

PORTUGUESE CALENDAR 2014

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS

JANUARY/JANEIRO

1st January – New Year’s Day

This is a public holiday in Portugal. People usually rest from New Year’s Eve festivities on this day.

At 0.00h of this day people celebrate the coming of the New Year drinking champagne and eating 12 raisins and making a wish for each month. They usually wish for good health, prosperity, money, love and happiness, among others. Sometimes they step on a chair to do this. It’s also usual to wear something blue (mainly underwear) and new. In some places they also throw old things out from the windows. There are fireworks in the main cities throughout the country.



Champagne



Raisins



Fireworks

6th January – The Holy Kings’ day

This is a religious festivity which marks the end of the Christmas celebrations. It is no longer a public holiday in Portugal. According to the tradition, families get together on this day for dinner and they eat a traditional cake, *Bolo Rei*. (*King’s cake*).



Bolo Rei – Kings Cake



On this day, and during the whole month, it is also traditional to sing the “JANEIRAS”. This traditional chant is sung mainly in the rural areas throughout

the country. People, friends and neighbours, get together in the evenings and go singing at the doors of the wealthy ones, playing various musical instruments. The lyrics are very simple, usually about the birth of Jesus and the holy family. They also sing about the good qualities of the owner of the house, hoping that he opens the door and invites them in to eat and drink and give them some money as well. If that doesn't happen they change the lyrics of the song and criticize his stinginess. The food offered is usually chestnuts, nuts, apples, different types of sausages (chorizo), bread, ham, cakes and sweets. They drink wine or liquor.



Group singing



different types of sausages



dried fruits



bread and wine

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIBnLIKPPGA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHngFbpXdjE>

FEBRUARY/ FEVEREIRO

MARCH/ MARÇO

Carnival is a pagan festivity that we celebrate always on a Tuesday, 47 days before Easter Sunday. It is not an official holiday in Portugal but usually people don't work on that day.

Usually Carnival is in February and lasts three days. In 2014, however, it will be in March, 4th.

There are Carnival processions all over the country during the three days of this festivity (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday). People wear costumes and masks and play tricks on everyone else. It's time for having fun and be happy, to criticize the government and all people from the jet set. There are balls and dances and special decorations in the streets. They tend to imitate the Brazilian Carnival, which is a pity, because we have our own traditions, different from those.

The rooster is also, according to ancient tradition, a symbol for corruption, crisis and other social evils, that's why, in certain parts of Portugal, there is the tradition of the "*Rooster's Trial and Death*". This is performed on Ash Wednesday. It is a popular performance and is accompanied by a lot of people coming from surrounding villages. Musicians, actors and professional animators

also take part in this show. The rooster is then judged and condemned publicly and burnt in a fire. The general atmosphere is of great amusement.



Carnival Parades

From the end of Carnival till Easter Sunday there is the period of Lent, when Catholics didn't use to eat meat. Today, this is not so strict anymore. Only during the Holy Week (the week before Easter Sunday) it is still a habit, in some regions, especially on Thursday and Friday.

19th March – Father's Day

This is not a public holiday in Portugal but it is celebrated by all families, especially children. They always give a present to their dads on this day. The 19th March is Saint Joseph's Day in Portugal, the "father" of Jesus, therefore it was chosen as father's day.

On this day, a very peculiar festivity takes place in the village of Carvalhal, near Bombarral.

It's a procession in honour of Saint Joseph called *Luminaries of Saint Joseph*, and the inhabitants of the village use snail shells lighted as candles and decorate their windows and doors with it. This procession is in the evening.

http://www.google.pt/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDMQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cm-bombarral.pt%2FNews%2Fnewsdetail.aspx%3Fnews%3Dc01b0b0e-feca-4b48-94b2-21455bdc3947&ei=Il6XUouJJKPQ7AbPuoDYCQ&usq=AFQjCNGEW5IEwVr1TN2-d0zZBe-1q4OP_w

APRIL/ ABRIL

18th April – Good Friday

This is a religious holiday celebrated before Easter Sunday, but not a public holiday. On this day, Christians remember Jesus trial, crucifixion and death. There are several religious rituals associated to this date. It is also known as

Passion Friday and it is a mobile holiday. It can be celebrated between 22nd March and 25th April and is a reference day for other dates.

