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Gay Porto: A Gay Travel Guide to
Portugal's Second City

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Overview

Porto has been named one of the Top 10 European Destinations by Lonely Planet, European Consumer's Choice and TripAdvisor. Located on the Douro River in the north of Portugal, it's a city with great cultural and historical importance and is well known for its Port wine. Porto boasts beautiful natural landscape, towering bridges, impressive architecture as well as great culture, gastronomy, and nightlife. It's one of the up and coming cities to visit in Europe and the past few years has seen a huge upswing in gay and gay-friendly venues across the city. Portugal is probably one of the least expensive countries to visit in western Europe so your money will go far during a visit.



Transportation & Airport Transfer

Getting around Porto is pretty easy with both tram and buses available. If you stay in the city center you can probably walk to most places you want to visit, including Gaia, technically a separate city on the other side of the river where all the Port wine cellars are located. The tram system is relevantly new and is quick and clean. Though it goes underground in the city center, it's really more of a tram system than a proper subway. Tickets worked based on zones so you pay for the distance travel. You buy your tickets from the automated machine and you must choose your zone based on your starting and ending stations. Tram line E (violet) connects the city center to the airport for 2€ and a 45 min ride.

Accommodation in Porto

Luxury

[Yeatman Hotel](#) – referred to as a Luxury Wine Spa Hotel (which pretty much says it all), these accommodations score a well deserved 4.6 out of 5 stars. Each and every one of the 82 rooms offer some of the finest views of the surrounding area. A wine lover's haven. Even if you don't stay at this property, it's well worth visiting the outdoor bar and terrace as it gives you some of the best views of Porto. Drinks at the bar are expensive for Porto standards but still reasonable for European standards.

Mid-Range

[Hotel Teatro](#) – perfectly located in the city center and a quick connection to the airport. It's a good option and is walking distance to just about everything you want to see. It's a relatively new design hotel located in a building that was formerly a theater. As you walk the walk halls and lobby, you can't help but feel that you're backstage of a performance with the walls lined with curtain and spotlight-style overhead lighting.

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Hotel Teatro Suite Room, Photo Credit: Hotel Teatro

[Hotel Infante Sagres](#) – still luxurious, this hotel is a tad on the smaller side of most luxury accommodations. The charming, boutique hotel, however, lacks absolutely nothing when it comes to comfort, allure, and spaciousness. Expect a glass of port upon arrival.

Budget

[Gallery Hostel](#) – this is a high end, design-focused hostel located in central Porto. You'll be surrounded by a trendy and vibrant area with a never ending flow of activity. You can enjoy free city walking Tours and some of the best hostel facilities around. They even have their own art gallery with an exhibition of local artists that changes twice a month.

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[The White Box House](#) – this is a typical house from the area dating back to the early 1900's. The guest house has been refurbished and you'll find a clean and modern feel right in the center of town. Just down the street is Café Majestic, one of the most famous restaurants in town. This is a simple, yet modern and clean guesthouse that's perfect for any traveler on a budget.

Apartments

There are many sites for apartment rentals in Porto, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment.



Photo Credit: misterbnb

There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterb&b](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment. Understanding Porto's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

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Special offers: [sign up with AirBnB using this link](#) or [misterb&b using this link](#) you will receive a free \$25 credit to use on your first booking!

Sightseeing & Activities in Porto

Porto Cruz

– They've been producing [Port wine](#) for more than 100 years, but they offer a modern Port wine experience and tour at their property free of charge. You'll also find one of the only rooftop terraces on the Gaia bank here and it's a great place to relax and enjoy the view with a Porto Tonic – one of Porto's most trendy cocktails. *Address: Largo Miguel Bombarda 23, 4400-222, Vila Nova de Gaia*

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Porto Cruz Wine Cellar, Photo Credit: Porto Convention and Visitors Bureau CC BY-NC-ND – Associação de Turismo do Porto e Norte, AR

Sao Bento Rail Station – Another must visit site in the center is the Sao Bento train station who's inner entrance showcase an impressive collection of tile art depicting Portugal's 800 year history in a 360 degree massive display.

[Ferreira Port Wine Cellar](#) – a traditional experience where you can tour the wine making process and sample several Port wines with cheese. *Address: Avenida Ramos Pinto 70, 4400-266, Vila Nova de Gaia*

[Casa da Música](#) – with a restaurant and two main auditoriums, this place rivals even Walt Disney's Concert Hall. Sometimes referred to as 'the temple of music' due to the sheer reverence and worship worthy concert venue, it is considered an acoustic marvel. The innovative design featured curved glass throughout the concert halls which gives the interior spaces natural light and an incredibly open feeling. You can also find a cool monthly here where they convert it into the largest nightclub in the country. *Address: Av. da Boavista 604-610, 4149-071*

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Casa de Musica, Photo Credit: Porto Convention and Visitors Bureau CC BY-NC-ND – Associação de Turismo do Porto e Norte, AR

[Livraria Lello](#) – if you love books, one of Portugal's oldest bookstores is a must see. Curvaceous staircases, ornate, geometric designs, stained glass, and wood carvings give it the feel of a resplendent old church! The ideal blend of art and science. Voted one of the top three most beautiful bookstores in the world. *Address: Rua das Carmelitas 144, 4050-161*

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Livraria Lello Bookstore, Photo Credit: Porto Convention and Visitors Bureau CC BY-NC-ND – Associação de Turismo do Porto e Norte, AR

Tramway – Though typically found in Portugal's older cities, this combination transportation system/tourist attraction is highly reminiscent of San Francisco's trolley system. Line 1 (Coast Line) goes from Passeio Alegre, along the river and into the City Centre. The trolleys are more touristic than practical but still worth a trip.

