

## **E-Bicycling Portugal: Minho to Porto, Mountains to Sea**

### **April 30-May 7, 2023**

### **Trip #2312**



Pedal on an energy-preserving *e-bike* from the mountain villages and pine forests of the Peneda-Gerês National Park, through lush valleys cloaked in vineyards, to the UNESCO city of Porto on the Atlantic Coast of modern Portugal. A stunning region of history, culture and cuisine, Minho's immense natural beauty is our constant backdrop. Staying in charming countryside manor houses, we will discover the region's striking architecture and rich traditions. Along the way we can sample crisp Vinho Verde (young) wines, full-bodied port, and seafood delicacies. Then we will explore the striking city of Porto - a puzzle of winding streets, dotted with botanic gardens, palatial villas and romantic rooftop bars overlooking the Douro River. No wonder it was voted Best European Destination twice in the last 10 years!

## Highlights

- Combines rugged hills, vineyards, coastal nature reserves and the vibrant city of Porto
- The untamed beauty of the Peneda-Gerês National Park on the Spanish border
- Astounding architecture; from intricate tile-clad buildings to crumbling fortresses
- Miles of white-sand beaches and colorful shore huts on the dramatic Atlantic coast
- Stay with welcoming locals in authentic manor houses set in the beautiful countryside
- Enjoy wine tastings on local vineyards and a visit to one of Porto's port cellars

## Trip Difficulty & Logistics

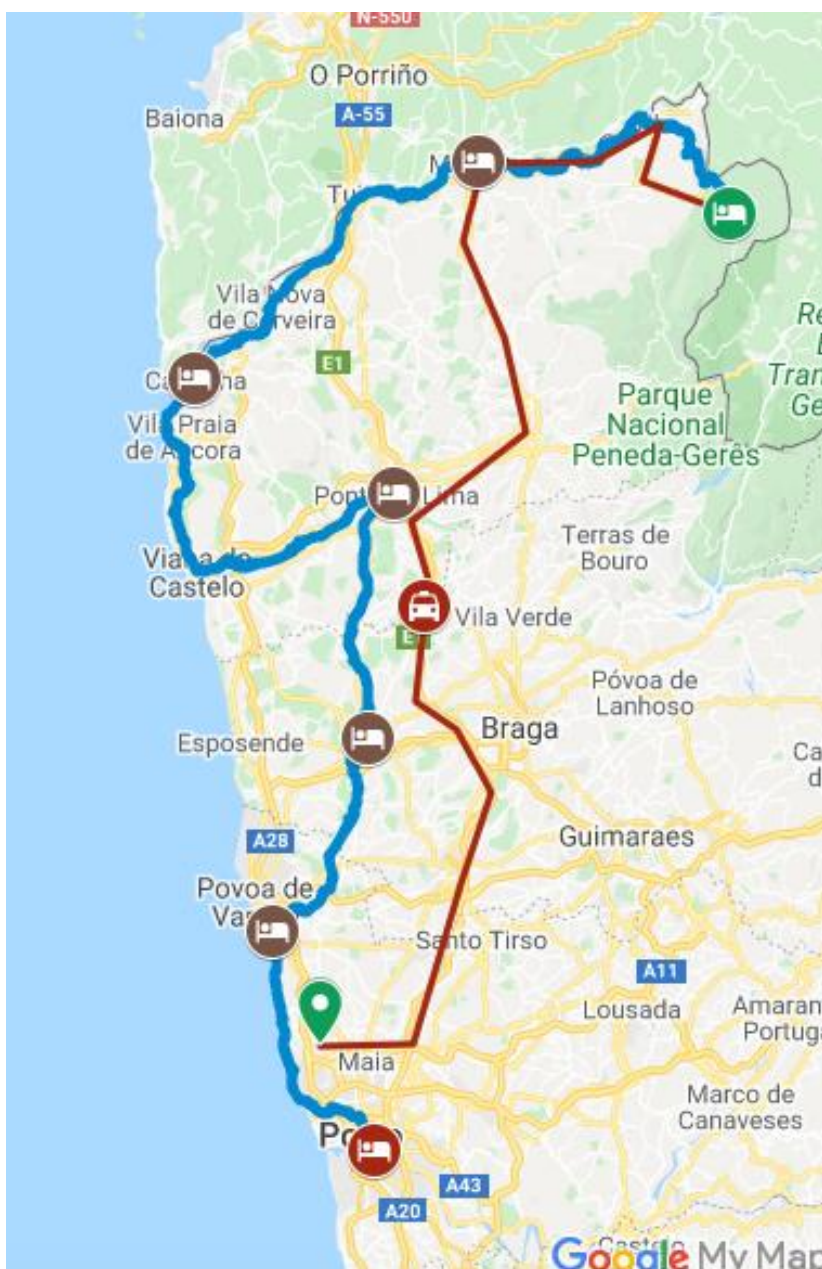
This trip is rated Easy-Moderate (#3-4, See [AMC Rating System](#))

