

JOYY MEETS WORLD

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COVER STORY:
PORTUGAL'S
HOUSING CRISIS

ELIAS MACOVELA:
BLACK WINEMAKER ON A
MISSION

Portugal



MURAL OF WOMAN IN BLUE HUES BALANCING POTS, PHOTO CREDIT: JOY GRANT

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Editor's Letter

Dear Readers,

Portugal is a country of contrasts; steeped in history yet ever evolving, welcoming yet wrestling with the pressures of change. In this issue, we explore its winding streets and shifting landscapes, from the timeless beauty of azulejos to the modern realities of housing and immigration. We meet the people shaping Portugal's future: artists, winemakers, and musicians, each with a story as rich as the land they call home.

Whether you're here for the flavors, the history, or the hidden gems, we hope these pages bring you closer to the soul of Portugal.

Enjoy the journey,

Joy Grant

Contributors

Nydak Kur- Writer

I'm a 27-year-old product manager by day, but beyond the work, I'm an aspiring beam of light with a burning heart to experience other beams of light, new places, and the unexpected—things I sense I didn't get to experience in a past life. For me, travel is both a calling and a celebration of the freedom to explore, connect, and embrace all that life has gifted us—and all that we've made of that gift. I take deep honor in being a woman—a free woman, a Black woman—who wakes up each day guided by the fire in my heart, always awaiting to unwrap yet another gift.



Amber Stokes- Managing Editor

As managing editor of Joyy Meets World, I have the privilege of helping Joy bring global cultures, undervalued histories from diverse destinations, and inspiring personal tales to the page.



Azulejos

Photos and Words by Joy Grant

Azulejos are more than decorations; they are Portugal's history, culture, and artistry told through ceramic. Uncover their evolution from traditional blue-and-white panels to contemporary designs that keep the art form alive.



AZULEJO MURAL PAINTED IN 1939 OF LISBON FROM THE TAGUS RIVER

HISTORY.

Much of Portugal's beauty lies in the way its buildings are decorated from the inside out. Architecture across the country is beautifully enhanced by azulejos, a word derived from the Arabic term al-zillij which means "little polished stone." As the name suggests, the use of tiles in architecture did not begin in Portugal. Introduced when the Moors invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century, these tiles were originally used to create complex geometric designs as a significant part of art and religious expression.



AZULEJOS DISPLAYING LAYERED FLORALS IN RICH, EARTHY TONES



AZULEJOS FEATURING A RADIANT FLORAL MANDALA IN BOLD ORANGE AND TEAL

Azulejos didn't gain extensive popularity in Portugal until King Manuel I's visit to Seville, Spain and the Alhambra in Granada in the 16th century. At the time, King Manuel was one of the wealthiest monarchs in Europe (thanks to colonization), so he wasted no time importing tiles to have his palace decorated in a similar Spanish-Muslim style.

After reclaiming control from the Moors during the Reconquista (8th - 15th century), Portugal was able to innovate azulejo designs. Released from Islamic restrictions, painters could now add detailed designs in the form of animals, humans, flowers, and religious, cultural, and historical scenes. Azulejos from this period often depicted imagery from Portuguese colonies like Brazil. This artistic evolution became more prominent in the 16th century, influenced by prominent Renaissance and Baroque styles, marking the beginning of Portugal's unique azulejo tradition.



AZULEJOS DEPICTING AN ELEPHANT BALANCING ON AN EYEBALL



AZULEJOS DEPICTING A FLAMINGO COMBINED WITH A PHONOGRAPH



AZULEJOS FEATURING A WINGED CHERUB FACE, FRAMED BY A FLORAL BORDER.



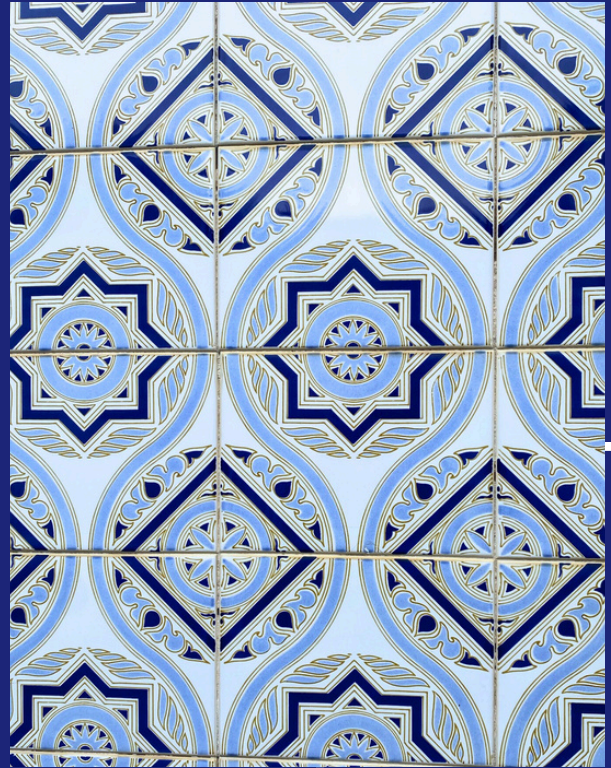
AZULEJO PANEL DEPICTING A PEACOCK

PEOPLE & ANIMALS.

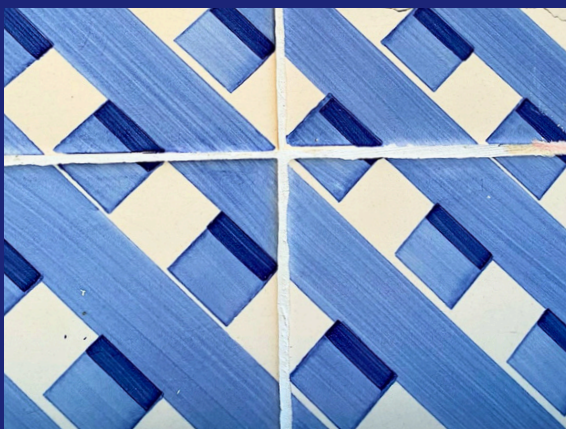
BLUE & WHITE.