Bolhao Outdoor Market – the perfect quick stop for cake, coffee, and other assorted examples of beloved local favorites. It's a little bit hidden, so keep your eyes peeled for a mysterious staircase.

[Hop on Hop off Bus Tours](#) – bus tours aren't always our favorite but admittedly, they are sometimes a good way to get a good overview of the city if you only have a single day for sightseeing. You can easily get to know the city quickly ([plus visit a Port wine cellar](#)) and jump on and off throughout the day to visit various sites of interest. You can buy online in advance for and find stops throughout the city center. This is easily helpful in Porto since the city has so many hills.

Restaurants & Cafes

[Palco Restaurant](#) – located at the Hotel Teatro, a design hotel inspired by the former theater that was previously onsite. After a fantastic sampling menu with various Portuguese wines, we decided to venture out into town. *Address: R. de Sá da Bandeira 84, 4000-427*

[DOP Restaurant](#) – the renowned Portuguese chef Rui Paula recreates traditional Portuguese flavors into dishes that take on a more modern and artistic feel. For the budget conscious, you can enjoy a multi-course lunch at DOP for just 20€. *Address: Largo São Domingos 18, 4050-292*

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Café Majestic – an old favorite of politicians and artists, this glorious, historical coffeehouse uses a stunning combination of wood, marble, chandeliers, cherubs, and mirrors to show off. From coffee or Sangria to superb seafood dishes and cheesecake, the ambiance isn't the only attraction here.

Fish Fish – with a 4.5 out of 5-star rating, the view from the outdoor dining area is just the start of your seafood filled dining pleasure. In addition to seafood, the wines, excellent service, and deserts keep both tourists and locals coming back.

Book Restaurant – yes, it used to be a bookstore... go figure! The 'prologue' – a cocktail; followed by a menu with Mediterranean 'chapters'. Either cod with chickpeas and olive purée or veal and black linguini come highly recommended.

DeCastro Gaia Restaurant – friendly service, elegant wines, and a charming atmosphere can all be used to describe this epicurean experience. Try this celebrated combo: "bochecha de porco" as a main dish with "Toucinho do Céu" as desert.

Cafe Santiago – Girl, please! Just throw your diet out the window. In a word... 'Francesinha'. Enough said.

Porto Gay Bars & Lounges

The area around "Galaria de Paris," called The Galleries, is where you'll find the highest concentration of cafes, bars and lounges. By night, this area comes alive and becomes the pulsating nightlife spot for locals who love crowding onto the streets since drinking in public is actually still legal in Portugal. In many bars, you pay for your drinks in advance and receive tickets or you order from a card that you receive at the entrance and pay when you leave.

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Nightlife at Galleries, Photo Credit: Porto Convention and Visitors Bureau CC BY-NC-ND – Associação de Turismo do Porto e Norte, AR

[Lusitano Café](#) – great bar with a mixed crowd built in a former warehouse with incredibly high ceilings. It starts to get busy around midnight and has an open atmosphere with more of a socializing scene. *Address: Rua de José Falcão 137, 4050-317*

[Conceição 35](#) – this is a new bar in town and is gay-owned. It's a small but energetic place with a front bar and back dance floor. The crowd is also mixed but will likely be more gay than straight depending on the night. *Address: Rua da Conceição 35*

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Syndikato – all old gay bar located outside of the center. In past years, Porto's nightlife was not in the city center and this place has been around since then. It's an gay institution in Porto and plenty of local bar goeres. It's open on weekends and on Wednesday's when they have a drag performance. It's a bit of a dive bar and not nearly as hip as the mixed crowd bars in the center, but it could still be fun with the right crowd. Address: Rua do Bonjardim 836

Pride – this bar is a bit outside the center and has been around for a while. It's a local favorite that's been around before the nightlife starting moving to the Galleries. It's known for its flamboyant drag shows and often attracts a slightly younger and alternative crowd.

Address: Rua do Bonjardim, 1121

Pride Coffee – this café is really the only gay spot during the day and it opens up after lunch. It can be a bit difficult to spot as it's located on the second floor. Go for a coffee, snack or beer and enjoy the free wi-fi. Address: Praça Marquês de Pombal, 13

Porto Gay Clubs & Parties

Clubs

Plano B – The place to end the night is definitely Plano B, but you won't find a crowd here until after 1 am. The place looks small upon first entering but head downstairs and you'll find two additional bars and two large dance floors playing either top 40 or house music, depending on your style. This place is gay-friendly and has a mixed crowd. *Address: Rua Cândido dos Reis 30, 4050-150*

Zoom – this is the only gay specific club in town. It's extremely popular and can be especially crowded on Saturdays. It's in the city center and like other places, is located in a former warehouse. You find cute go-go boys and an energetic crowd dancing to house music.

Address: Rua Beco Passos Manuel 40

Day Trips

Douro Valley – this is wine country. With river views, castles, breathtaking monasteries, and a 5-star rating, forgetting your camera (or photo ready smart phone) would be a mortal sin. If you have time it's totally worth taking a day tour of the Douro Valley, which usually includes wine tasting and lunch.

Braga – definitely a town of contradictions! By day, it is the epitome of Christianity with an ancient, Rome-like atmosphere. But after dark, this town turns upside down offering a nearly unrivaled nightlife!

Guimarães – history buffs rejoice! From the airport, you can reach this destination by car/taxi, bus, or metro/train. Old manors, incredible panoramas, majestic castles, wine, and gardens make Guimarães well worth the trip.

Interested in these day trips? Check out this [Douro Valley tour](#) or [visit both Braga and Guimarães in a single guided tour](#) including lunch.

For more information about visiting Porto visit the official visitor's website:
www.visitportoandnorth.travel