Welcome to Portugal

Practical information about Portugal and Guimarães
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Welcome to Portugal / Bem-vindo a Portugal
This document provides some useful and practical information before and during your stay in Portugal and the city of Guimarães. This document is provided for informational purposes only – UNU-EGOV shall not be deemed responsible for any issue, especially as some information is subject to change without notice. Updates to this document will be done as necessary. Nonetheless, international staff are urged to check on their own, before departure, some items and ensure they are ready for the trip.

About Portugal
Portugal is a country located in southwestern Europe, being bordered to the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean, and to the north and east by Spain. Its territory also includes the Atlantic archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira, both autonomous regions with their own regional governments. It is a developed country with a high-income advanced economy and high living standards, and is a member of the United Nations, the European Union, as well as a founding member of NATO, the Eurozone, the OECD, and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries.

Portugal is one of the oldest states in Europe, its territory having been continuously settled, invaded and fought over since prehistoric times. The current border with Spain is almost identical to the one defined in 1297 by the Treaty of Alcañices, making it one of the oldest in the world. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal established the first global empire. During this period, known as the Age of Discovery, Portuguese explorers pioneered maritime exploration, including the discovery of the sea route to India and the European discovery of Brazil, thus making the country one of the world’s major economic, political and military powers.

After the 1910 revolution deposed the monarchy, a democratic but unstable republic was established, later being superseded by a right-wing authoritarian regime. Democracy was restored after the Carnation Revolution on 25 April 1974. Shortly after, independence was granted to almost all its overseas territories; the handover of Macau to China in 1999 marked the end of an empire that lasted 600 years.

https://www.visitportugal.com/en
About Guimarães

Located in the north of Portugal, Guimarães is one of the oldest cities in the country and is historically associated with the foundation and identity of the Portuguese nationality. Established in the 9th century as Vimaranes, it played a major role in the foundation of the country. Not only was the place where the first king of Portugal was born (D. Afonso Henriques, The Conqueror), it was also the main government seat of the County of Portugal, which existed between the years 868-1139. Back then, the county was part of the larger Kingdom of Léon. The Battle of S. Mamede, fought in the outskirts of Guimarães, was the pivotal point in the battling efforts of the people to gain independence from Léon and establish the Kingdom of Portugal, which happened on 26 July 1139.

An exceptionally well-preserved and authentic example of the evolution of a medieval settlement into a modern town, its rich building typology exemplifies the specific development of Portuguese architecture from the 15th to the 19th century. Places to visit include the historic city centre, the Castle of Guimarães and adjacent Palace of the Dukes of Bragança, and the Mountain of Penha that oversees the city.

The premises of the UNU-EGOV are located very close to the old city walls and historical city centre, which is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2001.

https://www.cm-guimaraes.pt

Foreign nationals arriving in Portugal

Portugal is part of the “Schengen Zone”, an area composed of 26 countries that have abolished all types of border control at their mutual borders. This means that the holder of a Schengen visa can freely enter, travel within, and leave from any of the Schengen countries. Note that Schengen countries are not necessarily European Union countries.

Depending on your nationality, you may be required to obtain a visa for Portugal. If a visa is required, you should apply for one, in your home country, from either the Portuguese embassy/consulate or an embassy/consulate of a Schengen country that represents Portugal. Once you apply, UNU-EGOV will send a Note Verbale to the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) to support the visa application. Depending on the type of visa, you will be requested different documents.

https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/schengen-visa-countries-list/
https://www.vistos.mne.pt/en/

How to reach Guimarães

A) Porto Airport (OPO)

This is the closest airport to Guimarães, at a distance of only 54 km (33 miles). Several transportation options are available to/from the airport, which is placed just north of Portugal’s second largest city – Porto.

- **Bus:** directly outside the terminal you can use the GetBus service for a direct connection to Guimarães. The ticket can be purchased online in advance or when boarding the bus. Estimated time: 50 minutes.

- **Train:** directly outside the terminal you can take the metro Line E (purple) to Porto-Campanhã station and, from there, take one of the several daily urban trains Guimarães. Tickets can be purchased online in advance or at the station. Estimated time: 55-70 minutes.
• **Taxi:** taxis are widely available at the terminal exit. However, the price of a taxi to Guimarães is high when compared to other means of transportation. Estimated time: 40 minutes.

• **Car:** if you rent your own car, once you leave the airport you can take highway A3 > Braga and then highway A7 > Guimarães. Highway tolls are in place, including electronic-only tolls. Estimated time: 40 minutes. National roads (free of charge) can also be used, but the journey takes longer (70-80 minutes).


B) Lisbon Airport (LIS)

For flights outside Europe, landing at Porto may not be possible. In this case, Lisbon International Airport is a good option. Located in the capital, it is easily accessible to-from all major cities in the country. It is located 356 km (220 miles) from Guimarães.

• **Bus:** several companies provide a bus service between Lisbon and Guimarães. Estimated time: 5-6 hours.

• **Train:** high-speed trains known as *Alfa Pendular (AP)* connect Lisbon and Porto daily. A further connection to Guimarães is necessary in Porto-Campanhã via an urban train. Lisboa-Santa Apolónia station is the closest to the airport and you can take a taxi there. Estimated time: 4-6 hours (depends on the train).

