

Valley of the Douro: from Porto to Spain



TRIP OVERVIEW

The vibrant, riverside city of Porto is the starting point of this cruise, which makes its way down the Douro River, through the Douro Valley - one of the most dazzling landscapes in Portugal - and into Spain. Explore the architectural treasures of Porto's historic centre, enjoy fantastic food and wine experiences, visit the impressive Ducal Palace and tour the hillside town of Lamego on this thrilling eight-day voyage.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip on your river cruise. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our river cruise. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner.

Day 1: UK to Porto, Portugal D

Depart the UK on your scheduled flight to Porto. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your ship. Enjoy a welcome cocktail with the crew before dinner then take a tour of Porto, enjoying the city sights by moonlight.

Day 2: Porto to Régua B/L/D

Explore Porto, one of Europe's oldest cities with evidence of settlements dating back to 300 BC, on a guided tour, visiting San Francisco Church, with its gold-laced interior, and the beautiful Palácio da Bolsa located in the UNESCO-listed historic centre of Porto. In the afternoon begin your cruise through the Douro Valley where you will pass granite cliffs, whitewashed estates and 18th Century vineyards carved into mountains. Arrive in Régua, gateway to the Alto Douro, in time for an evening of dancing or some free time to explore.

Day 3: Régua to Vega de Terron B/L/D

Relax on board before disembarking for a visit to Vila Real with the chance to stroll through the landscaped gardens of Mateus Palace and taste the delicious local speciality of 'cristas de galo', a sweet pastry shaped like a rooster's crest. Later tonight, enjoy an entertaining flamenco performance.

Day 4: Barca d'Alva and Salamanca B/L/D

Arrive at Barca d'Alva early in the morning, a tranquil town shadowed by mountains and surrounded by countryside rich in orchards and vineyard. Later, join a day tour to the Spanish university town of Salamanca, a place blessed with a dazzling array of beautiful buildings awash with golden sandstone, including the exceptional Plaza Mayor with its magnificent cathedral.

Day 5: Barca d'Alva, Ferradosa and Pinhão B/L/D

Cruise through the locks of Valeira and Pocinho, en route to Ferradosa. Take part in a port wine tasting experience at a local estate. The ship docks at Pinhão, a town encircled by terraced hillsides and home to some of the world's finest port, where there will be a spectacular gala dinner on board.

Day 6: Pinhão to Porto B/L/D

Disembark for a tour to Lamego, an elegant town dotted with Baroque buildings and nestled among the terraced slopes of the Douro Valley. This afternoon, cruise to historic Porto.

Day 7: Porto B/L/D

This morning, journey to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Guimarães, birthplace of Afonso Henriques, the first independent King of Portugal, to visit the impressive Ducal Palace built by the first Duke of Braganca in the 15th Century.

Day 8: Porto to the UK B

Disembark for your airport transfer and flight to the UK.

Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily are taken onboard the ship. Tables seat 6 people, so you'll be able to converse and socialise with new friends, whilst never feeling crowded together. Tea and coffee are available on board ship as well as unlimited soft drinks and alcoholic drinks, including a variety of wines and beer, both during meals and at the bar. (Premium brands are available at an extra cost).

Any dietary requirements and dislikes should be made known to our reservations staff at the time of booking.

On embarking the ship, you will be greeted by the captain, crew and staff and treated to welcome cocktails.

SHIP INFORMATION

Ship information - 4★ MS Infante Don Henrique

The MS Infante Don Henrique is an attractive 3 deck ship consisting of 71 cabins. As you sail through the Douro admire the beautiful scenery from the large relaxing sun-deck. Facilities include a lounge bar with dance floor, dining room and gift shop.

Length: 75m long
Cabins 71 cabins

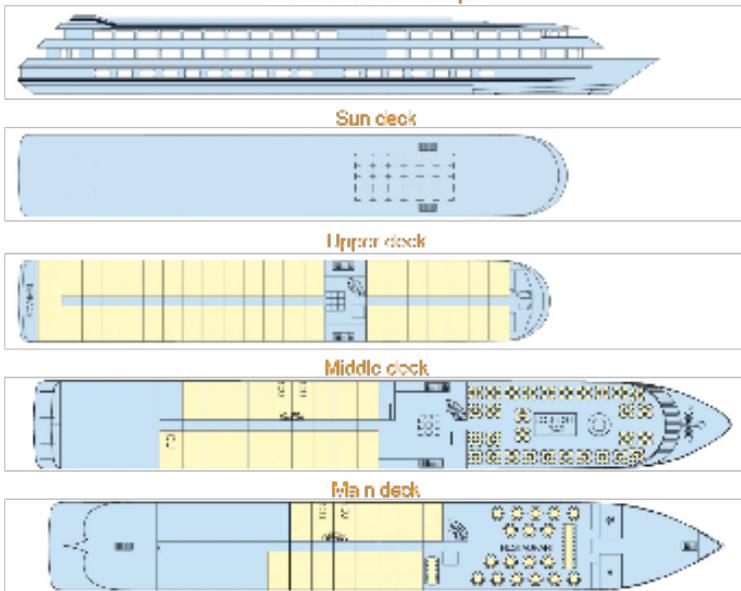
Width 11.40m wide
Capacity: 142 passengers