20nd April – Easter Sunday

Easter is a religious celebration commemorating Jesus Christ's Resurrection. Usually families get together and eat together on Easter Sunday, being religious or not. It is a public holiday.

In some parts of the country it is still common for the priest to visit the houses, bless the families living there and get gifts from them. There is a special cake for this time called *FOLAR*. This cake has got some boiled eggs on top, as eggs symbolize fertility and life, and in Easter the birth of new life is celebrated, together with all symbolism connected with springtime. It is also traditional to offer sweet almonds to family and friends.



The *Folar* before going to the oven and afterwards

sweet almonds

http://picasaweb.google.com/112409617612172976813/SemanaSanta2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCIGTg_2UmtDRxQE&gsessionid=vU04-P6hCIDaxETpm7IYsA#slideshow/5457406894698327762

http://picasaweb.google.com/112409617612172976813/Alvissaras2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCM_p2_681OKnGw#slideshow/5457415602038078850

http://picasaweb.google.com/112409617612172976813/Alvissaras2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCM_p2_681OKnGw#slideshow/5457415602038078850

<http://picasaweb.google.com/112409617612172976813/NossaSenhoraDaGranja2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCO-mwqusgpbm1gE#slideshow/5457327911831693586>

25th April – Freedom Day

This is a public holiday in Portugal. It was on this day that, in 1974, there was a military revolution that put an end to the dictatorship, which lasted for 48 years, in Portugal.

It was also the end of the colonial war in Angola, Mozambique and in Guinea. And the beginning of the independence process in these former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Since then we live in Democracy.

The red carnation is the symbol of this day.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha-h5bPSxQE>

MAY / MAIO

1st May – Worker’s Day

This is a public holiday in Portugal. Here, it was celebrated only after the 25th April revolution. Before that it was not allowed by the government.

4th May – Mother’s Day

Mother’s Day in Portugal is always celebrated on the first Sunday of May. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and therefore to all mothers. It is not a public holiday but every family celebrates this day. Children offer small presents to their mothers to show them their love. They use to prepare these presents at school.

JUNE / JUNHO

10th June – Portugal, Camões and Portuguese Communities Day

This is a public holiday. This date also marks the day when our greatest poet, Luís de Camões, author of the famous epic poem *Os Lusíadas*, died in 1580. On this day, the president of the Republic and the most important people in government participate in special ceremonies celebrating the Portuguese people and their achievements all over the world. These ceremonies are held in different cities every year.

13th June – Saint Antony’s Day

This is the municipal holiday of Lisbon. It is not a public holiday. Saint Antony was born on 15th August 1195, in Lisbon, and died on 13th June 1231 in Padua, Italy. He is the patron saint of Lisbon and people believe in his divine power to get them a good husband/wife. Children ask him for protection and good health. This is a day traditionally chosen for weddings. There are many *Saint Antony's Weddings*, every year, in the city of Lisbon. The inhabitants of Lisbon celebrate this holiday decorating their neighbourhoods and historical sites with bright colours and small vases with a plant, called *Mangerico*. They have parties everywhere in the streets and eat grilled sardines, cabbage soup, grilled peppers, corn bread and drink a lot of wine or beer.



Saint Antony



Mangerico



The Weddings



Streets festivities: *Marchas* Sardines



24th June – Saint John's Day

This is the holiday of the city of Oporto. It's a municipal holiday, not a public holiday.

Saint John is also a very popular patron Saint in Portugal, especially in the city of Oporto. He has the same meaning for the inhabitants of Oporto as Saint Antony has for the Lisbon ones.