DELICATE BLUE AZULEJOS WITH SNOWFLAKE
LIKE FLORAL GEOMETRY



AZULEJOS FEATURING A DIAGONAL GRID
PATTERN IN SOFT BLUE TONES



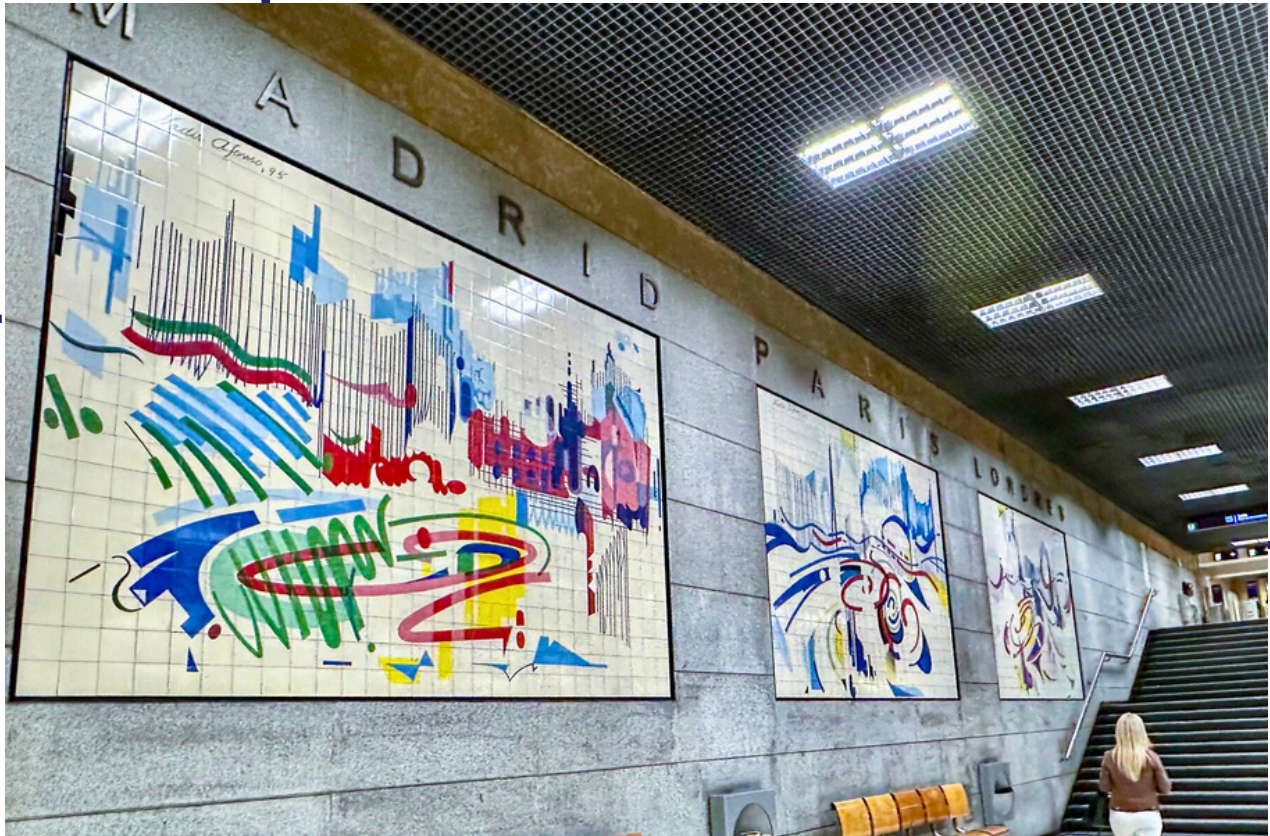
DELICATE BLUE AZULEJOS WITH SNOWFLAKE
LIKE FLORAL GEOMETRY

In the past, azulejos often reflected Muslim influences and incorporated earthy colors such as yellow, blue, white and green. During the Age of Discoveries, the color palette began to shift to reflect the popular blue and white ceramics found in both Chinese porcelain brought back from Asia and Dutch Delft ceramics (which was also designed after Chinese styles). Ultimately, the demand for Dutch Delft became so great in the 17th century that the government placed an import ban in hopes that this would help support local tile artists and local production.



ARCHITECTURE.

Originally, the majority of azulejos were featured inside buildings like artwork. However, after the Great Lisbon Earthquake in 1755, tiles were widely used on the exterior of buildings during the rebuilding process to help with stability since they were more inexpensive than marble or stone while still adding beauty.



ABSTRACT AZULEJO MURALS HONOR MADRID, PARIS, AND LONDON AT METRO STATION IN LISBON, PHOTO CREDIT: VITOR OLIVEIRA

While the ways azulejos are being used have changed, the art form remains prevalent and is as much a part of Portuguese culture as ever. Traveling from the streets of the country to the underground, azulejos began being used in metro station murals in the 20th century. Today, some of the original azulejo factories are still running, creating both traditional and newer designs, a testament to the importance of adapting while honoring traditions.

MODERN USES.



Porto, Portugal

As Portugal's second-largest city, Porto stands proudly on its own. Known for its famous port wine and six bridges connecting it to Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto offers countless architectural and culinary delights. Nestled along the north bank of the Douro River, the city ascends over steep hills on the north side, with a plateau stretching toward the south. These natural barriers have protected the town throughout history, earning it the nickname “a Cidade Invicta” (the undefeated city). Azulejo covered buildings, winding roads, and stunning river views create a timeless environment. While its history is ever-present, today, Porto is a city where tradition and innovation coexist. Its working-class roots in manufacturing and fisheries are now interconnected with a growing creative scene with something to offer everyone.



Discovering Porto

Through Unforgettable Experiences

Story and photos by Nydak Kur

On a walking tour in Porto, I had the pleasure of meeting Nydak, a fellow traveler with a deep curiosity for unique local experiences. In this piece, she shares three memorable activities that gave her a genuine connection to Porto's charm, culture, and creativity.

- Joy Grant

Joanne's Pastel de Nata Workshop

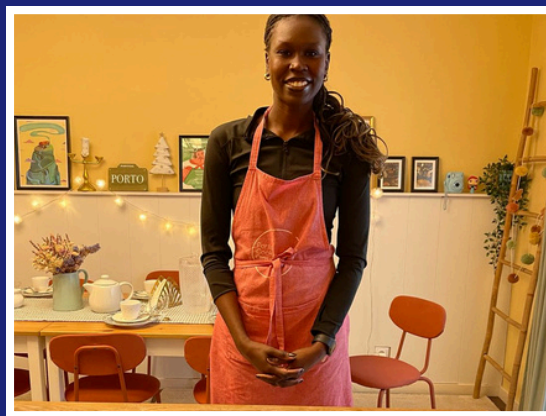
Stepping into Joanne's kitchen felt like stepping into history. As she shared her family's multi-generational recipe for pastel de nata (a Portuguese custard tart), she brought her stories to life with beautiful hand-drawn illustrations, making the experience even more intimate. Alongside fellow travelers from around the world, I rolled up my sleeves to prepare and bake the famous custard tarts. The reward? A warm, flaky pastel de nata enjoyed with a comforting cup of tea, a sweet taste of tradition that exceeded all expectations.

Price: \$30 USD

[Book here](#)

PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM:

NYDAK POSING IN JOANNE'S KITCHEN WEARING AN APRON
PASTEL DE NATA DOUGH SECTIONED OFF FOR BAKING
TARTS WAITING TO BE FILLED WITH CUSTARD
PASTEL DE NATA FRESH OUT OF THE OVEN



Porto Mountain Tour

A misty, drizzly day set the perfect mood for an adventure through Porto's rugged mountains. Our host welcomed us with freshly baked treats before we embarked on a thrilling drive through steep, rocky terrain, where breathtaking views of Porto stretched before us. One of the most unexpected highlights? Visiting a centuries-old village with only four remaining residents—the youngest in his early 70s. It was a humbling reminder of time's quiet passage and the resilience of those who call these remote places home.

Price: \$76 USD
[Book here](#)

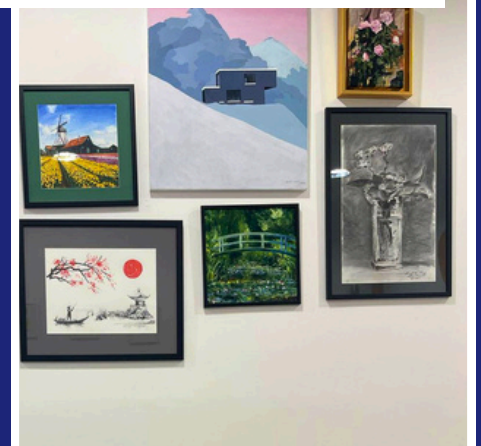
Watercolor Painting with Hugo

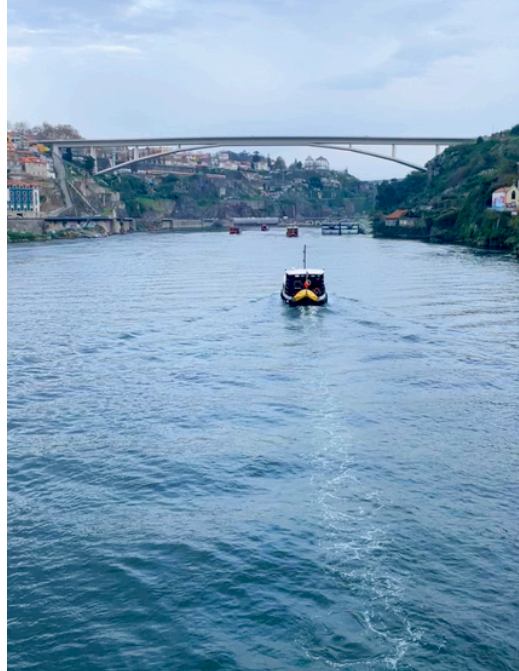
Rather than buying a piece of art, I chose to create one. In a cozy studio, I joined Hugo, a local artist, for a watercolor painting class focused on mastering shades of blue. With his guidance, I painted the iconic Luís I Bridge, learning how to blend water and pigment to create depth and movement. As we worked, Hugo shared stories from his life—his time studying art in London, his decades-long career, and his love for fatherhood. By the end of the session, I walked away with more than just a painting; I left with a new skill, a deeper appreciation for Porto's beauty, and a glimpse into the life of a talented local artist.

