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Country Profile

Country

Officially called the Portuguese Republic, Portugal forms the Iberian Peninsula together with Spain. Spain is the only neighbouring country on its Eastern side, while in the South and West lies the Atlantic Ocean. Portugal consists of 18 districts and covers an area of around 92,345 square kilometres (35,655 sq mi), which includes the Atlantic archipelagos Azores and Madeira.

The capital of Portugal is Lisbon (550,000 inhabitants, 2012 est.) and other main cities are Porto (240,000), Coimbra (101,000), Torres Vedras (75,500) and Figueira da Foz 62,600). The main river Tagus divides the Portuguese landscape, with mountains in the north and rolling plains in the south of the country.

Portugal is a member of many different international organisations such as the European Union, the European Economic Community, the United Nations, OECD and NATO. It has also signed the Schengen

Management Culture

The history of Portugal is rich and diverse, and this is highlighted in its culture. Part of this is its traditional folklore culture, which shows great regional differences. Relationships are of extreme importance in Portugal, which is apparent in every aspect of society. Family is considered the foundation of society, and generally comes before all other relationships. Personal and work life does not overlap much in Portugal, but the values and norms are similar in both spheres.

There are many differences between Northern and Southern Portugal. Not only is the climate and terrain different, but also many social and economic factors. Northern Portugal tends to be more traditional in its culture, with larger households, more rural based living and generally more religiosity. Southern Portugal is generally less traditional, with smaller, more nuclear families. Most of the country's heavy industry is located in the South, which has led to more urban centres. Knowing the background of the country's history and culture is essential in understanding the management culture of the Portuguese.

What will I earn?

A high salary level does not say much about what a person can afford. A comparison of purchasing power based on net income is more useful, since it takes into account what remains after tax and social security deductions. Purchasing power, the relationship between income and the cost of your shopping basket, gives an idea of what can be bought in a certain country with a particular level of income. We also give you an indication of regular rent prices because accommodation always takes up a large part of your salary, certainly if you are looking for a short-term lease. The rent prices include all ancillary costs. Some caution is required when directly comparing rents as the apartments may vary considerable from city to city in terms of size, comfort and location. Net pay is lowest compared to gross pay, in Frankfurt, Oslo, Munich, Brussels and Copenhagen, where tax and social security rates are highest. Purchasing power is highest in the US, as well as Western Europe, followed by Australia. Oslo and New York are by far the most expensive cities for renting an apartment.

Main Routes to Employment

At the moment, it may prove to be quite difficult to find employment in Portugal if you are not sent as an expatriate. Most people who move to Portugal also go for other reasons: love, different environment, family or a different lifestyle. One of the quickest ways of finding a job in Portugal is through personal contacts. Portuguese usually prefer hiring someone they know via another contact or someone they have already worked with. Inform everyone you know in Portugal that you are looking for a job. If you have not built up a network already, start as fast as possible! Having good networking skills are just as important as having a good CV and education in Portugal. Generally, people start working in Portugal giving English lessons, or working in the tourism sector. This kind of work allows new residents to practice their Portuguese, while learning about the culture and building their network. However, this varies greatly per person. If you have a consultancy or finance background, this will probably not be the best way in which to enter the Portuguese labour market.

Most large newspapers have vacancy sections, especially the Sunday

Quiz

QUIZ to test your understanding of this ELM Guide on Portugal:

Management culture & job-hunting in Portugal

Questions and Answers:

1. The name 'Portugal' comes from Portus Cale that comes from…

a. The Greek name for a type of green salad

b. The Celtic name for 'the far ones'

c. The Roman name for an early settlement along the Douro river

2. The first Portuguese to reach India was…

a. Bartolomeus Dias

b. Vasco da Gama

c. Christiano Ronaldo

d. Sebastiaõ de Melo

3. Portugal was the longest living of modern European colonial Empires, ending in 1999.

a. True

b. False