



Focus on PORTUGAL School Program

"I wouldn't change anything for this year with AFS Portugal. It seems I learned more during these few months than in my whole life. To me this experience will stay always in my heart. When I have to accept something different, be alone or in need of meeting new people, I will remember this year and have the courage to move forward."

Jasmine Penny, participant from the USA, 2002-03

"When I first applied to AFS many people asked me: 'Why do you want to go for a year abroad?' No one knew anything about this little country. I also didn't know much, and I thought Portugal was a sunny country of beaches and vacations! But after this year I know a lot more, because Portugal is a small country, but very beautiful, with its own special characteristics and a very interesting history. Portugal is a contrast between ancient and modern. The Portuguese people are very nice and with a good heart. Thank you so much for everything! I loved this country, this language and this culture! I will never forget it in my life!"

Anne Katrin Schultz, participant from Germany, 2002-03

Portugal, one of the oldest countries of Europe, established its independence in the 12th century. Portuguese seafarers soon became pioneers of exploration. Starting in the 14th century, they were the first modern Europeans to seek out overseas territories and to found colonies for trade and settlement in Africa, the Far East and the farther reaches of South America. Today, Portugal displays its stable and prosperous economy in up-to-the-minute cities, where glass-and-steel offices rise next to buildings in century-old art nouveau and even older Manueline architecture. Manueline is a Portuguese 16th-century style that combines twisting, sinuous Moorish lines with ornamental symbols of the sea, signs of how an economy once dependent on fishing influenced even the country's art. The Portuguese nowadays are worldly, easy-going and friendly, though with a national streak of melancholy made evident in the popularity of sad songs known as fado. In rural communities, ancient castles have been turned into inns and hotels, but modernization in the countryside is sometimes less dynamic than in Portuguese cities. Some farmers, in fact, still haul produce to market in ox-carts.

AFS & Your Experience

AFS Portugal has been in existence since 1956. AFS volunteers in six chapters and eight clubs across the country work hard year-round to provide the most satisfying intercultural experience possible. During the school year, AFS Portugal hosts approximately 50 AFSers from as many as 18 countries.

AFS will be at your side throughout your intercultural exchange. Even before leaving your home country, you will participate in organized AFS orientations and have the

assistance of experienced AFS volunteers. Once in your host country, you can rely on your local volunteer contact and other chapter volunteers to support you in your experience. Together we will ensure that you have an incredible experience abroad.

Landing in Portugal

When you arrive in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, you and your fellow AFSers will collect your baggage, pass through customs and be met by AFS Portugal staff and volunteers.

Arrival Orientation

You will attend an arrival orientation near Lisbon, which usually lasts three days. During the orientation, you will have a chance to relax, meet other AFSers from around the world and learn about AFS in Portugal and Portuguese culture.

After the orientation, you will be picked up by your host family or travel by bus, train or plane (for students placed in the islands of Azores and Madeira) to your new host community.

Post Arrival Orientation Camp

Six weeks after your arrival, you will participate in a major orientation camp that lasts for three days. The camp will concentrate on intercultural learning, cultural shock and the development of adaptation skills.

Living in Portugal

Lifestyle and Family Living

The Portuguese are open, friendly and hospitable to people of other nations. Because people and relationships are more important than time, punctuality is not always stressed. This is changing, however, particularly in urban areas. Portugal is an open, liberal society, and contrary to popular belief, families are not very religious, though some go to church on Sunday. On weekends, a lot of time is spent with relatives. Everybody greets each other by kissing both cheeks, from left to right (though there are exceptions; for instance, teachers are not greeted this way).

Families are very close. It is important to spend time with the family watching TV or talking about events of the day. Families are also very strict when it comes to family schedules: in some families, meals are always taken together. Physical contact is a common sign of affection between members of a family and between close friends.

In the typical Portuguese family, the wife usually supervises the children and manages the household while the husband is involved with work outside the home. Nowadays it is becoming more common that both parents work outside, and everybody shares the housework. Yet wives still have a more active role managing the household.

Families are protective of their children, particularly girls. For example, teenage boys have more liberal curfews than their sisters do. Teenagers are expected to ask permission to go out and to keep their parents informed of their activities. It is also very

common that adult children of the family still live in their parents' house and still receive a lot of attention.

