

LUCY PEPPER & CÉLIA PEDROSO

*Eat
Portugal*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
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*Special thanks go to our mothers,
Alice Pedroso and Sue Pepper,
who taught us how to cook
and to love food.*

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Introduction

Modern Portugal is creating different ways of cooking, but the vast majority of the new cookery still uses the flavours so adored by the Portuguese.

There is nothing more important to the Portuguese than food. Sit down to a meal with any group of friends or family and before pudding has reached the table, they will be discussing the next meal, their favourite restaurant, or where to find the best cured sausages.

If you are in Portugal on holiday, however, you may miss out on all the really interesting food that we're all talking about.

Deciding what to eat can be hard if you don't speak the language, don't understand the menus and can't ask questions. It's usually easier to opt for the simple option of something grilled with salad and chips, than risk trying something else that might turn out to be some bit of offal you really can't stomach.

In tourist areas, like the Algarve or the city centre of Lisbon, you will find some translated menus, but the translations are often slightly off or comically wrong. While this is amusing at first, it can soon become just plain irritating.

That is why we have written this guide; to help you understand what is on the menu and maybe encourage you to try something that you might love, maybe migas or jaquinzinhos or baba de camelo.

A comprehensive and definitive encyclopaedia of portuguese cookery would be enormous and probably impossible.

Portuguese cookery is strongly rooted in peasant cookery; simple ingredients and simple recipes that make the most of in season produce and whatever is preservable through the winter. Being a cuisine of the countryside and the sea, it has been passed down through the centuries by word of mouth and it is hard to find two recipes alike, even for the simplest dishes.

A comprehensive and definitive encyclopaedia of Portuguese cookery would be enormous and probably impossible, not because Portuguese cookery is so vast and complex — it isn't — but because everyone has a different, strongly-held opinion about how dishes are cooked. Each region has its own set of recipes, delicacies and traditions that the others don't even know about.

There are cakes that have different names in different places and petiscos with the same name but different ingredients, depending on what city you are in. You'll start to notice that if you cross the country from North to South or fly to the islands.

*Each region has its own set of recipes,
delicacies and traditions
that the others don't even know about.*

We can't hope to predict everything you will find while you are here. Instead, we do give a detailed snapshot of what there is to eat in Portugal today. Modern Portugal is creating different ways of cooking, and celebrity chefs and cookery shows are doing their thing, but the vast majority of the new cookery still uses the flavours of Portugal so adored by the Portuguese. In fact, Portuguese cooking is really based on a small number of vital ingredients and flavours that we hope you will discover while you are here, eating.



A note from Lucy

I have lived in Portugal since the beginning of the century and am lucky enough to have a Portuguese family that introduced me to the real food of Portugal.

At first I was horrified by the look of some of the great big platefuls of boiled up meat and vegetables, with ears and noses poking out. These days, I am too eager to get to my favas com enchidos or leitão to remember that I ever thought them ugly. Really, I'm still not the biggest fan of ears and noses, but I got used to them. I hope you learn to love Portuguese food as much as I do.

A note from Célia

I have always lived in Portugal and I still can't eat ears and noses. When I'm travelling people often ask me what the food is like in my country. Bacalhau and our sweet tooth generally cause consternation. However, I never realised just how many eggs we use in cooking until we started working on this book and Lucy pointed it out. We love our egg cakes passionately. As my mother keeps reminding me — don't take eggs away, if they are in the recipe there's a reason for it. I hope you dare to try the sweetness ahead — pastéis de nata are just the beginning.



What's inside

Eat Portugal is separated into five easy-to-read colour-coded sections.

RECIPES

We have collected recipes from our friends and families and our own kitchens, dishes you can easily make once you get home to remind you of your time in Portugal. These recipes are not the definitive Portuguese recipes (there are no definitive recipes), but they are the versions we like and think that you will too.

GLOSSARY

An explanation of some of the dishes and ingredients you will find.

USEFUL INFORMATION

A few useful tips and phrases about eating, paying, avoiding problems and a little bit about the language.

DICTIONARY

English to Portuguese and Portuguese to English

Full of useful words about eating.

RESTAURANT GUIDE

This is a selection of the places where we like to go with friends and families, in Lisbon, Porto and the Algarve. Two important reminders about eating out. Firstly, the couvert that arrives on your table (good looking snack, cheeses, olives etc.) is not free. Secondly, in Porto the portions are much bigger than in Lisbon. It is always acceptable to ask to share a dish, wherever you are.

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Recipes

Portuguese food is always simple to make — what is important is finding the best ingredients.

Portuguese food is always simple to make — what is important is finding the best ingredients. You will have most of these ingredients to hand. The ones you don't, such as bacalhau or cured sausages, can be sourced in areas where there are large Portuguese communities or substituted with similar items.

For example, Spanish chorizo is easier to find than Portuguese chouriço, and though it is quite different and often much spicier, you could try it in a feijoada or to finish caldo verde.

