



RIDING ACROSS GEORGIA SINCE

1980

PORTUGAL
2026

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WELCOME TO PORTUGAL

Day	Route	Miles
Saturday	Lisbon  Évora	Arrival
Sunday	Évora  Arraiolos	19.8 Miles
Monday	Arraiolos  Estremoz	19 Miles
Tuesday	Estremoz  Serra d'Ossa	10.8 Miles
Wednesday	Serra d'Ossa  Monsaraz	26.5 Miles
Thursday	Monsaraz  Loop	27.2 Miles
Friday	Monsaraz  Évora	42.5 Miles
Saturday	Évora  Lisbon	Depart

United States Embassy in Lisbon: +351 21 727 3300

Emergency number in Portugal: 112 (like our 911)

Franklin's phone number +1.678.548.1938

TRAFFIC & LOCAL REGULATIONS

Right of way & riding position. Ride on the right, as far to the right as is safe. Riding two abreast is legal and common in Portugal, but the group will default to single file whenever traffic, visibility, or road width calls for it. At unmarked junctions, traffic already on the road (including cyclists) generally has the right of way over traffic entering from a side road; when in doubt, slow down and make eye contact with drivers.

Helmets. Not legally required for adult cyclists in Portugal, but every BRAG rider wears one, every day, no exceptions. It's part of the Safety Pledge you'll sign before day one.

Phones & headphones. Illegal to hold a phone while riding, even hands-free calling requires care. Headphones/earbuds covering both ears are prohibited while cycling.

Lights & visibility. Not usually needed on our riding schedule (we're off the road well before dusk), but if you're out past sunset, Portuguese law requires a white front light and red rear light.

Toll highways. Bicycles are banned from Portugal's tolled autoestradas — not a concern on this route.

Terrain reality-check. The Alentejo is rolling, not flat — expect long, gentle grades through olive groves and vineyards and a few short sharp hills.

RIDING THE GRAVEL TRAILS

The Ecopista is a converted rail-trail — smooth and paved near town, shifting to packed dirt, gravel, and sand farther out. Two riding days use it this week (Sunday and Friday).

Hazards to watch for: gates/barriers at old crossings (slow down, dismount if needed), loose sand patches (stay loose on the bars, avoid hard braking), ruts or washboard surface, unmarked road/farm crossings, and grazing animals or guard dogs near fence lines, root rises near trees and bumps in the path. Shade and water are limited once you're out of town.

Route rules: stay right, call out before passing, slow to a crawl through gates and crossings, ride single file on rough or narrow stretches, no headphones in both ears.

Gravel basics: brake before loose sections, not during them; look ahead rather than at your front wheel; keep a relaxed grip. When in doubt, walk it out. A short dismount through a rough patch costs you thirty seconds and zero dignity.

Shared path. You're not the only one out here. Expect walkers, runners, dog walkers, and the occasional local cyclist, especially near towns. Pedestrians have the right of way — call out “on your left” or ring your bell well before you pass, and give extra room to anyone with a dog or small children.

STEEP CURVY PITCHES

The pitch up into Monsaraz is short but real — a steep, curving climb up the hillside to the walled village, and the same grade waiting for you on the way back down. A few tips for both directions:

Climbing: Shift down early, before the grade steepens, not after. Stay seated for steady traction on the switchbacks, and keep a light, relaxed grip — tensing up wastes energy. If your legs or breathing say stop, pull off wide where you're visible and take a break; there's no penalty for it, and the support van is never far.

Descending: Cover your brakes the whole way down and feather both, front and rear — don't grab a fistful at once. Slow before each curve, not mid-turn, since braking hard while leaning can wash out your front wheel. Keep your weight back and low, eyes up and looking through the turn to where you want to go, not at the pavement in front of you.

Curvy pitches generally: Take blind curves wide-to-tight-to-wide and assume there could be a car, walker, or another rider coming the other way — stay right. Call out “car up” or “car back” as usual, and single-file it through anything narrow or switchbacked.

When cobblestones or loose gravel show up (common in Monsaraz), the same rule applies as on the ecopista: ease off, relax your grip, and let the bike track through rather than fighting it.

