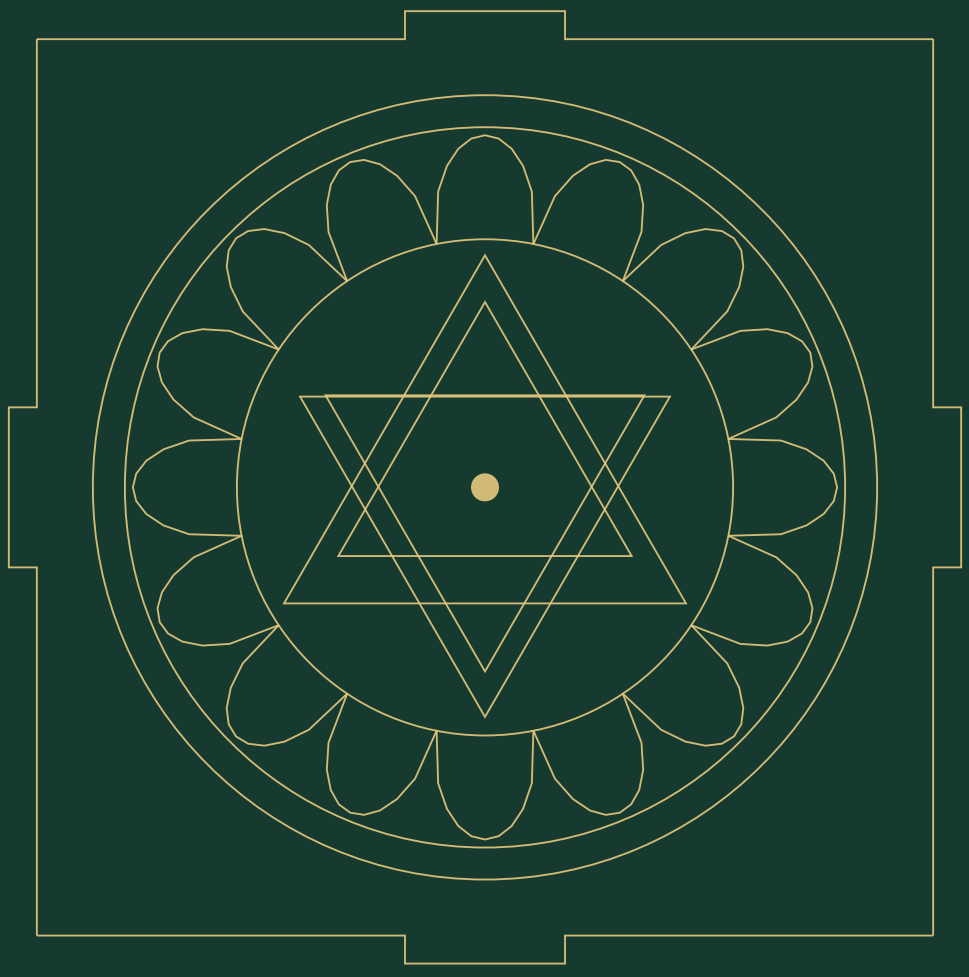
TRAVEL

Portugal: The Yogi's Guide

Sintra, Fátima, the Alentejo, Ericeira and the Algarve: contemplative places, seasons, Schengen rules and the practical facts, checked and dated



यात्रा

yātrā

YOGIDE

Free sample

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Before you begin

Portugal is a narrow country on the western edge of mainland Europe, with about 943 kilometres of Atlantic coast and two archipelagos far out at sea, Madeira and the Azores. It is a place where many people now come to roll out a mat: yoga retreats by the surf in Ericeira, weeks of practice in the cork-oak hills of the Alentejo, teacher trainings in the light of the Algarve.

This guide starts with a plain statement. **Yoga was not born in Portugal.** No Indian lineage grew up here over centuries, no ashram has stood on these shores for a thousand years. Pretending otherwise would be a disservice to you and to India. What Portugal does have is real and worth knowing: a long contemplative heritage, from Neolithic standing stones to Franciscan hermitages; one of the great Marian shrines of the world at Fátima; a pilgrim road to Santiago that is, for many walkers, a moving meditation; and a yoga community whose leading figure studied with a teacher of the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh and received the Padma Shri from the Government of India.