Expect to be active up to 4-6 hours per day, with reasonable breaks in the action to enjoy our surroundings. Pedal on a mixture of quiet country roads, cycle

paths and some sections on track with distances between 20-33 miles. While some days are largely flat, others are on rolling terrain. The daily cumulative ascent varies from 300-1000 feet. Leaders will determine feasibility of extending our daily ride distances, as available, after assessing the group's abilities and each daily timeline. E-bikes will be our default to assure a stress-free, energy-saving experience! As AMC-AT strives to build community among participants, we will ride as a group using a *stop-point-drop* system of guiding, if necessary, to avoid separation. Your bike can be equipped with a GPS device with daily rides pre-loaded, backed up by paper route sheets. (See Equipment Section) English is widely spoken in the areas we will be visiting.

## Daily Itinerary

Most flights to Europe require the passenger to depart the US on April 29 to arrive in Porto on Day 1. Leaders will assist you in assuring you choose the proper itinerary to arrive on time.





**Day 1 – April 30** Our trip begins with a transfer (approx. 2 hours) from Porto Airport to the small mountain village of Castro Laboreiro in the Peneda-Gerês National Park in northern Portugal. The mountainous landscape of Peneda-Gerês is Portugal's only official National Park, and here we will find old traditions are still very much alive in the mountain villages where we might see locals mingling around shared bread ovens. If time allows before our welcome dinner, you may want to stretch your legs wandering among the 9th century Romanesque castle ruins overlooking the village. Overnight **Castrum Villae Hotel** (or equivalent)



**Day 2 – May 1.** From Castro Laboreiro the first 35 km of our journey are largely downhill, so we can relax and take in the beauty of our surroundings. Look out for striking *espigueiros* (granite grain stores on stilts) and local wildlife from golden eagles, to free-roaming Garrano horses, deer and wild boar. The National Park is also home to the illusive Iberian wolf - although it's almost guaranteed that we won't lay eyes on these shy creatures. Arrive in the town of Monção with its 14th century fortifications that held off Spanish invasion. The locals are proud of their heritage, especially the region's *vinho verde*, a crisp white wine made from young grapes. Overnight in a traditional 17th century manor house near the town set among its own vineyards. On arrival we will enjoy a wine tasting with our hosts. **27 miles/44km, 820' ascent**



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**Day 3 – May 2.** Today's largely flat ride follows the River Minho towards the Atlantic Ocean. Pedal through vineyards, and pass by the Palácio da Brejoeira - owned by one of the largest producers of Alvarinho wine in the region - which offers tours of its stately rooms and wine tastings. We then journey to the sea through the town of Valença with its 17th century Vila Nova de Cerveira fort before arriving in the elegant town of Caminha at the estuary of the River Minho. **30 miles/48km, 440' ascent**

Overnight in the heart of Caminha town, and explore the surrounding dinner options. What better way to celebrate our arrival at the ocean than sampling some delicious local seafood?

**Day 4 – May 3.** The longest day's ride on the trip, but an almost flat profile makes this an easy-going day in the saddle. From Caminha at the mouth of the River Minho pedal south along the dramatic Atlantic coastline



to the city of Viana. The city was the setting off point for ships in the "discoveries" of the 16th century, and later cod fish shipping vessels bound for Newfoundland. The opulent town houses the impressive 19th century Byzantine Santa Luzia Church overlooking the city from its hilltop, and is a true testament of past prosperity. Enjoy a long lunch here before following the River Lima upstream to Portugal's oldest town. Ponte de Lima, named after its 1st century 24-arched Roman bridge, is an important stop for pilgrims making their way from Porto to Santiago de Compostela. Explore this charming town before pedaling a short way to our overnight stop in the nearby countryside. **33 miles, 318' ascent**

Overnight in a rustic 16th century guesthouse complete with vineyards, beehives, olive groves and an outdoor pool. In the evening sample some of the local wine at a tasting with your host.