Portuguese host families, like AFS host families worldwide, are not paid. They open their homes to students in order to share their community and culture as well as to enrich their family lives.

Students are placed with middle class families anywhere in Portugal, in urban or rural areas, in the mainland or islands. It is not common to be placed in the south coast of Portugal (Algarve).

Dress and Appearance

In general, it is best to bring casual clothes such as jeans, T-shirts, slacks and skirts. Students are encouraged to bring one or two nice outfits for special occasions (dress shirts and ties for boys, dresses for girls). Because most Portuguese homes are not centrally heated, you should bring sweaters and socks and a warm coat for the winter months.

Portuguese teenage girls use make-up sometimes, especially when going out for parties. But jewelry should be worn with caution, especially in urban areas.

Diet and Meals

The Portuguese are proud of their gastronomy. They appreciate eating and drinking well. Almost all parties include a meal, especially family gatherings.

Breakfast, served early in the morning before going to school, consists usually of bread or toast with butter/cheese/ham/jam, milk, coffee or chocolate. Lunch, served around noon, is usually a hot meal that includes soup, main dish and fruit or dessert. Dinner is a hot meal again and is served around 8 p.m. In Portugal, a family customarily eats together; it is considered inappropriate for individuals to request special foods, to prepare separate food for themselves or to raid the refrigerator.

Staple foods in the Portuguese diet include fish, chicken, vegetables and fruits. Pork, goat, partridge, quail and rabbit are typical meats in Portugal. Famous specialties are *sardinhas assadas* (charcoal-grilled sardines), *pastéis de bacalhau* (cod fishcakes) and *caldo verde* (a soup of cabbage and potatoes). Codfish is prepared in many ways, and it is usually served to AFS students as the most typical Portuguese dish. Sweets are very popular, and wine is often consumed with meals. Since red meat and fish are a part of the everyday diet, vegetarianism is extremely rare, making vegetarians difficult to place.

School

School is probably the best place to meet people and make friends during your stay in Portugal. AFS students are placed in public high schools with classmates their age. Based on your interests and academic achievements back home, you will be placed on one of the following subject tracks: sciences, humanities, arts or social-economic sciences. General subjects such as Portuguese, French, English, math, physics and philosophy are also available, and some may be compulsory.

AFS Portugal will help you obtain textbooks and cover transportation expenses if needed. You will also receive every month a check to cover expenses for school lunch. The quality of your work will be evaluated, and at the end of your year you will receive a

certificate of attendance if you attend classes regularly, complete the course work and pass the examinations.

Teachers in Portugal lecture more often than they pose questions and answers. Schools do not offer sports and extracurricular activities that may be available in your country, but look for soccer clubs and other teams, as well as theater groups, and clubs for aficionados of computers, photography and other activities. Your host family, schoolmates and local AFS volunteers can all help you to find activities outside of school.

Teen Life

Because few schools offer extracurricular activities, students organize their own activities after school. Your host family can also help you inquire about local community organizations. Getting involved as a volunteer in one of these groups is a great way to make new friends, meet people and learn more about your community.

On weekends, Portuguese teens like to get together with friends in each others' homes, the town square, a local café or at the movies. Many families enjoy doing things together on weekends.

During the year, Portugal enjoys numerous celebrations, fairs, religious pilgrimages and festivals. The year starts with New Year's parties, followed by Carnival, Easter, summer musical festivals and Christmas. In May, universities have special celebrations for the students who will graduate. Each region, even the smallest village, keeps particular traditions alive through colorful decorations, food and drinks, dances and songs, year-round.

AFS Activities

In addition to an orientation at your arrival, AFS Portugal will provide you with several others. AFS orientations offers participants a chance to meet (often for a weekend or for a few days) and talk about expectations for the future program and past experiences. Orientations involve participating in group activities and self-examination. Sessions usually provide new information and ways of looking at things while also allowing participants to share points of view. AFS orientations are social, interactive and educational, bringing together young people from many countries and helping them to better understand their own intercultural learning experience.

Local chapters may arrange events such as local orientations, excursions and picnics. Between February and June, some chapters organize a four-day activity in their area. Students stay with host families and participate in intercultural activities, visit sites of cultural interest, visit local schools and practice sports among other activities. Students choose which chapter to join for this experience.

