

# Portugal national day

## Portugal offers many interesting sights, opportunities

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AMBASSADOR OF PORTUGAL

In May this year Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife paid an official visit to Portugal. The decisions made in Lisbon by the heads of government of both countries will translate into a more solid relationship between Japan and Portugal in several fields such as the economy, science, culture and people-to-people relations.



We will now be able to pursue the road map adopted re-

cently in Lisbon that will translate in concrete cooperation projects that will cement the relationship between both countries for years to come.

Both leaders highlighted that Japan and Portugal were returning to a cycle of growth, adding momentum to the global economic recovery. I am confident there is wide room for Portuguese and Japanese private companies to work together and forge long-standing partnerships to operate businesses and invest not only in Portugal and Japan, but also in different parts of the world.

It is worth mentioning that during his three-day stay in Portugal, Abe visited Lisbon,



Panoramic view of the historical center of Porto, the second-largest city in Portugal. EMBASSY OF PORTUGAL

Sintra, Cabo da Roca and Evora, following the steps of the Tensho Embassy — the first official delegation Japan sent to Europe back in 1582.

But the four young nobles that formed that Embassy were

not the first Japanese traveling to Europe, bearing in mind that Bernardo of Kagoshima (Kagoshima no Berunarudo) went ashore in Lisbon in September of 1553, studied theology at Coimbra University and spent

the rest of his life in Portugal.

Mr. and Mrs. Abe visited three of the 15 UNESCO World Heritage sites in Portugal: the Hieronymites Monastery in Lisbon; the Cultural Landscape of Sintra; and Evora's historic center.

Another beautiful World Heritage site, which I would like to recommend, is the gorgeous terraced vineyard landscape by the Douro river, where port wine is produced. Continuing further east of that river, where it meets with the Coa River, there is another World Heritage site, the Archeological Park of Vale of Foz Coa, with its prehistoric rock carvings.

Adding to the sites mentioned above, other sites of interest, also classified as UNESCO World Heritage sites are: the historical center of Oporto and Guimaraes; the Garrison Border Town of Elvas and its fortifications; the city of Angra do Heroismo in the archipelago of the Azores; the vineyard landscape at Pico Island, also in the Azores; the Convent of Christ in Tomar; the laurel primary forest in the island of Madeira; the Monastery of Alcobaca; the Monastery of Batalha; and the University of Coimbra — Alta and Sofia.

A list of additional eleven sites in Portugal that applied for World Heritage Status — the



Located on the western Iberian Peninsula on the Atlantic Ocean and the Tagus River, Lisbon is the capital and largest city in Portugal. (Above) Rossio Square forms the bustling heart of downtown Lisbon. (Right) Celebrating Lisbon's patron saint, the St. Antonio Festival takes place every year in June. EMBASSY OF PORTUGAL



so-called tentative list — are still waiting for classification.

June marks the beginning of summer and many summer festivals, usually related to the patron saints of each town, take place from June to August.

In Lisbon, the St. Antonio Festival, is celebrated on June 13th. At this time of the year, the historical neighborhoods such as Alfama and Bairro Alto are decorated with colorful paper flowers and the narrow streets are packed with people and food stalls selling charcoal-grilled sardines on bread and wine. Everyone, from children to the elderly — locals and tourists alike — come out to celebrate on the sleepless night of June 12th.

On the very same day, Portugal will have an eye on the other side of the Atlantic for the kickoff of the FIFA World Cup in Brazil. Cristiano Ronaldo, the best player in the world in 2013, will be the standard bearer for the Portuguese national team. With the event taking

place in a Portuguese speaking country with a long past connected with Portugal, it will have special meaning to the Portuguese people, heating up the already warm summer in Portugal.

In Portugal, with its relatively small area, there is an immensely wide variety of interesting things to see and experience such as centuries-old monuments, preserved monumental landscapes, beautiful coastlines, great golf courses, unique and rich gastronomy, many cultural and popular events throughout the year and of course, its people, known as friendly and warm hosts, with high regard for Japan and aware of the almost 500-year-old relationship between both countries.

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the Portuguese Republic

on the Occasion of

Their National Day

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