

DECADES OF SOUL CRUISE

17th - 30th May 2027

Itinerary and useful information

Part 2



A12712 DECADES OF SOUL CRUISE

17 MAY - 30 MAY 2027

TILBURY, VIGO, CADIZ, ALMERIA, GIBRALTAR, PORTIMAO, LISBON, HONFLEUR, TILBURY

VIGO, SPAIN

Vigo, the Gateway to the Atlantic, has a great combination of ancient history, beautiful beaches and a modern cosmopolitan outlook. It is a lovely city that offers a warm welcome along with stunning surroundings. Its water reforms, beautiful landscapes, and friendly atmosphere give the seasoned traveller a unique experience. Travelling to Vigo is just like exploring heaven with your own eyes. With its strategic location in Galicia, Vigo provides the ideal environment for relaxation, pampering and enjoying the picturesque views of Ria de Vigo.

Ships dock at Muelle de Transatlanticos which is right in front of this fortress city. Just cross the very busy Avenida del Castillo waterfront promenade and you're there. No tendering.

PORT CALENDAR: https://www.apvigo.es/en/paginas/prevision_cruceros

VIGO

11 THINGS TO DO / PLACES TO VISIT

1 Islas Cíes - Las Islas Cíes (The Cíes Islands), is a cluster of islands situated just off the coast of Pontevedra in Galicia, Spain. These islands were declared a nature reserve in 1980 and included in the Atlantic Islands of Galicia National Park in 2002. The islands consist of a nudist beach and famous camping area, but the tourists have to get permission from the Vigo port authority for camping, sailing, anchoring or skin diving in the Cíes Islands. The boat trip from Vigo takes 45 minutes to reach the island. During the summer there are two companies (Mar de Ons and Nabia Naviera) running ferries at roughly half-hour intervals from the harbour to the islands.

2 Berbés Quarter - The Berbés Quarter came into existence as a small fishing village near the sea, but it has spread more in the mountain's direction with time. At present, it stands like the relics of a fishing quarter with narrow-fronted houses and arcades where long ago they sold fish. However, many taverns and the Stone market are restored to their original state - these places offer tasty seafood to visitors.

3 Porta do Sol - The Porta do Sol is a shopping centre cum historical quarter and has many cultural centres, modern museums and art foundations in Vigo. The Porta do Sol includes a cast-iron figure on the top of two columns, which resembles an imaginary figure, a hybrid of fish and man looking out to sea. Called El Sireno (The Merman), it is one of the modern symbols of Vigo.

4 Museo do Mar de Galicia - Galicia Marine Museum - The Museo del Mar de Galicia is a modern museum extending into vast outdoor areas, surrounded by a wall and the Atlantic Ocean. The museum offers a vision of both past and present fishing and highlighting the marine life of Galicia with several demonstrations. The museum also has a small lighthouse where one can have an incredible view of the Ria of Vigo.

5 Castro Fortress - Surely the best introduction to the city and its epic landscapes is to survey them from the granite walls of this 17th-century fortress. From this commanding position the Vigo's estuary, harbour, historic quarter, mountainscapes and the Cíes Islands will all be on show. The fortress was an artillery installation, designed to repel attacks on Vigo by the British Navy during the Portuguese Restoration War. Within the walls are formal gardens with lawns, neatly-tended flower beds and a fountain at the centre, all with photogenic 360° views of the city.

6 Santa María Collegiate Church (The Church of Santa María) - The Santa María collegiate church is the city's most visited church situated in the old town. Dating back to the Middle Ages, it is dedicated to Cristo de la Victoria (the Christ of Victory). The church's present building was built in the 19th century when demolished and rebuilt on the original place of worship. The church has three barrel-vaulted naves, wherein the outside naves are narrow while the central one is wide. These naves are separated by the twelve Doric columns, offering a great view.

7 Verbum - Casa das Palabras - The Verbum, Casa das Palabras is designed by Cesar Portela, a Galician architect. It is an interactive museum located opposite Samil beach. The museum has four floors - semi-basement, ground floor, first floor and terrace. All floors are unified by a lightbox, which relates to each other uniformly. Also, the stairs and lifts of the museum are kept in the lightbox structure. The museum is theme based on four subjects - languages, sciences, literature and technology.

8 Calle de las Ostras - Officially called Pescadería Street, the famous Calle de las Ostras or Oyster Street is a narrow pedestrian street. The area has many restaurants that serve the superb Vigo estuary oysters along with a chilled glass of Rías Baixas (DO) - white wine.

9 Casco Vello - Vigo's old-town is set on a slope that meets the estuary at the old port, with alleys that lead onto handsome arcaded squares like Praza da Constitución. This is the part of the city where fishermen's houses and grander buildings like plush townhouses and the 19th-century church of Santa María were set side-by-side. Almost all were built with Galician granite, which gives the old-town a dignified atmosphere distinct from many Spanish old quarters. Many of the street names correspond to old trades, and Rúa Cesteiros you can still find basket-weavers in business and of course, Calle de las Ostras.

10 Ermita de Nosa Señora da Guía - On the northeast side of the city, right next to the estuary is the 100-metre Monte da Guía. Cloaked in evergreen and deciduous woodland, it's one of the largest parks within the city, and offers an instant escape from the traffic and activity on Vigo's streets. At the top, and with far-reaching vistas, is the shrine of Nosa Señora da Guía. This chapel with its lofty central tower may look baroque, but is actually from 1952, and is built on an earlier 16th-century hermitage. Take some time out in the manicured gardens to let the vistas sink in.

11 Quiñones de León Museum - The regal home for this art museum is the Castrelos "pazo", a stately 17th-century manor house. The collection here is of 20th-century

works by Galician artists, as well as a few pieces that are part of collection at Madrid's Prado museum but stored here. If you take a turn in the grounds you'll be forgiven for wondering if you've ended up in one of London's royal parks. There are large lawns with thickets of birch, plane and beech trees, and a rose garden adorned with the beautiful Príncipe de las Aguas fountain.

CADIZ FOR SEVILLE, SPAIN

Cadiz stands on a peninsula jutting out into a bay, and is almost entirely surrounded by water. Named Gadir by the Phoenicians, who founded their trading post in 1100 BC, it was later controlled by the Carthaginians, until it became a thriving Roman port. It sank into oblivion under the Visigoths and Moors, but attained great splendour in the early 16th century as a launching point for the journey to the newly discovered lands of America. Cadiz was later raided by Sir Francis Drake, in the struggle to gain control of trade with the New World, and managed to withstand a siege by Napoleon's army. In the early 19th century Cadiz became the bastion of Spain's anti-monarchist, liberal movement, as a result of which the country's first Constitution was declared here in 1812.

Some of the city's 18th century walls still stand, such as the Landward Gate. The old, central quarter of Cadiz is famous for its picturesque charm, and many of the buildings reflect the city's overseas links. Worth a visit are the city's Cathedral and churches of Santa Cruz and San Felipe Neri, which is famous throughout Spain as the place where, in defiance of Napoleon's siege, the provisional government was set up with its own liberal Constitution. Other points of interest are La Santa Cueva, home to several paintings by Goya, and stately mansions such as the Casa del Almirante and Casa de las Cadenas.

The old city looks quite Moorish in appearance and is intriguing with narrow cobbled streets opening onto small squares. The golden cupola of the cathedral looms high above long white houses and the whole place has a slightly dilapidated air. It just takes an hour to walk around the headlands where you can visit the entire old town and pass through some lovely parks with sweeping views of the bay.

