



5 Reasons to Cruise the Douro River

 Posted on April 18, 2017  Carrie Finley-Bajak  Posted in River cruise

Top 5 Reasons to Book a Douro River Cruise

When it comes to river cruising, there are certainly many options to choose from. The big draws like the Danube and the Rhine certainly get the lion's share of attention, but Portugal's Douro River is a hidden gem not to be ignored.

The Douro flows from its source near Duruelo de la Sierra in Spain and crosses northern-central Spain and Portugal to the river's mouth in Porto at the Atlantic Ocean.



Out and about: A visit to Casa de Mateus in Vila Real is a manor house from the 18th-century Baroque era. Photo by Carrie Finley- Bajak.

The Douro is the third-longest river in the Iberian Peninsula measuring 557 miles long. The shallow river is a navigational challenge that modern river cruise ships meet with ease.

As more people discover river cruising as a vacation option, venturing afar to explore the smaller waterways like the Douro will become more popular. My advice is to head there soon before the charming location gets overrun by tourists. The top five reasons why I loved sailing on the Douro river are:

1. Breathtaking scenery with one of the best canyons in Europe.
2. Almost perfect climate: Mild temperatures from Fall throughout Spring. Expect sun and higher temperatures during the Summer, which is great for the grapes.
3. The **Douro Valley** is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the vineyards and cultural sights are full of history
4. The towns along the river are interesting to visit, shore excursions offered by cruise lines like **CroisiEurope** take you afar. Discover towns like Vila Réal, which is famous for architecture or stroll through the beautiful gardens of Solar de Mateus.
5. **Wine**. Learn all about Port and winemaking in the Douro region. Choose a cruise line that pairs local wines with dinner – it's not just about Port wine. The Douro has the oldest regulated winemaking region in the world since 1756 and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

World Heritage Sites and Wine



Port wine anyone? Served with a smile during an outing on CroisiEurope shore excursion. Photo by Carrie Finley Bajak.



View from CroisiEurope river cruise on MS Miguel Torga on Douro River. Photo by Carrie Finley Bajak.



Gardens outside the Casa de Mateus near Villa Real. Photo by Carrie Finley Bajak.



Rabelo Boat near the Port wineries at Vila Nova de *Gaia* (*Gaia for short*) is a city and a municipality in *Porto* District.