THE TTP PORTUGAL RETREAT

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Thursday, March 20 - Tuesday, March 25
$1,950

Last week (01/10), we learned about the history of Portugal in California in Europe. We also learned that's where the first TTP International Retreat will be.

Again, this is different than a Rendezvous, where a lot of us gather to enjoy each other's company and to hear our speakers. This is an intimate get together of no more than a dozen TTPers to discuss the world in depth. And I might as well give you a warning up front.

In addition to learning more about the world than you thought possible over a long weekend, you run the risk of falling head over heels in love with Portugal. I describe it as utterly captivating, and once you are there you'll easily understand why. Here's our schedule.

Thursday, March 20

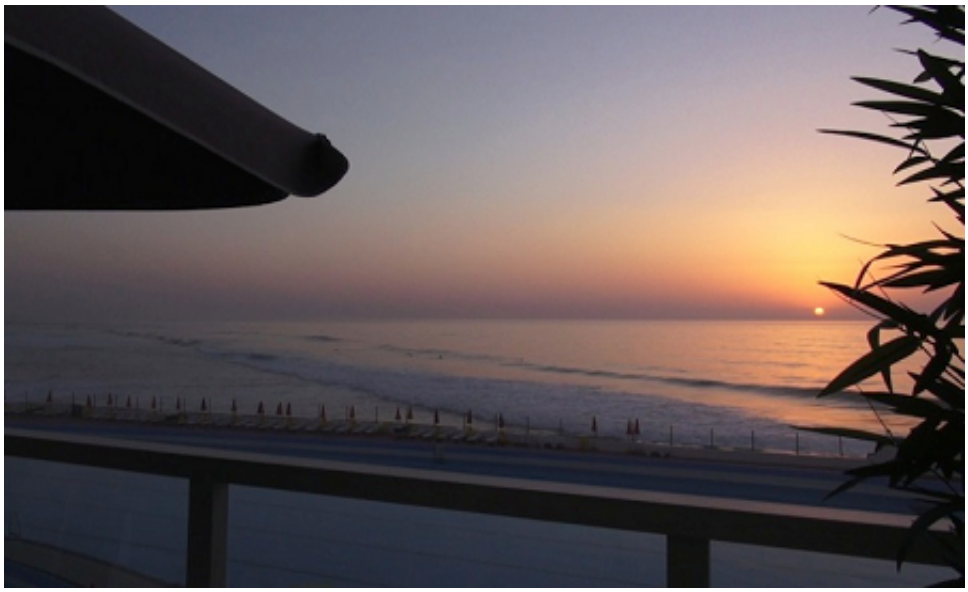
[Note: Everyone is responsible for being in Lisbon by Friday noon. You can get there however you want, but the United non-stop suggested is the easiest and quickest. It takes less time to fly from New York to Lisbon (6 hours flat) than it does to fly from New York to Los Angeles (over six hours).]

Leave home for Newark airport, connect to United 64, departing Newark at 8:10pm for Lisbon.

Friday, March 21

Arrive Lisbon at 7:10am. Be met at airport and transferred to our hotel, the *Arribas*, on Praia Grande beach in Sintra:

Every single room at the Arribas has a spectacular ocean view. Which means watching the sunset from your balcony:



You'll be welcomed at the Arribas by Rebel (I'll be writing the Half-Full Report!). Rebel will host you for lunch, after which you're free to relax on the beach (or jog, it's a mile long), lounge by the pool, rest in your room listening to the waves below for the afternoon. For the evening, Rebel and I host a Welcome Reception and Dinner at the Arribas.

Saturday, March 22

After breakfast on the ocean terrace, we devote the morning to a world briefing by yours truly, and discussion of any place in particular that interests you. We continue the discussion with a nice long walk on the beach.

After lunch, we have a tour of the extraordinary World Heritage Site of Sintra. We first stop at Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of land in Europe. We then head for the magical fairy-tale Pena Palace, the summer residence of the Portuguese royalty during the 19th century:

We then visit the Castle of the Moors first built in the 8th century and captured by Christian knights in 1147. After exploring its ramparts (notice Pena Palace in the background) -

We descend to the famous *Lawrence's Hotel* for afternoon tea. This is where Lord Byron stayed in 1809 to write his poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in which he praised Sintra as a "glorious Eden... palaces and gardens rising in the midst of rocks, cataracts and precipices; convents on stupendous heights."

We'll wander through Sintra's tiny alleyways, and see its gardens and mansions.

Then we'll have dinner at Rebel's and my favorite Sintra restaurant, tucked away hidden from most visitors.

Sunday, March 23

After a sumptuous brunch on the Oceanside terrace, we'll continue our world discussion while walking off all those calories on the beach. Then we hop on a train to Lisbon.

Lisbon is the oldest city in Western Europe, founded by the Phoenicians as *Allis Ubbo* (Safe Harbor) over three thousand years ago (1200 BC). There is so much history and charm here it's overwhelming. We'll ride the cable cars...

Have a snack and glass of wine at open air cafés...

And have fun discovering it.

The train will take us back to Sintra, where we have dinner at a marvelous local restaurant owned by a friendly Portuguese family.

Monday, March 24

After breakfast, we dig ever deeper into the world, aided by Google Earth projections that can zoom into any location on earth. We wind up with our now-traditional stroll on the sand of Praia Grande. We then hop over the other side of the Sintra mountain to the jewel of the Portuguese Riviera, Cascais.

Cascais is Portugal at its most captivating, with picture post card scenes everywhere:

It's teeming with cool and quaint little shops and stores the ladies will love. Rebel will take them there, while I'll take the guys to O'Luian's Irish Pub for a Guinness or Kilkenny. Then we'll meet up for a walk past all the pocket beaches along the Cascais-Estoril Promenade:

We'll have our Farewell Dinner at a restaurant perched on the cliffs just above Cascais. I took Rebel there once, and this is the twilight view we - and you will - have:

We'll probably talk into the night, as this we'll be our last discussion solving all the world's problems....

Tuesday, March 25

We have to say goodbye. We transfer to the airport for the United flight departing at 9:15am, arriving Newark at 1:35pm and connections to home.

Or is it goodbye? For those wishing to linger, Rebel is offering to take you to the Shrine of Fatima, the World Heritage Sites of Batalha and Alcobaça, plus that of Coimbra. She really loves Portugal!

So, as you can see, this is a special and unique experience. If you want to be one of the dozen TTPers to enjoy it, let Miko know - miko@tothepointnews.com. Better do so quickly. If you have any questions, we'll be happy to answer them.

That cost of $1,950 includes just about everything from your arrival in Lisbon on Friday morning March 21 to departure on Tuesday morning March 25 (that post-retreat trip with Rebel is extra of course) - transfers, accommodation, meals, excursions, and picking my brain as much as you want. Let Miko know if you want to be with us. Soon. Remember, there can only be a dozen of you, max. I hope you'll be among them.