Unlike most other ports of its size it seems immediately relaxed and easy going, not at all threatening, even at night. Perhaps this is due to its reassuring shape and size, the presence of the sea making it impossible to get lost for more than a few blocks. It also owes much to the town's tradition of liberalism and tolerance which was maintained all through the years of Franco's dictatorship, despite this being one of the first cities to fall to his forces and was the port through which the Republican armies launched their invasion.

The cruise terminal is located alongside Alfonso XIII pier. Almost immediately across the busy Avenida del Puerto is the main square Plaza de San Juan de Dios with the tourist office.

PORT CALENDAR: <https://www.puertocadiz.com/en/the-port/facilities-for-specific-traffics/cruises-and-passenger-traffic/>

12 THINGS TO DO/PLACES TO VISIT

1 The Plaza de San Juan de Dios - Start your day in Cadiz with the Plaza de San Juan de Dios. This square built in the 16th century was for a long time the heart of the city, because of its proximity to the port. Many exotic products from India were exchanged.

On this square, you can admire 2 beautiful buildings: the town hall and the church of San Juan De Dios. The Plaza de San Juan de Dios, decorated with water jet and fountains, surrounded by cafes and restaurants is very pleasant for pedestrians.

2 The Roman Theatre (Teatro Roman) - From the calle San Juan de Dios, go to Cadiz Roman theatre.

Dated from the end of the 1st century BC, it was discovered by chance in 1980. It's the oldest in Spain as well as one of the largest, with a capacity of 20,000 people.

Today, the proximity of surrounding buildings prevents further excavations.

Feel free to enter, the museum and theatre visit is free. It's small, but the tour is organized and you can even walk in an underground hall under the bleachers.

3 Cadiz Cathedral - With its golden dome, Cadiz most famous monument can be seen from everywhere while walking in the city. Started in 1722, the construction of Cadiz Cathedral was completed only a century later and thus mixes several architectural styles such as Baroque and Neoclassical.

The Cathedral, located in the historic centre, was nicknamed "Catedral Nueva" by the locals, in opposition to the "Catedral Vieja". Catedral Vieja is also known as the Santa Maria Church which, you guessed it, was the former cathedral.

So, in addition to the cathedral, don't hesitate to visit Santa Maria Church. It's nearby and the entrance is free.

During your visit to the new Cathedral, you should definitely go up the Tower of Poniente (Torre de Poniente in Spanish), one of the cathedral's bell tower. Once at the top, you can enjoy a nice panoramic view of the whole city.

The view from up there is particularly impressive!

4 The Tavira Tower - Close to the market, first going to Alcala Galiano Street and then turning left on Sacramento Street, you will come across the Tavira Tower, one of the 126 towers (yep, only!) in Cadiz. It's one of the most visited buildings after the Cathedral.

These towers generally served as watchtowers for the port, and Tavira Tower was the highest and main one.

The main attraction of the tower is the Camera Obscura, a room equipped with a set of optical lenses and mirrors: it allows you to admire the entire bay of Cadiz in a magnificent panorama.

In the Tavira tower, there are also exhibition halls and audiovisual projections.

5 Cadiz Market - After the cathedral, you should walk to Cadiz market. For me, going to the market is a must when discovering a city or region. The best way to discover local products!

To go there, take the Calle Compania to the Plaza de las Flores (so called because of

the many flower stalls you will find there).

You will then arrive to the Plaza Libertad, and its central mercado. Unlike other markets in Andalusia, it's not super big, but for sure enough to taste some fresh local products. It's your best bet if you want a good cold cuts and cheese sandwich!

6 San Sebastian Castle - Your walk along the Campo del Sur, will take you directly to the entrance of the paseo Fernando Quinones, the path leading to the castle.

Connected to the city by this pier, the San Sebastian Castle is located on a small island. The legend has it that this is where the temple of Cronos stood, in antiquity. It was the Venetians who called it "San Sebastian", to invoke his protection.

7 Museo de Cadiz - Admittedly a little dusty, the Museo de Cádiz is the province's top museum. Stars of the ground-floor archaeology section are two Phoenician marble sarcophagi carved in human likeness, along with lots of headless Roman statues and a giant marble 2nd-century Emperor Trajan (with head) from Bolonia's Baelo Claudia ruins. Upstairs, the excellent fine-art collection displays Spanish art from the 18th to early 20th centuries, including 18 superb 17th-century canvases of saints, angels and monks by Francisco de Zurbarán.

8 Baelo Claudia - The ruined town of Baelo Claudia is one of Andalucía's most important Roman archaeological sites. These majestic beachside ruins – with views across to Morocco – include the substantial remains of a theatre, a paved forum, thermal baths, a market and the columns of a basilica, and the workshops that turned out the products that made Baelo Claudia famous in the Roman world: salted fish and garum (spicy seasoning made from leftover fish parts). There's a good museum.

Baelo Claudia particularly flourished during the reign of Emperor Claudius (41–54 CE), but it declined in the 2nd century and was gradually abandoned after a 3rd-century earthquake. Live musical performances occasionally happen on July and August evenings.

9 Catedral de San Salvador - Echoes of Seville colour Jerez' dramatic cathedral, a surprisingly harmonious mix of baroque, neoclassical and Gothic styles. Standout features are its broad flying buttresses and intricately carved stone ceilings. Behind the main altar, a series of rooms and chapels shows off the cathedral's collection of silverware, religious garments and art, including Zurbarán Virgen nina meditando (Virgin Mary as a Child, Asleep). Across the square, the bell tower is 15th-century Gothic-Mudéjar on its lower half and 17th century at the top.

You can also enjoy an orange-tree-lined patio (the church was built by Alfonso X on the site of an old mosque). Though erected between 1695 and 1778, the building only officially became a cathedral in 1980.

10 Alcazar - Jerez' muscular yet elegant 11th- or 12th-century fortress is one of Andalucía's best-preserved Almohad-era relics. It's notable for its octagonal tower, typical of Almohad defensive forts, reached through Islamic-style gardens, past a 12th-century mosque-turned-chapel, the sprawling Patio de Armas and the 17th- and 18th-century baroque Palacio Villavicencio.

On the left as you enter is the beautiful mezquita (mosque), transformed into a chapel by Alfonso X in 1264, though retaining its fountain and horseshoe arches; it's the only remaining one of 18 mosques that once stood in Jerez. On the right, the Palacio Villavicencio, built over the Almohad palace ruins, is known for its bird's-eye views of Jerez; the camera obscura inside its tower provides a picturesque panorama of the city.

11 Puerta de Tierra - The imposing 18th-century 'Land Gate' guards the southeastern (and only land) entry to Cádiz' old town. You can wander the upper fortifications and defence tower, where Spanish- and English-language panels detail visible sights and the evolution of Cádiz' complex fortification system.

Within the Puerta de Tierra's walls are two museums: the Museo del Titere, devoted to puppetry, and the Museo Taller Litografico.

12 Oratorio de la Santa Cueva - Behind an unassuming door, the Santa Cueva conceals quite the surprise. Of its two superposed neoclassical 18th-century chapels (built on trade wealth from the Americas), the bare, pillared subterranean Capilla de la Pasión is washed in white. Above is the richly adorned, oval-shaped Capilla del Santísimo Sacramento, its altar graced by six Corinthian columns, and with five religious canvases strung between its pillars – three of them important works by Goya. A bit of history: in the 15th century, sailors of a Venetian ship contaminated by the plague epidemic were allowed to settle there and built a hermitage.

A watchtower was then erected to counter any attacks. Then, in 1706, the castle was built to strengthen the defences of the city.