Price: \$39 USD
[Book here](#)

PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM:

4X4 TOUR JEEP
MOUNTAIN VIEW IN SERRAS DO PORTO PARK
WATERCOLOR PAINTING SUPPLIES
ARTWORK DISPLAYED IN HUGOS STUDIO





Cidade Invicta



BEAUTIFUL



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

MUSEU ROMÂNTICO

JOY AT MIRADOURO DA VITÓRIA

BOAT ON THE DOURO RIVER

PEACOCK IN THE PALÁCIO DE CRISTAL GARDENS

GRAFFITI-COVERED DOOR IN PORTO

FOUNTAIN IN THE PALÁCIO DE CRISTAL GARDENS

Building Community & Visibility:

A Conversation with BLACK IN PORTUGAL

Planning a trip to Portugal and want to support Black-owned businesses or attend community events? Black in Portugal has you covered with curated resources to help you connect, explore, and celebrate Black culture.

By Joy Grant

Photos Provided by Heather Courtney

In recent years, Portugal has become an increasingly popular destination for Black travelers. However, many Black residents have had difficulty connecting with a larger community. Enter Black in Portugal, an organization dedicated to fostering connection, supporting Black-owned businesses, and increasing visibility for Black entrepreneurs and creatives in Portugal. Along with community-building efforts, they offer a Black business directory to help travelers and locals alike discover and support Black-owned establishments across the country. We spoke with its founder, Heather Courtney, about the community's origins and the impact of their work.

Q: What inspired the creation of Black in Portugal, and how has the organization evolved since its inception?


Before moving to Portugal, I was part of a Facebook group called Black to Portugal, but nothing was really going on, and the founder never actually made the move to Portugal. I thought back to my experience in Mérida, Mexico, where the Black community was tight-knit, we showed up for each other, and we had people we could depend on.

I wanted that same support in Portugal, somewhere I could thrive, but when I arrived, I couldn't find it. A friend once told me, "If the community doesn't exist, you have to create it." So, a week after I landed in 2021, I hosted my first brunch. Eleven women showed up, and by the end, everyone was asking about the next one.

From there, we began organizing regular meet-ups, which eventually led to Black to Portugal evolving into Black in Portugal. The Facebook group became a resource for travelers seeking recommendations, and we created a WhatsApp group for planning events and meet-ups.

Q: How did that evolve to include the Black Business List?

When people in our Facebook group asked for restaurant recommendations, they would be told the same tourist-heavy spots. Meanwhile, there were plenty of Mozambican, Cape Verdean, and Angolan restaurants, but people were only talking about the most convenient ones, and everyone was missing out on gems. So my team and I started hosting events at Black-owned businesses: hangouts at a karaoke spot owned by an Algerian, co-working days at a South African café, or dinners at an Angolan restaurant. We wanted to bring visibility to



these businesses because if we're able to go to Time Out Market (a popular restaurant) and spend \$20 or \$30 on a burger, why can't we spend \$12 on a whole meal and support a black business? I also started connecting with musicians, artists, and creatives, even when language barriers made it difficult. I showed up at events and immersed myself in the scene to show that I was willing to show up and put myself out there, willing to learn the language, and willing to make connections. And yes, of course, we're all black and a part of the diaspora, but Black Americans often have more resources, so I saw it as a responsibility to show support.

Q: Do you have any success stories where you've seen this support make a tangible impact?

I see success in the number of micro-communities that have formed through Black in Portugal. There's now a language exchange group that hosts meet-ups at the Cape Verdean Association, a Zillennial group, and even a 50+ community.

From the local standpoint, I've noticed businesses getting more attention. Take Rum and Tickles, a Jamaican restaurant. I randomly got a notification about its opening and reached out to the owner just to hype him up. Then I visited with some friends, and it's the snowball effect; you bring some people it's good and then they bring more people, and soon he was hosting back-to-back sold-out dinners. It's amazing seeing his growth, especially since he had only been in Portugal for 6 months and didn't know anyone outside of his wife. So

it's cool to see that just a simple conversation can have such an impact.

Q: How do you go about curating the list of Black-owned businesses?

I just show up. For example, there's an African art museum I stumbled upon. I walked in, started talking to the owners, and never left. For me, the highlight is genuinely getting to know these individuals and having conversations. No one's going to know what's out there if you don't show up. I didn't go in with any specific intentions I just wanted to talk to them and check it out. And come to find out they also have an amazing art gallery next door where they highlight artists from the diaspora.

When you approach people with genuine curiosity and a willingness to support them without expecting anything in return, it pays off. Maybe not in a month or two, maybe not even in a year, but persistence and sincerity always pays off

Q: How visible is Black culture and community in Portugal today?

I think that the Portuguese sometimes push an agenda when it comes to Black neighborhoods and communities. They have a habit of labeling Black neighborhoods as dangerous. For example, there's Cova da Moura, a Cape Verdean community right outside Lisbon. It's vibrant, has amazing food, and is home to incredible people, yet taxis refuse to go there. On the map, the whole neighborhood is inaccessible you have to walk really far to get a cab when you leave. I've spent time there, day and night, and never felt an ounce of fear.

I'm from Jersey, so it just felt like kicking it with my people. But every Black neighborhood is given this reputation. If visitors are willing to step outside the typical tourist spots, they'll gain a much wider perspective on Portugal's Black community.

Q: What's the best way for people to access the Black Business List?

We have a paid Google Maps directory available in our [Instagram bio](#). It works wherever you are in Portugal, showing nearby Black-owned businesses. It costs \$25 and includes my eBook, which dives deeper into navigating Portugal, from things to do to understanding different neighborhoods.

I'm also working on a free community directory, which we'll announce on Instagram once it's ready.

Purchase their Black Business List [here](#)

For more information about Black in Portugal, follow them on Instagram (@black.in.portugal). Whether you're moving to Portugal or just passing through, the community is there to support, connect, and uplift.



VISION BOARD AND MIXER EVENT



MIXER AT SOUL KITCHEN AND BAR



RUM AND TICKLES AND BLACK IN PORTUGAL EXCLUSIVE EVENT

Mozambique



in Portugal

Mozambique, located in Southern Africa along the Indian Ocean, was a key target for Portugal during the "Age of Exploration" due to its strategic position on Indian Ocean trade routes and its abundant natural resources. Portuguese colonization began in 1498, marking the start of a centuries-long presence that included the forced migration of enslaved Africans. In the mid-16th century, Africans made up approximately 10% of Lisbon's population.

Mozambique gained independence in 1975 after a decade-long guerrilla war. The post-independence period was marked by internal conflict and economic challenges, which led many Mozambicans to seek opportunities abroad. Portugal became a key destination due to historical, cultural, and linguistic ties.

Today, Mozambicans are an integral part of Portuguese society, contributing to the beautiful tapestry that makes this country unique. I was fortunate to meet individuals who were willing to share their experiences and gifts with me, offering a deeper understanding of this cultural connection.

Beating to His Own Rhythm:



The Sound of Zé Maria

Photos and Words by Joy Grant

ZÉ MARIA POSING IN FRONT OF THE STAGE AT SECRET GARDEN LX

A journey through music, passion, and heritage with one of Lisbon's most soulful Mozambican artists.

If you go to the Secret Garden LX in Lisbon on a Thursday or Friday night, you'll most likely get the pleasure of seeing the Mozambican artist Zé Maria perform as part of their Open Mic and Open Mind series, and if you do, you're in for a show.

The night I was there, the energy in the garden was high as different performers took to the stage. My group sat at a table near Zé Maria and his friends, and before long we were all talking and joking like old friends.



ZÉ MARIA SMILING ON A WALK THROUGH GRAÇA

When I found out he was a musician from Mozambique, I let him know I was a travel writer and asked if I could get some video of him playing. Though hesitant, he went and grabbed his instrument, the Hatsló which caught me off guard as it looked like an ordinary pot. But the moment he quieted the crowd down and began to play, its musicality was clear. He opened with singing and then began patting the sides and the top where there was an opening, each action adding another dimension to the sound. The singing slowly sped up as the song went on, and his voice came out stronger along the way, slowly becoming a deep, resonant sound. His hands moved quickly, coaxing out percussive beats and hypnotic melodies, shifting the entire atmosphere. A moment before, the night had been fragmented, groups scattered around having their own conversations. Now, everyone was locked in, the musician caught in the rhythm of something entirely his own.



