL DISHES A PORTUGUESE GRANDMA WOULD FEED YOU

If you were to visit Portugal and have a traditional Portuguese Grandma as your gastronomic guide, she would feed you a variety of dishes rich in meats and seafood.

Traditional Portuguese food tends to be hearty, which is my polite way of saying “quite caloric”. Back in the day and, still in the rural areas, families raise their own cattle and kill animals to make the most out of every single gram of meat! No wonder Portuguese cuisine has developed a lot of regional “enchidos”, that is, sausage look-a-likes that come in all shapes and flavors and make sure that, at the end of the day, no meat goes to waste.

Depending on the region of the country, you will find distinct typical dishes. Cod fish (“bacalhau”) will be a staple no matter where you go. Some say there are more bacalhau recipes than days in a year!

Grandmas in Portugal will tend to cook what’s more typical in their region, but a super hero grandma with a love for Portuguese food, would cook you at least these 10 delicious dishes, for a true taste of Portuguese tradition.

1. COZIDO A PORTUGUESA

Please meet the king of all stews! Portuguese stew is the perfect example of the importance of using all the meat an animal can provide. This meaty bomb includes beef, pork, chicken and a variety of pork derivatives such as blood sausages and smoked pork parts. There are also some vegetables thrown in the mix, but one must admit this is a dish for meat lovers.

Cozido à portuguesa is a common and treasured Portuguese dish, which is mainly eaten in winter. The recipe for it somewhat parallels the French pot-au-feu or the New England boiled dinner. A lavish version may include beef, pork, salted pork, several types of assorted smoked sausages (charcutaria), pig’s feet, cured ham, root vegetables, cabbage, and rice.

2. FEIJOADA TRASMONTANA

Do not eat this on the same day as a Cozido a Portuguesa, unless you have a true desire of exploding! Feijoada stands for bean stew, but you know it wouldn’t be a Portuguese stew if you didn’t throw a variety of heavy meats into the mix! All the funny parts of the pig end up here, as the dish was created when people couldn’t afford to waste anything the human body could eventually digest. Meats included may vary, but if you are too picky, ask before you put something in your mouth. It’s not at all uncommon for Feijoada to include delicacies such as pig hocks, knuckles or ears!

3. BACALHAU A BRAS

Out of the numerous ways to prepare salted cod fish in Portugal, “Bras style” is one of the most popular and I honestly salivate just to think about it. The shredded cod is sauteed in a pan along with plenty of onions and straw fried potatoes. This dish is finished up with beaten eggs that cook as they join the pan, and topped with parsley and black olives. This is the essence of a country inside a plate!

4. AMEIJOAS A BULHAO PATO

More than a meal, clams Bulhao Pato style are a snack, best enjoyed with ice-cold beer. It's very popular as appetizer as well, and a tasty way to get your juices flowing. Clams are cooked until tender in olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper and plenty of cilantro. Other similar clam dishes might feature this seafood cooked in white wine, butter and herbs, which is as good! Very important: you will need bread to dip into the sauces, as I can guarantee you wouldn't want a drop to be left on the plate.

5. ROJOES A MODA DO MINHO

Because Portugal has a never-ending affair with pork, rojoes are abundant to keep the spark alive! Chunks of pork loin cooked in the very same pig's lard, and seasoned with garlic and white wine. Served with stewed potatoes, variations of this dish may include roasted chestnuts. It can sometimes be served with a side of "arroz de sarrabulho", which is a loose rice dish that includes little bits of meat and pork's blood. I wouldn't judge you if you find it too hardcore.

6. BOLINHOS DE BACALHAU

A super Portuguese Grandma wouldn't let you leave Portugal after trying only one cod fish dish alone! Also known as "pasteis de bacalhau" these cod fish fritters can be savored as a starter or snack, or along with rice and salad as main dish. The batter behind this fried goodness is made of shredded cod fish, potatoes, eggs and parsley and is cooked until golden crispy on the outside but smooth and melty on the inside.

7. AÇORDA ALENTEJANA

This typical dish of the southern region of Alentejo is as good as it gets when it comes to comfort food with a rustic touch. The basic recipe for açorda would be made of mashed bread with olive oil, coriander, salt, eggs and water but more complete versions might include cod fish or shrimps. It's not a soup and it's not a stew, it's something in between: the unique açorda!

8. ALHEIRA DE MIRANDELA

Translate "alheira" into sausage doesn't almost make justice to this unique combination that, yes looks like a sausage, but is so much more than that! Meats stuffed into an alheira may include veal, chicken, duck and rabbit, compacted together with bread. If you have "alheira de caça" it means that it will only have game meat. This unusual sausage was created by the Jews in Portugal when they were forced to convert to Christianity. Their true religion wouldn't allow them to eat pork but by preparing this sausage looking dish, they could easily fool others that will think alheira would be made out of pork, like all the other Portuguese cuts looking alike. No matter what religion you follow, eating a fried alheira, with a fried egg and fries can make you feel an outer-body experience!

9. ARROZ DE PATO

In case you don't appreciate pork meat and are frustrated by most of the suggestions above, let's end on a ducky note. In Portugal, duck rice is cooked until the meat is ridiculously tender, simmered in red wine, and oven toasted along with the rice until the top is crispy. The rice absorbs the juices of the duck and is traditionally topped up with sliced smoked sausages. It's a true feast of flavor.