Today, San Sebastian castle is the opportunity to take a beautiful walk along the ocean and admire a great view of Cadiz seafront. Inside you will have access to free exhibitions. Its courtyard often hosts concerts and other events.

SEVILLE

13 THINGS TO DO / PLACES TO SEE

1 Real Alcazar - A magnificent marriage of Christian and Mudéjar architecture, Seville's royal palace complex is a breathtaking spectacle. The site, which was originally developed as a fort in 913, has been revamped many times over the 11 centuries of its existence, most spectacularly in the 14th century when King Pedro added the sumptuous Palacio de Don Pedro, still today the Alcázar's crowning glory. More recently, the Alcázar featured as a location for the Game of Thrones TV series.

Note that long entry queues are the norm here. To cut waiting time, it pays to pre-purchase tickets at www.alcazarsevilla.org.

2 Catedral & Giralda - Seville's showpiece church is awe-inspiring in its scale and majesty. The world's largest Gothic cathedral, it was built between 1434 and 1517 over the remains of what had previously been the city's main mosque. Highlights include the Giralda, the mighty bell tower, which incorporates the mosque's original minaret, the monumental tomb of Christopher Columbus, and the Capilla Mayor with an astonishing gold altarpiece. Audio guides cost €3. You can also tour the cathedral's stained glass windows – see the website for details and booking.

3 Museo de Bellas Artes - Housed in a grand Mannerist palace, the former Convento de la Merced, the Museo de Bellas Artes is one of Spain's premier art museums. Its collection of Spanish and Sevillian paintings and sculptures comprises works from the 15th to 20th centuries, but the focus is very much on brooding religious paintings from the city's 17th-century Siglo de Oro (Golden Age).

4 Metropol Parasol - The Metropol Parasol, known locally as Las Setas (The Mushroomrooms), is one of Seville's iconic modern landmarks. Built in 2011 to a design by German architect Jürgen Mayer H, the colossal sunshade is a hypnotic sight with its undulating honeycombed canopy – said to be the world's largest wooden-framed structure – and massive support trunks. Lifts run up from the basement to the top, where you can enjoy killer views from a winding walkway.

5 Hospital de los Venerables Sacerdotes - This gem of a museum, housed in a former hospice for priests, is one of Seville's most rewarding. The artistic highlight is the Focus-Abengoa Foundation's collection of 17th-century paintings in the Centro Velázquez. It's not a big collection, but each work is a masterpiece of its genre – highlights include Diego Velázquez' Santa Rufina, his Inmaculada Concepción, and a sharply vivid portrait of Santa Catalina by Bartolomé Murillo.

6 Plaza de España - This bombastic plaza, designed by architect Aníbal González in the Parque de María Luisa, was the most extravagant of the building projects completed for the 1929 Exposición Iberoamericana. A vast brick-and-tile confection, it's all very over the top, but it's undeniably impressive with its flamboyant neo-Mudéjar architecture, fountains, and Venetian-style bridges. A series of ceramic tile panels depict maps and historical scenes from each Spanish province. You can hire row boats to ply the canal that skirts the plaza for €6 (for 35 minutes).

7 Iglesia de San Luis de los Franceses - The finest example of baroque architecture in Seville, this imposing (and deconsecrated) 18th-century church is a former Jesuit novitiate dedicated to King Louis IX of France. Designed by Leonardo de Figueroa, its unusual circular interior harbours four extravagantly carved and gilded altarpieces inset with paintings (Louis' image is topped by a huge crown), and a central cupola. You can also visit the chapel decorated with macabre reliquaries (saints' bones) in glass boxes, and the crypt.

8 Casa de Pilatos - The haunting Casa de Pilatos, which is still occupied by the ducal Medinaceli family, is one of the city's most glorious mansions. Originally dating to the late 15th century, it incorporates a wonderful mix of Mudéjar, Gothic and Renaissance decor, with some beautiful tilework and artesonados (ceilings of interlaced beams with decorative insertions). The overall effect is like a mini-Alcázar.

9 Museo del Baile Flamenco - The brainchild of sevillana flamenco dancer Cristina Hoyos, this museum illustrates the dance with interactive displays, paintings, displays of period dresses, and photos of revered erstwhile (and contemporary) performers. Even better are the fantastic nightly performances (at 5pm, 7pm and 8.45pm; €22) staged both in the courtyard and the more intimate basement space (€37 including a drink). Combined museum and show tickets are a good option.

10 Palacio de Las Duenas - This gorgeous 15th-century palace was the favourite home of the late Duchess de Alba, one of Spain's most prominent aristocrats. Renaissance in design, it boasts beautiful gardens and a lovely arcaded courtyard. Inside, you can admire paintings and tapestries, as well as the Duchess' collection of Semana Santa, bullfighting and football memorabilia (she was a Betis fan). A plaque commemorates famous Spanish poet Antonio Machado, who was born here in 1875.

11 Iglesia Colegial del Divino Salvador - Overlooking Plaza del Salvador, this baroque church was built between 1674 and 1712 on the site of Muslim Ishbiliya's main mosque. Its Mannerist red-brick facade masks a cavernous, light-filled interior crowned by a soaring dome and filled with extravagant gold altarpieces. Particularly breathtaking is the retablo behind the main altar, a 21m-high composition crafted by the Portuguese artist Cayetano de Acosta between 1770 and 1779. A second, and earlier, Acosta altarpiece graces the Capilla Sacramental.

A quick tip: tickets sold here cover admission to both the church and the Catedral & Giralda, so buy here to skip the line at the cathedral.

12 Basilica de La Macarena - This 20th-century neo-baroque basilica is home to Seville's most revered religious treasure, the Virgen de la Esperanza Macarena (Macarena Virgin of Hope), known popularly as the Macarena. This magnificent 17th-century statue, a star of the city's fervent Semana Santa (Holy Week) celebrations, stands in splendour behind the main altarpiece, adorned with a golden crown, lavish vestments and five flower-shaped diamond and emerald brooches donated by the famous matador Joselito El Gallo in 1912.

13 Torre del Oro - This distinctive tower, one of Seville's signature landmarks, has been guarding the Río Guadalquivir since the 13th century. The original dodecagonal structure, built to bolster the city's fortified walls, was subsequently heightened, first in the 14th century and then again in the late 1700s. Over the centuries, the tower has served as a chapel, prison and naval office; nowadays it houses a small maritime museum and a rooftop viewing platform.

ALMERIA, SPAIN

Situated on the bay of the same name Almeria is a luminous city, whose origins go back a long way into the past. Presided over by its impressive castle, uneven in appearance, from its battlemented parapets there is an extraordinary panoramic view of the city and the port. At the feet of the castle is the most typical district: La Chanca with its colourful and picturesque houses.

Almeria is a city that faces the sea, and for this reason the port forms part of the city in its physiognomy and its daily life. Within the port, the mineral landing pier, known as "El Cable" is especially interesting. It is one of Andalusia's hidden gems.

In the centre, the Cathedral, built as a fortress to protect the city from pirate attacks, has an interesting interior.

Although it has been inhabited since prehistoric times, the Millares and Argar cultures evolved and it was occupied by Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans. The

current settlement of the town and its moment of greatest splendour both came about during the Al-Andalus period. Al-Mariya Bayyana, origins of the current town, was a maritime suburb of Pechina. It became the first Al-Andalus port and a naval base for the Caliphate of Cordoba in the times of Abderramán III.

The cruise ships typically dock at the Muelle de Levante, which is conveniently located just a 10 to 15-minute walk from the heart of the city centre and the main promenade, the Paseo de Almeria. Because the pier is so close to downtown, most passengers can easily explore on foot without needing a shuttle, although taxis are readily available at the gangway.