• **Airplane:** it is possible to book a flight with TAP Air Portugal to Porto Airport through their “air bridge” service. Booking is quite flexible and several airplanes depart daily. Estimated time: 60 minutes.

• **Car:** if you rent your own car, once you leave the airport you should exit the city towards highway A1 > Porto, then highway A3 > Braga and finally highway A7 > Guimarães. Highway tolls are in place, including electronic-only tolls. Estimated time: 4 hours. National roads (free of charge) can also be used, but the journey takes longer (7 hours).

Bus: [https://www.checkmybus.co.uk](https://www.checkmybus.co.uk)
Short-term accommodation in Guimarães

A range of hotels are available for short-term accommodation. The list and map below are not exhaustive and is solely a recommendation of hotels within walking distance to UNU-EGOV (highlighted in the map).

- EMAJ Boutique Hotel (****)
- Hotel da Oliveira (****)
- Hotel de Guimarães (****)
- Hotel Fundador (**)
- Hotel Ibis Guimarães Centro (**)
- Santa Luzia ArtHotel (****)
- Stay Hotel Guimarães Centro (****)
- Youth Hostel

Long-term accommodation in Guimarães

UNU-EGOV has two apartments to be used by international fellows (depends on type of contract): apartment one is located at Rua do Anjo 28, 4800-153 Guimarães and apartment two is located at Rua da Rainha D. Maria II 124, 4800-431 Guimarães. Both are less than 10 minutes away on foot from UNU-EGOV.

If not offered, UNU-EGOV recommends making use of the services of a real estate agency. They might assist you in finding a suitable home, negotiating and finalising the rental contract, setting-up of telephone, internet, cable TV and utilities such as gas, electricity, etc.
Emergency and medical services

In case you face an emergency, dial 112 for police, ambulance or fire brigade. Please note that this number must be used only for real emergencies.

The Portuguese National Health System (SNS) provides medical care to everyone. For international personnel, it is recommended to always carry a copy of the passport or another form of identification. No special vaccinations are required for Portugal. The public hospital is located at Rua dos Cutileiros (N41°44′19.37″, W8°30′50.93″) and the private hospital (Hospital da Luz) is located at Alameda dos Desportos 4835-235 (N41°25′48.43″, W8°19′19.37″)

Language

The official language of Portugal is Portuguese. While places like airports, major railway stations, hospitals and police headquarters feature information translated to English and other European languages (such as French and German), in most of the country this does not happen. However, most Portuguese can speak English, although not fluently. It is possible to learn Portuguese by taking courses at the University of Minho or by enrolling in a private language school.

Time zone

Portugal observes UTC between October and March and UTC+1 between April and September. Usually, the clocks are moved forward 1 hour on the last Sunday of March and moved backwards 1 hour on the last Sunday of October, respectively, for starting and ending daylight saving time or “summer time”.

Currency

The currency in Portugal is the EURO (€), the same currency used in 18 other European Union member states. The euro coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents, and 1 and 2 euros; the banknotes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros. It is uncommon to find banknotes of 200€ and 500€, and smaller stores may refuse to accept such a high denomination.

All major credit cards are widely accepted in Portugal and many shops and restaurants accept credit card payments. However, not all of them do, therefore it is advisable to always carry cash. There are numerous ATM machines spread throughout the entire country called Caixas Multibanco (MB) where money can be withdrawn. Foreign currency can be exchanged at airports, banks and exchange stores. A passport or other form of ID is required when exchanging currencies or opening a national bank account.

Banks are open Monday to Friday from 8:30-15:00 and are closed on official holidays.

Electricity

The standard power supply is 220-240V/50Hz and the power sockets are Type C and F (two round pins).
Climate
Portugal is defined as having a Mediterranean climate. Winters are moderately cold and temperatures average 8°C, while summers are usually hot and dry and temperatures average 30°C. The north is usually colder and wetter than the south. Snowfalls are extremely rare in the city and usually occur only in the mountains. During the winter, there are about 6 hours of sunlight per day and, in the summer, 10 to 12 hours of sunlight. The sea surface temperature averages 12°C on the west coast and 20°C on the south coast.

Driving
Portugal is a right-hand traffic country and normal driving rules apply. Traffic signs are international traffic signs. A driving license which has been issued in an EU Member State, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway shall, as a rule, entitle the holder to drive a motor vehicle also in Portugal (equivalent to the category for which it is indicated to apply). Driving licenses from other countries must be checked by the competent authorities.

Smoking
Smoking is allowed on the street or open public areas, however, not inside most buildings, unless these buildings have a specific area for smokers. Smoking inside UNU-EGOV premises is strictly forbidden.

Shopping
The two main shopping malls in the city are Espaço Guimarães and Guimarães Shopping, which are open all days of the week, usually from 10:00 to 23:00. Smaller shops in the city are usually open during the week from 9:00 to 19:00 (with possible lunch break) and until 13:00 on Saturdays.

Sim cards
Sim cards for mobile phones are readily available in several shops and the network coverage for national territory is pretty much 100%. The three mobile network operators are MEO, NOS and Vodafone. A passport may be needed when buying a mobile phone. For nationals of another European Union country, roaming charges do not apply in Portugal, meaning you can use your mobile phone as if you were in your home country.

NOS: [http://www.nos.pt/](http://www.nos.pt/)