Facilities

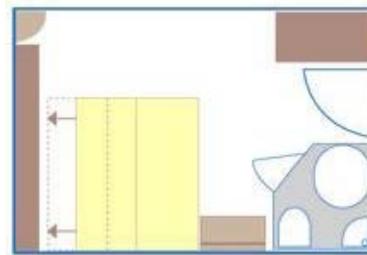
- Lounge bar with a dance floor
- Bar
- Dining room
- Large sundeck with deckchairs
- French balconies
- Gift shop
- Lift
- Radio
- Phone
- Central heating/air-conditioning
- Wi-Fi on board



MS Infante don Henrique



Twin Cabin



The Cabins

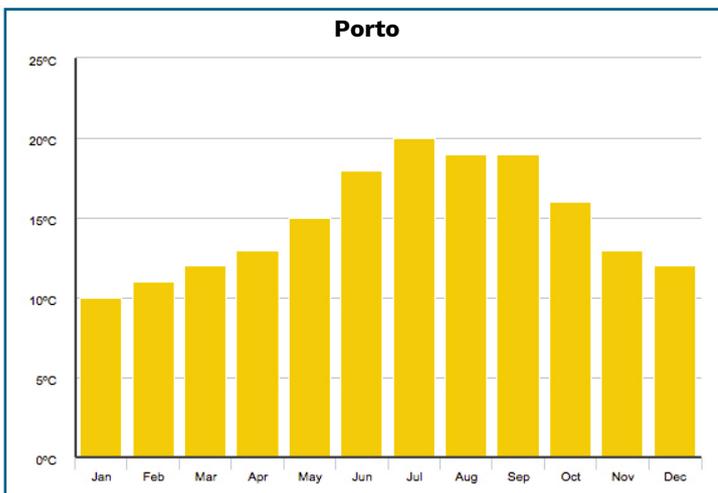
All cabins are equipped with shower and toilet, hairdryer, satellite TV, radio, safe. Spaced across the Upper and Main Decks, all cabins are outside facing and located above the water affording outstanding views from the large picture window.

Upper deck: 38 twins. Middle deck: 19 cabins - 16 twins and 3 double bed cabins (1CU). Main deck: 14 cabins - 12 twins, 2 double bed cabins (1CU)

Final confirmation of your deck and cabin will be confirmed at booking. Please contact us if you have any queries.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE AND ROUTE MAP

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



SHIP INFORMATION

Ship information - 5★ MS Gil Eanes

A premium 3 deck vessel which cruises on the Douro river, provided with 66 cabins that are able to host 132 passengers. It offers a distinctive and elegant design, mixing the classic with the modern. There is a wide variety of facilities, such as the sundeck, perfect for morning coffees onboard, or the cozy dining room where you can enjoy French delicacies.

Length: 80m long
 Cabins: 66 cabins

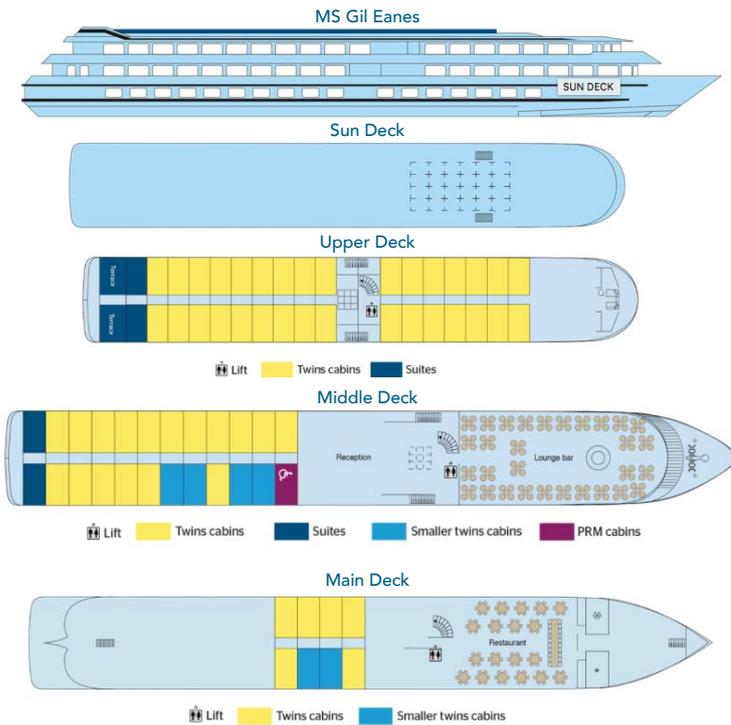
Capacity: 132 passengers

Facilities

- Lounge bar with a dance floor
- Dining room
- Large sundeck with deckchairs
- French balconies
- Fitness
- Wi-Fi on board



Twin Cabin



The Cabins

Cabins are equipped with a TV, private bathroom with shower and toilet, telephone (for internal calls only), towels, safe and independent air-conditioning.

