

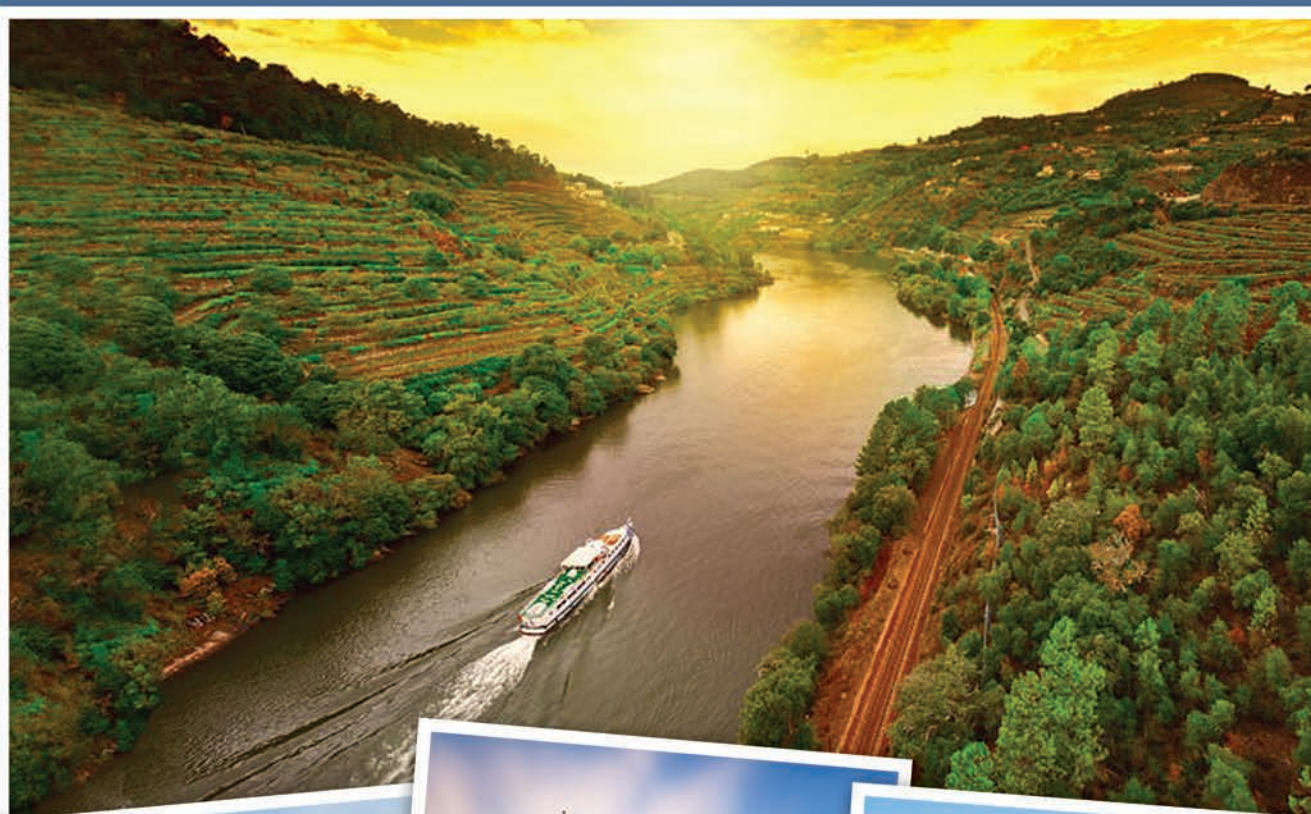
Portugal – Douro River Cruise

April 5 – 16, 2021

Lower Deck \$5,195 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago; Single Supplement - \$2,690

Middle Deck \$5,645 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago; Single Supplement - \$3,090

Upper Deck \$5,795 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago; Single Supplement - \$3,240



Day by Day Itinerary

Monday, April 5 – CHICAGO / EN ROUTE (I)

We depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this evening by scheduled service of TAP Air Portugal on the overnight transatlantic flight to Lisbon, Portugal.