In the evening of 23rd June people come to the streets and celebrate during the whole night. Again the *Mangerico* is a symbol, because it is a plant of this time of the year. But there are other symbols like plastic hammers and leeks used to hit, gently, on other people's heads. There is also the tradition of launching hot air paper balloons in the air, which glow in the dark of the night and create a special atmosphere. It's usually warm in this time of the year, so people enjoy these festivals very much. In Oporto they eat and drink the same type of food and drinks as in Lisbon.

In the past, it was usual to light big fires in the streets and people danced and jumped around these fires. Today this doesn't happen anymore.



Saint John's festivities in Oporto

29th June – Saint Peter’s Day

This is the municipal holiday in Bombarral. On this day people don’t go to work, there is no school and there are several celebrations in the Municipality.

Saint Peter is another of our popular patron saints. In the past there were big fires in the streets, in the evening, and dances around them, in Bombarral, too. People used to eat roasted sardines and drink a lot of wine. It was a traditional festival. Now our biggest festival is in August: The Wine and Pear “Rocha” Festival. It’s a pagan festivity.

During the month of June there are many other festivals all over the country.

- *Octopus Festival in Lourinhã*
<http://culturaelazermagazine.blogspot.pt/2012/05/iv-quinzena-do-polvo-da-lourinha.html>
- *Flavors of the Sea Festival in Peniche*
<http://www.cmpeniche.pt/CustomPages/ShowPage.aspx?pageid=c6030d5f-ff9c-4856-8d65-2074bca95b42&m=a172>
- *Bonfire Races in Peniche*
http://www.google.pt/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cm-peniche.pt%2Fcorridafogueiras&ei=t12XUsKZHebe7AaPm4GACw&usq=AFQjCNFxDX_-rD8H8XEOa0_LHCGcx45aUQ

JULY / JULHO

AUGUST/ AGOSTO

SEPTEMBER / SETEMBRO

4th July – Saint Elisabeth’s Day

This is a municipal holiday in Coimbra, our third biggest city.

All cities, towns and villages have their own festival and they are mostly during the summer months.

In these months there are almost no public holidays in Portugal, but there are many local festivals always related to a patron saint.

In fact there is a patron saint for every day of the year in Portugal.

Emigrants come back and enjoy this time with their families. These festivals have always a religious and a pagan celebration associated to it. People participate in the serious, religious processions and attend the Sunday mass, in church, during the day. In the evenings they have dances, they eat and drink and have fun together till dawn.

This is the time when students are on holidays and families spend most their summer holidays in the beach. summer holidays at the beach.

It is also in August and September that most harvests are picked. We have mainly pears, apples, plums and grapes in our region.

Other popular festivals of our region and country are:

- *Medieval Market in Óbidos* – end of July
<http://www.mercadomedievalobidos.pt/>
- *the Wine and Pear “Rocha” Festival in Bombarral*- beginning of August
<https://pt-pt.facebook.com/FestivalDoVinhoPortuguesFeiraNacionalDaPeraRocha>
- *Procession of the Sea in Peniche* – beginning of August
<http://www.gazetacaldas.com/24358/procissao-nocturna-maritima-em-peniche-a-4-de-agosto/>
- *Ferrel Festival* – beginning of August
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Festa-de-Ferrel/354476701975>
- *Festival of Lord of Calvary* – end of August
<https://picasaweb.google.com/105664363864758092812/FestaSrCalvario2011?authkey=Gv1sRgCM-N1MCZisnf4QE#slideshow/5647740202149475810~>

15th August - The Assumption of Mary

This is the only public holiday in August. It is a religious holiday too, for Catholics. There are no special traditions related to this date, except for the places where it is also the municipal holiday, or if there is a pagan festival associated to the day.

