



→ Why Tejo

Why are people choosing Portugal?

Living in Portugal as an Expat: An Introduction

Portugal, with its mild climate, rich history, and affordable cost of living, has emerged as a top destination for expats from around the globe seeking a higher quality of life. When I think about quality of life, the key contributors to me are the weather (I need regular sunshine and blue skies), societal security, access to a clean food system, affordable, high quality healthcare, interesting culture, a life enhancing built environment (I like to walk my city, not drive it), great education and access to nature.

I aim to cover most of this as an introduction to aid your assessment of this beautiful country as a potential home base or second home for you and your family.

Ease of Integration

Moving to a new country is daunting. When I moved here in 2016, I knew absolutely no one, didn't speak the language and did not employ any professional services to assist me. I sold up in London, where I had been living for the ten years, and moved.

The first thing to know is that while Portuguese is the official language, English is widely spoken in business environments and major cities, and by most of the people that you interact with to go about your life. Learning some basic Portuguese, however, can greatly enhance daily interactions and integration into local communities.

Portugal hosts vibrant expat communities, especially in cities like Lisbon, Porto, and the Algarve region. I developed one myself, Lisbon Good Vibe Tribe, that has 280 members from all over the world who have chosen to call this home.

There are now numerous professional services, run by locals and expats, that help guide your move across. They connect you to all professional help, local community and for a monthly fee, remove local friction to make things easy.

Security

Portugal is considered one of the safest countries in the world, currently ranking number 7 in global safety indices. Lisbon is so safe that you can walk home in the middle of the night as a woman without feeling any sense of unease. That matters to me as I like to know my partner is safe.

I leave my house key under the front door mat and never lock my car or my scooter and thus far, in the seven years I've been living here, I've experienced no crime at all. On a more macro level, knowing that there are no guns in civilian society is a huge peace of mind, especially for parents sending their children to school.

Healthcare

As an expat, we generally don't utilise the national healthcare system, known as the Serviço Nacional de Saúde as the private hospitals are world class here and cost very little as a result of an extraordinarily affordable private health insurance. To give you an example of this, I pay just over \$100 per month for my exhaustive medical insurance, including international travel.

I recently went to one of the private hospitals in Lisbon, CUF, for some annual checks ups. I had an appointment with a general practitioner, then another with a cardiologist and I was sent for two sets of tests, including a blood draw and a ultrasound. The entire bill for all of this was under \$100. The blood drawer was under \$5.

Food

75% of the US population is considered overweight. This epidemic of ill health is a result of a poisonous food system constituting highly processed foods, full of additives and sugars. Navigating the system is hard and expensive if you're choosing health.

Only 10% of a typical Portuguese diet includes highly processed foods, unlike the UK where the average diet is just over 50% processed foods. A box of organic vegetables, delivered from a local farm, costs me €34 per week.

Dining out has become more expensive of late, but you're still looking at a €50 per head check for a great dinner with wine compared to \$150 for a New York equivalent.

Education

For expat families, education is a crucial aspect of integration. Portugal's education system encompasses public, private, and international schools, catering to diverse needs and preferences. Public schools offer free education, with language support for non-Portuguese speakers. The country is home to several prestigious universities, offering a range of programs in English, particularly at the postgraduate level.

The reality is that most of the expat community educate their children in the private system. Primary school fees at one of the top private schools in Lisbon are €850 per month and high school in the region of €1000 per month.

Political Stability and Governance

The country operates as a democratic republic, with a history of peaceful transitions of power and a political landscape characterized by moderate, centrist parties. This stability is underscored by Portugal's commitment to the rule of law, transparency in governance, and adherence to European Union standards and regulations, which ensure a level of predictability and security in legal and business affairs.

Moreover, Portugal's active participation in international organizations promotes a global perspective in its policy-making, further enhancing its governance framework. This environment fosters not only a secure and orderly society but also attracts foreign investment and expatriates looking for a reliable and steady governance system in this chaotic world.

The Government could be better. Same the world over, and the bureaucracy can be infuriating, but you do not feel like your freedoms and rights are being infringed upon or whittled away.

In conclusion, my team and I chose to move to Portugal having lived all over the world in the UK, France, East and Southern Africa, and the US. We chose Portugal as our base because it is in the middle of the world, easily accessible, with great weather, safety and good people. We knew we could community here, which we have, and that this offered a better quality of life, all things considered.

I'm happy to jump on a call with you to talk about Portugal. I made this little film when I first moved here which gives you an idea of the old culture, it's worth a watch.