

# Portugal for Families

By **Judy Koutsky**

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When traveling with family, finding the right destination and tour operator is key to a successful trip. Enter [Global CommUnity](#), a tour operator that focuses specifically on creating itineraries for families—with activities broken down by age groups—as well as volunteer activities that you can participate in while on vacation.

Global CommUnity does everything for busy parents trying to book a memorable trip, from booking your hotel and itinerary to customizing a volunteer experience.

“Our goal is to keep families curious about other cultures, and exploring the world as a lifestyle, all the while grooming their children to become global citizens,” says Westport, CT-based Jena Gardner, partner at Global CommUnity, which launched in 2017. “Our unique community impact opportunities allow families to discover a global perspective.”

While Global CommUnity offers tours around the world, Portugal is one of the company’s most popular itineraries. “Portugal is great for families because it is a smaller country, does not require extended car rides, plane trips or train excursions and offers varied topography—city, beach and countryside,” says Gardner. [TAP Air Portugal](#) flies direct daily and it’s only six hours from New York to Lisbon, which is manageable with kids. Global CommUnity partners with Martinhal resorts—a group of hotels in Portugal that specifically caters to kids, whether it’s with a baby concierge (think: cribs, high chairs, baby food and other gear available at all their properties) or activities (like a BMX bike path at their Sagres property,

especially popular with teens).





*Kids will love taking the tram to navigate hilly streets.*

“We have designed our itineraries around the top sights for first-time travelers to Portugal, but we have also added in activities along the way that engage travelers, geared towards their ages—under 12, teens and adults,” says Gardner. “Then we add philanthropic opportunities that help the traveler experience the social, economic and cultural issues of these communities.”

One way Global CommUnity arranges for families to give back in Lisbon is by spending an afternoon at Convento dos Cardaes, a convent in the Bairro Alto. The nuns living there take care of 30 handicapped girls whose families are not able to provide for them. They make a jam famous in the area, with the proceeds benefitting the girls and the convent. Families can have an incredibly intimate, hands-on experience by helping the nuns, going to the local market to buy the ingredients for the jam and then spending the afternoon making it—and learning firsthand about the lives of the people they help.

## A Typical Itinerary

Lisbon is a great destination whether traveling with little kids or teenagers, or for multi-generation travel. It's a very walkable city—but for those who aren't overly steady on their feet (the very young or old), the tram system is a fun and efficient way to get around. For teenage kids and adults, Global CommUnity can arrange for a private vintage motorcycle tour (travelers can either sit on the back of the bike or in a sidecar) and it's a unique way to navigate around the cobblestone streets. Younger kids will enjoy the high-speed boat tour which does fast 360-degree turns and adds some adrenaline to the cultural aspect of the city. Both kids and adults will enjoy a stop at Pastéis de Belém to try Portugal's famous traditional cream-filled tarts. Stop for lunch at the Time Out Market, a popular food hall at the Mercado da Ribeira Cais do Sodré—it's a good option for kids and adults since it's an indoor market with dozens of food stands, appealing to a variety of palates.

For younger kids, especially those who love fairy tales and castles, Global CommUnity can arrange a trip to Sintra—this is a day trip less than an hour outside Lisbon. The Palácio da Pena is a beautiful palace set on a hilltop, and kids can spend the afternoon exploring the hidden nooks. A guide that specializes in children, can tell stories based on the real life of Maria II and Ferdinand, but in a kid-friendly way (reenacting certain parts of the story). Older kids and adults will like exploring the castle for its history and beauty. A carriage ride through the town of Sintra appeals to all ages. Before leaving Sintra, visit Boca do Inferno and Cabo de Roca, the most western point of the European continent, with amazing water views.



*The Pena Palace is a fairytale castle, enchanting to both kids and adults.*

Global CommUnity can then transfer families to the Algarve region, on the southern coast of Portugal. Spend a day in the town of Sagres and enjoy the Mediterranean beach the area is known for. Also, those feeling a little adventurous (older kids and adults) a bike ride around the coast to Cape St. Vincent, the southernmost tip of the country, is a great way to spend an afternoon. Other activities in this area include dolphin watching (good for younger kids), windsurfing, scuba diving and surfing.

Global CommUnity's starting rates for a seven-day itinerary in Portugal is \$3,080 per person.

## Where to Stay

Global CommUnity Portugal itineraries center around [Martinhal Family Hotels & Resorts](#). They're luxurious enough to keep parents happy, but with plenty to keep kids occupied. Martinhal Lisbon Chiado Family Suites is located in the city's cultural center and the apartment-style accommodations have full kitchens, washers and dryers. The Kids Club, which takes kids from six months to 9 years old, offers a variety of activities including childcare in the evening (so parents can enjoy a night out in Lisbon).

Families traveling with little ones can take advantage of the baby concierge which allows guests to pre-book baby gear. The Martinhal Sagres Beach Family Resort is known for its amazing seaside location and five pools. Meanwhile, golfing families will love the Martinhal Cascais Family Hotel; it resides between two championship courses.



*Martinhal has four properties in Portugal—all catering to families. From fun artwork on the walls, to numerous pools, to multi-room villas, it's ideal for kids of all ages.*

The spacious kids area has trampolines, soccer courts and a dome-covered pool (for young kids who can't be in the sun). Rates at Martinhal properties range from \$250 per night in a superior deluxe studio with bunkbeds at Martinhal Chiado, to \$980 per night in a grand deluxe villa with two bedrooms at Martinhal Cascais.