PORT CALENDAR: <https://www.cruisemapper.com/ports/almeria-port-1019>

7 THINGS TO DO/ PLACES TO SEE

1 Alcazaba de Almeria - The Alcazaba of Almería can be seen from any part of the city and it is the biggest of the citadels built by the Arabs in Spain.

Its construction was begun in 955 by Abderramán III and finished by Hayrán, "taifa" king of Almeria, in the XI century. After the Christian conquest it was reformed by the Catholic Monarchs and Carlos I.

It has three walled enclosures. One of the three was built by the Catholic Monarchs. It was a royal residence and today stands at the foot of Al-Mutasin palace with all its rooms, its mosque, converted into a church since the end of the XV century, and its baths. It has only one entrance, made almost invisible by the enormous walls as well as large rooms with vaulted ceilings and gothic doors.

From the top of the castle walls we can enjoy marvellous views of the city and the port.

2 Cathedral of Almeria - The Cathedral of Almería is only one of its kind since this 17th-century cathedral-fortress is Gothic in style with a Renaissance façade. It was built both as a place of worship and to defend the city from attacks by Berber pirates. The architect Juan de Orea, following in the footsteps of Diego de Siloé and Pedro Machuca, projected the building of the cathedral under the postulates of the most classical 16th-century artistic Renaissance which can be clearly seen in the different features of this sacred enclosure. Works were promoted and extended years later under the episcopacy of Fray Juan de Portocarrero, the great sponsor and promoter of the Sagrario Chapel adjoining the Cathedral. A visit to the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Almería involves a journey through two thousand years of Christianity, and a delight for the senses enjoying the artistic excellence employed throughout its execution.

3 Segundo Recinto - The second enclosure of the Alcazaba sits above the Muro de la Campana de la Vela, a wall named after its bell, which once chimed in times of danger. Much of the compound is covered by the ruins of a palace built by the city's Muslim ruler Almotacín in the 11th century.

Also in the compound is a pair of reconstructed medieval houses containing archaeological exhibits, and a 15th-century Christian chapel, the Ermita de San Juan.

4 Tercer Recinto - The highest part of the Alcazaba, the Tercer Recinto consists of a

castle constructed by the Catholic Monarchs in the early 16th century. Many of the castle's formidable walls and towers survive, including the Torre del Homenaje (Tower of Homage), which originally served as the residence of the fortress' governor but is now used to stage temporary exhibitions.

5 Primer Recinto - The Alcazaba's lowest compound, the Primer Recinto, was originally a residential area. Excavations have unearthed remains of houses, streets and a complex water system, comprising wells, cisterns and channels. These ruins have now been incorporated into a lovely landscaped area of gardens, fruit trees and splendid city views.

6 Civil War Tunnels - The last city in Andalusia to be held by the Republicans during Spain's 1936-39 Civil War, Almeria was subjected to repeated and devastating bombings. So relentless were the attacks that engineers built a 4.5km network of subterranean tunnels in which civilians could take refuge; today, 1km of these underground havens – called the *Refugios de la Guerra Civil* – can be visited (tours only in Spanish).

7 Visit the Wild West - During the 1960s and 70s, the dusty, rugged landscape of Almeria's Tabernas desert became a popular filming destination for Hollywood. Many classics of that era were shot here, most famously the Sergio Leone westerns starring Clint Eastwood. You can visit three of the Wild West sets that were built specifically for these classics: Little Hollywood, Fort Bravo and Western Leone.

GIBRALTAR

Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory and headland, on Spain's south coast. It's dominated by the Rock of Gibraltar, a 426m-high limestone ridge. First settled by the Moors in the Middle Ages and later ruled by Spain, the outpost was ceded to the British in 1713. Layers of fortifications include the remains of a 14th-century Moorish Castle and the 18th century Great Siege Tunnels, which were expanded in WWII.

The Rock of Gibraltar is considered one of the two Pillars of Heracles (Hercules); the other has been identified as one of two peaks in northern Africa: Mount Hacho, near the city of Ceuta (the Spanish exclave on the Moroccan coast), or Jebel Moussa (Musa), in Morocco. The Pillars—which, according to Homer, were created when Heracles broke the mountain that had connected Africa and Europe—defined the western limits of navigation for the ancient Mediterranean world.

Ship docks about 1.5km from town, a 15 min walk. Shuttles offered by the port, mostly mini vans and a long wait. Taxis available.

PORT CALENDAR: <https://gibraltarport.com/cruise/schedules>

14 THINGS TO DO/PLACES TO VISIT

1 Saint Michael's Cave - No visit to Gibraltar would be complete without paying a visit to the stunning St. Michael's Cave. The largest of the island's more than 150 caves, St. Michael's Cave lies at least 274 meters above sea level and is crammed full of spectacular stalactites and stalagmites. First recorded in AD 45, and known to

have sheltered Neanderthals more than 40,000 years ago, the cave has many legends associated with it, including one suggesting the island is secretly connected to Africa via a 24-kilometre-long tunnel.

The reality, however, is equally impressive. The largest area of the cave, the Upper Hall, is connected via five passages to a smaller hall where you'll see spectacular drops of between 12 and 45 metres. A number of smaller chambers, some reaching depths of 76 metres, are accessible via a series of small holes. During excavation work in WWII, the Lower St. Michael's Cave was discovered, containing many more equally breathtaking chambers, as well as a small underground lake.

For a truly unforgettable experience, take in a concert in the fabulous Cathedral Cave, a natural underground concert hall seating 400 people for performances of music, ballet, and drama. A variety of tour options are available, and the caves can even be used to host weddings.

2 Rock of Gibraltar - The geographical feature from which Gibraltar takes its full name is a 400m (1,312ft) cliff, from the top of which you can take in spectacular views of three countries (Gibraltar itself, Spain and Morocco) and two continents (Europe and Africa). It is reached by taking the cable car up from the base station on the southern edge of the old town, and when you disembark on the top you'll receive a warm welcome from the territory's famous Barbary macaques. Bear in mind that on days when the wind is particularly strong, the cable car doesn't run, as it would sway dangerously on the way up.

3 Casemates Square - Located at the northern end of Main Street, Casemates Square is the largest public space in the old city centre and is a popular gathering place due to its numerous restaurants, cafés, and shops. Although completed in 1817, evidence of settlements dating back to the Moors of the 10th century has been found.

While for centuries it served as a place of trade (and also execution), these days the square is where you'll find numerous cultural events and fun things to do, including open-air concerts, National Day celebrations, and the increasingly popular Calentita Food Festival.

Other landmarks along Main Street include the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned, a former mosque rebuilt in Gothic style in 1502. In Cathedral Square stands the Moorish-style Anglican Cathedral (1821), while near the south end of Main Street is the Governor's Residence, originally a Franciscan convent built in 1531.

Also worth a visit, if time allows, is the attractive fishing village of Catalan Bay. It's located on the east shore, just a few minutes' drive from the town centre.

4 Cable Car - Pretty much everything that can be enjoyed at the Upper Rock area - the nature reserve, the monkeys, and the amazing views - can be accessed via the Gibraltar Cable Car. This spectacular aerial tramway was constructed in 1966, and is capable of carrying groups of up to 30 passengers at a time up the 412 meters to the "Top of the Rock."

It's a breathtaking journey, and even though it only takes six minutes, offers some of the best views you're ever likely to experience of the Mediterranean as you make your ascent. An interesting audio guide provides details of the top sights along the way.