ZÉ MARIA PLAYING THE HATSLO

After his performance, I thanked Zé Maria for his time and for sharing his talent with me. He let me know that sharing his art was his pleasure but made sure I came back to interview him, stating, “You have the sound, but you need the story too.” His insistence wasn’t about vanity but about ensuring his music carried the weight of his journey.

“

**You have the sound, but
you need the story too.**

”

Born into a family where music was as much a part of life as breathing, Zé Maria never questioned his path. From the moment he was born, he believed he had a musical calling on his life. *“I didn’t want to be in my mother. I wanted to be in the land with music,”* he stated during our conversation. *“I need to be near music all the time.”* His earliest memories are colored with music. His grandmother, originally from Tanzania, was a singer. Before he received any formal training, he did everything he could to learn. *“I would listen to music at my friend’s house on the radio and memorize it so that I could practice at home,”* he reminisced. Eventually, he met Chico Antonio, a Mozambican musician who is considered one of the greatest of his time. *“I knocked on his door every morning for a month before I was allowed to learn with him,”* he laughed.

The instruments Zé Maria played for me are as unique as his story and sound. The Hatsló, the pot instrument from our first encounter, was crafted by a friend. The Mbira, a wooden instrument with metal keys, has a built-in guitar jack, a fusion of tradition and modernity. Each instrument carries history, and for him, playing them is about more than just sound; it's about keeping stories alive. He believes that music should make people sing, dance, and feel connected to something beyond themselves. His playing is a conversation between cultures, blending traditional Mozambican influences with jazz, blues, and whatever else he feels in the moment. A genre of his own, he calls it “salada mista”, mixed salad.



ZÉ MARIA'S MBIRA INSTRUMENT

Zé Maria speaks about music the way some speak about family—something inherited, nurtured, and deeply personal. And if there's one thing Zé Maria makes clear, it's that his music is not just for him; it's for his people.

After traveling the world performing and recording music, Zé Maria ended up in Portugal during the pandemic, finding a community that he wanted to call home. His pride isn't just in his skill but in what his music represents. He is deeply aware of the history and meaning behind every note he plays, and he carries that with him whether he's performing in a hidden garden in Lisbon or on a stage across the world.

As I think back on the night I met Zé Maria, I understand what he meant when he said he needed to be near music all the time. It's not just an art form to him—it's the rhythm that has shaped his life. The pride he takes in his work is not just about talent but about carrying forward the voices of those who came before him. Zé Maria is more than a musician; he is a storyteller, a bridge between past and present. And for anyone lucky enough to hear him play, his music lingers long after the night is over.

Cantinho do Aziz

Mozambican Comfort Food in Mouraria

**Photos and Words by
Joy Grant**

As I wrapped up a visit to a small winery in the Portuguese countryside, my conversation with Elias, the winemaker, turned to my plans for Lisbon. After hearing that I wanted to prioritize visiting black-owned businesses, he excitedly listed off a few of his favorites and offered to join me. Never one to turn down a local experience, I took him up on his offer. While he admitted to rarely eating Mozambican food that his mom or sister didn't prepare, he did have a Mozambican restaurant up his sleeve. "They have the best chamussas," he said with a knowing smile. "I know you'll love them."

A few days later, we met in Mouraria, one of Lisbon's most diverse neighborhoods and historically a melting pot of cultures. Tucked into a side street just a short walk from the main square, Cantinho do Aziz exuded a warmth that extended beyond its food. As we approached, the sound of laughter carried from tables clustered near outdoor heaters, where diners lingered over plates of vibrant dishes.



CANTINHO DO AZIZ'S CHEF, JENNY

The majority of the seating is located in front of the restaurant. While it was December, the 60-degree weather was perfect for enjoying a meal on the terrace, which was wrapped with a yellow wall full of the restaurant's high praises from critics throughout the years.

As we settled into our table, Elias gave me a brief overview of the restaurant's history. Cantinho Do Aziz has been in business for over 30 years, weathering many storms and adjusting when needed, whether it was adjusting the menu or updating the decor. The siblings who own it weren't shy to make changes when needed, fighting to keep their father (who started the business) and the restaurant's legacy alive.

The best way to describe the menu is Mozambican with Indian and Portuguese influences. Mozambique's position off the coast of the Indian Ocean has made it a crossroad for cultures, and today, much of its Indian population traces its roots to Goa, a Portuguese colony until 1961.

Cantinho Do Aziz showcases this history beautifully, consistently illustrating how these two cultures blend well together. The famous chamussas, a Mozambican take on samosas, are a great example of that.

To start, we ordered every chamussa on the menu: beef, chicken, and veggie. Each arrived at our table perfectly golden. Chamussas are more triangular and compact than samosas, with a thinner and crispier pastry and they're packed full of flavor with spicy piri piri sauce served on the side to add the perfect amount of heat.

For the main courses, we had makoufe and caril camarão. The Makoufe, one of their most popular dishes, is comfort food at its finest. This creamy cabbage stew is full of crab and prawns cooked in a peanut and coconut sauce. The texture was soft but not mushy, and the flavors were simple but elevated with a smoky finish that lingered just long enough to make me want another bite. The caril camarão, a shrimp dish in a fragrant tomato curry, was served with a side of rice. To add an extra layer of heat I drizzled the peri peri sauce on top, an addition I highly recommend.

By the time we finished our meal, I understood why Cantinho Do Aziz is a Lisbon staple. The restaurant is more than just a place to eat, it's a space where history, culture, and culinary greatness come together with each bite.



CHAMUSSAS AND PIRI PIRI SAUCE



CARIL CAMARÃO



CRAB AND PRAWN MAKOUFE

Mozambique in Portugal

Elias Macovela's Wine, Identity, & Unshakable Passion

Photos and Words By Joy Grant



Elias Macovela's wines reflect his journey from Mozambique to Portugal; redefining representation in an industry rooted in tradition.

I stand up for my wine, I fight for my projects, and I fight for my place. That's what I want to bring to the industry. I'm not against other people. I just want to be respected as an equal, a person capable of making wine." Elias Macovela's voice is steady, his words are measured but firm. There's no bitterness or anger in his tone, only conviction.

It wasn't until he moved to Portugal at 24, to work as a theater lighting designer, that he would be fully introduced to the world of wine. "I lived near a local wine shop that an old man owned, and every Monday he'd organize a tasting with a group of older gentlemen, and they'd invite me." Elias became friends with the group and would usually be sent home with the



Seated in the middle of his winery surrounded by the very wine he nurtured from the soil up, he not only speaks of winemaking but of purpose as well. His hands move as he talks, gesturing toward the land, full of potential and hope. For Elias, each bottle is proof of his dedication, a testament to the fact that he belongs in this space, not because of permission granted, but because of the work he's put in.

Growing up, Elias was first introduced to wine by his father who was an avid wine enthusiast back home in Mozambique.

PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT:

ELIAS MACOVELA OPENING A BOTTLE OF WINE
FRESH SALAD SERVED DURING THE WINE TASTING
SELECTION OF ELIAS MACOVELA WINES

leftover wine. He quickly became engrossed with wine, finding other tastings to go to, and doing his research. Wanting to become more immersed in the field Elias eventually started a [blog](#) where he reviewed wines and built a strong reputation in the wine community. When he decided to fully step into the wine industry he got a degree in wine business, followed by a degree in winemaking. But he knew that knowledge wasn't enough, he needed funding. To prepare, he worked in real estate for two years to ensure he'd be able to stand on his own two feet. When it was finally time he hit the ground running. His first wine was released in 2019 and received [18/20 points](#) making it an overall success.

Yet, for Elias, the true reward isn't in the accolades or sales, "The best part is sitting with people and seeing them enjoy the wine, that's the best feeling" he says, a proud smile spreading across his face.

“

**The best part is sitting
with people and seeing
them enjoy the wine,
that's the best feeling**

”

Since 2019, Elias has released 3 wine collections and opened two wineries. The winery I visited is his second, nestled in the Bairrada region between Coimbra and Aveiro. Tucked away in the countryside, the rustic gray building stands tall, with a curved terracotta roof and white trimmed archway making it stand out against the blue sky. The green double doors, blending with the surrounding grass, open into a space that feels both intimate and purposeful. Inside, aging wine bottles line one wall while supplies fill the other. A charming wooden table with benches sits in the middle of the front room draped in a blue checkered tablecloth and set with wine glasses and unopened bottles. In the back, French wood and stainless steel barrels hold aging wines, alongside a grape press and white fermentation tanks. The space offers a balance of old-world features with modern efficiency, a testament to Elias' approach to winemaking.

