



Journey to Portugal: In Pursuit of Portugal's History and Culture

By José Saramago

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When José Saramago decided to write a book about Portugal, his only desire was that it be unlike all other books on the subject, and in this he has certainly succeeded. Recording the events and observations of a journey across the length and breadth of the country he loves dearly, Saramago brings Portugal to life as only a writer of his brilliance can. Forfeiting the usual sources such as tourist guides and road maps, he scours the country with the eyes and ears of an observer fascinated by the ancient myths and history of his people. Whether it be an inaccessible medieval fortress set on a cliff, a wayside chapel thick with cobwebs, or a grand mansion in the city, the extraordinary places of this land come alive.

Always meticulously attentive to those elements of ancient Portugal that persist today, he examines the country in its current period of rapid transition and growth. *Journey to Portugal* is an ode to a country and its rich traditions.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In 1979, 19 years before he won the Nobel Prize for literature, Portuguese novelist Saramago (*Blindness*) journeyed across his homeland, hoping "to write a book on Portugal that [would be] capable of offering a fresh way of looking, a new way of feeling" about the country's history and culture. Out of that personal quest comes this monumental work, a literary hybrid that intermingles an intimate portrait of a nation with aspects of a novel, travel log and guide book. From the outset, a deep sense of Portuguese and European history pervades Saramago's descriptions, which evince a longing for the past whose fragments lie in every crevice, niche and portico. For example, upon seeing "traces of ancient anti-Spanish rancor in the form of obscene graffiti scored into good 15th-century stone" in Miranda do Douro, he recalls a 17th-century siege that took place in the small town. Later on in his trip, standing in the ruins of a church, he muses, "[T]he day before yesterday the Romans were here; yesterday it was the turn of the monks of Sao Cucufate; today it's the traveler." Saramago's absolute attachment to his homeland filters through every paragraph, impelling him to create a new vision of the country: a vision that aims to meld Portugal's past to its present and future. The reader may find the author's use of the third person when speaking of himself rather tedious, and some drawn-out sections waffle in personal, almost mystical, reflections. But it is difficult to resist being enchanted by the witty, at times sarcastic reveries of a man in search of his land, its history and himself. 6 maps, b&w photos. (Mar.) Forecast: Saramago's name will attract some readers to a book that, without it, will appeal to only a limited niche market.

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From Library Journal

For many Americans, Portugal is a distant relative of Spain, a country whose glory has vanished since the days of Henry the Navigator and his discoveries in the New World. Saramago, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature, writes to dispel this notion. The author originally wrote this book to show his compatriots his deep love for the history, traditions, and countryside of his native land, and his passion for his subject shines through on every page. The many black-and-white photographs will familiarize the reader with some of the more obscure locations discussed here. Unfortunately, Saramago's use of the third-person narrative throughout the text gives it a stilted, artificial tone that distracts from the information presented. Further, Saramago is so deeply involved in his topic that he can be obscure to readers unfamiliar with the details of Portuguese history and culture. Some notes are available, and the maps and index are excellent. Recommended for larger travel collections where introductory travel guides to Portugal are already available.

-Dolga B. Wise Compaq Computer Corp. Austin, TX

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Review

PRAISE FOR *JOURNEY TO PORTUGAL*

"The personality that makes the book worth your while is that of Saramago, the unmistakable voice that hovers over his fictional world and now, over the real world of his native Portugal."--*The Seattle Times/Post Intelligencer*

"In observances both wry and soulful, Saramago makes this travelogue a page-turner."--*Travel & Leisure*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Howard Martinez:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to often the Mall. How about open or even read a book allowed Journey to Portugal: In Pursuit of Portugal's History and Culture? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have some other opinion?

Irvin Ehlers:

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also be a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The benefits you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of publication you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with education books but if you want experience happy read one having theme for entertaining including comic or novel. Often the Journey to Portugal: In Pursuit of Portugal's History and Culture is kind of book which is giving the reader erratic experience.

Casey Timmons:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or maybe go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book that you just read you can spent the whole day to reading a reserve. The book Journey to Portugal: In Pursuit of Portugal's History and Culture it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not to cover but this book possesses high quality.

Abigail Shelton:

On this era which is the greater person or who has ability to do something more are more valuable than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you must do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to get a look at some books. One of many books in the top collection in your reading list is actually Journey to Portugal: In Pursuit of Portugal's History and Culture. This book which can be qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking up and review this e-book you can get many advantages.

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