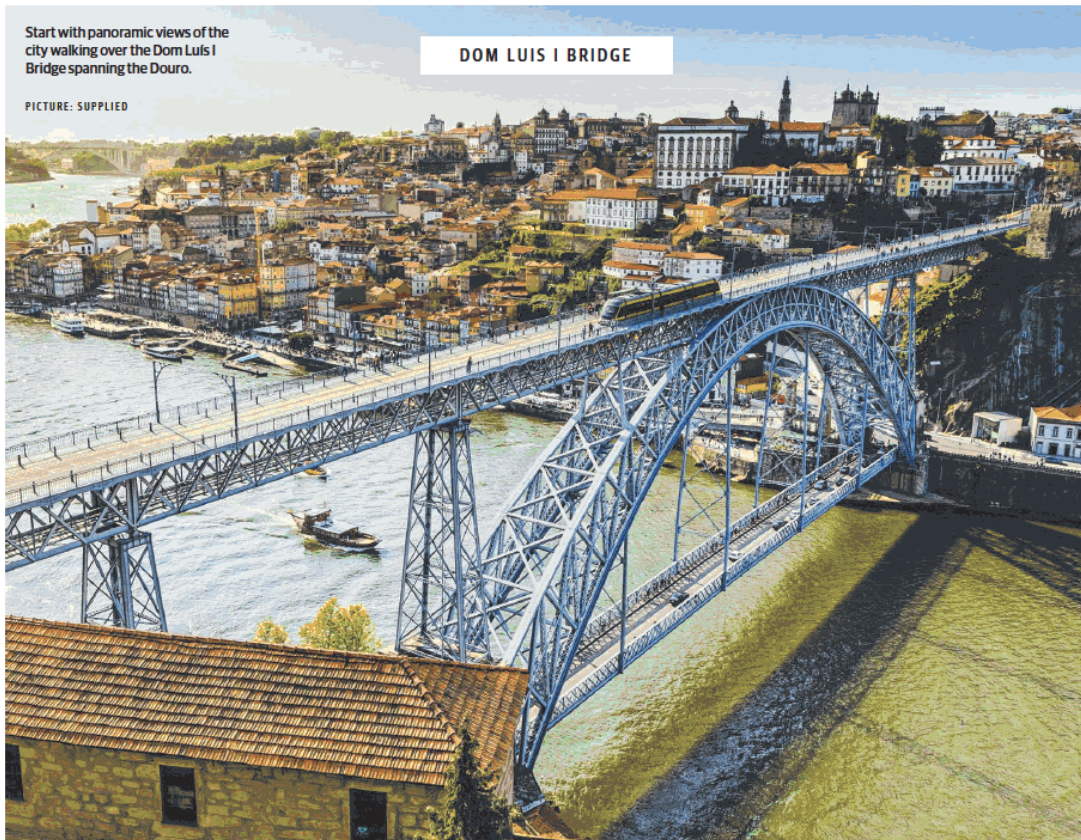


DESTINATION ♦ PORTUGAL

Start with panoramic views of the city walking over the Dom Luis I Bridge spanning the Douro.

PICTURE: SUPPLIED

DOM LUIS I BRIDGE



traditional sweets, this tour is an invaluable introduction to Porto. **To book:** Although the tour is free, with tips welcomed at the end, it's recommended to book ahead. **PORTOWALKERS.PT**

FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

"Food is a cultural expression ... it's how we share who we are as other people," Taste Porto guide Miguel says as we embark on our food walking tour with a twist, armed with smartphones and a bag of styling props.

At Confeltaria Moura, a family-owned company that has been rolling and baking their sugary-sweet pastries since 1892, we play with light and angles, then slip into the kitchen to document pastry chefs in action.

As well as playing the part of food photographers (and taste testers), with stops taking in everything from coffee to sardines and a new artisanal gelateria, the tour is intertwined with random historic and cultural tidbits.

It'll depend on your predilection, whether you get more out of the food or photography side of this tour, but either way you'll walk away with a full stomach and Instagram snaps.

To book: Check the online calendar for availability of this half-day tour – cost is €49 (about \$75) a person. **TASTEPORTO.COM**

HISTORIC TRAIN JOURNEY

With tracks that run alongside the sparkling Douro River all the way to the heart of Portugal's UNESCO World Heritage-listed winemaking region, Journeying to the Douro Valley by train is a brilliant way to go.

But when there's a beautifully restored 1890 train that once served the court of King D. Luis I and transported the likes of Queen Elizabeth II and Portugal's heads of state – that only comes out of its home at the National Railway Museum for 25 days each year – the experience is really taken up a notch.

Add a roll call of Michelin-starred chefs making culinary magic in a kitchen with no electricity, fire or gas – and free-flowing wine on a journey that culminates with cigars and port cocktails on the veranda of a private winemaker's estate – and you have the luxurious Presidential Train.