Even outside of aesthetics, this location offers exactly what he was hoping for. "We're heavily influenced by the Atlantic sea winds and the nearby mountains. The combination makes a micro cleaner for the grapes and adds lots of freshness and minerality" he explains. "The region is known for white and sparkling wines because the soil is mostly limestone." Along with those crisp whites and sparkling varieties, Bairrada is also known for the red *baga* grape which is widely considered the mother of the grape varieties in the region. "When you work well with the *baga*, you can make a superb wine," Elias says diving into the possibilities. "Because it's so flexible, some wines made from it are very bold while others are more elegant like a pinot noir which is where mine lean."

Elias' winemaking philosophy is rooted in authenticity and typicity. He describes the perfect wine as fresh with minerality, high acidity, and, of course, the potential to pair well with food. But beyond this he ultimately wants to create wines that will stand the test of time: "I want someone to pick up one of these bottles in 20 years and say, 'Wow what a fantastic wine.'"

As we continue through the winery, Elias offers me samples of his 2024 vintages, drawn directly from the barrels. With each new sample, he lifts his glass, giving it a long, purposeful swirl before inhaling deeply. "I'm trying to understand if the wine has richness in terms of aromas because it's very young, and I was concerned about the fermentation," he explains. Swirling his 2024 sparkling rosé, he inhales again, eyes sharpening with recognition.

“

I want someone to pick up
one of these bottles in 20
years and say, ‘Wow what
a fantastic wine.’

”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

ELIAS MACOVELA IN HIS WINERY'S
WORKROOM

TART FILLED PASTRIES

ELIAS STANDING IN FRONT OF WINERY

YELLOW RENAULT 4, USED TO DELIVER
LUNCH FROM REI DOS LEITÕES

“Here I’ve found that there’s a lot of roses, strawberries, and it’s fresh,” he nods, **“I’m very happy with this wine.”** And I couldn’t help but agree, the 2024 sparkling rosé was one of my favorites, followed closely by the 2021, Bailador which is a soft red with notes of cinnamon and blackberries.

Currently, Elias grows grapes for his sparkling wines at his winery in the Dão region and sources the rest from small vineyards, working directly with farmers to organize the cultivation process. Through this system, he successfully avoids all pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides. Prioritizing health and quality, he does his best to avoid chemicals during the winemaking process as much as possible, relying only on Indigenous yeast and just enough SO₂ to protect the wine. **“I want to make sure that my product is completely clean and of the best quality,”** he emphasizes.

While the winery I visited doesn’t currently serve as a vineyard, Elias spoke excitedly about his plans to change that. “Right now, it’s not the best conditions, but with some hard work, everything is possible,” he said, looking around the space. His next goal is to successfully sell his new 2024 wine collection and then begin to update the winery, making it a better space to work and adding more storage. In the backyard, he plans to relocate the current trees and plant grapevines stretching toward the river that flows at the property’s edge, transforming the landscape into a fully operational winemaking site.

Once the tour was complete, we settled at the wooden table, ready to continue our conversation over lunch and, of course, more wine. Elias selected his 2020 white Miloro wine to accompany the Sea Bass and assorted vegetables in our second course. *Miloro* means dream and utopia in Changana, one of Mozambique’s indigenous languages. He decided to name the wines grown in this region Miloro, as a statement. “I’m Black, I’m from Mozambique, and I don’t want to hide that. I’m standing up as a Mozambican winemaker in Portugal, and I want to connect the two countries through my wine.” In an industry often marked by elitism, Elias has ingrained his identity into his craft. Miloro is more than a name, it’s an introduction to his heritage.

After voicing my interest in discovering other ways his Mozambican background shows up in his wine, he explained how his experiences have influenced his palette. “It’s my tasting background,” he said after thinking for a moment. “When they say blackberry...what...blackberries? I’m from Africa, I didn’t grow up with blackberries. I have another perception of the woods, flowers, tastes, and memory.”

Even the concept of wine pairings is influenced by his background. “To me, pairing is a personal preference. Pairing is subjective. **Traditional Pairing is a white thing, they rarely talk about ethnic foods, which is why I say: do what you want, drink what you like. If you like a drink and a dish together, then that’s enough, it’s a good pair.**”

His unapologetic approach to wine pairing mirrors his philosophy as a winemaker—bold, unbound by convention, and deeply personal. Just as he encourages people to trust their taste, he is trusting his skills and carving his own path in an industry and country where Black winemakers remain rare. As we continued our meal, I asked him about his journey into winemaking and the challenges he has faced as a Black man along the way. He attributes a lot of his success to the relationships he formed while running his blog. Though his production is largely a one-man show, the support of his network is priceless, from being loaned building equipment to help set up his winemaking operation to having a menu selected for our meeting. “I’m surrounded by a lot of friends. From the production perspective, I don’t have any complaints. I have the support of the people, and that’s really important in this industry.” But while he feels that support from his peers, consumer opinions often tell a different story. “I sense that sometimes people judge the color of my skin instead of the wine. It’s a process, and I’m trying to fight that strongly. I’m very conscious of the challenge and responsibility I have.”

That challenge manifests in subtle, yet telling, interactions. “When people find out I’m a winemaker, they ask, ‘How come you are a winemaker?’ I know what they mean, but I act like I don’t understand. I ask them to explain. They hesitate, then say, ‘You know...how did you, as a Black man, become a winemaker?’

“

“I’m Black, I’m from Mozambique, and I don’t want to hide that. I’m standing up as a Mozambican winemaker in Portugal, and I want to connect the two countries through my wine.”

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JOY INTERVIEWS ELIAS ON WINEMAKING AND BUILDING A LEGACY



ELIAS STANDS IN HIS CELLAR SURROUNDED BY AGING WINE BARRELS, HOLDING A GLASS OF RED AND A BOTTLE IN HAND.

And I say, ‘Why can’t a Black person be a winemaker?’” He fights these assumptions not with anger but by proving himself through his craft and continued success.

Elias’ vision for breaking down barriers extends beyond his personal success. He wants to open doors for more Black people in the industry, not just as winemakers but as sommeliers, distributors, and in any other role they choose to go after. More than anything, he strives to show Portugal’s Black community that it’s possible to create opportunities without having white financial support, that success can be built on their own terms, and this is where freedom is found. “I want to have a good life of my own, but I also need to build opportunities,” he says, his voice full of conviction.

This is a part of the reason Elias is so open about being a Black winemaker, refusing to hide behind the scenes. “I want people to know exactly who I am, I am not hiding who I am. I am bringing it to the table.”

When reflecting on his journey it was clear that Elias has found a perfect balance between his passions and talents. “Winemaking gives me the same thing that theater once did. Creating magic in the theater gave me pure happiness and here it’s the same thing I spend a lot of time working here building my wines and I’m also creating happiness.” With each bottle he produces, he isn’t just sharing his craft; he’s telling a story, one of heritage, perseverance, and the dream of a more inclusive industry.



Lisbon, Portugal

Lisbon, a city connected, surrounded, and founded on water, lies in western Portugal where the Tagus River, the longest in the Iberian Peninsula, meets the Atlantic Ocean. The city is built on a progression of rolling hills crowned with beautiful terracotta rooftops that reach toward the Sintra Mountains in the distance. Once the capital of an extensive overseas empire, Lisbon is now the booming heart of Portugal, buzzing with life, art, and creativity. Its roads hum with the rhythm of fado and samba music and the sounds of people mingling from all walks of life. And on every corner, you smell the essence of world-class food. Since the 1970s, waves of migration have transformed Lisbon into a melting pot, blending Cape Verdean, Brazilian, Mozambican, and other cultural influences. Today, Lisbon's history, diversity, and ability to evolve have made it one of Europe's most alluring capitals.

Hidden



Gems

Uncover a few of Lisbon's hidden gems, from secret Chinese eateries tucked behind unmarked doors to a circus-themed restaurant with stunning views. Step into a hidden garden oasis where cocktails and greenery create a tranquil escape.

