

Explore, experience, Northern Portugal Hertz

If you're yearning for a little extra romance in your life, the unspoiled beaches and hilltop hideaways of Northern Portugal are waiting to seduce you...

Try our fabulous Hertz roadtrip!

We have compiled the following two-day tour that introduces you to what we believe are the best offerings Northern Portugal has to offer.

Leave the bustle of Porto behind and cruise up the coast to surf the unspoiled beaches around Vila do Conde, then head inland to the riverside town of Ponte de Lima to sample the unique vinho verde (green wine). From here you follow the lush River Lima valley eastwards to the sea and the sleepy coastal town of Viana do Castelo, where you'll discover the romantic hilltop Pousada de Monte de Santa Luzia— your bed for the night. In the morning it's only a short hop around the coast and along the Spanish border to Monção, before heading south to climb the beautiful baroque staircase at Bom Jesus do Monte.



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Recommended high points and route stops

Vila do Conde - Sun, surf and seafood

The pristine sandy beaches stretching along the coast north of Vila do Conde are some of the best in northern Portugal, and the tempting breakers are perfect for honing your surfing skills. Boast about your exploits afterwards in the buzzing shoreline Restaurant Caximar, over their fresh-off-the-boat seafood platter.

Ponte de Lima - Sips and sunsets

Sniff out the local Adega Cooperativa and try their deliciously crisp vinho verde – regarded as one of the region's finest wines. Pull up a couple of chairs at one of the cafés on the town's main square for unforgettable views of the sun setting over the 31 arches of the elegant Roman bridge.

Viana do Castelo - Hilltop haven

Tucked among the eucalyptus trees on a hill just north of Viana do Castelo is the chic and tranquil Pousada de Monte de Santa Luzia, a beautifully renovated 1918 hotel with sinfully romantic views across the Atlantic and up the Lima River. Bronze on the terrace, chill in the pool then indulge in local specialties from the restaurant – the sweet torta de Viana is a must.

Monção - Calming Caldas

Park up and wander through the cobbled streets of this charming border town to a square decorated with flowers and lined with chestnut trees. Visit the old palace and tower, monastery and church for views towards the thick green forests and mountains of Spain, before retreating to Termas das Caldas, the town's spa, for a warm soak in the therapeutic waters.

Bom Jesus do Monte, Braga – Baroque beauty

The elegant baroque staircase that leads up the forested hillside to Portugal's most spectacular sanctuary seems to go on forever. While hiking up on foot is enough to earn you both bragging rights and a

rest in the colourful sculpted gardens at the top, spare a thought for the numerous pilgrims who make the climb on their hands and knees each year. (If you're feeling really lazy, just ride up in the funicular!)



Hertz recommend taking this roadtrip in a cool convertible!

Need to know information

- Round circuit: 192 miles (308 km); 7 hours' driving time approx.
- Tips: Motorways are prefixed with an "E" on signs and maps and there is a toll charge of around €0.06 per kilometre to travel on them.
- Best season: For the best weather, travel between mid-June and mid-September.
- Soundtrack: Dazkarieh Dazkarieh (2004).
- Essential item: Contour 2 Person Picnic Backpack (John Lewis).



Top five must see places...



Northern Portugal Must Sees

If you find yourself with some free time on your hands or you can just squeeze in one trip then take your pick from the following five gems. Roll mouse over picture to enlarge it.



Peneda Gerês National Park – Extreme exploration

You can discover this lush unspoiled landscape of mountains, gorges and rivers as daringly as you like, with everything from hiking to hang-gliding on offer at one of the adventure centres. To really get back to nature, try a winding mountain bike trail through the forest, with a picnic pit-stop thrown in.



Pinhão – Port and peacefulness

Many of the famous names in port production have quintas close to this small town. The terrace of the luxury Vintage House, with marvellous views of the River Douro and the surrounding vineyard-smothered hills, is a perfect place to enjoy this traditional tipple. The hotel serves as a perfect departure point for exploring the Douru valley by day.



Côa Valley Archaeological Park – Rock-ing art

A trip to an art gallery is the perfect ingredient for any romantic excursion, even if it's only accessible by a bumpy 4WD ride like this one. Discovered a stone's throw from the River Côa in 1990, these 20,000-year old engravings – depicting bulls, horses, fish and humans – are well worth the ride.



Amarante – Fall-in-love food

The delicious warm décor of the Michelinstarred restaurant at the Casa da Calçada - a glamorously renovated noble house on the Tamega River - perfectly complements head chef José Cordeiro's mouthwatering menu. To get the very most from your visit, the very decently-priced degustação (taste of everything) menu is a



Aveiro

– Virtually Venice

It's easy to see why Aveiro, with its network of blue canals and humpback bridges, is known as the "Venice of Portugal*. You'll find it just as romantic too. Meander through narrow streets lined with pastel buildings before hopping into one of the brightly painted, gondola-like moliceiro boats for a dreamy cruise to the lagoon.

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