Two weeks before you return home, you will get together for the last time with other AFSers for the so-called End-of-Stay orientation. The End-of-Stay is about looking back at your exchange year and sharing memories with other AFSers. It is also about thinking of the future.

Language

The only official language spoken in Portugal is Portuguese. A single dialect, called Mirandês, is spoken in a small village in northern Portugal (Miranda do Douro), very near the Spanish border. This dialect is preserved as a regional cultural heritage.

Portuguese is spoken by 200 million people in eight countries spread across five continents.

AFS Portugal will provide you with a language handbook and asks all hosting schools to provide students with private or group classes of Portuguese for foreigners. Around 75% of the students have these classes, usually two hours per week. They also provide specific manuals to the Portuguese teachers and to students who do not have this support at school.

Travel

Although it is natural for you to want to travel while in Portugal, AFS is not designed as a tourist program. AFS offers the rare opportunity to be immersed in a culture and a country. It is likely, however, that you will have many opportunities to travel with your host family, school, community organization, local chapter or AFS Portugal. We strongly discourage traveling on your own or with friends.

Spending Money

Host families are asked to pay only for ordinary family events in which you are expected to participate. When you do such things as shopping for yourself or going out with friends, the expenses are your responsibility. AFS recommends that US\$1,000 in traveler's checks or credit cards should cover a year's worth of spending needs.

Portuguese young people are not used to carrying or spending large amounts of money. Spending more than your peers may create a distance between you and them. It is wise to learn to spend as they do.

Safety and Support

Portugal is a safe country, and you should do well if you follow the normal precautions you would use in your home country.

During your stay, local AFS volunteers will be available to assist you as you learn to live as a Portuguese. In the event of an emergency, AFS staff can be reached 24 hours a day by you in your host country and by your natural family at home.

For the welfare of participants, AFS worldwide has two rules: no driving and no use of drugs for non-medicinal purposes. Any student who violates either of these rules will be automatically sent home. AFS Portugal may have additional rules.

Health Precautions

In addition to the precautions mentioned above, AFS suggests that you discuss the health recommendations for Portugal (which you can get from your government or easily find on the Internet) with your personal doctor to determine what is best for you and your personal needs.

If you require any medical assistance during your stay, your host family or local volunteers will be ready to help find it. As an AFS participant, your medical expenses

are covered for illness or injuries incurred while on the program, exclusive of pre-existing, dental or visual aid expenses.

Documents

Students coming from European Union countries, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein do not need a visa to enter Portugal, though upon arrival they must apply for a Residence Permit.

For all other countries, you must have a passport that will be valid for six months longer than your intended stay. In addition to your passport, you also need a visa to enter and reside in your host country. Visas are obtained through the consular offices of your host country, and requirements often vary from consulate to consulate.

Consulates charge fees for their services, and obtaining your visa can be a complicated and lengthy process requiring a great deal of paperwork, patience and persistence. AFS will help you obtain the visa and provide you with instructions regarding the required documents.

Program Prices

Please [contact the AFS office in your home country](#) for information about program price and scholarship possibilities and what the program price covers for the various program offerings. In most cases the program price covers the following: round-trip international travel with your AFS group; travel in the host country to your host family; travel from your host family to your international departure point; AFS's medical plan; placement with your host; orientation in your home country and your host country; 24 hour emergency assistance in your home and host countries; a global medical assistance organization to support extreme emergencies; a network of trained volunteers who support you throughout your experience.

In order to keep costs low and provide good service, AFS utilizes a network of volunteers and staff in 50+ countries around the world. Volunteers need training, support and assistance from professional staff in each country. Other expenses you will normally need to pay in addition to the program price: passport and visa fees, required inoculations, expenses for eyeglasses, contacts and dental care, school uniforms (where applicable) and personal spending money. Your housing and food are provided by your host family as part of their commitment to our program.

Country Information

Geography and Climate

Portugal is located on the western side of the Iberian Peninsula of Europe and is about 91,985 Km². It is bordered on the north and east by Spain. Its western and southern flanks are washed by the cold Atlantic Ocean. Portugal is divided into two regions by the Tagus River, which flows into the Atlantic at Lisbon. The northern region is mountainous and has a temperate climate with long, cold winters especially in the northeastern section. South of the Tagus River the terrain is less rugged, characterized by gentle hills and valleys. The climate is warmer and milder. The Portuguese Republic includes the mainland, the Azores and Madeira Islands in the Eastern Atlantic. Portugal has no

extreme temperature differences. The average temperature in winter is 11°C (52°F). The average temperature in summer is 23°C (74°F).