From the upper station, you can access many of the top attractions included on this list, as well as enjoy a delightful café and terraces offering superb views over the Mediterranean all the way to Morocco. When you're done, either ride the cable car back down or, if you're feeling adventurous, take the famous Mediterranean steps back down to the town.

5 Ape's Den - Gibraltar is famous for its Barbary macaques, a species native to Morocco and the only monkeys living wild anywhere in Europe. Legend has it that if the apes ever leave Gibraltar, so too will the British. But with more than 160 of the animals thriving on the island, this eventuality seems remote.

The best place to see them is in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve in the Upper Rock area of the island. Here, you'll find the famous **Apes' 6 Den**, a great place to visit for you to get up close with these fascinating creatures without fear of being harassed. But visitors beware: as cute as these apes are, they're wild and do bite. Also, from time-to-time they venture into the town, so watch your belongings. Feeding is strictly prohibited.

A great way to ensure you get to see the monkeys, as well as the colony's top tourist attractions, is to join a Gibraltar Rock Tour. Setting off from the town centre and accompanied by a professional tour guide, you'll be transported to see the monkeys at the famous Ape's Den area, as well as take in spectacular St. Michael's Cave, the tunnels used by the British army during WWII, as well as Europa Point.

6 Pillars of Hercules - The Pillars of Hercules is the ancient name referring to the two promontories at the eastern entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar, a narrow opening 14 kilometres wide between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean separating the continents of Africa and Europe. The northern pillar is the Rock of Gibraltar (called Mount Calpe in ancient times) at Gibraltar. The location of the southern pillar, Mons Abila, on the African site of the strait is not known for certain, but the two most likely candidates are Monte Hacho in Ceuta (the Spanish enclave on the Moroccan coast) and Jebel Musa in Morocco, eleven kilometres to the west.

Throughout history, up to present times, the Pillars have held a major role in mythology and culture. Believed to have been created by the mythological hero Hercules, the Pillars and their creation myth have since been referenced in literature, art, music, architecture, and even on the coat of arms of Spain.

7 Europa Point - At the most southerly point of Gibraltar's peninsula is Europa Point. It's well worth a visit for the historic 19th-century Trinity Lighthouse, the old chapel of Nuestra Señora de Europa (the Shrine of our Lady of Europe), and the impressive Mosque of The Custodian of the Holy Mosques.

The subject of a great deal of redevelopment in recent years, the area is also where you'll find the impressive Harding Battery, a restored fortification built in 1859. It's also home to the Nun's Well, an ancient underground water reservoir.

More recently added attractions include the island's only cricket ground and the Sikorski Memorial, a monument to one of Poland's leading generals of WWII, who died here in a plane crash in 1943. You'll also be rewarded with excellent views across Algeciras Bay and the African coast.

8 Gibraltar Skywalk & Windsor Suspension Bridge - A relatively new attraction (it was only completed in 2018), the Skywalk is already one of the top things to do when visiting the Gibraltar Nature Reserve. Perched 340 meters above the Mediterranean, the Skywalk is an incredible experience (unless you're afraid of heights) as the cliff falls away from under your feet to the shoreline far below. If you can overcome your fear of heights, the vistas are simply stunning as you're able to enjoy uninterrupted views in all directions.

From here, you're also able to enjoy the equally spectacular (and also very new) Windsor Suspension Bridge, connected by a series of fun walking trails. Stretching 71 meters over a spectacular 50-meter gorge, the views over the Straits of Gibraltar are breathtaking. A visit to either site (admission is included with the Gibraltar Nature Reserve) is especially memorable at sunset.

9 The Moorish Castle - Perched high above the old town of Gibraltar and overlooking Casemates Square, the medieval Moorish Castle is certainly an imposing sight. Originally built in the eighth century and rebuilt in the 14th century, much of the castle has been destroyed over time, although the parts that do remain - including the tall Tower of Homage, a massive gatehouse, and a few fragments of masonry - certainly suggest the building's former glory. In places, battle scars from the island's many sieges can still be seen.

The Tower of Homage is in fact the highest such Islamic structure left standing in the Iberian Peninsula, while the walled Kasbah, where local dignitaries would reside, is one of the largest in the area.

10 The Great Siege Tunnels - Perhaps the most significant military installation in the Mediterranean, the Great Siege Tunnels of Gibraltar are an engineering marvel. Carved out of the sheer face of the "Notch," the northern face of the Rock, using nothing but manual labour, this labyrinth of tunnels was built by the British in just six weeks as a defence against a combined force from France and Spain when they tried to recapture the Rock from the British.

The 14th of many sieges the island has endured over the centuries, the Great Siege lasted from 1779 to 1783 and, thanks to the tunnels, resulted in Britain's victory in what would, without the cannons that were able to be mounted here, have undoubtedly ended in defeat. Some of these canons are on display.

Additional tunnels were added in WWII, bringing the total length of the tunnel network to an impressive 51 kilometres. Admission to the siege tunnels is included

with entrance to the Upper Rock Nature Reserve, and guided tours of both sets of tunnels are available.

11 Gibraltar Museum - The Gibraltar Museum dedicates itself to the territory's rich cultural, military and natural history. In its well-organised spaces you can learn about the different peoples who have occupied the Rock from Carthaginian times to the present, gaining a fascinating insight into the history that gives Gibraltar its unique ambience. There are also rooms focusing on the territory's natural and prehistory, and in the basement are the remains of what was once an Arabic bathhouse. Despite being used as stables by the British military at one time, these are some of the best-preserved Moorish baths in Europe.

12 Old Town - One of the most curious, even surreal, parts of Gibraltar is its old town, which occupies the northwestern corner of the territory and is only a 15-minute walk from the airport. A network of narrow lanes surrounding the central thoroughfare of Main Street, it is a slice of England in the sun: high-street stores such as Debenhams and traditional British pubs tell you that you're in the UK, yet the curious blend of architecture and the spotless blue skies remind you that you that you're in the Mediterranean. Casemates Square is the neighbourhood's principal outside space and has plenty of sunny terraces on which to enjoy a pint or a meal.

13 The Convent - One of Gibraltar's oldest buildings, Main Street's Convent dates from 1531 and was originally used as a residence for Franciscan friars. It retained its name after 1728, though, when it was converted into the official domicile of the Governor of Gibraltar. Presumably, a fairly robust constitution is required for this job, as the former convent is said to be one of the most haunted public buildings in Europe. A Lady in Grey (a Spanish nun who was walled in alive in one of the rooms by her father) is said to roam the corridors and set off alarms in the middle of the night.

14 Irish Town - One of Gibraltar's liveliest streets (and not neighbourhoods, as the name might suggest) is the smart Irish Town, which runs parallel to Main Street and takes its name from the Irish women who arrived here in the late 1720s to keep members of the British garrison company. Throughout the remainder of that century, the street's location close to the port made it a thriving commercial centre, but all of its buildings were destroyed in the 1779-83 Great Siege. Many of the elegant buildings on Irish Town that we see today date from the extensive rebuilding carried out in the early 19th century, since which time it has established itself as one of the most fashionable parts of Gibraltar.

PORTIMAO, PORTUGAL

Located right bank of the Arade River just before it reaches the ocean and dating back to the Phoenicians.