Photos and Story by Joy Grant

Chinês Clandestinos

Chinês clandestinos, also known as secret Chinese restaurants, can be found throughout Lisbon, especially if you know what you're looking for and are willing to have a little adventure. These restaurants are usually family-run and unlicensed to avoid business taxes. While many clandestinos were either forced to be shut down or become legitimate (and brought up to health code) during 2020, a few are still operating under the radar. They reside in residential buildings with no large signs or branding other than a Chinese lantern hanging in the window. The one I visited was on a dark side street in Mouraria with a large, creaky blue door that opened to a pitch-black apartment entryway. If I hadn't been with a group I trusted, I would have turned around and found a less suspicious, well-lit restaurant. Once we trekked out of the darkness and up the stairs to a door with more lanterns, we were welcomed into an apartment that smelled better than any restaurant. Ginger, lemon grass, and toasted sesame aroma filled the air. But was the food worth the adventure?



CHINESE LANTERNS HANG BY THE WINDOW, GUIDING PATRONS TO THE RESTAURANT



HOMESTYLE DISHES FILLED WITH CRISPY DUCK, DUMPLINGS, AND HOT AND SOUR SOUP

The dining room was set with a large table, and we were seated next to a table of Danish students in what was previously a bedroom. As we settled into our seats, it became even more apparent that we were in what was once someone's home, from the mismatched place settings to the art on the wall. This dining experience felt like visiting a friend's family. The owner took our order and brought us jasmine tea while we waited. Before long, pork dumplings, sweet and sour soup, and crispy duck sat before us. The dumplings were fried perfectly golden, and the soup was savory with just the right amount of spice to help with the cold I was battling. But the pièce de résistance was the duck. Crispy, tender, and seasoned to perfection, each bite collapsed into rich, juicy pieces. Who knew that something as simple as a lantern in a window could lead to food that I'd be dreaming of more than 5,000 miles away? I guess you could say the journey was worth it.

The Secret Garden LX

Picture yourself wandering around Portugal's ancient streets and stumbling across Miradouro da Senhora do Monte, a famous viewpoint overlooking one of the most beautiful vistas in Lisbon. The city lights up at night, and you spot the infamous 25 de Abril Bridge's outline as it sparkles in the distance. Once you take your pictures and turn to head out, you hear music playing. You follow the sound down a few steps and around a corner before you enter [The Secret Garden LX](#), a welcoming paradise.



ARTWORK BY CO-OWNER MARCIO BAHIA

The beautiful view from before can now be enjoyed from your seat, with a drink in your hand and surrounded by friendly faces. You can sit at a table by the front to be immersed in the hustle and bustle or steal a corner table near the back of the terrace if you want to enjoy an intimate moment alone.

Surrounded by lush green plants, as the name suggests, this bar is multifunctional. Grab breakfast and coffee in the morning or a stronger drink in the evening. Enjoy live music, a DJ set, or check out beautiful art crafted by one of the owners. I was lucky enough to be

there on a night with a jam session. Different musicians gathered with their instruments while singers riffed off of each other, creating an electric energy in the space. The Secret Garden has something for everyone and is more than worth a visit.



MUSICIANS HAVING A JAM SESSION

Chapitô a Mesa

If you ask someone in Portugal what [Chapitô a Mesa](#) is, you'll likely receive a variety of answers. For some, it's a restaurant famous for its stunning panoramic views of Lisbon. For others, it's a non-profit that supports at-risk youth through circus training and a focus on the arts. For me, it's where I first tried vinho verde and experienced the charm of live samba music.

Whatever brings you to Chapitô, one thing's for certain: the atmosphere is electric and unforgettable. The venue is split into two levels: a restaurant and a circus-inspired tented terrace on the main floor and a bar with an entertainment space downstairs. Each space has its own personality and unique menu. They often host jam sessions and student performances. When my friends and I



VIEW OF STUDENT DORMS



OUTDOOR PATIO LEADING TO THE LOWER LEVEL BAR

arrived we were immediately drawn to the sound of instruments coming from downstairs, excited to hear good music.

Descending the spiral staircase that led to the lower level, we were welcomed into a vibrant scene. An energetic crowd surrounded musicians seated in a circle. Tambourines and guitars accompanied passionate vocalists as they sang samba classics, allowing the crowd to sing along. The space was full, leaving most of us to stand, but somehow, it still felt intimate. A blend of tourists and locals made it a dynamic experience. You could tell that this was the first time many of us had heard this style of music, while others appeared to revel in lyrics that held deeper meaning for them.

Looking around it was clear that Chapitô is everything people describe it as and more; it's an homage to Lisbon's creative spirit. From the enchanting music to the bustling crowd, the entire experience left me more connected to Lisbon's allure. If you find yourself in Lisbon, don't miss the chance to discover what Chapitô means to you.



MUSICIANS SINGING A DUET WHILE PLAYING GUITARS



MUSICIANS PERFORMING A SAMBA JAM SESSION

PORTUGAL'S HOUSING CRISIS



A CASE FOR
STAYING
Home

Dive deeper into Portugal's housing crisis, where rising rents, digital nomads, and political policies create overlapping challenges that make it harder for locals and immigrants to stay in their homes.

Story and Photos by Joy Grant

I visited Portugal in November 2024, and it's hard to describe, but there was a restlessness in the air. Almost every conversation with a local eventually turned towards politics, whether the topic was a lack of housing, excessive tourism, or the outcomes of recent elections. The evidence of the underlying tension was everywhere, from posters advertising protests lining the streets to "Tuk Tuks go to Bangkok" (referring to the Southeast Asian taxis that are rising in popularity among tourists) spray-painted throughout neighborhoods. While eating at a restaurant in Alfama, Tuk-Tuks consistently passed the building, hogging most of the street. "Worst tourist trap ever," my waiter scoffed as one passed blasting Dua Lipa's latest song at an obscene volume. The dissension isn't just about the issues themselves, though; it's about something much deeper. Many feel they're fighting against cultural erasure.

If you're considering moving to Portugal with intentions of a slower, richer life but don't realize your relocation drives up costs and accelerates the loss of culture, you might be a part of the problem. Before moving, consider the impact of your decision not just on your life but on the lives of the people who have been there for generations.

When gauging the benefits ask yourself, are they worth someone else losing their home?

With the power of this choice comes the responsibility to consider the whole picture and understand how your temporary decisions can have a lasting impact on both the community you're leaving and the one you're retreating to.

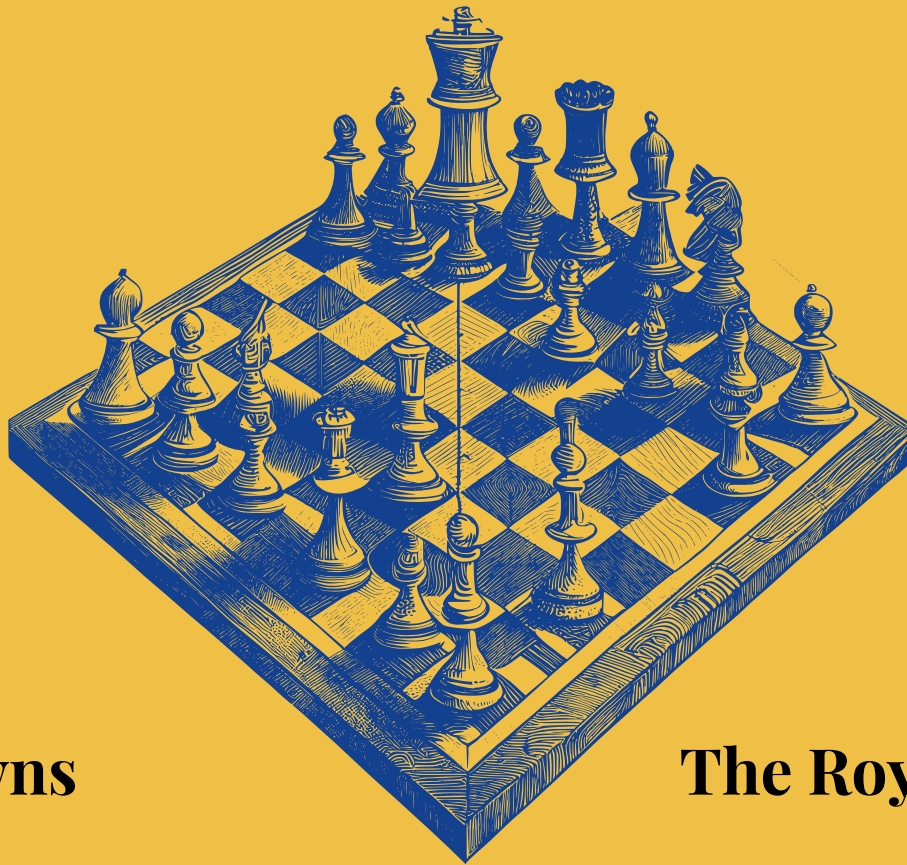
No amount of supporting local businesses or involving yourself in the local community changes the fact that your presence negatively affects others, especially those who are already marginalized. Although daunting, the real solution may be staying home and strengthening your community.



