Paço de Calheiros

Arrival at 10:15, departure at 11:00.

In this stop you can visit the house, the gardens, the cellar and see the vineyard of Paço de Calheiros, a magnificent 17th century Portuguese manor house. This house at the center of the Vinho Verde region, a distinct whine produced only in this area. You can also try the “vinho verde” produced in the vineyards (just a taste please, it's 10 o'clock in the morning!).

Vinho Verde

The Vinho Verde is an unique product in the entire world with a blending of aroma and petillance that makes it one of the most delicious natural beverages! Medium in alcohol, Vinho Verde has great digestive properties due to its freshness and special qualities. It is a highly regarded wine, specially for Summer drinking. The reds are full-bodied wines with an intense colour and a rosy or light red foam. The whites usually present a lemony or straw colour. The strong distinctive character and originality of these wines are the result of soil and climate characteristics and social-economic agents, on one hand, and of the grape varieties and the vinegrowing methods, on the other. The vines, distinguished by their great vegetative expansion in severe conditions, occupy an area of almost 21 thousand hectares, corresponding to 15% of the national viticultural area.

It was in the Northwest of Portugal, the most populated region since Asturian-Leonese times, that the dense population spread through the fields of the region. There are many references to vine growing, whose development started by the initiative of religious orders, as well as by the positive contribution of the Portuguese Crown. Viticulture had not much importance until the XII-XIII centuries, when wine consumption started to be part of the habits of the Entre-Douro-e-Minho population. The demographic and economic expansion itself, the enhancement of agricultural trade and the development of metal currency, turned wine into an important and essential source of revenue. Although its export was rather limited, history reveals, however, that it should have been the Vinho Verde wines the first Portuguese wines to be known in the European markets (England, Flanders and Germany), specially those of Monção and Ribeira de Lima sub-regions.

In the XIX century, the institutional reforms, opening the way to a larger commercial freedom, as well as the transport and communication's revolution, were the cause for the definitive changes in the regional viticultural panorama. The quality guidance and the Vinho Verde wine production and trade regulations appeared in the beginning of the XX century, when the Law of September 18, 1908 and the Decree of October, 1st of the same year, demarcated the "Vinho Verde Region" for the first time. Cultural issues, wine types, the grape varieties and vine's guiding systems forced the division of the Demarcated Region in six sub-regions: Monção, Lima, Basto, Braga, Amarante and Penafiel.