**Day 5 – May 4.** After enjoying some of the honey made by bees on the estate with fresh bread for breakfast hop back into the saddle for a day's pedaling through hillier terrain as you follow the pilgrimage route to Barcelos. Ride through the rural landscape of rolling fields and vineyards to arrive in Barcelos, make sure to visit the 13th century Mother Church with it's peeling hourly bells. Feira de Barcelos is the famous Thursday market that takes place in the town, but even if you miss the market it's worth wandering through the medieval heart of the town and looking out for local pottery that the town is known for to take home as a keepsake. In the evening we recommend a refreshing glass of vinho verde with tapas before a late dinner. **20 miles, 985' ascent**

**Day 6 – May 5.** Today's ride takes us back to the Atlantic coast and its vast strips of white-sand. After some minor rolling terrain enjoy a largely downhill then flat approach to our next overnight stop. **22 miles, 800' ascent**

We hope to arrive in Vila de Conde with plenty of time to explore. With a prosperous shipbuilding past we'll find grand townhouses, a replica of one of the *Discovery* ships in the charming harbor, overlooked by Santa Clara monastery and the impressive aqueduct. For the seafood enthusiast sampling locally sourced cuisine with a view of the Atlantic is surely the only option for dinner.

**Day 7 – May 6.** On our final day in the saddle, we follow a largely flat route along the coast past large dunes, through a sea bird reserve and plenty of small fishing villages. Cycle into the beautiful UNESCO city Porto via the River Douro estuary. The city's renown for its vast port export is evident from the terracotta roofed storage warehouses on the banks of the Douro. On arrival we have arranged a cellar tour to enjoy a port tasting, then spend the evening exploring the city. **21.5 miles, 760' ascent**

Once settled at or hotel, Trip Leader Dave will lead a personalized, relaxed walking tour of Porto, discovering botanical gardens and several of the 1500 UNESCO-listed monuments, all offset by

striking modern architecture and edgy street art. Our trip will conclude at a rooftop bar for a toast & tapas farewell celebration. You may then choose to stroll leisurely through the winding streets in the old quarters of Ribeira, Miragaia and Massarelos back to our hotel. For those who love the nightlife, save some appetite for a heavier dinner at one of Porto's Michelin-listed restaurants before returning to the hotel and getting ready to leave this beautiful country in the morning.

Overnight at **Carris Porto Ribeira Hotel** or an equivalent accommodation.



**Day 8 – May 7** After breakfast prepare to bid farewell to this incredible city and the beautiful northeast of Portugal. We will be transferred from our hotel by minivan (approx. 20 minutes) to Porto Airport. Or *why not add an extra night or two in Porto? There is so much to discover in this colorful, charismatic hillside city on the banks of the River Douro!*

## Summary of Daily Itinerary

Day: Start from	Activity	Destination
1: Arrive Porto Airport	Transfer by bus (2 hours)	The small mountain village of Castro Laboreiro in the Peneda-Gerês National Park; welcome dinner & trip briefing
2: Castro Laboreiro	Bicycle 27 miles, 820' ascent	Monção; wine tasting
3: Monção	Bicycle 30 miles, 440' ascent	Caminha
4: Caminha	Bicycle 33 miles, 318' ascent	Ponte de Lima; wine tasting
5: Ponte de Lima	Bicycle 20 miles, 985' ascent	Barcelos
6 Barcelos	Bicycle 22 miles, 800' ascent	Vila de Conde
7: Vila de Conde	Bicycle 21.5 miles, 760' ascent; walking tour of Porto	Porto; say farewell with a toast & tapas!
8: Porto	Transfer by bus to airport	End of trip.

## Accommodations, Meals and Transportation

On this trip you will stay in a mixture of modern 3 and 4-star hotels as well as a traditional manor house on a vineyard near Moncao and a rural guesthouse in Ponte de Lima. End your trip in Porto in a large 4\* hotel in a UNESCO protected area just minutes from the Douro River in the lively old quarter of Ribeira. At your accommodation on days 2 and 4 enjoy a wine tasting experience with your hosts, and on day 6 visit one of Porto's renowned port cellars. Some accommodates listed or referenced in the Daily Itinerary may not be available. Should we need to make a change, an equivalent property will be used.

