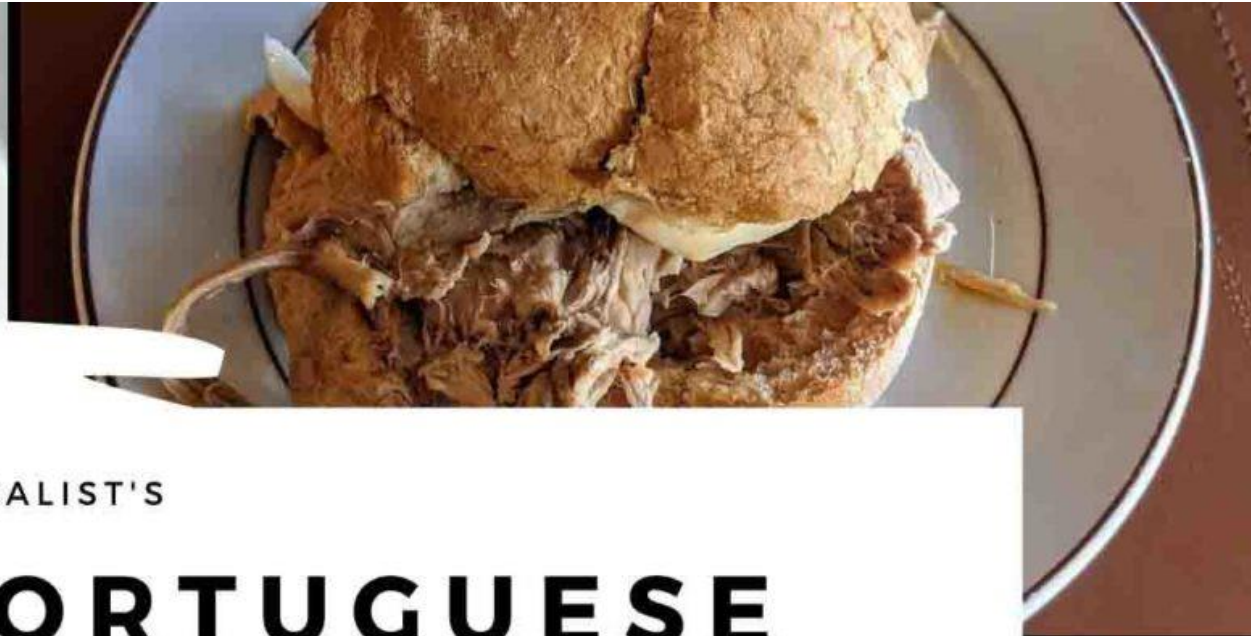


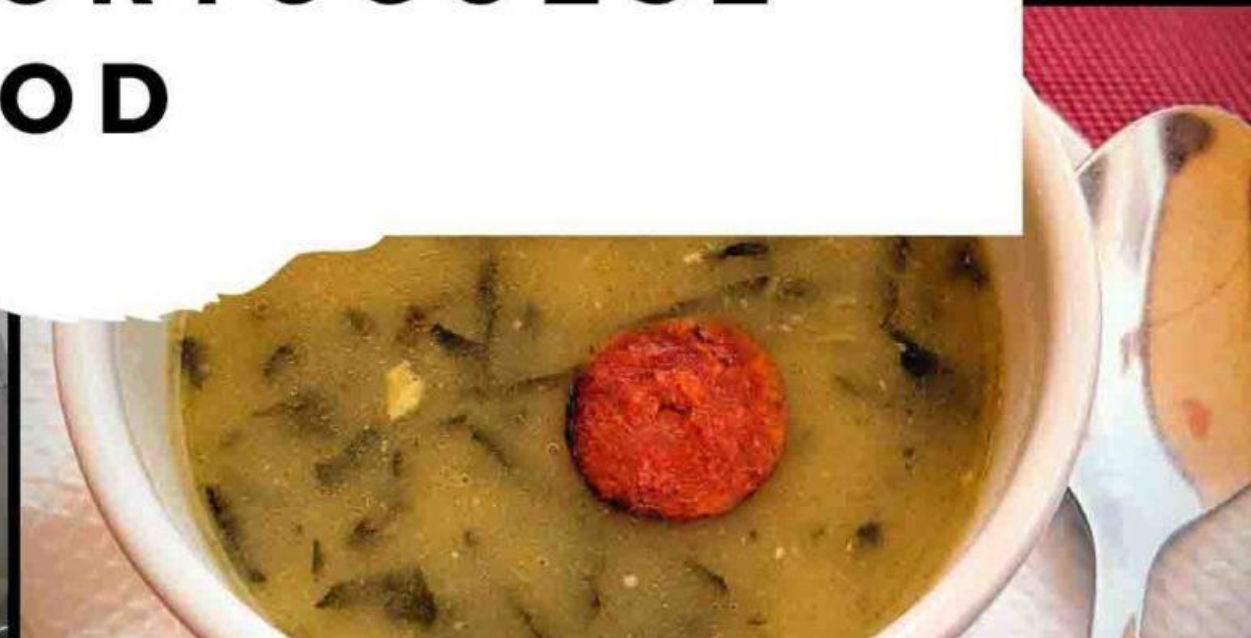
PORTUGUESE
TRADITIONAL
DISHES





PORTUGALIST'S

GUIDE TO PORTUGUESE FOOD



There are hundreds of different Portuguese dishes. Thousands probably, especially when you consider that there are apparently more than 365 ways to cook bacalhau alone.

As much as you'd like to, you probably have the time or stomach capacity to try absolutely everything in Portugal (although you can give it the old college try), so what should you eat?

Don't worry: help is at hand. After eating hundreds of different Portuguese dishes over the course of many years - including at least 50 of Portugal's different cakes and pastries - I can help you with those all-important eating decisions.

In this article, I'll highlight which are the best and most typical or most authentic Portuguese dishes that you'll find on a Portuguese menu.



Bacalhau, dried and salted cod, is Portugal's national dish, although saying national dish is a bit confusing as there really isn't just one recipe for bacalhau. Rumour has it that there are more than 365 different ways to cook bacalhau, and some people say that's even an under-estimation.

Most Portuguese menus will contain at least one bacalhau dish. Favourites to look out for include *bacalhau com natas* (bacalhau with cream and potatoes), *bacalhau à lagareiro* (bacalhau with lots of olive oil), and *bacalhau com broa* (bacalhau with a type of cornbread).

Most cafés will also have *pastéis de bacalhau* (or *bolinhos de bacalhau*, depending on what part of the country that you're in), which is also a fantastic way to enjoy bacalhau.



