



LISBON + PORTO // SEPTEMBER 13-19, 2020

PORTUGAL

MAYO CLINIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: POST-CONFERENCE TOUR





ITINERARY

DAY 1: SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13

LISBON

Following breakfast, you will be met and greeted at the Grande Real Villa Italia by your local guide who will assist with your luggage and escort you to your motorcoach for the transfer to Lisbon.

Upon arrival in Lisbon, begin your post-conference tour with an authentic taste of Lisbon's cuisine as you nibble your way around the lively areas of central Lisbon! You'll begin in the picturesque working class quarter of Bairro Alto dating back to the 16th century. Traditionally, this was the city's bohemian haunt for artists and writers. Nowadays, it's one of the main hubs of the city's nightlife. Neighboring Chiado is an elegant, sophisticated district of theaters, bookshops, old style cafes, art nouveau jewelry shops and luxurious international brands. Baixa, or downtown Lisbon, is the heart of the city and the main shopping and banking district. It stretches from the riverfront to the Avenida da Liberdade, with streets named according to the shopkeepers and craftsmen who traded in the area. It was completely rebuilt after the Great Earthquake of 1755.

At the very heart of any visit to Lisbon, or Portugal in general, must be the food and drink. Lisbon is full of cafés, restaurants, bars, bakeries, butchers and much more. This walking tour is designed to get your legs moving and your taste buds going! Your guide will share local insights while hopping from café to bar to restaurant all-the-while explaining the local delicacies being tasted along the way such as Pastel de Nata (custard cake), Bica (Portuguese espresso), Ginjinha (cherry liqueur), Portuguese ham and cheese and traditional Portuguese beer and wine.

Following the tour, transfer to your hotel for check-in. This evening, join your fellow MCAA travelers for an unforgettable dinner featuring delicious Portuguese flavors! (L, D)

DAY 2: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

LISBON

Today's adventure includes a picturesque drive to the romantic village of Sintra, often called a fairytale village aptly named after the Moon Goddess by the Moors. Sintra teems with enchanting castles and palaces that seem to come straight from a storybook. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sintra has charmed the world's greatest poets, conquerors, aristocrats and philosophers, making this fantasy-like village a genuinely historical place. Continue with a visit to the National Palace of Sintra where the Portuguese ruling nobility resided from the early 15th to the late 19th centuries, making it Portugal's most lived in royal palace. Situated right in the heart of Sintra, it is commonly referred to as the Town Palace. Following the palace visit, you will have free time to explore before meeting the group for lunch. After returning to Lisbon, the remainder of the day and dinner are at leisure. (B, L)

DAY 3: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

LISBON

This morning, drive through the city to the Belém Quarter, a charming district west of Lisbon filled with parks, tree-lined plazas and green open spaces. Visit two of the most cherished and historic buildings of Portugal, the Jeronimos Monastery and the Torre de Belém (Tower of Belem). Both buildings date back to the 16th century, survived the great earthquake of 1755 and are considered World Heritage Sites. Continue on to the 20th century with the Monument of the Discoveries and a stop to sample the famous Pastéis de Belem (sweet Portuguese pastries)!

After a group lunch at Praça do Comercio (Commerce Square), your journey continues with a visit to the city center of Lisbon by tram and by foot. Discover the city with a ride on its emblematic trams! Built in the early 19th century, these bright yellow trams run on thick iron rails set into the city's steep, cobbled streets. It is a bumpy ride up and down the hills, but the experience is great fun.



The tram will do the climbing for you and bring you up near Saint George's Castle which can be seen from almost everywhere in the city. Its oldest parts date back to the 6th century. From the castle, you'll then descend through Alfama, Lisbon's most emblematic quarter and one of the most photogenic locations in the city thanks to its medieval alleys and outstanding views.

The remainder of the day and dinner are at leisure. (B, L)

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 LISBON/PORTO

Travel by train from Lisbon to Porto and enjoy stunning views of the countryside and coast along the way. Upon arrival in Porto, embark on a walking tour of the seaside town including Sao Bento Station, which is covered from wall to wall with beautiful azulejos, the quintessential Portuguese blue-painted tiles. Continue on to the historic Ribeira neighborhood with its charming arcaded markets, churches, museums, monuments, and elegant buildings. Next, visit Clerigos Tower, the highest structure in the historic center of Porto. You will also visit the ancient and heavily fortified Cathedral, the religious center of Porto combining Gothic cloisters, Romanesque origins and a Baroque exterior. Lastly, you will visit the Dom Luis I Bridge, an iron bridge designed by Seyrig, one of Gustave Eiffel's collaborators.

This afternoon, a cruise along the river will provide excellent views of the UNESCO listed city center of Porto on one side and the emblematic port wine cellars of Gaia on the other. You will also get up-close perspectives of the six bridges that span high up across the river. Each bridge has its own character and story, from the one designed by Gustave Eiffel to another which once held the record for the longest reinforced concrete bridge span in the world.

The passenger boats are all built in the style of the Rabelo boat which is a traditional Portuguese cargo boat. For centuries, these boats transported people and goods along the Douro River. The vessels are unique to Porto, they do not exist in any other place of the world! Before the arrival of the railway, the Rabelo boat was the fastest and the most efficient means of transport between the Douro Valley, where Port Wine is produced, and the city of Porto, where it was traded and exported worldwide.

This evening, join your fellow travelers once more for a private wine cellar tasting followed by dinner overlooking the Douro River. (B, L, D)

DAY 5: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 PORTO

Today's trip starts at the Sao Bento Railway Station, often billed as one of the world's most beautiful train stations. Here, the group will board the train to Regua for the two-hour journey. Backed by the Serra do Marão mountains and overlooking the wide valley of the River Douro, the peaceful town of Peso da Régua is the official center of the port wine growing region. From here, barrels of wine were traditionally transported to Vila Nova de Gaia in the past using the Rabelo boats. At the station in Regua, you'll depart by coach to one of the region's most magnificent wine estates. After a visit of the vineyards, enjoy a delicious lunch accompanied by the wines of the estate. (B, L)

DAY 6: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 PORTO

Your last day in Porto is free for independent exploration! Your local guide will be on-hand to assist with suggestions and logistics. (B)

DAY 7: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 RETURN HOME

Following breakfast, transfer to the Porto Airport or onward destination. (B)