The group will dine together at a pre-arranged location on the first and final nights of our trip. Other days will include breakfast at our lodging accommodations. You will receive a bank debit card in US\$ for your lunch and dinners. Lunch can be taken in local bistros, or from a grab and go stand to enjoy on a park bench or on the beach. We encourage participants to mix and mingle for dinner plans. Leaders will assist in locating and arranging restaurants and will join groups each night.

### *Weather*

Spring and autumn are the best times for cycling in Portugal, with temperatures from 57-66 degrees Fahrenheit and the added bonus of less summer tourists. Rainfall is generally low with a monthly average of no more than 0.5 inches between March and November. May to September tend to be the driest months.

## Equipment

Our trip will take advantage of the growing popularity of electric bikes (e-bikes) to keep our tour stress-free. We will arrange hire of high quality battery-powered standard or low frame hybrid-style bikes. The rechargeable battery on your bike will be your reliable riding partner, getting you to the top of hills or to your final destination with more energy in the tank for an afternoon swim or simply for exploring. Bikes will have gearing and brake systems appropriate to conditions and terrain. Included with our bike hire is a pannier rack, 1 pannier per bike, handlebar bag (one per two bikes),



a lock (one per two bikes), toolkit, first aid kit, puncture repair kit, pump, spare inner tube, and use of a helmet. **Although, we recommend that you bring your own helmet for your own comfort.**

You may choose a standard frame (XS, M, L or XL) or low frame (cruiser/step through design) (M or L). You will be sized to your bike frame according to your height.

*Please note that unless you specifically request a low frame bike, a standard frame model will be allocated - so if you would prefer a low frame bike please let us know on your application.*

### **GPS Unit**

For navigation you will be provided with a pass code to access a route-finding app with our routes' GPS tracks. Alternatively, on request you can borrow a GPS unit pre-loaded with the tracks you will need for your daily rides.

## **Participant Fitness and Skill Expectations**

To get the most out of the trip we recommend a good base level of fitness. It's a good idea to get out on your bike for a couple of consecutive days in the lead up to our trip so you can get used to riding back-to-back days. If you have never experienced an e-bike, we recommend you visit a bike shop to become accustomed to their handling. You may want to rent one a few times to gain confidence.

However, it's not all about the cycling. Each day there are plenty opportunities to visit historic sights and sample locally produced food and wine. We will strive to maintain a leisurely pace, while ensuring that we arrive at day's end with time to explore each town and locate appropriate dining facilities for the evening meal.

Participants on this trip must be able to confidently pedal, steer, stop and negotiate a bike over a variety of terrain including flat, uphill and downhill in both rural and populated settings. Participants should be familiar with basic road repair techniques.

In addition, participants must be able and willing to flex with the needs of the group. AMCAT trips are more successful when we work as a group, including offering or receiving assistance when needed.

## **Trip Price**

**The AMC Member price is \$3,460. The non-member price is \$3,560.** To join AMC click [here](#).

This trip is priced based on projections of 2023 rates and exchanges. Should there be undue inflationary conditions by then, leaders will determine if the price needs to be adjusted.

### **Price includes:**

- 7 Nights in 3-4\* hotels, an authentic guesthouse and vineyard manor house
- 7 Breakfasts, lunches, dinners
- Luggage transfers throughout our bike trip
- Detailed information pack, route notes, GPX tracks and loan of a GPS unit (must be reserved in advance)
- Wine tasting experiences in Monção (Day 2) and Ponte de Lima (Day 4)
- Port wine cellar visit and tasting in Porto (Day 7)
- Walking tour of the highlights of Porto (Day 7)
- Transfer from Porto Airport to our first hotel (2 hours) (Day 1)
- Transfer from our Porto hotel to Porto Airport (20 mins) (Day 8)
- 24/7 Emergency telephone support
- Emergency Medical and Evacuation insurance (with limits)

**Price does not include:**

- Round trip airfare from US – Porto, Portugal
- Snacks, beverages, personal items
- Tickets or excursions not included in itinerary
- Single room (please add \$700 subject to availability and early booking)
- Travel insurance (trip cancellation, trip interruption, lost/damaged luggage, etc.)

## Application Process

This trip is likely to fill quickly. If this is a good trip for you, we encourage you to submit your application as soon as possible. We will take a maximum of 14 people.