OCTOBER / OUTUBRO

5th October – Republic Day

This was a public holiday till 2012. It isn't anymore!
The Republic was officially proclaimed in Portugal on 5th October 1910. Before that we had a monarchy and our last king was assassinated on that day, by the republicans of the time. From then on we had a different national anthem and a different flag, the same until the present time.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdOEpfpWQA>

NOVEMBER / NOVEMBRO

1st November – All Saints Day

This was also a public holiday in Portugal until 2012. Not anymore!
On this day children use to gather in groups, during the morning, and go from house to house, in their neighbourhoods, knocking on every door, asking for food, sweets, dried fruits, etc. This tradition is called “*Pão por Deus*” (God's

Bread). Our recent government decision of ending with this holiday unfortunately threatens this tradition, because now children have classes, like in a normal school day, and can't do this anymore.

On 2nd November, people use to visit the graves of their dead relatives in graveyards all over the country.

In the last decade, it also became a tradition to celebrate the 31st October, Halloween. It is mainly the young people who celebrate this and not the older generations.

11th November – Saint Martin's Day

This day is not a holiday in Portugal, but we use to celebrate it with special food and drink. We use to eat roasted chestnuts and drink the new wine, or a liquor called *Jerupiga*. People get together on this day to celebrate this time. We have an expression to refer to this time: "Saint Martin's summer". Because it's often warm and sunny by this time here. It's a kind of remembrance of the warm days of summertime. Of course this is related to the legend. I think it is the same legend in all our countries.

We have a lot of popular proverbs about Saint Martin's Day, but I don't know if they have equivalents in English. They all refer to agricultural works, food and wine.

- *Por S. Martinho semeia fava e o linho.*
- *Se o Inverno não erra o caminho, tê-lo-ei pelo S. Martinho.*
- *Se queres pasmar o teu vizinho, lavra, sacha e esterca pelo S. Martinho.*
- *No dia de S. Martinho, vai à adega e prova o vinho.*
- *No dia de S. Martinho, castanhas, pão e vinho.*
- *No dia de S. Martinho com duas castanhas se faz um magustinho.*



DECEMBER / DEZEMBRO

1st December – Restoration of Independence

This was a public holiday until 2012. Not anymore, as well! (New government rules...) On this day we celebrate the action of the Portuguese noblemen who, in 1640, proclaimed John, Duke of Bragança, king of Portugal after 60 years of Spanish rule over Portugal. We were never good neighbours...

8th December - the Immaculate Conception Day

This is still a public holiday in Portugal. It is a religious holiday. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. The Immaculate Conception is also the patron virgin of Portugal. On this day, it is a tradition in the eastern and northern part of Portugal, for the men (young and old), to get a huge wooden log in the woods and carry it to their villages so that it burns on Christmas Eve, honouring the baby Jesus. They spend the whole evening in the site where they collect the log, cutting it, and at the same time they eat and drink. In the morning they carry the log in chariots to their villages and put it in the churchyard. Then they celebrate all together. This is a pagan tradition, of course.

https://picasaweb.google.com/105664363864758092812/Madeiro2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCMGVquWa-ZO_yQE#slideshow/5553196890956542530

25th December – Christmas Day

This is one of the most important public holidays in Portugal. It's the birth of Jesus. On Christmas Eve, families get together for the Christmas Supper. They prepare and eat special dishes: codfish, roasted turkey, octopus, Christmas cakes and fried sweets, nuts, figs, wines, liquors, etc, etc. The table is always full in this evening.

Then, at midnight, Catholics go to the Midnight Mass, called *Missa do Galo*. Afterwards it's time for most families to exchange presents. It is also a tradition to have a beautifully decorated Christmas tree at home and also a Nativity representation. In the past, children were sent to bed after the mass and they only opened the presents on Christmas morning. Today it depends on their parents.

Traditional dishes for Christmas



Codfish and cabbage



Octopus and potatoes



Roast Turkey



Christmas sweet fries





Sweet rice



Egg pudding



Sweet bread



Christmas Log

31st December – New Year's Eve

This is not a holiday but everybody likes to celebrate this time with their loved ones. There are many public or private parties everywhere and everyone wants to enter the New Year in their best. They dress for the occasion. Everybody wishes a Happy New Year!



The Nativity