Of course, all this exclusivity comes with a price tag to match, but to travel back to the golden age of travel for the day and eat a multi-course Michelin-starred meal along the way, it could actually be considered a steal.

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GET TO KNOW PORTO

Learn the secrets of Portugal's second biggest city on five fabulous tours

CELESTE MITCHELL

As an independent traveller, online research, a guidebook and wandering the streets will get you so far but tapping into short tours can give you the keys to a secret side of a city.

You could spend a month in the UNESCO-listed old town of Porto, as I did, and still not feel as though you've absorbed it all. So here are five tours to accelerate your cultural PhD of the city that gave Portugal its name.

CLASSIC FREE WALKING TOUR

Many a European city has a free walking tour but the guides from Porto Walkers are particularly enthusiastic about their home town, which is undergoing a makeover of Madonna circa-2003 proportions.

Meeting every morning, rain, hail or shine, at Praça da Liberdade, the

STROLL LABYRINTHINE LANEWAYS OF ONE OF THE OLDEST TOWN CENTRES IN EUROPE

walks take you through the city for an express history tour over three hours.

From learning the story behind the detailed paintings inside São Bento railway station (and the key facilities the city's most celebrated architect neglected to include in the building's design), to strolling down the labyrinthine laneways of one of the oldest town centres in Europe to buy

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DESTINATION ♦ PORTUGAL



OLD TOWN CHARM



SÃO BENTO STATION

Let experts take you into secret streets full of sherbet facades and crumbling charm (above left); and enthusiastic local guides will reveal the stories behind detailed paintings inside São Bento railway station.

PICTURES: ISTOCK

<FROM PAGE 27

To book: Dates for the 2018 spring and harvest seasons have been released and booking in advance is advised. Tickets are €500 a person. THEPRESIDENTIALTRAIN.COM

PRIVATE PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR
You could easily get lost in the higgledy-piggledy maze of Porto's old town, which spills down the hillside into the Douro, but with a guide like Andre from With Locals, you'll

appreciate, and document, landmarks, architectural anomalies and hidden museums you might otherwise easily miss. On a private photography tour, we start by walking over the Dom Luis I Bridge for a panoramic view of the city from the old Pedrosa Monastery. Then, over three hours the old town becomes our creative muse, as we slip into secret streets to appreciate the sherbet facades and crumbling charm of the houses found within. If you're looking for help to move off the auto function on your DSLR, this might not be for you. But if you'd love to capture those must-have shots and hidden corners

of Porto, Andre is the guy to help. He tells me how he left his stressful career to slow down and make use of his history degree in a new way.

And if travelling solo and looking for someone to snap shots of you in front of the icons, Andre is happy to oblige. **To book:** Tours can be customised to suit and cost €20 for three hours. WITHLOCALS.COM

THE PORT WINE TASTING TOUR

"If you don't want to drink all the wine on this tour, please share with someone who wants it," Porto Walkers guide David says, clearly knowing

his audience from the outset. You're in the birthplace of port wine so it would be a great disservice to not delve into its history and taste-test your way through some vintages.

Though many believe port is the reason for Porto's name, it's a misnomer since the wine is produced in the Douro Valley and matures in the wine caves across the river in Vila Nova de Gaia.

You'll learn this fact and many more by visiting the wine caves independently, or you can join a tour with Porto Walkers and visit three of the best – starting with the historical

house of Ramos Pinto, founded in 1880, and ending on the rooftop of the modern Cruz.

Over a few hours you sample seven port wines – white, rosé, tawny and ruby – then be left to your own devices to track down a bifana (life-changing pork sandwich) to soak it all up.

To book: The tour costs €20 and runs each afternoon from Tuesday to Sunday. PORTWALKERS.PT

THE WRITER TRAVELLED AS A GUEST OF THE PRESIDENTIAL TRAIN. ALL OTHER TRAVEL WAS AT HER OWN EXPENSE

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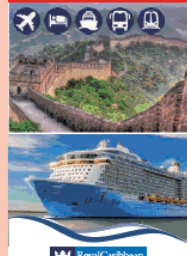
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- 7 night cruise from Tianjin visiting Fukushima (15 days/7 night), Kagoshima, Sasebo and Tianjin
- All meals and entertainment onboard cruise
- **Gratuities onboard** the cruise are included in the price

RoyalCaribbean.com

Web Search Ref: RCIOV1806T

Luxury Vancouver to Japan

Price from **\$3799pp**

ms Westerdam • 17 Nights • 29 September 2018



- Return flights from Sydney
- **1 night stay** in Vancouver
- 15 Night cruise from Vancouver cruising Alaska's Inside Passage to Juneau, Glacier Bay, Kodiak, Cross International Dateline, Hakodate and Yokohama
- All meals and entertainment onboard
- **Add a 6 night escorted tour of Japan from \$1399pp**

HubbardAlaska.com

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CelebrityCruises.com

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