Upper deck: 34 cabins (32 double cabins and 2 suites with private balcony)

Middle deck: 24 cabins (21 double cabins, 2 suites and 1 disabled cabin)

Main deck: 8 double cabins

Final confirmation of your deck and cabin will be confirmed at booking.
 If the ship detailed is not available, an alternative will be used of a similar standard.



SHIP INFORMATION

Ship information - 5★ MS Amalia Rodrigues

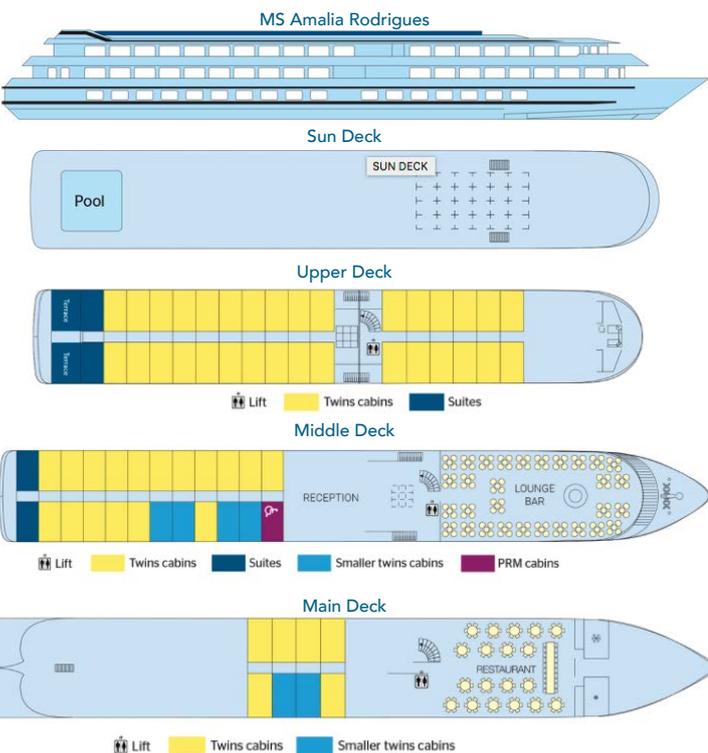
A modern and contemporary ship with 66 cabins and a spacious sundeck - a great vantage point for admiring the passing scenery and a lounge bar in which to relax.

Length: 82m long
Width: 10.80 metres

Cabins: 66 cabins
Capacity: 132 passengers

Facilities

- Lounge bar with a dance floor
- Restaurant
- Large sundeck with deckchairs and pool
- Wi-Fi on board



The Cabins

Cabins are equipped with a TV, private bathroom with shower and toilet, telephone (for internal calls only), towels, safe and independent air-conditioning.

Upper deck: 34 cabins (32 double cabins and 2 suites)

Middle deck: 24 cabins (21 double cabins, 2 suites and 1 disabled cabin)

Main deck: 8 double cabins

Final confirmation of your deck and cabin will be confirmed at booking.
If the ship detailed is not available, an alternative will be used of a similar standard.



SHIP INFORMATION

Ship information - 5★ MS Miguel Torga

The MS Miguel Torga is an elegant state-of-the-art ship, with excellent on-board facilities. Enjoy views from the sun deck as you stretch out on a lounger or relax in the panoramic lounge.

