

PASSAGE ALONG THE DOURO

Discover the beauty of the Douro Valley
aboard the **MS Gil Eanes**

1st to 8th June, 13th to 20th September
& 20th to 27th September 2023

SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£200
PER PERSON

NOBLE CALEDONIA



The Douro is not the longest, grandest or most historic of Europe's rivers, but it certainly is one of the most untouched and beautiful. From its meagre beginnings in the hills north of Madrid it makes its way through Northern Portugal in a meandering flourish to the ocean and the endlessly fascinating city of Oporto. Our cruise aboard the 132-passenger MS Gil Eanes offers the opportunity to sail this delightful river and experience some of the local flavour. Where vessels once laden with barrels of port drifted to Oporto, we will cruise along this lovely river, relaxing on board whilst admiring the beautiful passing scenery and stopping each day for fascinating excursions.

Our navigation of the Douro will take us from Oporto on a wonderfully scenic path, past sleepy villages and a tranquil countryside of almond and citrus trees to just before the Spanish border. From here we will visit Spain's ancient seat of learning, Salamanca with its grand buildings in rich copper hues and the country's most magnificent square, Plaza Mayor. Along the way we will visit the world renowned port wine region, restored palaces, places of pilgrimage and cultural centres. Small towns and settlements perched on the sloping hillsides of the region have retained an aura of Medieval simplicity, its many tiny communities, largely agricultural, clustering round historic churches, monasteries and castles.



THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Oporto, Portugal. Fly by scheduled flight. Upon arrival transfer to the MS Gil Eanes and embark. This evening meet your fellow travellers at the welcome dinner.

Day 2 Oporto. This morning there will be a guided tour of Oporto, Portugal's second largest city and a World Heritage Site. This attractive city was originally a Celtic-Iberian settlement and became a prosperous Roman village thanks to its natural harbour.

During our tour we will drive through its narrow streets to find 16th century arcaded buildings, Baroque churches and chapels, as well as the city's iconic 19th century iron bridge, built by the school of Gustav Eiffel. We continue along the coastal road of the Atlantic to the mouth of the Douro River to view this wealthy neighbourhood with its fashionable villas and manor houses. Our final visit will be to the city's cathedral, located on the top of the Penaventosa Hill. Inside are beautiful examples

of golden carved altarpieces and paintings from the Nasoni period, whilst outside we will enjoy the amazing view over the river. The tour will conclude with a visit to a port wine lodge where we will see the old casks full of port and enjoy a sample of this delicious world famous wine. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a relaxing afternoon on board.

Day 3 Regua. From our mooring at Regua we will visit the unique 18th century Mateus Manor House

and its gardens. This fine looking palace and gardens is still owned by the Count of Vila Real and is one of the best examples of Baroque architecture in Portugal. On our guided tour of the Palace we will see the "rare books" library, as well as vestments and religious icons and view the remarkable chestnut wood crafting on the ceilings, as well as some beautiful paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries. Stroll around the romantic gardens which feature a unique 100 foot long cedar tunnel and formal



Mateus Palace



Pinhao



Lamego

garden and visit the villa's pretty chapel. Return to the vessel which will have sailed to Tavora to meet us. Enjoy lunch on board and continue cruising towards the Spanish border.

Day 4 Salamanca, Spain. Today we will enjoy a full day tour to Salamanca, a Spanish city rich in culture and tradition. Salamanca has been famous as a seat of learning since the early 13th century and has an impressive history, with many fine monuments and architecture. The city attracts around 40,000 international students each year, giving it a cosmopolitan and modern feel. Our guided tour will include the University, House of Shells and the classic Plaza Mayor, formally a bullfighting site. We will also visit the Gothic "New Cathedral" which was actually constructed in the 16th century, replacing the original 12th century Salamanca Cathedral. After lunch in a local restaurant, enjoy some free time to explore independently. Maybe visit the Casa Lis (the Museum of Art Nouveau and Art Deco), or simply stroll through the plazas and side streets of this delightful city. Return later to the vessel for dinner.

Day 5 Almeida or Coa Valley, Portugal. There will be a choice of excursions today, maybe drive to

Almeida, one of the finest examples of a ramparted fortification still standing in Portugal. The fortress was built in the 17th century to surround a Medieval castle and, when seen from above, has the appearance of a 12 pointed star. Strategically located on a plateau just 12 kilometres from the Spanish border, it featured in many historic battles during the Wars of Restoration as well as the French invasions of the 19th century. We can explore the narrow streets that preserve the historic atmosphere inside the town as well as walking the fortress walls. Alternatively, we will make our way to the Coa Museum which celebrates the prehistoric art of the Coa Valley. The Coa is a tributary of the Douro where thousands of examples of ancient rock art have been discovered from the Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic and Iron Age and the region has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Day 6 Pinhao, Douro Valley. Enjoy a leisurely morning on board as we cruise to Pinhao, located in the heart of the Douro Valley. The region is one of the oldest demarcated wine regions in the world with a microclimate perfect for grape cultivation. An afternoon drive takes us through steep terraced vineyards that stretch up the riverbanks and which boast

breathtaking views. Visiting one of the local Quinta we will learn about the production methods, and will have the chance to sample some of the local wines.

