

A PRIVATE TOUR OF PORTUGUESE DECORATIVE ARTS & ARCHITECTURE

Lisbon · Sintra · Porto

October 4 to 12, 2025 · Saturday to Sunday



BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OUR DAYS

October 4 to 8 – LISBON – Palacio Ludovice Hotel,
staying for four-nights.

Touring on our way to Sintra with stops in
Montserrat and Azenhas.

October 8 to 10 - SINTRA - Palacio Seteais Hotel,
staying for two-nights.

Touring on our way to Porto with a stop in Mafra.

October 10 to 12 – PORTO – Torel Palace Hotel,
staying for two-nights.



IMAGES: Top - Sintra's Palacio Pena, dates to 1854. Above Right – Lisbon's Palacio Queluz, 18th century.



I have planned an exciting journey for you which will encompass the Crown Jewels of Portugal including the cities of Lisbon, Sintra and Porto with stops along the breathtakingly beautiful coast. Hotels featuring unique historic and Portuguese design have also been selected ranging from a charming design boutique hotel to former grand palaces. No trip to Portugal would be complete without a Port wine tasting and indulging in the local cuisine and pastries such as the Pastel de Nata cream tart! We will also have an opportunity to engage with members of the local design community who have been instrumental in recommending highlights to include, along with suggesting interesting hotels.

Of course, we will also be focusing on Portuguese design which is known for its iconic blue and white tiles that are often installed on benches, train stations, church interiors, sidewalks, and houses.

The typical Portuguese Azulejos (tiles) originate from Moorish culture. The artistic style spread across Portugal after the Moors invaded the country in 711 AD.

While initial azulejos techniques were simplistic, they would develop more from the 13th through 15th centuries. During this period, the Spanish city of Seville became a significant center for ceramic tile art. As the style developed, tile artists began to create multi-color variations.

It wasn't until the 16th century that Azulejo tiles became a notable fixture in Portuguese culture. After visiting the Spanish city of Sevilla and Granada's Alhambra Palace in the south of Spain, King Manuel I of Portugal was impressed with the intricate tile designs that he saw. He used his wealth to import azulejos to his palace in Sintra, a Portuguese municipality northwest of Lisbon. Thereafter, ceramic tile art rapidly grew in popularity, with influential members of the monarchy and the church commissioning pieces.

I look forward to sharing this adventure with you.



Lani Summerville

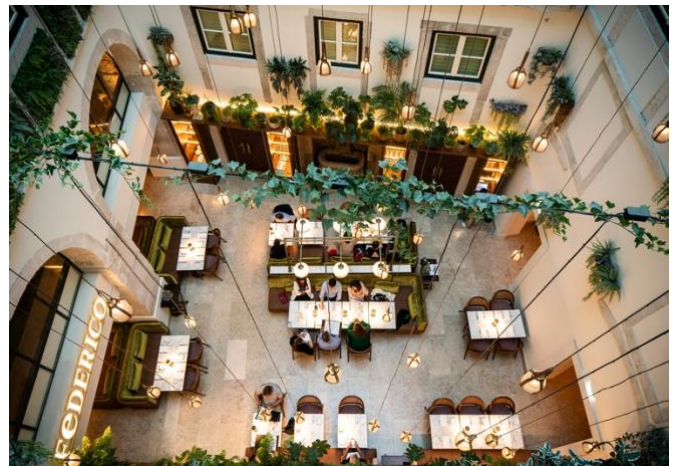
Lani Summerville
Founder and Director
Classical Excursions

LISBON: Palacio Ludovice Hotel

STAY: October 4 to 8 · four-nights

Former private residence of João Federico Ludovice, architect to King João V in the 18th century, its rooms and halls are brought back to life, completely transformed recently by architect Miguel Cântio Martins to create a luxury boutique hotel.

In the early 1700, João Federico Ludovice arrived in Lisbon, commissioned to transform King João V's architectural desires into reality. In search of a place to build a private residence for him and his descendants, he found in the mythical Bairro Alto the perfect spot. A facade developed in 5 floors of unequal height and dimensions, opened by a large central door with decorated pilasters, windows framed in stone, balconies with stunning views over Lisbon and of the Bairro Alto neighborhood, 18th century white-and-blue tiled walls, a Chapel with Masonic symbols and a hebraic inscription, palatial rooms with stucco ceilings and a majestic staircase. This was the first palace of its kind, one to occupy an entire block.