Length: 80m long
 Width: 11.40 metres

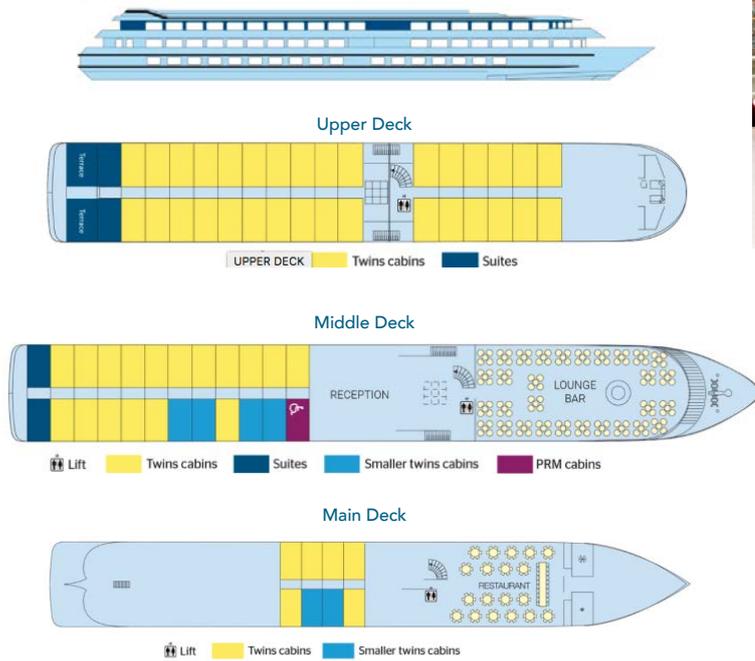
Cabins: 66 cabins
 Capacity: 132 passengers

Facilities

- Lounge bar with a dance floor
- Restaurant
- Large sundeck with deckchairs and pool
- Wi-Fi on board



MS Miguel Torga



Twin Cabin



The Cabins

Cabins are equipped with a TV, private bathroom with shower and toilet, telephone (for internal calls only), towels, safe and independent air-conditioning.

Upper deck: 34 cabins (32 double cabins and 2 suites)

Middle deck: 24 cabins (21 double cabins, 2 suites and 1 disabled cabin)

Main deck: 8 double cabins

Final confirmation of your deck and cabin will be confirmed at booking.
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WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for British nationals travelling to Portugal and Spain. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

Passport Information

Your passport information is required for this cruise, including place of birth. This information is required at least 70 days prior to your departure. Failure to provide this information on time may result in your booking being cancelled with loss of deposit.

Tour Guides

Optional excursions are escorted by an experienced, English speaking guide.

Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion. There is an envelope in your cabin for these purpose that can be handed to reception at the end of your cruise.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Portugal and Spain as well as on board is the Euro (€). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK, however cash machines are available in most towns and cities to withdraw money in the local currency.

Personal Expenses

This cruise is All-Inclusive, so you will only need to take a little extra money with you to cover any premium drinks on board and souvenirs, drinks and snacks purchased when off the ship, as well as any optional excursions you wish to book.

Credit Card Information

Credit cards are accepted on board ship and throughout Portugal and Spain.

Electricity Supply

Travel plug adapter – the electricity supply is 220V – 240V. You will need a special 2 pin plug adapter in Portugal and Spain.

Itinerary Changes

The Captain and Croisieurope reserve the right to alter/modify an itinerary at any time, should safety or external circumstances make this necessary, changes are also subject to tides. Some of the highlights may only be seen on optional excursions at an additional cost, or by exploring independently.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This river cruise is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves moderate days of walking on cobble streets and getting on and off the cruise ship. This cruise is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote **'WK830'** for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

DRESS CODE & WHAT TO PACK

Dress Code

There is no official dress code on board, however you'll be most comfortable during the day in smart casual clothing. You may wish to bring items that do not wrinkle easily as there is no iron provided on board ship. There are also no laundry facilities available. Bring a variety of clothing for the weather expected on your cruise, including light clothing and bathing suits for hot weather, a jumper or jacket for cooler weather and of course a raincoat and/or small umbrella.

What to Pack

- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers for sightseeing excursions
- Sun cream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Sunglasses
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries
- Insect repellent
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your flight is to Porto Airport, Portugal with TAP Air Portugal (TAP) departing from London Gatwick South Terminal.

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. Your final documentation will include transfer vouchers for your pre-organised return airport transfers and your river cruise boarding passes.

Baggage Allowance

Each passenger is entitled to 23kg of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding in size and 1 personal item such as a handbag, briefcase or laptop case. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Check-in should be at least 2 hours before departure.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras. Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

Please Note: You will receive excursion vouchers with your ticket package. In the unlikely event that your cruise does not operate, then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available, should the alternative dates offered be unsuitable.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Porto you will be met just after the Customs office by a representative from our local transfer agent, **CroisiEurope**. The Mercury Holidays/ Croisieurope representative will show you to your transfer vehicle and escort, you to your boat. If you need to contact Croisieurope, during your stay the details are:

CroisiEurope

Amalia de Rodriguez - 003519 13 03 22 51
Torga - 00351 967 013 504

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EMBARKING & DISEMBARKING

Embarkation Time: 6pm
Disembarkation Time: 9am

If your arrival is before this time, you will be transferred to the docking area where you will be able to leave your luggage. You are then free to explore the city at your own pace until it is time to board your ship.

BOARDING DETAILS

Please see below for details of your boarding quay. Your cruise company is **CroisiEurope**.



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