Day 7 Lamego. Sail early this morning towards Folgosa where we will disembark and enjoy a half day excursion to the historical and charming town of Lamego. This city houses one of the most important places of pilgrimage in Portugal - the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies. Built in the second half of the 18th century over the remains

of a 14th century chapel, it is an excellent example of Portuguese Baroque style. It is wonderfully decorated with enormous panels of blue and white tiles, with an impressive staircase of nearly 700 steps. During lunch on board we sail back to Oporto crossing the Crestuma-Lever dam. On our final evening we will be entertained by a Portuguese folklore show on board.

Day 8 Oporto to London. Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for the return scheduled flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
E	Main /Middle Deck Double/Twin Cabin	£2895	£2695
D	Middle Deck Double/Twin cabin	£3095	£2895
C	Upper Deck Double/Twin Cabin	£3295	£3095
B	Middle Deck Suite	£3695	£3495
A	Upper Deck Suite	£4595	£4395
E	Main /Middle Deck Cabin for sole use	£3495	£3295

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights aboard the MS Gil Eanes on a full board basis • All-inclusive drinks from 10am to 11pm (please note that premium brands & sparkling wines are not included) • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia onboard team including Guest Speaker • Gratuities • Transfers • Port Taxes • Airport Taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



New Cathedral of Salamanca



Douro River



Almeida

PRE-CRUISE PORTUGAL EXTENSION – 27th May to 1st June, 8th to 13th September & 15th to 20th September 2023



If you would like to spend some more time in Portugal we are offering a five night extension with the chance to tour Lisbon, Sintra, Coimbra, Tomar, Guimaraes, and Braga.

THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Lisbon, Portugal. Fly by scheduled flight. Upon arrival transfer to our hotel in Lisbon for a two night stay. Meet later tonight for our welcome dinner. (D)

Day 2 Lisbon & Sintra. Set on seven hills on the banks of the River Tagus, Lisbon has been the capital of Portugal since the 13th century. It is a city famous for its majestic architecture, old wooden trams, Moorish features and more than twenty centuries of history. Following disastrous earthquakes in the 18th century, Lisbon was rebuilt by the Marquis de Pombal who created an elegant

city with wide boulevards and a great riverfront and square, Praca do Comercio. Today there are distinct modern and ancient sections, combining great shopping areas with culture and sightseeing in the Old Town, built on the city's terraced hillsides. During our panoramic tour we will see the Monument to the Discoveries and Belem Tower and visit the famous Jeronimos Monastery. This afternoon we will drive to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sintra where we will visit Sintra National Palace, famous for its magnificent painted ceilings. The palace is the only survivor of the country's Royal Halls, dating from the Middle Ages. Later enjoy some free time to explore the town which still retains much of its Medieval layout before driving back to Lisbon. (B)

Day 3 Lisbon to Coimbra. Check out this morning and drive to the city of Tomar where we will visit the Convento de Cristo. Founded in 1160 by Gualdim Pais, and headquarters of the legendary Knights Templar, this extraordinary monument is a rambling concoction of Gothic, Manueline and Renaissance architecture. After lunch we will continue our journey to Coimbra and check in to our hotel for a two night stay. Meet for dinner and a Fado performance this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 4 Coimbra. Spend the day in charming Coimbra, the Medieval capital of Portugal for over 100 years and the site of the country's greatest university for the past five centuries. Visit the stunning 16th to 18th century buildings,

including the Paco das Escolas (Royal Palace). We will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant followed by a free afternoon for individual exploration. (B, L)

Day 5 Guimaraes. After breakfast in the hotel we will drive to Guimaraes, the birthplace of Afonso Henriques, the first independent King of Portugal. Guimaraes has beautifully preserved its illustrious past; its Medieval centre is a warren of lanes and picturesque plazas framed by 14th century edifices and on an adjacent hill stands the 1,000 year old castle and the palace built by the first duke of Braganca in the 15th century. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before checking in to our hotel for an overnight stay. (B, L)

Day 6 Guimaraes to Oporto. Spend the morning in Braga, an elegant town laced with ancient narrow lanes, plazas and Baroque churches. After lunch we will transfer to the MS Gil Eanes moored in Oporto. (B, L)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£1145** Single: **£1595**

Price Includes: Five nights hotel accommodation as described, meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner), excursions, Tour Manager, gratuities, transfers.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



MS GIL EANES

For our cruises along the Douro we have chartered the elegant MS Gil Eanes. Launched in 2015, the ship has a modern feel and offers a tranquil atmosphere on which to relax and enjoy the picturesque panoramas of the region. Cabins are located over three decks, and have a bright airy feel. Public areas include the restaurant, the lounge bar with floor to ceiling windows, and the Sun Deck with comfortable loungers, and some tables and chairs under a shaded area. There is ample opportunity to watch the world gently pass by as you relax on board your comfortable floating hotel.