SINTRA: The Valverde Palacio de Seteais Hotel

STAY: October 8 to 10 · two-nights

This 18th century palace is today a five-star hotel. nestled within the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, the hotel provides stunning views and is in close proximity to Sintra's renowned historical sites.

Constructed between 1783 and 1787, the palace was originally the residence of Daniel Gildemeester, a wealthy Dutch consul. He chose this elevated location to enjoy panoramic views of the Sintra hills. After Gildemeester's death, the property was sold in 1797 to Diogo José Vito de Menezes Noronha Coutinho, the 5th Marquis of Marialva. The Marquis expanded the palace between 1801 and 1802, transforming it into a symmetrical U-shaped structure. A notable addition during this period was a neoclassical arch built in 1802 to commemorate a visit by Prince Regent John and Princess Carlota Joaquina. The interiors were adorned with frescoes attributed to French painter Jean-Baptiste Pillement, featuring exotic vegetation and mythological themes.

PORTO: Torel Palace Hotel

STAY: October 10 to 12 · two-nights

Housed in an 19th century mansion in the heart of Porto, today it combines Romantic-era opulence, classical elegance and contemporary sophistication, courtesy of interior designer Isabel Sá Nogueira.



Known as Palacete Campos Navarro after the wealthy merchant family who built it in 1861, the four-storey building attests to the family's bourgeois status and source of wealth, namely exporting products such as fabrics, wine, olive oil and cereals.

DAY 1 • October 4th – Arrivals to Lisbon

We will meet in Lisbon where we will spend our first four-nights at the **Palacio Ludovice Hotel**, a five-star luxury boutique hotel opened in 2022, after a detailed renovation that transformed the former residence of João Frederico Ludovice, architect to King João V. A welcome dinner tonight.

DAYS 2 / 3 / 4 • October 5th 6th 7th – Lisbon

Over the course of the next three days, we will explore a number of amazing palaces, museums and more. Blue and white tile work and coloration is a major decorative feature found throughout Portugal.

The **Fronteira Palace**, is a 17th-century palace constructed around 1670 by Dom João de Mascarenhas, the first Marquis of Fronteira, it initially served as a hunting lodge and summer retreat. Following the 1755 earthquake that devastated much of Lisbon, the Mascarenhas family made it their primary residence. It is renowned for its exquisite azulejo (traditional Portuguese tile) decorations, considered among the finest in situ collections from the 17th century. The palace's gardens are a testament to Baroque landscape design, adorned with fountains, statues, and meticulously trimmed hedges.



Palace of Queluz was originally conceived as a summer retreat for Dom Pedro of Braganza, who later became King Pedro III, the palace exemplifies Rococo architecture and is often referred to as the "Portuguese Versailles." Construction of the palace commenced in 1747 under the direction of architect Mateus Vicente de Oliveira. Following the destruction of the Palace of Ajuda by fire in 1794, Queluz became the official residence of the Portuguese Prince Regent João and his family until they fled to Brazil during the French invasion in 1807.



The National Azulejo Museum (Tile Museum), is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the art of azulejos—traditional Portuguese ceramic tiles. Established in 1965, the museum is housed in the former Convent of Madre de Deus, founded in 1509 by Queen Leonor. The collection traces the evolution of azulejo art from the 15th century to contemporary times. Notable pieces include the "Great View of Lisbon," a panoramic tile composition depicting the city before the 1755 earthquake.



The **Palácio Nacional da Ajuda** (above) is a neoclassical palace located in the Ajuda district of Lisbon, Portugal. Originally constructed to replace the royal residence destroyed in the 1755 earthquake, its construction began in 1795 but faced numerous interruptions due to political and financial challenges. The palace became the official residence of the Portuguese royal family from the reign of King Luís I in 1861 until the establishment of the republic in 1910.



The **Decorative Arts Museum / Fundação Ricardo do Espírito Santo Silva** (known as FRESS), established in 1953 by banker and collector Ricardo do Espírito Santo Silva, is dedicated to preserving and promoting Portuguese decorative arts and traditional craftsmanship. Situated in the historic **Azurara Palace**, a restored 17th-century building in Lisbon's Alfama district, the foundation offers visitors a comprehensive experience of Portugal's artistic heritage.



The **Palácio do Marquês de Pombal**, located in Oeiras, is an 18th-century Baroque and Rococo-style palace designed by Hungarian architect Carlos Mardel. Constructed in the second half of the 18th century, it served as the residence of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, the 1st Marquis of Pombal, who was a prominent statesman and reformer in Portugal. The palace showcases intricate architectural details, including an elaborate chapel, grand stone staircases, and rooms adorned with meticulously painted ceilings and azulejos (traditional Portuguese tiles). The surrounding gardens are notable for their Baroque design, featuring decorative elements such as statues, fountains, and a cascading waterfall.