SAFETY SIGNS



Give way to oncoming



No Entry for Bicycles



No Entry for Pedestrians



No stopping or parking



Danger Ahead



Bike Path



Dead end Except Cyclists



Priority Road Intersection Ahead



No entry, one way traffic



Priority Road Ahead



Priority Road Ends

SAFETY INFO

You are responsible for your own safety - BRAG assists as much as possible in ensuring a safe ride, however you are in control of your ride and safety. Take note of hazards as you spot them. Hazards are always being created and note we can not warn participants of every potential or existing hazard. Cycling has inherent dangers - take safety seriously!

You must obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices.

Wear a helmet and ensure your gear is properly functioning.

Communicate with other cyclists to keep each other safe - please yell when appropriate car back, car up, rider on, rider off, etc. Communicate about hazards such as RR tracks, pot holes, rumbles, debris in the road, cracks, animals, etc. Do not yell CLEAR as what is clear for you may not be for others.

Visibility - See and be seen, wear bright clothes, reflective clothing and use lights.

Bicycle lanes and shoulders - please use them when possible and safe to do so.

Report dangerous motorists and cyclists.

In the event of rain, the road and road tires can be slick and brakes can slip. Normal conditions may become more hazardous, especially rail road tracks.

In the event of lightning, take appropriate action and exercise caution.

BRAG'S CORNERING SYSTEM

This is a ride, not a race. We encourage you to stop and smell the roses and get a true taste for the fiber and culture of the areas we travel through. We will stay together as a group and ride together. If you would like to ride alone without the group/support, you are more than welcome to, please ensure you have the ride with GPS route on your phone and provisions to make the trip to the Hotel.

The Cornering System: The ride leader will be in front of everyone in the group. Everytime we turn, or the direction of travel is unclear, they will ask the person behind them to be a "corner". When you are asked to be a corner, pull over to a safe and out of the way area visible to others in our group, and point them in the direction we are traveling. Once the sweep arrives to you, you can hop back in with the group. This ensures no one gets lost and we stay together as one cohesive group. You are more than welcome to pass and catch back up to the front of the line if you are so inclined.

How not to get lost:

1. Stay with the group.
2. Download the Ride with GPS App and have the routes downloaded on your phone.
3. Download offline maps in google maps of the local area in case you need to navigate from off course.

SATURDAY

You land in Lisbon in the morning, and rather than fighting the city with a suitcase and jet lag, we put you straight on a shuttle east into the Alentejo. By early afternoon you're in Évora — a walled Roman-medieval town that is one of the most complete historic centers in Portugal — with the afternoon to settle in, walk the old town with a guide, and eat your first Alentejano dinner.

1:00pm	Shuttle to Évora (Grab a bite prior to departure)
3:00pm	Check in at the Noble House Hotel, Évora
4:00pm	Guided walking tour of Évora
6:00pm	Bike Fitting & Orientation
7:00pm	Dinner at Nã T'acho Atípico — a 2-minute walk from the hotel

Lodging: Noble House Essence Évora, in the old town — two minutes' walk from the Roman Temple and the Cathedral. Roman wall, vaulted ceilings, azulejo tilework, and a breakfast room worth getting up for.

SATURDAY

Évora has been continuously occupied for roughly two thousand years, and the town doesn't hide it. The Romans built here in the first century; the Moors held it for four hundred years; Portuguese kings made it a royal residence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. All of it is still standing, stacked on top of itself inside a ring of walls. UNESCO listed the whole center in 1986, and it remains one of the best-preserved examples of a Portuguese golden-age city anywhere.

The Roman Temple is the postcard — fourteen granite columns built in the first or second century AD, often called the Temple of Diana, which is a romantic nineteenth-century invention. It survived because it was walled up and used as a butcher shop for centuries, which is not dignified but did preserve it beautifully. The Capela dos Ossos is the town's other famous stop, and a genuinely strange one: seventeenth-century Franciscan monks lined a small chapel with the bones of some five thousand people, exhumed from overcrowded cemeteries, as a meditation on mortality. Over the door, Nós ossos que aqui estamos, pelos vossos esperamos — “We bones that are here await yours.”

Beyond the monuments, Évora is a real, working university town — the university was founded in 1559 — with students in the cafés and a genuine local life around Praça do Giraldo, the main square.