Bacalhau, in many cases can be replaced with a firm white fish, such as fresh cod, monkfish or smoked haddock. It won't taste quite the same, of course.

If you are lucky enough to find bacalhau, see first if it has already been soaked (in which case, it's going to be frozen). If you need to soak it, place it in a big bowl of cold water and keep it in the fridge for at least 24 hours, changing the water three or four times. If the pieces of cod are quite thick (thicker than 3cm when dry) it would be better to give it 48 hours.

These are recipes that we cook at home, and have borrowed from friends and family.

Peixinhos da horta

Deep fried green beans

500 G GREEN BEANS
OR FRENCH BEANS

LEMON JUICE

100 G FLOUR

200 ML SPARKLING WATER
(OR BEER)

1 EGG

GOOD PINCH OF SALT

GROUND NUTMEG

(SERVES 4-6)

Eat as
a starter or
with drinks.

Japanese tempura is believed to be of Portuguese origin (like their word for thank you, arigato, which is uncannily similar to obrigado) — Portuguese traders and missionaries started arriving in Japan in the 16th century and may have taken some words and customs with them. Tempura is very similar to these Portuguese green beans deep-fried in batter, and to the Portuguese word temperar (to season). The word might also originate from t mpora, the period of time in which the Catholics wouldn't eat any meat.

Top and tail the beans, and remove the strings. If using flat green beans, slice each bean in half, along its length.

Boil for 3-4 minutes with some lemon juice in the water, which helps keep the beans green. Drain them and put them to one side while you make a simple batter, beating together the flour, sparkling water, egg, salt and nutmeg.

Heat an inch of oil in the bottom of a deep pan. When the oil is hot, dip two or three beans at a time in the batter and drop carefully into the oil. Fry until the batter is lightly golden. Drain on kitchen paper.



Salada de polvo

Octopus salad

A SMALL OCTOPUS

OLIVE OIL

1 ONION

RED AND GREEN PEPPER

WHITE WINE VINEGAR

PARSLEY

SALT

(SERVES 4)

Clean the octopus and add to a deep pan of already boiling water. Do not add salt yet. Lots of people place a raw onion in with it. After about 20 minutes, check if you can stab it with a fork. If you can, it's done. Another trick is to boil it straight from the freezer since freezing softens the fibres in the octopus.

Let it cool then chop in small pieces or fine slices if you prefer.

Finely chop the vegetables and parsley and toss with the octopus pieces.

Dress with the oil, vinegar and salt.



Sopa de tomate

Tomato soup

5 LARGE RED TOMATOES
OLIVE OIL
2 ONIONS
2 GARLIC CLOVES
1 LOAF OF SOURDOUGH
BREAD
SALT
4 EGGS (OPTIONAL)
(SERVES 4)

Originally from Alentejo, this is a popular summer soup.

First peel the tomatoes: place them in a bowl, prick each one with a knife, and pour boiling water over the top. After a few minutes, the skins will be easy to remove by hand.

Remove the seeds and chop the tomatoes, and finely slice the onions and garlic. Fry them all in the bottom of a saucepan for a couple of minutes, then turn down the heat and allow the tomatoes to cook down.

Once you have a nice thick pulp, add the salt to taste and around one litre of water.

Bring back to the boil and, if you want to add the eggs, poach the eggs in the top of the soup (you can also poach them separately and add them afterwards to the bowls, in case they break).

Slice some bread or toast and place in the bottom of soup bowls. Ladle the soup over the bread, making sure an egg gets into each bowl. You can sprinkle some parsley on top and serve with some croutons if you like.

Another version includes sliced potatoes that are boiled in the soup.



Caldo verde

Dark Green Cabbage Soup

1 ONION
1 LARGE CLOVE OF GARLIC
OLIVE OIL
500G KALE OR ANOTHER
GREEN CABBAGE, FINELY
SHREDDED
500G POTATO, PREFERABLY
FLOURY, CHOPPED
2.5 LITRES WATER
1 CHOURIÇO, THICKLY
SLICED

(SERVES 4-6)

It's made
with a very
strong, dark
leafed
cabbage.

Being such a simple soup, you'd think there was only one recipe, but there are those who like it potatoey with just a hint of cabbage, those who like it more like a cabbage stew and all the options in between. There's also debate about whether it's best with or without chouriço. Here's a more cabbagey version, perfect for warming and filling you up. In Portugal it's made with a very strong, dark leafed cabbage called couve galega, also known as couve ratinha. However, any very dark leafed green can be used for this soup, including kale, collard greens or couve portuguesa.

Finely chop the onion and garlic and fry in a large pan, until they're translucent. Add the potatoes and a litre of the water and let this boil until the potatoes are cooked.

Pulverize the potatoes in the broth with a masher or a handheld blender.

Add the remaining water and the kale and bring back to the boil and cook until the cabbage is cooked.

In the last few minutes of cooking, add the chouriço slices, then salt to taste.

Besides the chouriço, some people also serve it with corn or rye bread, especially in the North.