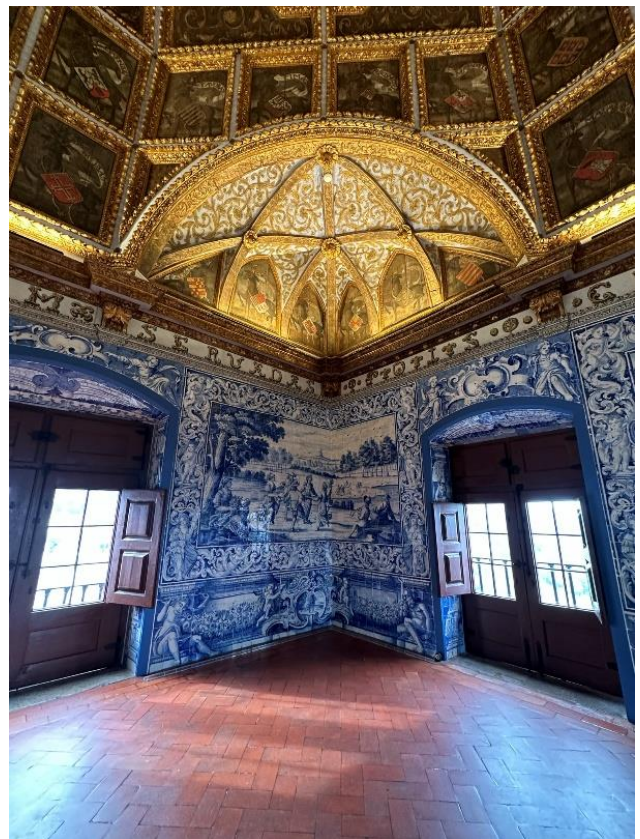
The **National Museum of Ancient Art** (known as MNAA), established in 1884, is Portugal's premier art institution, housing an extensive collection of over 40,000 items, including paintings, sculptures, goldware, furniture, textiles, ceramics, and prints. Located in the Palácio Alvor-Pombal in Lisbon, the museum's collection spans more than a millennium, featuring significant works by artists such as Hieronymus Bosch, Raphael, Hans Holbein the Elder, Francisco de Zurbarán, Albrecht Dürer, Domingos Sequeira, and Giambattista Tiepolo.

Casa-Museu Medeiros e Almeida

was the residence of António de Medeiros e Almeida, a prominent Portuguese entrepreneur and art collector. His 19th-century home now displays an extensive collection of decorative arts, including paintings, sculptures, and fine furniture. Visitors can explore the elegant rooms and appreciate the opulent lifestyle of its former owner.



Quinta dos Azulejos is a historic estate renowned for its exquisite interiors and gardens adorned with intricate tile murals and benches that date back to around 1779. These azulejos were sourced from the historic Rato tile factory and showcase the artistry of the period. The garden's design reflects Moorish influences, characterized by its inward-looking layout that creates a secluded and contemplative environment.



DAY 5 · October 8th – Depart Lisbon for Sintra

After breakfast, check-out of the hotel and have luggage ready to board the coach heading north.



On our way to Sintra, we will visit the **Palácio de Monserrate** (image above), a palatial villa in the traditional summer resort of the court in the foothills overlooking the Atlantic Ocean north west of the capital, Lisbon. Eclectic in style, it was completed in 1863 to the design of architect James Thomas Knowles.

And you'll enjoy a stop in **Azenhas**, a village clinging to the rocky cliffs.



Arrive **Sintra** and check-in to **The Valverde Palacio de Seteais Hotel** for two-nights.

DAY 6 · October 9th – Sintra

The **National Palace of Sintra**, also known as the "Town Palace" is recognized for its distinctive twin conical chimneys, the palace showcases a blend of architectural styles, including Medieval, Gothic, Manueline, Renaissance, and Romantic elements. The palace's origins trace back to the Moorish era, serving as a residence for Islamic rulers. Following the Christian reconquest, it became a favored retreat for Portuguese royalty. Significant expansions occurred during the reigns of King John I in the early 15th century and King Manuel I in the late 15th to early 16th centuries, contributing to its current architectural diversity.