Frango piri-piri or frango no churrasco com piri piri is piri-piri chicken, a dish that has its roots in the Portuguese colonies in Africa but is famously from Guia in the Algarve.

You'll find [piri-piri chicken](#) on menus all over Portugal, and you can order it as a takeaway from the churrasqueiras dotted around the country, but the best piri-piri really does come from the Algarve. Not necessarily from Guia, although there are some great restaurants there, but from the surrounding towns and villages in the Algarve.



Caldo verde is a simple soup that contains shredded kale, onions, potatoes, garlic, and chouriço. It originates from the North of Portugal, but it's served all over the country. It's also listed as one of the 7 wonders of Portuguese gastronomy.



Arroz de Marisco is a rich seafood stew that's made up of fish and rice. It's a Portuguese favourite, and it's also another of the 7 wonders of Portuguese gastronomy.



A cataplana is also a stew, but in particular a stew that's cooked in a clam-shaped cataplana dish. The dish originates from the Algarve, and it's quite hard to find it in other parts of the country.

There are many different types of cataplana, both meat and fish, and some of the most popular types are *cataplana de bacalhau*, *cataplana de peixe*, and *cataplana à alentejana*.

This is one of the best regional dishes from the Algarve, so be sure to try it while you're there.



Leitão is roasted piglet. It's one of Portugal's least vegetarian-friendly dishes (and that's saying a lot), but it's also extremely tasty.

