



Uncover the Fun of Spain & Portugal

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SOMETIMES YOUR FAVORITE THINGS SURPRISE YOU. Spain was not at the top of my bucket list, but sitting in a lively courtyard restaurant eating simple tapas of chorizo and cheese while sipping the best sangria of my life, it hit me: Manchego cheese is the best of all cheeses, and Barcelona has stolen my heart forever. Now I shout to everyone who will listen, "You must go. Must!"

My love affair with Spain began as a two-night stay in Barcelona before a Mediterranean cruise, a chance to adjust to the time change more than anything else. I can't say I was sad to get on the ship, but I was left craving so much more. Spain and its neighbor Portugal are multi-dimensional cultural feasts that are, in a single word, fun.

Barcelona

The seaside city of [Barcelona](#) is sprawling and full of hidden delights, but the crowning jewel is impossible to hide. Antoni Gaudí's famous unfinished masterpiece La Sagrada Família is the size of a city block. The basilica towers over the streets below and one could spend hours staring up at its ornate facades. The inside is equally stunning, where its stained-glass windows create a kaleidoscope of colors, bringing to life Gaudí's imagined forest nave.

Gaudí's monumental mark on the city also includes whimsical Park Güell, an architectural marvel created with vibrant broken tile mosaics.

Located on a hillside overlooking the city, the park is one of the largest green spaces in Barcelona, making it ideal for strolls in the shade admiring Gaudí's intricate, undulating mosaic creations. It also offers some of the best views of the city, unless you head to the summit of Tibidabo, Barcelona's highest point. If you're traveling with little ones—or even if you're not—Tibidabo's charming little amusement park is a delight. Hop on the colorful Ferris wheel for an even more spectacular view down to the sparkling Mediterranean Sea.

La Sagrada Família

Park Güell

Royal Alcazar



Seville

In the south of Spain, historic Seville embodies Spanish Andalusian culture and is the birthplace of flamenco. The rhythmic, dramatic music paired with skillful dancing is both theatrical and passionate, giving the performance tremendous emotion and energy.

Seville is also home to the Royal Alcazar, a royal residence that is a masterpiece of Mudéjar architecture. Game of Thrones fans will easily recognize this as a setting for the kingdom of Dorne.

PORTUGAL

Porto

This Portuguese coastal city sits on the Douro River not far from where it enters the Atlantic Ocean. The city's iconic blue and white tiles and winding labyrinth of stairways and cobblestone streets draws you in for culinary delights and unique sights. The Alto (upper) Douro Wine Region, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is located 60 miles upriver from the city. It's one of the world's oldest wine-producing regions and the origin of Port wine.

In the city's center, you'll find one of the most renowned bookstores in the world. The magical Livraria Lello boasts beautiful stained-glass work, a breathtaking staircase, first-editions and intricate decor. J.K. Rowling brought international attention to it as it is thought to be the inspiration for the Hogwarts library in her Harry Potter books.



Douro River Valley



Porto Architecture



Porto

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Lisbon

Hilly [Lisbon](#), in South Central Portugal, is easily explored by trolleys, funiculars and even elevators that lift you through the city to jaw-dropping outlooks. As you stroll the charming streets of this laid-back city, you'll hear the distinctive nostalgic tunes of fado music, a Portuguese tradition comprised of a singer evoking emotional longing with a classical guitar harmony.

The city's main square, the Praça do Comércio, sits directly on the Tagus River and is one of the largest squares in all of Europe. Views of its 18th century buildings with sunny yellow facades and the square's diamond-patterned surface are beautiful, particularly from atop the Arco da Rua Augusta, where you can also see the São Jorge Castle and the riverfront.



Lisbon



Belem Tower



Lisbon Tram



Tapas

Portugal and Spain go together like churros and hot chocolate or tapas and sangria—the experience of one enhances the other—and since traveling between these countries is easy, planning a two-country trip is a great option, including a river cruise along the Douro River as

it winds from Northern Spain to Porto, Portugal.

No matter how you choose to delight your senses in these lively countries, take your time doing it. You'll be daydreaming about these moments for years to come.



Ready to discover the treasures of Spain and Portugal? Stop by your local [AAA Travel office](#) or contact your [AAA Travel Advisor](#) to plan your adventure today!