Portimao is the largest city in the western Algarve, and was traditionally a centre for shipbuilding, sardine fishing and fish processing. Today, most of that industry has

been replaced by tourism, leisure and retail, leaving Portimao as a large residential city. Most tourists visit Portimao either for the extensive shopping or when using the public transport, but there is a surprising amount to be seen within the city. The city's old and once bustling fishing docks have been responsibly transformed into a scenic promenade, leading to the quaint and tree-lined plazas of the old town. Further inland are pleasant pedestrian shopping streets, a series of historic buildings, and a varied selection of cafes, bars and restaurants specialising in freshly cooked seafood. Don't forget to try the pastel de natas.

Ships dock alongside the wharf with an up to date terminal building. Tender service offered for bigger cruise ships. Minibuses run every 15 mins between the port and the main tourist sites. Quay is about 1.5km from the town centre and makes a pleasant walk along the boulevard.

PORT CALENDAR: <https://www.cruisemapper.com/ports/portimao-port-945>

7 THINGS TO DO / PLACES TO SEE

1 Portimao Museum - For a slightly different side of Portimao, head to the town's museum. It's full of knowledge and fun facts about Portimao's past; everything from fishing and sardine canning, to the archaeological collections that were found in the Algarve.

The museum is arranged in chronological order and goes back as far as Roman times. However, there are also Islamic artefacts, features from the Algarve's boat-building heritage and a movie depicting how the town used to be.

The entrance to the museum is €3 however, you can also get a combined ticket which includes entrance to the Megalithic Monuments of Alcalar. The open-air museum features 18 burial monuments spread over around 10 hectares that date back 5000 years.

2 Marina de Portimao - When it comes to what to do in Portimao, the town's marina is a peaceful place for a leisurely stroll and one of the best places to visit in Portimao. It sits at the top part of the town, next to Praia da Rocha and overlooking the Arade estuary. The Marina is a splendid place to dine. The boardwalk is decorated with a collection of fresh seafood restaurants, trendy pizzerias and creperies.

3 Igreja Matiz de Portimao (Igreja da Nossa Senhora da Conceicao) - The town's parish church stands on high ground to the north of the centre. A 14th-century Gothic portal and a gargoyle are all that remain of the original structure after the 1755 earthquake. Its interior is decorated with azulejos (hand-painted tiles) and neoclassical and neobaroque gilding.

4 Mercado Municipal de Portimao - Experiencing life the way the locals do is one of the top things to do in Portimao. For a great example of this, head to Mercado Municipal, the town's traditional market. It'll likely be bustling with locals buying every type of fresh food imaginable. You'll also be able to sample more authentic Portuguese cuisine.

5 Fortaleza de Santa Catarina - This ancient fortress is located on a cliff behind the beach of Praia da Rocha. A rather intriguing structure from the 1600s, the Fort of

Santa Catarina was actually built by the Italian military engineer Alexandre Massai. Created for the town's defence, the fortress has been rebuilt a few times, so not much of its authenticity remains. However, it's still a great photography opportunity and the panoramas from the top are second to none.

6 Alvor - The little fishing village is a combination of authenticity and tourism. Some restaurants are clearly catering to international visitors but there are also plenty of traditional eateries tucked down its tiny streets. You could easily spend a few hours wandering the winding cobbled paths of Alvor, marvelling at its whitewashed buildings and buying handmade trinkets from local stores. But, if you're only there for a day, make sure to visit the Igreja do Divino Salvador which is a stunning little find.

7 Autodromo Internacional do Algarve - For all the fans of motorsports out there, a trip to Portimao's autodrome will surely be one of your favourite things to do in Portimao. The F1 standard race track is not even a decade old and ideal for an adrenaline-filled morning. Located 8km northwest of Portimão, the track has held everything from the World Superbike Championships to the Algarve's Classic Car Festival. If you've ever wanted to take a charged supercar out for a spin, this is definitely the place for you. They have track days during the week and if you'd feel safer in a cart than in a car, you can also test your driving skills on the go-kart circuit.

LISBON, PORTUGAL

Lisbon is the capital and the most influential city in Portugal. It lies on the Atlantic Ocean and River Tagus. Its privileged location made it an important city, controlling as it does a great part of the Atlantic. . It's known as the city of seven hills, as, like Rome, it's set upon 7 hills – this means you are guaranteed some stellar viewpoints! It is one of the oldest cities in western Europe. After the region was settled by the Celts, it was then founded by the Phoenicians. They established a settlement called Ulissipo, which was then conquered by the Greeks and Carthaginians. During World War II, Lisbon became a refuge for many exiles from the various countries occupied by the Axis powers. From Lisbon, they would sail to the United States or Great Britain.

Santa Apolonia Terminal: This terminal is one of the main docking points and is well-positioned for easy access to downtown Lisbon.

Jardim do Tabaco Terminal: Another popular terminal, located close to key attractions and shopping area.

Alcantara Terminal: Situated further from the city centre, but offers excellent facilities and transport links.

From the docks there are buses, trams (15E) and an underground for transportation into town. HOP ON/HOP OFF tour good option.

PORT CALENDAR: <https://www.cruisemapper.com/ports/lisbon-port-65>

20 THINGS TO SEE / PLACES TO VISIT

1 TRAM 28 - One of the most iconic sights in Lisbon is the yellow and white trams that bumble along the streets taking residents and travellers alike from A-Z. However, it's Tram 28 that the most historic journey, weaving up through popular neighbourhoods and offering great views over the city. Due to the nature of the route, the new trams aren't able to travel this line and so, you're sure to be on one of the antiquated models.

Along the E28 route, delightful Remodelado trams trundle, and these retain many of their original 1930s features, including polished wood interiors, brass dials and cheery yellow paintwork. In any other city these trams would be housed in a museum, but in Lisbon they are an integral part of the public transport network. The E29 tram follows a very scenic route, passing through many of Lisbon's historic districts, and provides one of the best tours of the city.

2 SÃO JORGE CASTLE - Located on one of the city's seven hills, São Jorge Castle, or Saint George Castle in English, overlooks the city centre and offers a historic sight of the skyline. And, historic it is. Archaeologists have found evidence of fortifications built here dating back to 8th century BC, and you can still see remains dating back to 6th century BC today. As well as offering a historic location, you can also enjoy amazing views over the city from the castle, and that's why it's a must-visit.

The silhouette of the Castle stands out both by day and when illuminated at night, located on the summit of São Jorge hill, the highest in Lisbon. The hillside also houses two of the city's neighbourhoods called Alfama and Castelo.

A small fortress was built by the Visigoths during the fifth century. It was modified and enlarged by the Moors in the mid-eleventh century and during the reign of Afonso I of Portugal (1109 – 1185), it was altered and in later years transformed into a Royal Palace. Finally, it was completely restored in 1938.

The Castle reached its maximum splendour during the thirteenth century and lasted until the sixteenth century when it was occupied by both the Kings of Portugal and the Bishop.

Only a few years ago, Phoenician, Greek and Carthaginian ruins were found in the area, and are currently being uncovered.

3 ELEVADOR DE SANTA JUSTA - If you're scared of heights this is one you may want to skip, but for those who love some excitement (and a stunning view), Elevador de Santa Justa is a great visit and a really unique attraction in the city centre. Standing at 148ft high, inaugurated in 1902, the lift connects the city centre with the higher Largo do Carmo and Barrio Alto neighbourhoods and really stands out from the surrounding buildings. Take the lift up and for an even better view take the spiral staircase to the viewing deck to get a unique viewpoint of the city.

4 VASCO DA GAMA SHOPPING CENTRE - some. For everything you'd want under one roof, why not try the Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre? It's only a short taxi ride from the port and has nearly 200 stores and 50 food options – the only limit is how many bags you can carry!