Population

Portugal's population numbers about 10 million. Lisbon, the capital city, has 564,000 inhabitants. Ethnic structure of the country: 99% Portuguese, 1% African. Portugal has one of the youngest populations of the European Union; around one-fourth of the population is younger than 15.

Language

Portuguese is the official language.

Government

Portugal is a republic. The president is elected for a term of five years. Members of the unicameral legislature, called the Assembly of the Republic, are elected for terms of four years.

Religion

More than 95% of the population is Roman Catholic.

Portuguese Pride

- ✦ Fado (national song style)
- ✦ The country's beaches and sun
- ✦ Human warmth and kisses
- ✦ Portuguese gastronomy, wines, seafood and 1,001 ways to cook codfish
- ✦ Portugal's history and much more

Launching Your AFS Experience

Evaluations by previous participants support our belief that those students who prepare prior to leaving have the best experiences. To get ready, first make every effort to learn some key Portuguese words and phrases so that you arrive with at least some basic knowledge of the language.

To familiarize yourself further with life in Portugal, make use of your local library and/or the Internet. A lot of general information is available about Portugal and its culture.

Although each participant's experience is unique, we strongly suggest that you speak with a recent AFS participant to Portugal. This person will be an excellent resource regarding living as a Portuguese. If you do not know any alumni, please contact your local volunteer or national AFS office. In addition, AFS Portugal will provide you with a special packet of country-specific information.

Portuguese people will be curious about your home community. You may be surprised to find out how much they already know about your country. Therefore, it is also helpful to be as informed as possible about current events in your community and country.

If you have not already received a full AFS application packet, please contact your local AFS volunteer or national office to request one. We wish you a wonderful experience!

Curiously Portugal

There are 37 cities bearing the name "Lisbon" in the United States. These cities are spread over 25 states.

Danielle Steele, the best-selling romance novelist, is half-Portuguese, and Tom Hanks, the Oscar winning actor and producer, is of Azorean descent.

The capital of Portugal was moved to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (which at the time was a colony of Portugal), from 1807 until 1821 while Portugal was fighting France in the Napoleonic Wars.

Throughout the night of July 7, 1497, the pioneering Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama prayed in an old mariner's chapel in Belém, west Lisbon, for the safe return of his captains and crew from their imminent voyage to India. The expedition was a success and a new sea-route to the East was discovered. After his return two years later, the chapel was replaced by the imposing Jerónimos Monastery, where da Gama's body now rests.

The world's earliest recorded balloon was a hot-air model invented by Father Bartolomeu de Gusmão (né Lourenço), which was flown indoors at the Casa da India, Terreiro do Paço (better known as Praça do Comércio) in Lisbon on August 8, 1709. He later fled to Spain for fear of being accused of performing black magic by the Inquisition.

On the Island of Madeira, one can visit the house where Christopher Columbus lived.

Two Portuguese were Nobel Prize winners: Egas Moniz (Medicine – 1949) and José Saramago (Literature – 1998).

Subway stations in Lisbon are the most mentioned of the world for the artistic diversity of their architecture and decor as well as for the harmony between their architecture and art.

The Portuguese Fado singer, Mariza, won the BBC World Music Award 2003.

How to Apply

To become a participant in this country's School Program, contact your nearest AFS office. To locate an AFS office, go to <http://www.afs.org/contact>

Student age (upon arrival)	15y to 18y 6m	
Country data	Size	91.985 km ² 35,662 mi ²
	Population	10,084,245
	Official language	Portuguese
	Government	Parliamentary democracy

Currency	Euro, divided into 100 cents	
AFS Portugal website	www.intercultura-afs.pt	
Useful websites	www.portugaltravelguide.com www.portugalinsite.pt www.portugal.org	

AFS program destinations are not always available to residents of all countries. If a program interests you, please contact your nearest AFS office to find out if it is an option for you. You can locate your nearest AFS office at <http://www.afs.org/contact>