Tuesday, April 6 – LISBON (I,L,D)

As the sun begins to rise on the Iberian Peninsula we arrive in Portugal where we'll meet our Tour Guide who will introduce us to Lisbon. An introductory tour of Lisbon will take us along the banks of the Tagus River where we'll stop to view both the Monument to the Discoveries, built to mark the 500th anniversary of the death of Henry the Navigator, and the Torre de Belem. Then we'll travel past the magnificent Mosteiro dos Jeronimos, a great monument to the Age of Discovery, before continuing along the grand Avenida Liberdade, the broad tree-lined avenue that is Lisbon's fashionable main thoroughfare, as we make our way to the Alfama District. Here we'll peer into Lisbon's Moorish past as we explore a colorful maze of winding cobblestone streets little changed since the 12th century. Our tour will come to an end at the Portas do Sol for a marvelous view of the city. Following lunch, we'll check-in at our downtown hotel where the remainder of the day is at leisure.

Wednesday, April 7 – LISBON (Sintra) (B)

This morning we travel towards the peaks of the Serra de Sintra to visit the spectacular Palacio da Pena. The palace's history started in the Middle Ages when a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Pena was built after an apparition sighting of the Virgin Mary. The palace as it is today was constructed in 1840 as a royal summer residence of Fernando II of Portugal and his wife Maria II. The most complete and notable example of Portuguese architecture in the Romantic period, the palace is a fanciful combination of architectural styles – Moorish, Gothic, Baroque and Manueline. Touring the rooms offers insight as to how 19th century Portuguese royalty lived their daily lives. Following our tour, we'll return to Lisbon where the afternoon is at leisure.

Thursday, April 8 – LISBON (Ribatejo) (B,L)

This morning we set our sights on southern Ribatejo as we make our way to the town of Muge where we'll visit Casa Cadaval. Well known for being one of the oldest Lusitano horse breeders in the world, Casa Cadaval also has a reputation for their award-winning wine production. We'll begin with a visit to the Stud Farm, which came into the Cadaval family by dowry in the 17th century. Then, we'll enjoy a guided tour of the Cadaval Estate cellar, along with an introduction to their winemaking process, followed by wine tasting and lunch. Afterward, we'll tour the farm where we'll see a vast variety of birds, as well as the mares, foals and cattle. We'll also learn about the vineyards, pine and cork forest, and the diverse types of agriculture which make up the Cadaval Estate.

Friday, April 9 – LISBON / CRUISING (B,D)

This morning we depart Lisbon and travel north to Fatima to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, one of the most famous Marian shrines in the world, commemorating the 1917 visitation of the Virgin Mary to three young shepherds. Some four million people visit Fatima each year to pay their respects at the basilica, constructed in 1928 to commemorate the site of the miraculous appearance. This afternoon we travel through the Beiras regions,

defined by the Tagus River in the South, and the Douro River to the North. Our destination is the historic city of Porto, strategically sited overlooking the Douro River as it empties into the Atlantic. Late this afternoon we'll embark aboard Riviera River Cruises *MS Douro Elegance*. In no time at all, we'll be settled into our luxurious accommodations and have an opportunity to familiarize ourselves with all the first-class aspects of this floating boutique hotel.

Saturday, April 10 – CRUISING (Pinhão) (B,L,D)

Today we get set to explore what is possibly Europe's most undiscovered river through the stunning Douro Valley, dotted with charming villages, age-old traditions, and wonderful wines. Our first port of call is the pretty little town of Pinhão, encircled by terraced hillsides that produce some of the world's stellar table wines. This afternoon we'll enjoy a visit to a historic quinta, an agricultural estate, to learn all about the stages of wine production, from the planting of the vines, harvesting, the wine-making process and finally tasting and labeling. Of course, no visit would be complete without sampling some of their excellent wines. Afterward, you'll have an opportunity to stop off in town to view the train station ornamented with beautiful azulejos, representing images of the vendimia, wine harvest, before returning to the ship. This evening take in the view of the surrounding hillsides and terraces before our Welcome Dinner.