5 TIMEOUT MARKET - For foodies, the TimeOut Market is a must. Just like the Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre, it contains everything you'd need under one roof though, it's not shops you'll find but places to eat. With 28 restaurants and 8 bars, as well as a concert hall, you can sample a range of local delicacies and the best dishes on offer in Lisbon, all hand-selected by the team from TimeOut.

6 LX FACTORY - Situated in a prominent factory dating back to 1846, Lx Factory is a community hub and business location featuring shops, restaurants and offices, as well as a range of creative events. For lovers of art and culture, the Lx Factory and surrounding area epitomises those things and is like a living, modern day-museum. Although the building itself is historic, dating back to 1846, the buzz here is electric and modern in feeling and offers a really unique experience to visitors.

7 PRACA DO COMERCIO - Lisbon's most important square: the Praça do Comércio was built on the site where the old Royal Palace used to exist before it was destroyed by the earthquake of 1755. It was for decades Lisbon's main entrepôt, and crucial for its maritime trade.

8 RUA AUGUSTA ARCH - Located on the north side of Commerce Square is the Rua Augusta Arch which gives way to the boulevard Rua Augusta, the most prominent boulevard in Baixa.

This triumphal arch was designed by the Portuguese architect Santos de Carvalho to celebrate the reconstruction of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake. It was completed in 1873. On top of its several pillars, it's adorned with numerous statues that represent important Portuguese figures like Vasco da Gama and the Marquis of Pombal.

9 EQUESTRIAN STATUE of JOSEPH I - The bronze equestrian statue of Joseph I of Portugal (1750 – 1777) was designed by Machado de Castro in 1775. Joseph I was King of Portugal during the Great Earthquake.

10 LISBON CATHEDRAL - Lisbon Cathedral, better known as Sé de Lisboa, is the oldest and most important church in the city. Its construction dates back to the 12th century and is predominantly Romanesque in style.

The Cathedral of Lisbon is austere in appearance with a predominantly Romanesque style, although with the alterations made over the years, different styles have been masterfully blended which give it a very special character.

From the outside, the cathedral is protected by thick walls framed by two bell towers, which give it an appearance more typical of a medieval fortress than of a church. The façade still retains its 12th-century Romanesque style and its centrepiece is a central rose window.

Once inside, we'll find a temple that, in the midst of its austere character, has some decorative elements such as the fountain in which Saint Anthony of Padua was baptized, some 14th-century sarcophagi, and a striking 14th-century Gothic chapel.

11 JERONIMOS MONASTERY - The Jeronimos Monastery is, along with the Belem tower, the most important tourist attraction in Lisbon, inside which lies the tomb of Vasco da Gama.

The Jerónimos Monastery, also called Hieronymites Monastery, is along with the Tower of Belém, one of the most visited sites in Lisbon. UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site in 1983. This landmark is called Mosteiro dos Jerónimos in Portuguese. The religious building was designed by the Portuguese architect Diogo de Boitaca to commemorate the return of Vasco da Gama from India. The construction began on 6 January 1501 and wasn't completed until the seventeenth century. The building is predominantly Manueline style (Portuguese late Gothic).

Curiously, the monastery was built on the site of the former Ermida do Restelo, the chapel where Vasco da Gama and the rest of the sailors prayed before setting sail down the African coast to India.

12 BELEM TOWER - Belém Tower was first built to defend Lisbon. Years later, it was transformed into a lighthouse and then a customs center. The Belém Tower (Torre de Belém) was built between 1514 and 1520 in a Manuelino style by the Portuguese architect and sculptor Francisco de Arruda. It was classified as a World Heritage Site in 1983 by UNESCO.

Constructed on the northern bank of the Tagus River, this tower was used to defend the city. Years later, it was transformed into a lighthouse and customs house. It's located right by the Jeronimos Monastery, so we recommend visiting them on the same day.

13 MONUMENT TO THE DISCOVERIES - At 52 metres (170 feet) tall, Lisbon's Monument to the Discoveries commemorates the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Henry the Navigator, who discovered the Azores, Madeira, and Cape Verde. The Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument to the Discoveries) stands 170 Ft (52 m) tall. This stunning monument was designed to commemorate the Age of Discoveries in Portugal. It was inaugurated in 1960, on the fifth centenary of one of the country's great discoverers, Prince Henry the Navigator, who discovered the Azores, Madeira, and Cape Verde.

The tribute is located on the coast of Belém, near Lisbon, and is also very close to other important sights like Belem Tower and Jeronimos Monastery.

The Monument to the Discoveries is made up of a group of sculptures that represent the prow of a caravel (a small sailing ship constructed by the Portuguese to explore the Atlantic Ocean). Leading the ship is Prince Henry the Navigator and behind him are many other great Portuguese discoverers.

14 NATIONAL COACH MUSEUM - The National Coach Museum houses one of the most important collections of horse drawn carriages in the world, making this a highly recommended place to visit.

The National Coach Museum (Museu Nacional dos Coches) houses an important horse-drawn carriage collection of vehicles are from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century.

The Museum is housed in an old riding school and was inaugurated on the 23 May 1905 by Queen Amélia of Orleans and Bragança, the Princess of France married to

King Carlos I of Portugal. Nowadays, it is one of the most popular museums in Lisbon.

15 VASCO DA GAMA BRIDGE - Built for the 1988 Lisbon Expo, the Vasco da Gama Bridge is more than 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) long and links the northern and southern regions of Portugal. The bridge was inaugurated for the 1988 Lisbon World Exposition, and is so long that on cloudy days, it is impossible to see the other side of the bridge!

Opened to the public on 29 March 1988, it was named after the most important Portuguese discoverer; Vasco da Gama. It commemorates the fifth centenary of his arrival from India in 1498. Gama was the first European to reach India by sea, from the Atlantic Ocean.

A bridge connecting the north and south of the country already existed, the 25 de Abril Bridge, but it wasn't enough for the traffic congestion from one side to the other, so as an alternative, they constructed the Vasco da Gama Bridge.

3,300 workers were needed to build the bridge and it took 18 months to complete.

16 25 DE ABRIL BRIDGE (25TH APRIL BRIDGE) - At 2,277 metres (1.4 miles) long, the 25 de Abril Bridge holds the record for the longest suspension bridge in Europe and was the first bridge to be built in Lisbon.

The 25th April Bridge, also known as 25 de Abril Bridge (Ponte 25 de Abril in Portuguese) is the longest suspension bridge in Europe. It has two levels, the top level is for cars and the lower, which was added in 1999 is for trains.

The overpass took 45 months to build. It was inaugurated on the 6 August 1966 and was named Salazar Bridge, after António de Oliveira Salazar, dictator of Portugal until 1974. After the Carnation Revolution that took place on 25 April 1974 and Salazar's regime was overturned, the Bridge was given the name of 25th of April.

It was designed by the American Bridge Company, also responsible for the San Francisco Bridge, and this is why the 25 de Abril Bridge looks a bit like the Golden Gate and why they are often compared.

17 MAAT - Exhibitions related to modern art, architecture and technology are presented in an iconic building of curved lines that descends into the river. Even if you don't visit the art inside, you may walk around, and even on top of, this waterfront landmark, as it serves as a viewpoint, looking out to 25 de Abril Bridge.

18 TILE MUSEUM - Ceramic tile art dates back to ancient Egypt and is found all over the Mediterranean, but nowhere else in the world did it evolve as much or as imaginatively as in Portugal. Here, tiles became more than just geometric figures decorating walls, they also depicted historical and cultural scenes to cover palaces, street signs and shops. There is only one place on the planet where you can follow the history and evolution of this art form, and that's Lisbon's Tile Museum. Set in a magnificent 16th-century convent, this is the city's most beautiful museum. It's a unique gallery with a collection of tilework that ranges from Moorish-influenced pieces from Seville to modern examples by contemporary artists. In the splendid

church dripping with gold is also a series of Dutch panels, from a time when Europe started imitating Chinese ceramics.