Quinta da Regaleira is a captivating estate located near the historic center of Sintra. Built between 1904 and 1910, it was commissioned by António Augusto Carvalho Monteiro, a wealthy Brazilian-Portuguese businessman with a deep interest in mysticism and the esoteric. Collaborating with Italian architect Luigi Manini, Monteiro designed the estate to reflect his philosophical and spiritual ideologies. The estate features a neo-Manueline palace adorned with intricate Gothic, Renaissance, and Manueline motifs. However, the true allure lies within its expansive gardens, which are replete with symbolic structures, underground tunnels, and concealed passageways. **Initiation Well (Poço Iniciático):** This subterranean tower descends approximately 27 meters and consists of a spiral staircase with nine levels, believed to symbolize the circles of Hell from Dante's "Divine Comedy." The well is thought to have been used for ceremonial purposes, possibly related to Freemasonry or the Knights Templar.



Pena Palace is situated atop a hill in the Sintra Mountains, overlooking the town. On clear days, its vibrant colors and distinctive architecture are visible from Lisbon and much of its metropolitan area. The palace stands as a significant representation of 19th-century Romanticism and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site's history dates to the Middle Ages when a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Pena was constructed. In 1493, King John II and Queen Leonor made a pilgrimage to this chapel. Later, King Manuel I commissioned the construction of a monastery, which was entrusted to the Order of Saint Jerome. This monastery remained a quiet place for meditation until it suffered significant damage from lightning in the 18th century and the devastating 1755 Lisbon earthquake. Despite the destruction, the chapel survived relatively unscathed. In 1838, King Ferdinand II acquired the monastery ruins and surrounding lands, including the nearby Castle of the Moors. He transformed the site into a summer residence for the Portuguese royal family. The reconstruction, completed between 1842 and 1854, was led by German architect Wilhelm Ludwig von Eschwege. The design reflects an eclectic mixture of styles, including Neo-

Gothic, Neo-Manueline, Neo-Islamic, and Neo-Renaissance, embodying the Romanticism of the era.



The **Convent of the Capuchos**, also known as the Convent of the Holy Cross of the Sintra Hills, is a historical Franciscan monastery located in the Sintra Mountains of Portugal. Established in 1560 by D. Álvaro de Castro, the convent exemplifies the Franciscan ideals of simplicity and harmony with nature.

DAY 7 · October 10th – Depart Sintra for Porto

After breakfast, check-out of the hotel and have luggage ready to board the coach heading north. On route to Porto we stop at Mafra for a tour, followed by lunch en route. We will visit the **Mafra National Palace**, a monumental Baroque and Neoclassical complex. Constructed between 1717 and 1755 during the reign of King John V, the palace stands as a testament to Portugal's opulence during the 18th century. The complex comprises a basilica, convent and library. The library is one of the most significant libraries of the 18th century, it contains approximately 36,000 volumes.



Arrive **Porto** and check-in to the **Torel Palace Hotel** for two-nights.

DAY 8 • October 11th – Porto

Porto's historic center has two significant landmarks: the **Porto Cathedral** (image below) and the **Episcopal Palace** (image right). Perched atop Penaventosa Hill, the Porto Cathedral is one of the city's oldest. Construction began in the 12th century under Bishop Hugo, featuring Romanesque architecture. Over the centuries, Gothic and Baroque elements were incorporated, including a Gothic cloister and a Baroque loggia designed by Nicolau Nasoni.



The **Church of São Francisco** is renowned for its Gothic architecture and opulent Baroque interior. Established in the 13th century by Franciscan friars, the current structure was primarily built between 1383 and 1425.

The **Casa-Museu Guerra Junqueiro** is an 18th-century Baroque mansion, constructed between 1730 and 1746 for Domingos Barbosa, a canon of the cathedral, the house exemplifies civil architecture from that period. In the 20th century, the residence became associated with the Portuguese poet and writer Abílio Manuel Guerra Junqueiro (1850–1923). Following his death, his family donated the house and his extensive collection of decorative arts to the city of Porto.



The **Capela das Almas**, or Chapel of Souls, is a notable religious site, renowned for its stunning exterior adorned with traditional blue and white azulejo tiles, depicting scenes from the lives of Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Catherine.





Dinner and tasting at the historic **Calem Cellars**, a renowned Port wine producer located in Vila Nova de Gaia, just across the Douro River from Porto. Established in 1859, Calem has a long-standing tradition of crafting high-quality Port wines and offers visitors an immersive experience into the world of Port wine production.



DAY 9 · October 12th – Departures from Porto

Following breakfast, independent departures or continue your exploration of this region.



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Itinerary as of 11 April 2025 | Program subject to change without notice.