SUNDAY

Ride along a converted railway line through open Alentejo farmland. Halfway along, we stop at Fitapreta Winery for a tasting. Then on into Arraiolos, a white-washed hill town famous worldwide for its hand-embroidered rugs, with time to walk around before checking in. 19.8 Miles cycling.

8 - 9:30a	Breakfast
9:30a	Leave luggage in the lobby; and start ride
	Wine tasting, and lunch at Fitapreta
	Ride to Arraiolos with some free time to walk around
	Check in at Pousada Convento in Arraiolos
7:30p	Dinner at Pousada Convento in Arraiolos (Our Hotel)

SUNDAY

The line from Évora toward Mora closed to trains decades ago and reopened as an ecopista — a rail-trail. What that means for you is a beautifully graded, nearly car-free corridor running straight through country you would otherwise only see as a blur from a car window: cork oaks, olive groves, wheat stubble, and the occasional whitewashed monte farmhouse on a rise. Old station buildings survive along the route as rest stops. It's the easiest riding of the week and arguably the most purely pleasant.

Fitapreta is where old and new Alentejo wine meet. Winemaker António Maçanita took over the 16th-century Paço do Morgado de Oliveira estate and turned it into one of Portugal's most closely watched wineries — known for reviving nearly extinct indigenous grape varieties and for making lighter, fresher, more restrained wines than the big jammy Alentejo reds that dominated the market for years.

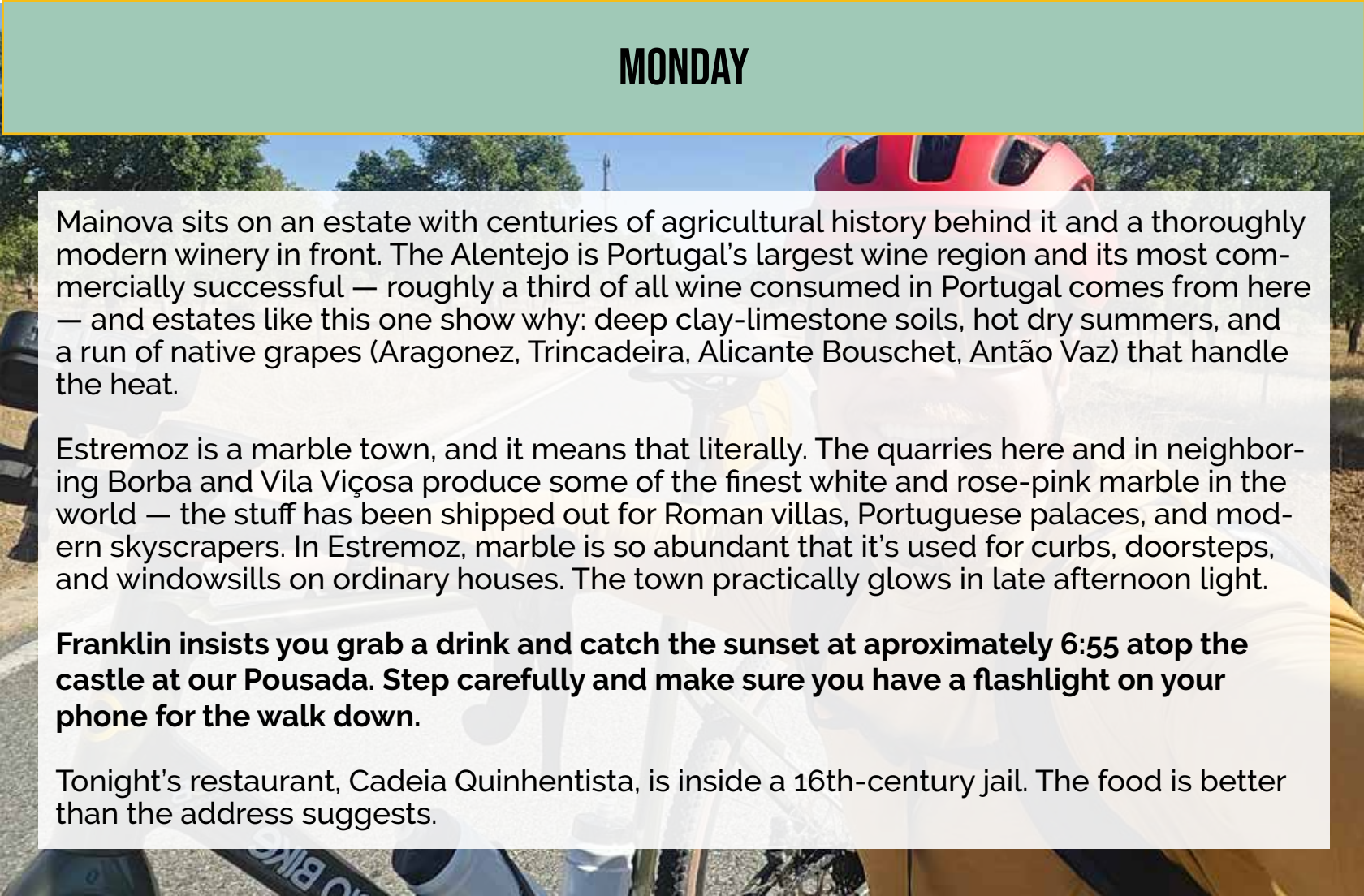
Arraiolos is famous for one thing: tapetes de Arraiolos, hand-embroidered wool rugs stitched in a distinctive long cross-stitch that women here have been making since roughly the 16th and 17th centuries. The style is thought to have come from Persian carpets by way of Moorish and Jewish artisans, then evolved into something entirely local. Real Arraiolos rugs are still hand-stitched and still sold in shops around the square — you'll see women working on them in doorways.