To apply for this trip, please request, complete, and submit a Participant Application, Confidential Health Questionnaire, and Acknowledgement COVID Release Form, and Assumption of Risk and Release form, enclosing a registration deposit of \$1,000 (\$1,100 if not a member of AMC). Your application will be subject to a full screening, including contacting your references and conducting a brief phone interview. A spot on the roster is not assured until this process has been completed and you have been notified. Once your roster spot is confirmed, your check will be deposited into the trip account for safekeeping.

Once we have secured the number of participants required for the trip and we can make a reasonable determination that we can safely travel to Portugal given health agency recommendations and country protocols, we will notify you with an official acceptance letter. This letter will contain important insurance information. At this time, we will make a deposit to our supplier to secure the accommodations.

## Payment schedule

\$1,000 is due with the application (\$1,100 if not an AMC member). A second payment of \$1,500 is due April 1, 2022. The balance is due November 1, 2022.

Please make payments by check payable to the “Appalachian Mountain Club” and mail to the address shown on the Participant Application.

## Terms, Conditions and General Information, including Cancellation Policy

Please carefully read the [Adventure Travel Standard Terms and Conditions](#)

## What to Bring

Here is a list of what to bring to have a good time on this trip:

- Clothing appropriate for bicycling: layers for changing weather, padded bike shorts or liners, comfortable shorts, trousers or skirts. Trousers should be snug around the lower leg or tied off to prevent catching in chain.
- Comfortable, durable, closed toe shoes for biking. Clips are not required or even necessary. If you **do** wish to ride with clip-in pedals, please bring your own, along with the appropriate mount tool. (We will confirm at a later date if this is possible.) Sneakers are acceptable but should have a sturdy, treaded sole (e.g., trail runners or sturdy hiking shoes) and should attach firmly to the feet. Sandals, flip-flops, or ‘slip-ins’ will not be allowed for biking.
- Each participant should carry with them at all times an appropriate water supply for the day.
- Layers, light jacket, and rain gear.
- Simple first aid kit, or appropriate to your needs. (We suggest you bring your own, especially if you have any particular first aid or medical equipment needs.)
- Comfortable, casual clothes for evening and travel days. Some locations we visit may have customs regarding length of skirts or shorts, and arm and shoulder coverings. Please be respectful of our host country.

## Required Gear

- ANSI or equivalent bicycle helmet (we recommend you bring your own)
- Appropriate cycling footwear

## Trip Leadership



A lifelong outdoor enthusiast, **Janis Stahlhut** has been an AMC-AT leader since 2009. She began her association with AMC as a CT Chapter hike and bike leader but was soon drawn to the Adventure Travel program by her natural wanderlust and a desire to share new places and cultures with others. Janis has led AT hiking, biking, kayaking and cultural trips on 5 of the 7 continents and in Pacific Island nations Fiji and New Zealand.

Now retired, Janis had a varied career history, including stints in arts administration, telecommunications marketing and public policy, and fitness instruction. Janis now writes (sparingly), develops and leads adventure travel trips, and practices Healing Touch healing therapy as a volunteer at her local hospital. Through the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training program, she has completed a number of short and middle distance triathlons and a century bike ride, raising 10s of thousands of dollars along the way. Included in her 15 minutes of

fame, Janis boasts a walk-on tryout for the 2002 US Olympic Women's Bobsled Team. The rest is history! You can read some of her writing and sample some of her travels at

[www.iasjourneys.wordpress.com](http://www.iasjourneys.wordpress.com).

**Dave Cole**, is an avid kayaker, hiker and traveler who has a passion for exploring. He is a long-time member of the AMC, a past Chapter Chair for the AMC Worcester Chapter, and current paddle and hike leader who has led many overnight paddle and excursions for the Chapter.

Dave has a natural curiosity for people and places and likes to share his experiences with others while learning about other cultures. He has travelled extensively in the US and abroad, including Europe, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Costa-Rica.

Dave is married and together they have one daughter currently an undergraduate student at UCLA. Needless to say he has been enjoying exploring LA while on campus visits.

Dave is an owner of a commercial painting company. With some of his free time he is currently section hiking the lovely MidState Trail in Massachusetts with a group of friends.



### Leader Contact information:

Janis Stahlhut, [jstahlhut@icloud.com](mailto:jstahlhut@icloud.com), 203-820-9275; Dave Cole, [davcole550@aol.com](mailto:davcole550@aol.com), 508-887-2581

If telephoning, please call between the hours of 9am and 9pm.

*All location photos courtesy of Macs Adventure*