At 20:30 dinner starts to be served at restaurant Don Tonho in Gaia (there is another D. Tonho on the Porto side of the river, don't confuse) which is the first restaurant near the boat near the Burmester Cellar.

The address of Don Tonho is Avenida Diogo Leite - 26 - Esplanada Calém - Caís de Gaia, 4400-111 Vila Nova de Gaia

At 23:00 the bus picks everyone up near the restaurant, don’t be late!

Port Wine

If ever a drink was synonymous with a country it's port – the fortified wine from Portugal’s Douro region. For three centuries wine has been shipped down the Douro River to Vila Nova de Gaia, whose famous wine lodges (Sandeman, Graham’s, Cockburn, Taylor’s, Burmester’s) reflect the early British influence on its production. A cellar tour forms an integral part of any visit to Porto.

The clear distinction between port wine (vinho do porto) and other Portuguese wines wasn’t made until the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Britain prohibited the import of French wines during the War of the Spanish Succession. Portuguese wines quickly filled the void and, following the Methuen Treaty (1703), the wine trade became so profitable that adulterated inferior wines were soon being passed off as the genuine article. This led to the creation of a regulatory body in 1756, the Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro, and, the following year, the declaration of the world’s oldest demarcated wine region (where port wine could now only legitimately be produced). Yet it wasn't until the mid-nineteenth century that it began to resemble today’s fortified wine, when the addition of brandy to stop fermentation became widespread, enabling the wines to be transported over even longer distances.

The port wine grapes are grown in a 600,000-acre demarcated region along both banks of the Rio Douro, stretching from Mesão Frio (near Peso da Régua) to the Spanish border. Sheltered by the Marão and Montemuro ranges, around fifteen percent of the region is under vines, which benefit from cold winters and hot, dry summers. The characteristic terraces can be seen along the length of the Douro, and they form a particularly beautiful backdrop to the small town of Pinhão, which is now the main centre for quality ports. The grapes are harvested at the quintas (vineyard estates) from September to October and crushed. After a few days fermentation is arrested by the addition of brandy – exactly when this is done determines the wine’s sweetness – with the wine subsequently stored in casks until the following March. The final stage in the wine route is the transportation downstream to the shippers’ lodges, where the wine is blended and matures.

Port wine is either Ruby (ie deep red) in style, Tawny (made from a blend of differently aged wines) or white – the first two are generally drunk at the end of a meal, or with cheese or dessert, the last served chilled as an aperitif. The finest reds are known as Vintages, wines from a single year that are bottled two to three years after harvest and left to mature. A vintage is only declared in certain years (just fourteen times between 1901 and 1999, for example), and the wine is only ready to drink at least ten to fifteen years after bottling, when the flavours are at their most complex, the wine deep purple and full-bodied. Late Bottled Vintage (LBV) is not of vintage quality, but is still good enough to mature in bottles, to which it’s transferred after four to six years in the cask. All other ports are blended and are kept in the cask for between two and seven or more years, with the colour developing into various shades of Tawny – they are ready to drink when bottled. Of these, a Colheita (“Harvest”) is a Tawny port made from grapes from a specific year and aged at least seven years in the cask; other fine wines are superior Tawnies dated 10, 20, 30 or 40 years old (the average age of the wines in the blend), while Reserve ports (both Tawny and Ruby) are blended wines, the best being the Tawny Reserve ports which have to spend at least seven years in the cask.