MONDAY

A short, scenic morning through olive groves and vineyards, with a stop at the village of Igrejinha, before arriving at the Mainova estate for a tour, tasting, and a long lunch. Riding ends there — a private transfer carries you and the bikes on to Estremoz, a fortified marble town where tonight's hotel is a 13th-century castle. 19 Miles.

8-9:30a	Breakfast at the Hotel
9:30	Walk to Arraiolos Castle, at the top of the hill. Visit the Castle then Start Riding
	Break at Igrejinha
	Visit, tasting, and lunch at Mainova
	Shuttle transfer to Estremoz
	Check in at the Pousada Castelo, Estremoz
7:30p	Dinner at Cadeia Quinhentista, 1-minute walk

MONDAY



Mainova sits on an estate with centuries of agricultural history behind it and a thoroughly modern winery in front. The Alentejo is Portugal's largest wine region and its most commercially successful — roughly a third of all wine consumed in Portugal comes from here — and estates like this one show why: deep clay-limestone soils, hot dry summers, and a run of native grapes (Aragonez, Trincadeira, Alicante Bouschet, Antão Vaz) that handle the heat.

Estremoz is a marble town, and it means that literally. The quarries here and in neighboring Borba and Vila Viçosa produce some of the finest white and rose-pink marble in the world — the stuff has been shipped out for Roman villas, Portuguese palaces, and modern skyscrapers. In Estremoz, marble is so abundant that it's used for curbs, doorsteps, and windowsills on ordinary houses. The town practically glows in late afternoon light.

Franklin insists you grab a drink and catch the sunset at approximately 6:55 atop the castle at our Pousada. Step carefully and make sure you have a flashlight on your phone for the walk down.

Tonight's restaurant, Cadeia Quinhentista, is inside a 16th-century jail. The food is better than the address suggests.

TUESDAY

Closed-toe shoes are mandatory for Marble Tour

This morning we trade the saddle for a hard hat and go into the quarry for the story that built Estremoz. A guided tour takes us into the working marble quarries of the Anticlinal de Estremoz, the richest marble deposit in Portugal, before we return to the hotel for a short but genuinely scenic climb into the Serra d'Ossa. Tonight we sleep in a 12th-century monastery set on 750 hectares of cork forest, with an optional hike for anyone whose legs still want more. 10.8 Mi

8-9:30a	Breakfast & Coffee
9:30a	Shuttle to the Marble Quarry for a tour
	Back to the hotel to start ride to Convento São Paulo
	Check in Convento São Paulo
	Optional Hike in Serra d'Ossa
7:30p	Dinner at The Ermita, the restaurant inside hotel