It is not a list of retreats. You will find no ranking, no review and no recommendation of any school, retreat centre or teacher, and that is deliberate. This book gives you context, practical facts and the questions that let you choose for yourself. It rests on three promises.

First, practical facts are checked and dated. Entry rules, the new European border systems, fire bans, ticket prices and health advice change. Every practical fact here was checked online on **21 October 2026** against the most official source we could find, listed in the last chapter. Where we could not verify something, we left it out or told you where to confirm it.

Second, no invented experiences. No testimonials, no "when I was in Sintra" anecdotes, no reviews. A legend is called a legend; a date comes with its source.

Third, the sacred is treated as sacred. Fátima, the chapels and the convents of Portugal belong to a living Catholic faith. They are not a decor for a yoga holiday. This guide tells you how to be present there with respect.

> **This guide informs; it does not replace official advice.**
>
> Read your own government's travel advice for Portugal (UK FCDO, France Diplomatie, US Department of State) and the European Commission's pages on border rules before you travel. In Portugal the single emergency number is **112** (ambulance, fire, police). For non-urgent health advice on the mainland, the UK FCDO lists SNS 24 on **+351 808 24 24 24** (press 9 for English). Numbers checked on 21 October 2026.

How to use this book

Still choosing dates? Read Chapters 3 and 10 first: the summer fire season and the cold Atlantic matter more than the guidebooks say. Ticket booked? Chapters 8 and 9 cover the airports and the new border rules. Already there? Chapters 4, 6 and 11 tell you where to sit in silence and how to behave there; Chapters

14 and 15 give checklists and phrases.

Chapter 1. Portugal and the yogi: what is here, what is not

What you will not find

You will not find a sacred river where yogis have bathed for millennia, a guru lineage rooted in the soil, or Sanskrit inscriptions on temple walls. If what you want is the source of yoga, go to India: our guides to Rishikesh and to choosing a 200-hour teacher training are written for that journey. In Portugal, yoga is a recent arrival, like everywhere in Europe, taught in modern styles, in English and Portuguese, mostly to international guests.

What you will find

- **A culture of silence.** The Franciscan friars of the Capuchos convent in Sintra chose poverty and contemplation in a convent finished with cork, in the middle of a primitive forest. The Neolithic builders of the Almendres stones near Évora raised circles of menhirs thousands of years before the Vedas were sung. At Cape St Vincent, the Romans named the land's end the Promontorium Sacrum, the holy promontory.
- **A living faith.** Fátima, in central Portugal, draws Catholic pilgrims from all over the world to the place where three shepherd children reported apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1917. Walking there, or along the Portuguese Way to Santiago de Compostela, is a form of yātrā, pilgrimage, that a yogi can recognise without borrowing it.
- **A real link with India.** The Confederação Portuguesa do Yoga, the Portuguese Yoga Confederation, was long presided over by Jorge Veiga e Castro, known by his initiatory name Amrta Sūryānanda Mahā Rāja (Diário de Notícias, 2014). Born in Portugal in 1952, he began learning yoga in his twenties from Krishnananda of the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, and the Government of India awarded him the Padma Shri in 2015 (Wikipedia). The Sivananda Yoga Vedanta organisation also lists an affiliated centre in Lisbon.
- **A gentle climate for practice**, at least in spring and autumn, and a coast where the ocean itself teaches attention.

A word on yātrā

In Sanskrit, yātrā (यात्रा) means a journey, and tīrtha-yātrā a journey to a ford, a sacred crossing place. India's pilgrim knows that the outer road is a support for the inner one. You can carry that attitude anywhere: into a Portuguese chapel, onto a pilgrim path, to a cliff over the Atlantic. What you should not do is relabel Portuguese places as Hindu ones. Let each tradition be itself; let your practice be the bridge.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already help your practice, and that they show how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, texts quoted with their source, nothing invented.

The full book has 28 pages.

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One-time payment, instant PDF.