19 ROYAL PALACE OF AJUDA - Portugal's last royal palace was built at the top of a hill in 1795. It was to be one of Europe's largest palaces, but was abandoned and the project left unfinished during the French invasion of Portugal and later when the country became a republic. However, the neoclassical building is grand enough, and the royal family left behind the crown jewels and a collection of decorative arts from the 18th and 19th centuries, which are displayed in the magnificent rooms.

Across the street is the royal botanical garden, laid out in 1768. Split into two levels, it has exotic trees and plants, 18th-century sculptures and fountains, and a beautiful view of 25 de Abril Bridge.

20 SAO VICENTE DE FORA MONASTERY - The world's largest collection of baroque tile panels, including several illustrating La Fontaine's fables, can be seen inside this monastery from 1582. Those panels were added in the 1700s, and line the cloisters and much of the interior. It's possible to climb up to the roof, for a view over Alfama.

HONFLEUR, FRANCE

Ports don't come any prettier than Honfleur on the Seine estuary. Colourful half-timbered houses jostle for position on the quays, along with art galleries and restaurants. Packed with things to see and do, it's not for nothing that Honfleur is one of the most popular places to visit in France.

DISCOVER THE PORT'S MARITIME HISTORY

Honfleur is so enchanting that people often forget it was originally built for trade. The harbour was chosen for its strategic location on the southern bank of the Seine estuary. During the Hundred Years' War, the French king fortified the port, although that didn't stop the English taking over for several decades.

Before the French Revolution, Honfleur's shipowners made their fortune from trading, especially with North America. Samuel de Champlain, one of the most famous explorers associated with the port, headed off from Honfleur to found the Canadian city of Quebec. Lucrative trade for the Honfleur shipping magnates included cod-fishing off Newfoundland and the triangular slave trade.

STROLL AROUND THE VIEUX BASSIN

Wealthy Honfleur families built their multi-storey homes packed tight next to each other, especially around the Vieux Bassin, the heart of the port, where a front-row home overlooking the boats was a real sign of status. Although there are no longer any commercial ships or fishing boats in the Vieux Bassin (they are now moored to larger docks), it's not uncommon to see yachts there. Shops fight for space along the quays in this extraordinarily picturesque setting, while restaurants set up their outdoor seating across the cobbles.

The neighbourhoods on each side of the Vieux Bassin all have their own character. The neighbourhood to the east is full of interesting buildings including the Church of Saint-Etienne, while that to the west extends uphill to the splendid wooden church

of Sainte-Catherine and Honfleur's main art museums. The neighbourhood to the south of the harbour is more low-key but boasts some lesser-known gems such as the Church of Saint-Léonard and the restored fountains.

Ships usually dock at Quai de Seine about 1.5km from town centre. Shuttle buses are usually FREE. After drop off about 5-10 mins to town centre. Taxis available.

PORT CALENDAR: https://www.cruisetimetables.com/cruises-to-honfleur-france.html#google_vignette

13 THINGS TO DO/ PLACES TO VISIT

1 Vieux Bassin: The old harbour, with its bobbing pleasure boats, is Honfleur's focal point. On the west side, quai Ste-Catherine is lined with tall, taper-thin houses – many protected from the elements by slate tiles – dating from the 16th to 18th centuries. The Lieutenance, at the mouth of the old harbour, was once the residence of the town's royal governor. Just northeast of the Lieutenance is the Avant Port, home to Honfleur's dozen fishing vessels, which sell their catch at the Marche au Poisson.

2 Lieutenance: Overlooking the Vieux-Bassin, the Lieutenance was the home of the French king's lieutenant up until the 17th century. One of the two gates to old Honfleur is set into the wall of this building.

3 Church of Sainte-Catherine: Initially intended as a temporary structure, this extraordinary wooden church was built by local shipwrights during the late 15th and early 16th centuries after its stone predecessor was destroyed during the Hundred Years War. Wood was used so money would be left over to strengthen the city's fortifications, though there are elements of stone (such as some of the pillar bases). From the inside, the remarkable twin naves and double-vaulted roof resemble two overturned ships' hulls. museum is the place to go to find out about the maritime history of old Honfleur and discover the stories of explorers such as Roberval, who set sail from Honfleur for Canada in 1541.

Somewhat surprisingly for a wooden building, a galaxy of devotional candles often sparkles within the interior. The house of worship is situated a block southwest (up the hill) from the northern end of the Vieux Bassin.

5 Chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce: This 17th-century chapel sits on a hill above Honfleur (Plateau de Grace) in a spot where pilgrims have long come to give thanks to God for rescuing them from natural disasters, including Duke Richard II of Normandy, who narrowly escaped a storm early in the 11th century. Inside, fascinating plaques, paintings and models attest to the gratitude felt by many visitors here, including famous people associated with Normandy. For fabulous views over Honfleur and the Seine estuary, head up to the Mont-Joli hilltop.

6 The Eugène Boudin Museum: Honfleur's extensive fine arts museum houses many fine paintings by celebrated 19th- and 20th-century artists associated with Honfleur and the Seine estuary, including Boudin, Courbet, Dufy, Jongkind and Monet. Also on display are drawings and paintings bequeathed to the town of his birth by Eugène Boudin in 1898.

7 Les Maisons Satie: This unusual and intriguing complex captures the whimsical spirit of the eccentric avant-garde composer Erik Satie (1866–1925), who lived and worked in Honfleur and was born in one of the two half-timbered maisons Satie (Satie houses). Visitors wander through the beguiling rooms, each concealing a surreal surprise, as a headset plays Satie’s strangely familiar music. Les Maisons Satie is situated 350m northwest of the northern end of the Vieux Bassin

8 Greniers à Sel: These vast stone salt granaries date back to 1670 and could store up to 10,000 tonnes of salt, a vital commodity. Although no longer used for salt, today the building is used as a venue for exhibitions, concerts and conferences

9 The Pont de Normandie: This vast bridge spans the Seine between Honfleur and Le Havre, and was designed by Michel Virlogeux. It opened in 1995, when it was the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world, at just over 7,000 feet. Although built as a toll bridge for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists can cross for free and enjoy incredible panoramic views of the Seine estuary.

10 Naturospace: Situated between the old port and the Seine estuary, this beautiful tropical butterfly house is the largest in France.

11 Musee d’Ethnographie et d’Art Populaire Normand - Through multiple rooms, this museum gathers together exhibits on domestic and economic life in 16th- to 19th-century Normandy portraying traditional costumes, furniture and housewares. It's located in two adjacent 16th-century buildings: a one-time prison and a house, hence the name of the street. A pass for access to Musée d’Ethnographie et d’Art Populaire Normand, Musee Eugene Boudin and the Musee de la Marine is €13.

12 Musee de la Marine - This museum displays model sailing ships, nautically themed engravings and watercolours, and a case that examines Honfleur’s role in the 17th- and 18th-century traite negriere (slave trade). It's located on the eastern shore of the Vieux Bassin, in the deconsecrated 13th- and 14th-century Église St-Étienne.

13 Marche au Poisson – A visit to this lively fish market to browse the day's catch is both fun and fascinating.



DECADES OF SOUL CRUISE

17th - 30th May 2027

Itinerary and useful information

Thank you for
your fantastic support