Sunday, April 11 – CRUISING (Vega de Terron) (B,L,D)

The Douro was once a wild river, notoriously challenging to navigate. Today it has been tamed by a system of dams and locks, which have raised the water level, and the river here is at its most gentle, as we cruise into ever more rural territory towards the Spanish border. This afternoon's port of call is the peaceful town of Vega de Terron, Spain. From here, we'll travel to the delightful 12th century walled village of Castelo Rodrigo, tucked away in the picturesque highland ranges bordering Spain. From this lofty hilltop position, the views are simply stunning. In Castelo Rodrigo, we'll have the opportunity to make a true journey through the history of humanity. The region is rich in remains of the Paleolithic and Roman era, and the village was the scene of intense struggles, conquests, and reconquest, which is still visible today in its structures. Its church, dedicated to Our Lady of Rocamadour, was a resting place on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela, and it is said that Saint Francis himself stayed here.

Monday, April 12 – CRUISING (Barca d'Alva) (B,L,D)

Today we travel to historic Salamanca, regarded by many Spaniards as their nation's most beautiful city. Founded by the Romans, Salamanca is built from local sandstone that emanates a gorgeous rose-colored glow in the sunlight. As we'll soon find out, Salamanca is exceptionally beautiful and has many architectural treasures. We'll see the New Cathedral in Gothic Style, the Old Cathedral in Romanesque Style, and the Renaissance University Building with its splendid facade. Founded in 1218, the university is the oldest in Spain and was one of the civilized world's most important seats of study for over 400 years. The Spanish Inquisition records are still kept here, and as early as the 16th century it boasted some 12,000 students. At lunch, we'll enjoy a traditional Flamenco show.

More than just a dance, Flamenco is a forceful artistic expression of the sorrows and joys of life. Afterward, free time will be set aside to explore the Plaza Mayor. Possibly Spain's finest public square, it was built in the 18th century in Spanish Baroque style with colonnaded walkways.

Tuesday, April 13 – CRUISING (Peso da Régua) (B,L,D)

One of the benefits of life aboard a river cruise is the sheer sense of relaxation it brings. Enjoy the morning at leisure in the on-board spa, or simply watch the riverbank scenery passing by from the comfort of a cozy seat in the lounge. This afternoon we arrive in the small port town of Peso da Régua, from where we'll travel to Vila Real to visit the grounds of the splendid Mateus Palace. Built in the first half of the 18th century, the palace is set among beautiful gardens on a vast farm, considered to be one of the finest examples of baroque civil architecture in Portugal. The palace is owned by the Mateus Foundation, which sponsors a number of cultural activities, particularly in the areas of music, literature, sculpture, and ceramics. This sweeping baroque property houses a maze of manicured hedgerows, elegant parterres, and a lake that reflects the palace in its mirror-still surface. Tonight, we'll enjoy an evening dinner at the 126-acre Quinta da Pacheca with a spectacular view over the Douro landscape.

Wednesday, April 14 – CRUISING (Peso da Régua) (B,L,D)

This morning we travel to the charming town of Lamego, nestled among the terraced slopes of the Douro Valley, home of Portugal's sparkling Raposeira wine. Located atop the hill overlooking the town is the ancient Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies. The church is reached via an awe-inspiring double stairway, adorned with attractive azulejos. Individuals who choose to make the 686-step journey to the Patio dos Reis will be rewarded with a spectacular view of the town. Following our tour, we'll return to the ship as we cruise towards Entre-os-Rios, an opportunity to head up to the Sun Deck to enjoy the ever-changing kaleidoscope of the Douro Valley. This evening is the Captain's Dinner, a truly memorable experience featuring exquisite regional specialties, followed by a colorful performance of traditional Portuguese folk music.