TUK-TUK TRAVELING THROUGH ALFAMA

The Players & Their Roles

Portugal's housing crisis is often portrayed as a conflict between locals and foreign buyers, but the reality is far more complex. The broader problem is not just about real estate; it's about the deep, systemic shifts that political policy triggers in communities. The solutions to Portugal's housing crisis will vary depending on who you ask. What's clear, though, is that the actions of one group often ripple out, influencing the lives of others. Understanding these overlapping challenges is the first step toward finding solutions to a crisis that affects many.



The Pawns

The most numerous but most vulnerable represent those with the least control.

Locals: the lifelong residents struggling to stay in the game. Their movements and power become more limited as foreign money floods the board.

Non-Western immigrants: many come seeking better opportunities but find themselves pinned by endless obstacles with little hope of advancing.

The Royal Court

Those with more power and flexibility.

The government: with control over policy, sits safely behind its pawns, moving across the board with ease. By prioritizing foreign investment, it leaves its own pieces exposed.

Western immigrants: the powerful pieces who are privileged with more money and can maneuver with a freedom local residents and non-Western immigrants can't afford.

The Government: The Policymaker & Facilitator

At the center of Portugal's housing crisis is the government, both as a policymaker shaping the rules of the game and as a facilitator whose decisions (or lack thereof) determine who receives the perks of an expanding country and who is left to deal with the growing pains.

Portugal was one of the hardest-hit countries during the 2008 recession, ultimately requiring a €78 billion bailout. In response, the government introduced the Golden Visa Program in 2012 to attract foreign investment, offering residency to non-EU nationals who invested in sectors like real estate, business, and research. The real estate option required participants to invest between €280,000 and €500,000.

Portugal's Golden Visa program stood out for its relaxed rules, including low investment thresholds, minimal residency requirements (just one week per year compared to Greece's 7-year requirement), and family benefits. It became highly popular, attracting foreign investment and boosting the country's economy. By 2023, Portugal had received over €7 billion from the program, contributing to a budget surplus. The government also started offering tax breaks to expats, hoping to encourage them to move to Portugal. Within a decade, the number of foreign residents grew by 40%.

The government succeeded, so why are so many people upset?

The government succeeded, so why are so many people upset? While foreign investors reaped the benefits of Portugal's new policies, many locals saw their everyday lives flipped upside down. Real estate investment quickly became the most popular Golden Visa option and with little regulation on where and how many properties could be bought, housing prices soared and rent prices swelled. Since 2015, home prices in Portugal have more than doubled, and rents rose by 36% in 2023 alone.

Meanwhile, over half the workforce earns less than €1,000 a month. Consequently, many who had weathered the brunt of the recession suddenly found themselves priced out of their own neighborhoods. The government neglected to implement strong rent control policies or make plans to raise the local income, leaving its people defenseless to rising costs.

With tensions mounting, the government has received many critiques for not keeping the market in check. Eventually, the real estate option and unfair tax breaks were removed in October 2023. But many believe it's too little, too late.

In response to the numbers and an outcry from its residents, this year, the government has started making strides toward addressing the housing crisis. With one of the EU's lowest public housing rates

at 2%, Portugal recently began correcting this by budgeting €2.8 billion to build 59,000 public low-cost housing units in the next five years. They have also created legislation that allows for the reclassification of rural land for urban use. Additionally, the government has introduced tax breaks for young workers and direct financial assistance to low-income tenants.

While these efforts look promising, housing prices will likely continue rising until at least 2026 due to demand. Despite government intervention, many believe the damage is already done. Foreign investment continues to dominate the market, leaving locals with limited options. Policies shape the housing crisis on paper, but their impact is most deeply felt on the streets, where locals face the daily realities of displacement and cultural loss.

Locals: The Displaced & Struggling Residents

For many lifelong residents, staying in Portugal feels less like playing the game and more like trying not to be sacrificed. During a tour of Mouraria, my local guide consistently pointed out the freshly painted white walls, which contrasted the once-vibrant street art that used to define the neighborhood. Artists and the government continuously reclaim and repaint the walls, each marking their territory in an ongoing battle for the neighborhood's identity. The city that residents have known for decades, the one defined by its cobblestone streets, traditional Fado music spilling out of cafés, and tight-knit communities, is rapidly changing.

Housing and tourism are critical issues, however, they are symptoms of a much larger issue: the loss of community. While many argue that tourists are good for the economy, Portugal's tourism industry is monopolized by international conglomerates, leaving locals with little to show. Small business owners to tour guides, have shared that their conversations often circle back to a single question: Who is Portugal really for anymore? The very essence of Lisbon is at risk of becoming nothing more than a backdrop for Instagram photos rather than a place where people live, work, and grow.



WHO IS
PORTUGAL
REALLY FOR
ANYMORE?

Plans for a 150-room hotel in the Graça neighborhood have sparked protests, further highlighting tension between locals and the forces of gentrification. In a city already struggling with the impacts of excessive tourism, the approval of this project has felt like a final blow to those fighting the transformation of their neighborhoods into tourist attractions.

Graça, already reeling from rising rents and displacement, faces further erosion of its community fabric. The Quartel da Graça, a former convent, was granted to the SANA group for the project despite protests about the lack of environmental studies and public consultation.

As highlighted in an [Instagram post](#) from [Stop Despejos](#), a collective fighting for housing rights, the hotel threatens the character of a neighborhood known for its tight-knit community.

Protesters argue, “*The Graça barracks is a public building and therefore must be a space for those who live, work, or study here, whether they are children, teenagers, or adults, Portuguese or foreign.*”

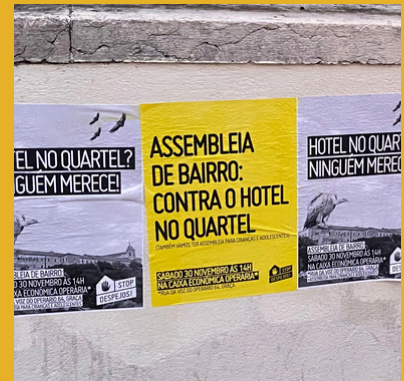
For residents, this hotel isn’t just another luxury development; it’s the latest chapter in the gradual erasure of their homes, their culture, and their way of life. And while protests have made headlines, many locals feel like they are running out of time to reclaim what has been lost.



THE QUARTEL DA GRAÇA



GRAFITI DISPLAYING “R.I.P LX” (LISBON)



FLYERS ADVERTISING PROTESTS

Non-Western Immigrants: The Overlooked Workforce

While locals struggled with displacement, another overlooked group faced even greater obstacles: non-Western immigrants. For many non-Western immigrants, the game feels rigged from the start, with every move met by obstacles that keep them from advancing. Over the decades, as Portugal’s migration patterns have shifted, these communities have remained vulnerable, particularly when it comes to securing stable housing.

Following the [Carnation Revolution in 1974](#) and the consequential decolonization of Portugal’s overseas colonies, returning colonists flooded a strained job market. When Portugal became a member of the [EU in 1986](#), notably two things happened. First, returnees gained access to better job opportunities across the EU, and immigrants from former colonies arrived, drawn by cultural ties, shared language, and job prospects in growing industries.

This migration flow quickly became a symbiotic relationship. By 2015, stricter immigration policies in Northern Europe led a new wave of migrants to Portugal, which had one of the most lenient pathways to citizenship and, ultimately, an EU passport. Among the largest groups were South Asians, drawn by a lenient citizenship pathway. Previously, undocumented immigrants could gain residency simply by finding a job. This provided stability for immigrants and helped fill vital gaps in Portugal's agriculture, construction, and domestic services, where they often form the backbone of the workforce.

Unfortunately, the government had no plans of making sure

people would have access to housing once in the country. When the housing crisis became crucial, these communities were hit the hardest. With few protections and rights, non-Western immigrants are faced with the same housing limitations as locals, however, they are also vulnerable to exploitation from employees and landlords. This became overwhelmingly clear following a 2023 Lisbon house fire, which not only revealed 16 South Asian migrants were being sublet a single studio apartment but also left two of them dead.