You'll find this dish all over Portugal, and many restaurants specialise in it, but it's most commonly found in and around Coimbra.



Octopus is a popular ingredient in Portugal, and Portugal has some great octopus-based dishes. One of the best, and one that's reasonably easy to find, is polvo à lagareiro, a dish that combines oven-roasted octopus and potatoes with lots and lots of olive oil.



Grilled sardines are one of the most quintessential Portuguese things that you can eat and every summer, particularly during the month of June, the air is filled with the smell of BBQ's sardines.

One of the best times to eat them is at the Santos Populares, June festivals like Santo António, São João, and São Pedro that take place in Lisbon and Porto.



Alheira is one of many Portuguese sausages, but this one is particularly popular because of its history.

The sausage was developed during the Inquisition period when Jews in the Iberian Peninsula faced death if they didn't convert to Christianity. Rather than actually convert, many Jews continued to practice their religion and tricked the locals by making pork-looking, pork-tasting sausages from chicken and other non-pork meats. Alheira is also one of the 7 wonders of Portuguese Gastronomy.



Made from ham, steak, sausage, chunky slices of bread, melted cheese, a beer and tomato sauce, and chips, this is one hefty sandwich.

The [francesinha](#) definitely has novelty value, but it's more than that: the Portuguese love them for their taste as well. Head to Porto, where the dish originates from, and you can easily end up in an argument with a local over which café makes the best francesinha.

Even though Francesinhas come from Porto, they are starting to appear in other parts of the country as well. Whether they'll be as good as the ones from Porto is up-for-debate, but at least there's an increasingly good chance you'll be able to try one regardless of where you are in Porto.



Many of us think of tinned food as student food or something we might keep in the cupboard in case there's a powercut or a nuclear war. In Portugal, however, tinned food is held in much higher regard. And, it's easy to see why: they put a lot more effort in.

Smoked octopus, tuna and preserved lemon, spicy sardine mousse...these are just some of the flavours that you can expect to find in Portugal.

So popular are they that you'll even find some restaurants that specialise in tinned



It's simple, and often greasy, but arroz de pato (or duck rice) is one of the most comforting dishes that you'll find in Portuguese cuisine. It's a regular on daily menus, takeaway menus, and it's also something that you can easily cook at home as well.

Authentic Dishes That Aren't For Everyone

Burras Assadas

Portuguese food is great, it goes without saying, but some dishes have strong flavours that many tourists won't like. And, of course, there are plenty of weird dishes like an omelette made from pig's brains or a roasted jawbone of a pig (complete with teeth).

In practice, you probably won't come across too many of the weird ones as they're mainly found in rural parts of Portugal but you may come across some of the following.

Cozido à portuguesa - While incredibly authentic (especially the version on Ilha de São Miguel in The Azores), this dish is meaty, heavy, and often quite fatty or chewy. It's not for everyone.

Sardines - An incredibly authentic Portuguese dish, particularly in summer time, but a very strong "fishy-tasting" fish.

Grilled fish of any sort - Be aware that most traditional restaurants will serve the fish with its head (the cheeks and eyeballs are often considered some of the best bits) so if this is going to freak you

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Bacalhau

In just about every Portuguese restaurant, travellers can find bacalhau (dried and salted cod). The traditional dish comes with its own nickname - 'the faithful friend' - and the Portuguese are quick to remind you there are more ways to prepare bacalhau than there are days of the year. You can find it as bacalhau à brás, a mound of tiny fried potatoes, cod, onions and scrambled eggs; or you can tuck into bacalhau com todos, a plate of boiled cod and vegetables and sliced hard-boiled eggs.



When the day is busy or stressful, making a meal with lots of steps can be overwhelming. Simple recipes make it easy to have a healthy, balanced meal made from fresh ingredients so you don't end up turning to take out on a nightly basis.

This easy fish recipe uses just a few ingredients that you probably already have on hand. Even better, both the fish and the sauce are cooked in the same pan, meaning there are fewer dishes to wash later! Seriously, one-pot meals are such lifesavers on busy weeknights. You will love how you can have dinner ready in less than 20 minutes!