

# 48 hours in Porto

*Need a weekend escape? Giselle Whiteaker plans 48 hours in Porto, the Portuguese home of port.*



Above: Traditional boats transporting port anchored near the Ponte Luis I bridge.

**W**e recommend treating yourself to a stay at The Yeatman Hotel, in the heart of the Gaia district, during your idyll in Porto, Portugal's second-largest city. The Yeatman bills itself as a wine hotel, the theme running through the establishment, from the extensive wine cellars to the Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa, which offers therapies using extracts from the vine.

## Day One:

After a hearty breakfast at The Yeatman, with the Duoro River snaking below, walk downhill to the Ponte Luis I that anchors the city. The double-decker bridge spanning the river was created by Teophile Seyrig, a former partner of Gustave Eiffel, and the views from the upper level are spectacular.

Crossing to the Porto side, board the Funicular dos Guindais to ascend the steep hill to the old town. Admire the panoramic views across the river, taking in the Ribeira waterfront, the Cais de Gaia on the opposing bank, and the *barcos rabelos* rocking gently on their moorings. These boats traditionally transported barrels of port from the vineyards upstream.

Walking towards Avenida dos Aliados, a sloping boulevard lined with grand buildings and a central promenade, you'll find the São Bento train station. Stop to appreciate the delicate blue and white tiled panels painted by artist Jorge Colaço, which allude to the history of Portugal and the development of transport. At the top of the avenue stands the Town Hall, a palatial granite and marble structure with a tall bell tower.

By now you'll have worked up an appetite, so pop into the fascinating 19th-century Mercado do Bolhão. This market does a brisk trade in fresh local produce, so it's the perfect place to sample local wines, smoked meat and cheese, or swing by one of the inexpensive stalls on the ground level for a fresh seafood feast.

Circling back towards the river, drop into the Lello Bookstore. Built in 1906 and renovated in 1995 after falling into disrepair, this is now arguably the most beautiful book shop in the world, and possibly the most ornate, blending Neo-Gothic and Art Deco elements including carved wooden ceilings, stained-glass, and an eye-catching red staircase. From here it's a short walk to Clerigos Tower, an easily spotted architectural landmark that affords a bird's-eye view of the city's red roofs and hills atop its 240 steps. The 1763 structure is the bell tower of the baroque Clerigos Church.

Continuing towards the river, the next stop is one of the city's oldest monuments, the 12th Century Porto Cathedral. The cathedral is flanked by two square towers, each supported by two buttresses and crowned with a cupola. Less than ten minutes' walk away, the magnificent, Neoclassical Palácio da Bolsa, the former stock exchange,







Clockwise from left: Clerigos Tower; a vintage tram; Porto Cathedral.

is housed in a square containing a statue of Henry the Navigator, the first of Portugal's great explorers. Next door, is the 13th-century São Francisco church, boasting a flamboyant interior laced with gold leaf.

For an authentic Portuguese food experience, book into ODE Porto Winehouse, tucked down a side street near São Francisco. This eatery features an impressive wine list that extends to the décor, with slate table-tops resting on wine barrels. The restaurant sources fresh Portuguese produce, including bread from Bragança, smoked pork from Minho and sheep's milk cheese from Alentejo and it's minutes from the waterfront, which comes alive at night.

#### Day Two:

Start the day with a refreshing dip in The Yeatman's lush swimming pool, before crossing back to the Porto side and trundling to Foz, Porto's beach suburb, on a 1920's vintage tram. The trip to the Atlantic takes around 20 minutes. Wander through the Jardim do Passeio Alegre, an elegant garden entered through two 19th century obelisks and surrounded by palm trees, sculptures, two mini-golf courses, and a bandstand that hosts philharmonic concerts during the summer.

Most of the beaches here are dotted with outcrops of rocks, so not great for swimming, but stroll along the water's edge to the swanky beachside Praia da Luz restaurant for an early lunch, before continuing another mile or so to Castelo do Queijo, a fortress dating from 1661. It is reached by a drawbridge, and the cannons inside point towards the sea. From the fortress, amble through Parque da Cidade, Portugal's largest urban park. Catch the bus back to Porto in time for an afternoon port tour and tasting at any one of the port wine lodges on the Gaia side of the river.

Right: The chic Yeatman Hotel.

For dinner, book a table at the gastronomic restaurant at The Yeatman, the only restaurant in Porto to carry a Michelin star. Sample innovative dishes accompanied by Alvarinho wines as you gaze out over the city, knowing that you have but sampled the delights that Porto has to offer. ■

#### > STAY AT: *The Yeatman Hotel*

The Yeatman is a haven for wine-lovers and the prime destination for those wishing to explore the pleasures of port, the classic wine for which the city of Oporto is famous. [www.the-yeatman-hotel.com](http://www.the-yeatman-hotel.com)

#### > SNACK ON: *Pastel de nata*

This sweet Portuguese egg tart pastry is the perfect complement to an espresso at any of Porto's cafes.

#### > DRINK AT: *Caves Sandeman*

Located in an 1811 granite building overlooking the river, the Sandeman port tour details Sandeman's wine tradition and the ageing process. [www.sandeman.com](http://www.sandeman.com)



*If you're interested in a luxurious Porto property, look no further than these picks:*

#### ► *Foz do Douro, Porto*

This magnificent two-bedroom and two-bathroom apartment is in excellent condition. It is located in a peaceful location in a closed condominium in the Foz do Douro, in the western part of Porto, next to the mouth of the Douro River and the Atlantic Ocean. The complex features a gymnasium, squash court, children's park, and private garden.

The area is one of the most prestigious in Porto, providing beautiful landscapes, with its picturesque maritime promenade, beautiful esplanades, restaurants, bars and gardens.

#### Fine & Country Porto

[infoirg@fineandcountry.com](mailto:infoirg@fineandcountry.com)

275,000€



#### ◀ *Gaia, Porto*

This exclusive, detached, five-bedroom townhouse villa is located in a quiet condominium of townhouses with unique views over the Douro River, yet in a central area of Porto, with easy access to the public transport networks.

The property is two minutes' drive from the D. Luis Bridge to the south bank and there are a number of parks and gardens in the surrounding area. The nearby Gaia Docks enjoy the best views over the historic area of Porto, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

#### Fine & Country Porto

[infoirg@fineandcountry.com](mailto:infoirg@fineandcountry.com)

800,000€



#### ► *Moledo, Norte*

This charming villa with land has a fabulous pool, two suites, and a large living room with views across the lush garden. All of the rooms have natural light due to the windows with shutters.

In a privileged location of Moledo, in the north of Portugal, it is a two-minute walk from the beach and comes with privacy guaranteed, due to the thick vegetation around the grounds. Moledo is 50 minutes from the international airport of Porto and 15 minutes from Spain.

#### Fine & Country Porto

[infoirg@fineandcountry.com](mailto:infoirg@fineandcountry.com)

850,000€