In 2024, Portugal tightened its immigration policies, requiring a work visa for entry. What was

once a difficult but navigable system became a bureaucratic dead end, trapping many in precarious jobs without a path to legal residency. Without the possibility of gaining legal status through work, many find themselves stuck in a cycle of risky employment and housing instability.

Their experiences underscore the brutal truths and a need for comprehensive solutions that address immigration, labor rights, and housing access, or Portugal's dependence on immigrant labor will continue to conflict with the realities that these communities constantly suffer.

Western Immigrants: The Unintended Gentrifiers

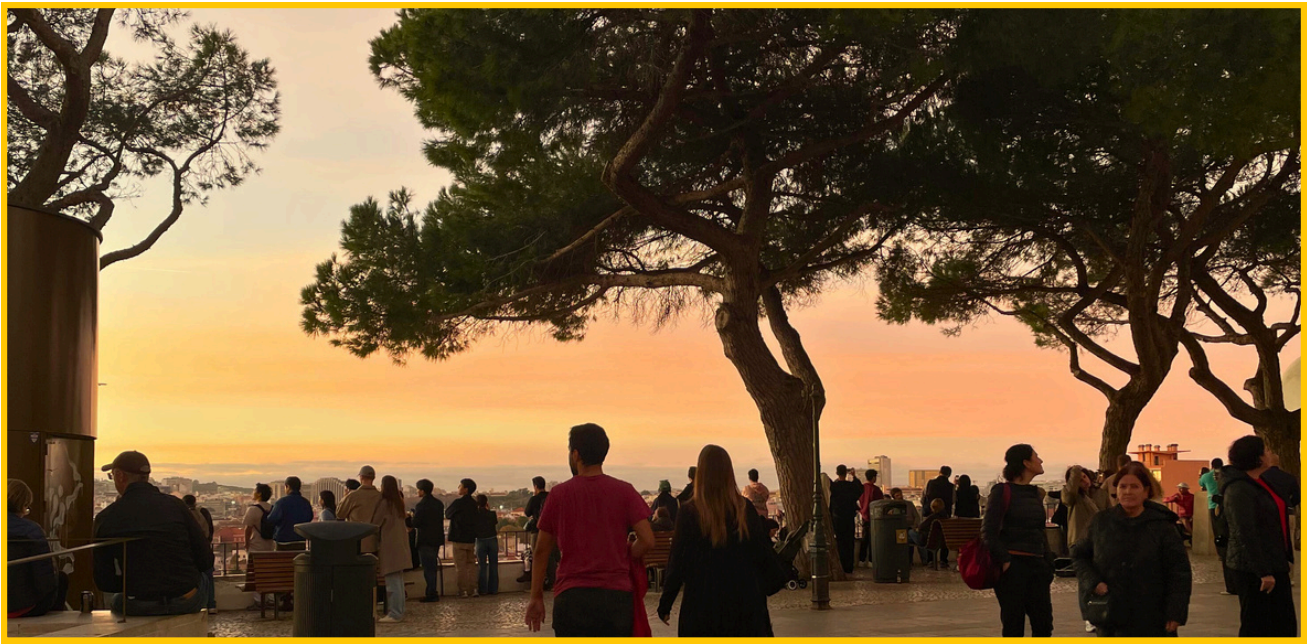
To some, moving abroad is a fresh start; to others, it's a powerful piece claiming more space on a crowded board. While expats' reasons for migrating may seem frivolous in comparison to non-Western immigrants, they're often still valid. Some relocate due to issues with the healthcare system, a desire for an improved quality of life, rising costs of living, or dissatisfaction with the political or social climate of their homes.

While these are legitimate reasons, the issue begins when these are the only problems that Western immigrants can see, and they're blind to the strains their presence creates in the local community.

With the world becoming more globalized and travel becoming easier, the last 15 years have seen many more Westerners migrating. For example, the

number of Americans living abroad rose from 29.3 million in 2005 to 40 million in 2019. Since COVID-19, the numbers have grown significantly with the flexibility of remote work, creating a path for digital nomads and governments like Portugal, who are creating visas to draw them specifically.

But it's important to recognize that Westerners leaving their



TOURISTS GATHER FOR SUNSET PHOTOS AT MIRADOURO DA GRAÇA

home countries is not the same as non-Western immigrants leaving theirs. Many non-Western immigrants are not leaving by choice, they are fleeing economic collapse, political instability, and climate disasters. Often, they are sending money back home, actively strengthening their communities in ways that their governments have failed to do. They are not welcomed into new countries with open arms, nor do they arrive with financial security or the privilege of choosing a life of ease. Meanwhile, Westerners (especially Americans) are often embraced as desirable expats, granted pathways to residency, and given an easier transition, all while driving up local housing costs and deepening inequalities. The impact is not the same.

Immigrants from higher-income countries often earn more money and usually unintentionally

become gentrifiers while living in lower-income destinations. When planning to move abroad, instead of looking at the market and finding something that is reasonably priced, they will often look to spend more than locals on everything from housing to food, services, transportation, entertainment, and more, eventually driving prices up for everyone.

Not only does this create an economic disrupter, it disrupts the local culture as well. Everything from the architecture to the decor to the music played in stores changes to cater to one subset of people. And what about the people who were left behind? Is it fair that the everyday burden of dealing with the issues at home is left to them when they often have the least power and control?

Wide-Ranging Consequences

The desire to leave home when things get rough is understandable, there are good reasons to seek a better quality of life elsewhere. But is there an ethical way to do so? I understand the fear of opening your phone and worrying that you'll read a headline with more news of your rights slowly being stripped away. I know the devastation of working hard for a life that seems to be constantly pushed out of reach by a system built on oppression and greed. But Westerners moving to Portugal, or anywhere else, don't just escape their own problems; they bring consequences to the places they settle.

Portugal, despite its appeal, isn't free of issues, especially for Black and Brown people. Racism exists, and the government, in recent years, has been shifting further right. The sense of safety that some Black Americans feel there isn't necessarily because Portugal is inherently better; it's because their money affords them a privilege that shields them from many of the struggles faced by local Black and immigrant communities. And for many, the instinct is to lean into that privilege rather than question it. While this is a problem that the government is at the root of and has the ultimate responsibility to fix, it's cruel and short-sighted to act as though those who take advantage of the situation aren't also part of the issue.

Recognizing that privilege is the first step, but what matters more is what we choose to do with it. If there was ever a time to take action, to show up to community meetings, to hold politi-

cians accountable, to fight against harmful policies, it's now. It's not too late. But if those of us who recognize the problem and have the means to leave do, it will be too late.

Generations before us rarely had the opportunity to flee the U.S. when their rights and quality of life were threatened. Their fight is the very reason recent politics are so jarring to us; they did the work to bring this country to a more inclusive and free space. Instead of a reason to leave, the situation in the United States should serve as a reminder that Democracy isn't something that just exists; it has to be fought for, constantly. If Americans dissatisfied with the country's political direction choose to leave instead of staying to push for change, who is left behind to fight? What happens to our already vulnerable communities? These communities are the least likely to be listened to when it comes to policy and change. In conversations with those considering the move, one response stands out to me the most: "I just want to leave for a while and maybe return when things get better." But I want to be very clear: there is no guarantee that things will improve unless those with the most power and resources to positively impact change, stay.

It often feels as though people want to benefit from the work of others rather than build stronger communities at home. But at what cost? Once again, the question has to be asked: Are you okay with contributing to this problem, or do you want to be part of the solution?

Thank You for Reading!



As we close this issue, we hope these stories have brought you closer to the heart of Portugal; the layers of history etched into its streets, the people shaping its future, and the complex realities beneath its beauty. From conversations with those redefining tradition to the hidden corners that reveal a different side of the country, this journey has been about more than just places, it's about perspectives.

Your curiosity fuels this magazine. With every page turned, you help us uplift voices, uncover hidden histories, and honor the richness of the places we visit. We hope this journey not only sparks your wanderlust but also deepens your understanding of the people and traditions that shape the world.

Stay connected with us on Instagram @JoeyMeetsWorld, where we continue to share behind-the-scenes stories, updates from the road, and inspiration for your next adventure.

Here's to more stories, more history, and more joy; wherever the world takes us next.