Your Cabin/Suite

The MS Gil Eanes features 62 outside cabins and 4 suites, all of which are stylishly decorated and feature individually controlled air-conditioning, private bathroom with shower, flat-screen TV, hair dryer, safe and wardrobe. The cabins and suites have twin beds which can be positioned separately or together as a double bed. Most cabins are 13.3 square metres, though some on the Middle Deck and Main Deck are slightly

smaller at 12 square metres. The Suites on the Middle Deck measure 15.5 square metres, whilst those on the Upper Deck measure 19 square metres. Cabins on the Main Deck feature two windows, and those on the Middle and Upper Decks boast French balconies and sliding floor to ceiling windows.

Your Space

The vessel offers plenty of space to relax unwind and watch the world go by. The Sun Deck is equipped with comfortable loungers and for those who prefer the shade, an awning, under which are tables and chairs. The Lounge Bar is situated on the Middle Deck. Stylishly decorated with clusters of armchairs and sofas set around tables, this area boasts panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows and is the perfect place to spend time at leisure and make new friends whilst enjoying complimentary drinks from the bar from 10am until 11pm. The entrance to the ship is also on the Middle Deck, and you can find the reception desk here, manned from morning

through evening and offering assistance when required. On the same deck is a small shop selling a selection of souvenirs. Wi-Fi is available in the reception area and lounge bar.



Bar



Reception



The Restaurant



Sun Deck



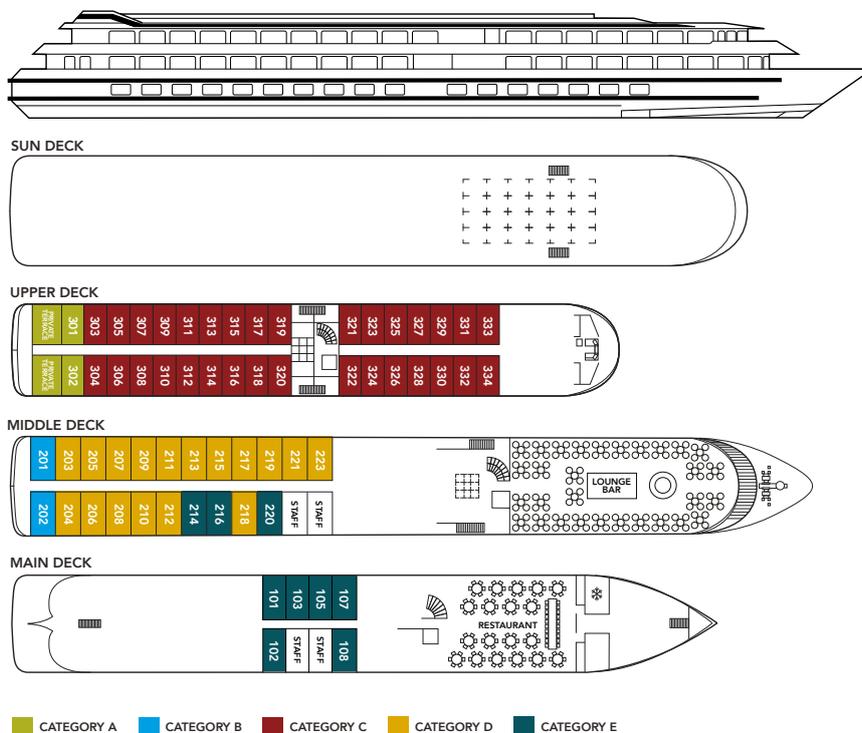
Lounge bar

Your Dining

Breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner are served in the stylish restaurant located on the Main Deck which seats all passengers in one sitting. The excellent cuisine features delicious local and international dishes. Breakfast and lunch are buffet style with hot and cold items, and dinners are a served set menu with a choice of either two main courses or a vegetarian option. Drinks are included during meal times, and are also available until late in the Lounge Bar.

Life On Board

Our cruises along the Douro are a leisurely experience with plenty of time to relax on board. During the day, comfortable and casual attire is appropriate whereas in the evenings the dress code is smart casual. The charming and friendly French and Portuguese crew members speak excellent English and provide a great, personal service. In addition to our Cruise Director and Tour Manager, we will also be joined by a Guest Speaker who will deliver informative and interesting lectures on board, adding to your enjoyment of the cruise and interest of the area.



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