TUESDAY

Beneath Estremoz, Borba, and Vila Viçosa runs a geological fold called the Anticlinal de Estremoz, a band of crystalline marble roughly 40 kilometers long that formed some 500 million years ago and now holds one of the largest and finest reserves on earth. The Romans quarried here, so did the builders of Portugal's royal palaces, and the trade has never stopped. We head to the quarry faces, where nothing quite prepares you for the scale: sheer white and rose-pink walls dropping hundreds of feet in clean geometric steps, with machinery at the bottom reduced to the size of toys. Some worked-out pits have filled with groundwater and turned an improbable turquoise against the stone. We finish in a factory where blocks are sawn and polished before shipping, bound for buildings around the world, including the Perelman Performing Arts Center at the rebuilt World Trade Center in New York.

The afternoon ride is short and earns its elevation, Portugal produces roughly half the world's cork, and the trees here are stripped by hand only once every nine years, with the year of the last harvest painted on each trunk, so watch for the numbers on the bare red-brown wood as you climb. At the top waits Convento de São Paulo, founded by hermits in 1182, emptied in the 1830s when Portugal dissolved its religious orders, and eventually restored by a private family into a hotel that doubles as a museum: monks' cells converted into guest rooms, corridors unchanged in 800 years, and some 50,000 hand-painted azulejos, the largest private tile collection in the country. The optional hike leaves from the property into 750 hectares of woodland trails.

WEDNESDAY

A day of long views. You drop out of the Serra d'Ossa, stop at a working pottery, and climb to a hilltop miradouro for a picnic looking out over the Alentejo. The afternoon ends in Monsaraz — a medieval walled village on a ridge above Lake Alqueva — with a wine tasting, dinner, and a night walk around the castle under some of the darkest skies in Europe. 26.5 Miles

8-9:30a	Breakfast & Coffee
9:30a	Start Riding
	Break at Barru Pottery
	Picnic lunch at Miradouro do Monte do Patamal
	Check in at Casa Pino / Casa Dona Antonia
5:00p	Wine tasting at Ervideira
7:30p	Dinner at Sahida — a 2-minute walk from the hotel
	Night walk around Monsaraz Castle

WEDNESDAY

Monsaraz is the image most people carry away from the Alentejo: a compact medieval village of whitewashed houses and schist-paved lanes, walled, perched on a quartzite ridge with the vast blue of Lake Alqueva spread out below. Around three hundred people actually live inside the walls. Knights Templar used to hold the site.

Day-trippers come up from Lisbon by the busload, and between eleven and four the main street can feel like a set. By seven in the evening the village empties out, the light goes gold on the walls, and you have the place largely to yourself. Tonight's walk around the castle after dinner is when Monsaraz is at its best.

The lake below you is the largest artificial lake in Western Europe, created when the Alqueva dam on the Guadiana closed in 2002. It flooded 250 square kilometers of farmland — including the village of Aldeia da Luz, which was dismantled and rebuilt on higher ground, cemetery and all. The reservoir transformed the region's agriculture and, incidentally, gave the Alentejo a coastline.

Ervideira is a family winery with a genuine gimmick or two worth respecting. Their Invisível is a white wine made entirely from red Aragonez grapes — no skin contact, no color. Their Vinho da Água is aged in bottles submerged in Lake Alqueva, in constant dark and cool. Both are more than novelties; both are good.

THURSDAY

An energetic day in the heart of the Alentejo that mixes cycling with craft and tasting. You ride out to the Herdade do Esporão for a tour and tasting, picnic at Esporão Castle, break in Corval — Portugal's pottery capital — and loop back to Monsaraz. 27.2 Miles.

8-9:00a	Breakfast & Coffee
9:30a	Start Riding
	Tour and tasting Herdade do Esporão
	Picnic lunch at the Castle of Esporão
	Break in Corval, Olaria Polido & Filho pottery shop
7:30p	Dinner at Sem-Fim

THURSDAY

Herdade do Esporão is one of the giants of Portuguese wine, spread across roughly 1,840 hectares in the Reguengos de Monsaraz subregion. Its boundaries were drawn in 1267, shortly after the Christian reconquest of Monsaraz, and have barely changed since. The Torre do Esporão, the fortified tower where we picnic, went up in the second half of the 15th century under Álvaro Mendes de Vasconcelos, a knight of the House of Bragança and governor of Évora. Look around at lunch and you are seeing a working farm, a nature reserve, and a 750-year-old property line all at once.