Thursday, April 15 – CRUISING (Porto) (B,L,D)

Today we return to Porto, where the city's splendid geographical location at the mouth of the Douro River has led to an architectural heritage of exceptional quality. Porto is synonymous with wonderful Port wine, so a visit would not be complete without a tour to one of the famous Port producers. Port is made from grapes stillpressed in the traditional way – by feet – then lovingly matured, sometimes for decades, before you can enjoy its subtle flavors. We'll learn of this time honored tradition and have an opportunity to sample various port styles at the end of our visit. After lunch on board, we'll enjoy a guided tour of Porto that will take us to the Cathedral District where we'll see the soaring Torre dos Clerigos tower and the Sao Bento Station, where you can find beautiful azulejos, Portugal's characteristic painted ceramic tiles, depicting early modes of transportation. Then we'll see the Mannerist Igreja de Santa Clara, the massive granite Se Cathedral, and the Gothic Sao Francisco church. Following our tour, we'll return to the ship as we get set to explore what is possibly Europe's most undiscovered river through the stunning Douro Valley, dotted with charming villages, age-old traditions, and wonderful wines.

Friday, April 16 – CRUISING / CHICAGO (B,I)

Early this morning we disembark from Riviera River Cruises *MS Douro Elegance* and board our waiting motor coach as we travel to Porto Airport in preparation for the return journey home. No better time to reflect on memories of our *Portugal – Douro River Cruise* vacation to last a lifetime and new friendships made along the way.

*** Welcome Home ***

Visit myniu.com to make your reservation.

The Tour Price Includes:

- Pre-trip assistance.
- Informational packet.
- Alumni staff assistance for a worry-free travel experience.
- Economy-class air transportation by scheduled airline service of TAP Air Portugal.
- Transportation by deluxe private motor coach with accompanying Tour Guides on pre and post cruise days.
- Accommodations in a first-class hotel.
- Accommodations based on choice of stateroom aboard the Riviera River Cruises *MS Douro Elegance*.
- All meals as shown in the Day by Day Itinerary.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary including applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portage charges for one suitcase per person at the hotel and pier.
- Taxes for included ground services, **and airline taxes and fuel surcharge of \$480 per person.**

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; luggage handling at airports; gratuities to the motor coach driver(s), Tour Guides, and shipboard personnel; personal and baggage insurance; and meals other than those stated above.

TOUR CONDITIONS

Tour Deposit and Payment: Reservations may be made by check or credit card (Visa, MC, or Discover). Tour prices do increase every year and it is possible that increases could occur after the printing of this brochure in advance of your tour's departure.

Tour Pricing: This is a package tour in which land tour costs and special group airfares have been combined in the most advantageous way. Should you wish to make any deviation from the package tour by changing your departure and/or return dates, the advantages of the package tour price may be eliminated, and additional charges will be assessed.

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is very important and can be purchased through USI Travel Insurance Services. This insurance is designed to cover you and your trip investment from trip cancellation/interruption penalties and provide medical expense, medical evacuation, baggage and personal effects loss, and accidental death coverage, as well as emergency assistance. There is an advantage to early enrollment in this travel insurance program. Purchasing coverage within 21 days (Plus and Elite Options) of your initial trip deposit can make you eligible for 1) Pre-existing Medical Condition Exclusion Waiver, and 2) Optional Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (Elite Option). If you wish to take advantage of the special above provisions, you must enroll within 21 days of the date your initial trip deposit is received. Contact Travel Insurance Services at 1-800-937-1387.

RESPONSIBILITY

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For more information contact the NIU Alumni Association at 815-753-1512 or visit the Travel section at myniu.com to make your reservation.

\$100 of the trip cost is tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

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