The modern winery story is much younger and more turbulent. José Roquette and Joaquim Bandeira bought the estate in 1973, only to see it swept up in the upheaval after Portugal's 1974 revolution. It took more than a decade before the first Esporão Reserva appeared with the 1985 vintage, and that wine helped prove the Alentejo could make serious reds rather than cheap bulk wine. The Roquette family, now in its second generation, still runs it.

Corval is the largest pottery center in Portugal and one of the largest on the Iberian Peninsula, with around twenty working olarias in a village of not much more than two thousand people. The clay comes from the ground nearby, the shapes and floral patterns have barely changed in generations, and most of the shops let you watch the wheel. Olaria Polido & Filho is our stop. Buy something small; the van can carry it.

FRIDAY

The longest ride of the week, and one of the gentlest — a rail-trail day running back across the Alentejo to Évora, with a mid-morning break at one old railway station and a picnic at another. You finish where you started, with a farewell dinner in the old town. 42.5 Miles

8-9:00a	Breakfast & Coffee
9:30a	Start Riding
	Break with drinks and snacks at the old Montoito railway station
	Picnic lunch at Antiga Estação de Machede
	Check in at the Noble House Hotel, Évora
7:30p	Farewell dinner at 1/4 Para as 9 — a 9-minute walk from the hotel

FRIDAY

Today's route follows another converted railway — the line that once linked Reguengos de Monsaraz to Évora — now a quiet rail-trail running through pasture, vineyard, and cork oak. Rail engineers hated gradients, which is excellent news on your longest day: the grade is nearly imperceptible for long stretches.

The old station buildings at Montoito and Machede are the two anchors of today's ride, and they're worth a look beyond the snacks and the shade. Portugal's rural branch lines were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and closed through the 1980s and 90s as roads took over — the tiled station names, platform edges, and stationmaster's houses are still there, slowly being absorbed back into the landscape. A number have been reborn as cafés and rest stops on the ecopista network.

You'll have walked Évora on your first afternoon, jet-lagged. Today you arrive on a bike, having ridden across the entire region, and the town reads differently. If there's time before dinner, the things most people miss: the Aqueduto da Água de Prata, a 16th-century aqueduct that runs into the city with houses and shops built directly into its arches; the Praça do Giraldo cafés in early evening, when the students come out; and the university cloisters, which are open to visitors and quietly beautiful.

1/4 Para as 9 — “a quarter to nine” — is tonight's farewell dinner. Raise a glass. You've earned it.

SATURDAY

The shuttle departs for Lisbon at 8:30 am.

Today concludes our trip in wonderful Portugal! Évora is where the week began and where it ends — a walled Roman city that has been standing for two thousand years and will be standing long after we roll out. There's a symmetry to finishing here. You arrived jet-lagged with a suitcase; you came back on a bicycle, having crossed the whole of the Alentejo under your own power.

The Shuttle departs for Lisbon at 8:30 am. Please have breakfast early, settle any outstanding bar tabs the night before, and bring your luggage down to the lobby before departure. It's a long morning's drive west to Lisbon airport, and we can't hold the bus. If you're staying on in Portugal, let your guide know in advance so we can sort your drop-off.

That leaves last night as the real farewell, which is as it should be. Between the cork forests and the rail-trails, the picnic on the ridge above Alqueva, the pottery wheels in Corval, and the night sky over Monsaraz, this was a week that rewarded going slowly. Obrigado for riding it with us — safe travels home, and we hope to see you on the next one.

LOIRE VALLEY FRANCE

Chateaux & Wine

JUNE 19 - 25, 2027

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INTERNATIONAL



ITALY



Tuscany

BIKE TOUR

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Booking Soon
September
2027



CROATIAN ISLANDS

Yacht and Bike

SEPT 3-10 & 10-17, 2027

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