

Post



Scott Farnsworth

Jun 3, 2025 · 5 min read

First (and last) full Douro Valley day - June 4, 2025

Updated: Jun 9, 2025

SUMMARY

A total "dolce farniente" (sweet doing nothing) day. In paradise! I loved this place SO much. We spent the day lazing around, taking a dip in the pool and hot tub, having a lovely salad lunch on our terrace. More lazing around, reading, wine and another delicious dinner.

Heavenly! - Karen

[Photos](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

DETAIL

Group consensus is that it's so nice here we won't use the car today, but just hang, eat, drink, and hike through the vineyards. There's a winery or two nearby, so we may visit those.

Our room includes breakfasts, which is very good. Lots of fruit, cheeses, meats. We both get a cheese and tomato omelet, yum. Various types of bread and spreads. From trees on their property are big loquats. The one I have is delicious.

Stuffed from breakfast we just hang outside the room, on in the big cabana next to the pool. I'm restless and so walk the property. Flowers are everywhere and many are blooming. There's obviously local Mediterranean varieties but everything else as well, including flowering cacti. The fig bushes are as big as a small house but for now the fruit is still small.

It seems no part of the property has been spared when it comes to answering the question: what big flowering plants can we put here? Beyond the property, for as far as the eye can see (which is a long way) are grape vineyards. This suggests that finding skilled horticulturalists who know how to make plants thrive isn't an issue.

The flowering plants are growing at the base of, and between, well manicured olive trees that appear to be a hundred years old. Rock walls divide up the hillside and stone steps get one safely from level to level as I work my way down the hillside. At a couple of places I realize I'm standing next to a very healthy rosemary bush that's taller than I am (and smells better, too).

I find their vegetable garden and see workers tending to stuff. Eventually I head back up the property hillside to see what the rest of the group is up to. The threesome hasn't moved, they're still relaxing, reading under the shade of the cabana, just feet from the pool. This won't stand!

I act as the agitator and convince everyone to get suited up and in the pool. It's cool enough to take a long minute (or ten) to get into the pool. Nancy plays with a big squirt gun/cannon, but kindly doesn't aim the water at anyone.

After the invigorating swim we realize it's been hours since we've eaten and our requested 2:00 pm roasted chicken salad lunch must be ready soon. "Just doing the finishing touches" comes the reply. We convene on the patio at our room and soon are chomping down on a delicious, healthy lunch. We ordered two salads (each supposedly portioned for one) and we almost can't finish them split each between two of us.

Filled we again pursue power-relaxation and poolside reading with renewed vigor. Non-stop sloth finally gets the better of me and I suit up for a walk. Madam (Adelaide) says the twenty minutes I think it'll take me to walk down to the Douro river is more like 45 minutes to an hour (each way).

She points me, instead, to some trees, way far away, on the very far side of the valley. She gives me directions on how to walk there. 40 minutes each way with no traffic and wonderful views. She's right. I do get to see the Douro river, albeit from a great height.

Back home I'm informed it's time for pre-dinner cocktails on the patio, overlooking the vineyards. Always a good idea. The wine's good as we look back on our time together. We sadly split with Mike and Liz when we left Asturias a couple of days ago and tomorrow noon, Karen and I go separate ways from Ron and Nancy. We play a casual game of "Favorite tapas" and "Best meal" and "City you're most likely to go back to".

Eventually we clean up and head to the dining room. At the next table is a couple maybe close to our age (so young, wink). They're from The Netherlands so we have a fun chat with them. Their country's official color is orange and our current president is orange, so we have that in common. There's a lot of churn in how our country is being governed and yesterday the Dutch prime minister resigned. Such fun! We switch our talk to Portugal and travel and all enjoy the topics more.

Our final dinner here is (not surprisingly) delicious. The appetizer is bacalou (dried salt-cod) soufflé. We're dubious but each of us devours every last bite. It's delicious, as is the beef stew with vegetables that follows. The accompanying local wines are also good and we probably have more than is advisable. But we're on vacation, am I right?

For the dessert (chocolate tart with whipped cream) we ask for smaller slices and the sort of comply. We all agree we're going to miss this place. We'll be back!

Photos



As General Mills and Kellogg's would suggest, the best days start with a complete and balanced breakfast. We tried our best and enjoyed it.



We learn that Molly doesn't only visit at dinner, but apparently any time food might be dropped. Isn't that a face only an orthodontist could love.



Karen, Nancy, and Ron were emphatic about today being a 'lounge and read near the pool day' and by gosh they're going to make it so.



While the three kids test out the theory that reading by the pool lowers your blood pressure I tour the property's grounds, inspecting the various buildings, planted areas, recreational areas, and mostly flowers. They're extensive, numerous and pretty.



So many 100 year old olive trees. There's also a tree-house in this one for the kids.



So many flowers. Lots of roses, irises, lavender, etc. etc.



Done inspecting the back 40 (and front 40) I check back in on the kids. No change to their location or avocation. With some prodding I end up getting everyone in the pool for a cool, refreshing dip. No photographic evidence is forthcoming.



At lunch time we had two big, yummy salads with roast chicken delivered to our room's terrace and the four of us dig in. That should be lunch for two but the four of us can barely finish them.



Exhausted by their morning activities and lunch, Ron and Nancy retire to the hot tub to relax.



In the afternoon I get restless at only having been at the hotel since we arrived. I head out on a hike. I invite any and all takers, but everyone else wants to continue their hotel-based chilling. First stop for me is a look back at the front of our hotel.



On the hike the sun provided some super views.



The wild flowers can't compete with the flowers at the hotel, but these aren't half bad.



From across the valley I can look back and see our home for these few days.



Zooming in I can see all of the various buildings and recreational areas of our temporary home.



High atop the hill across the valley I can look down and finally see the river (The Douro) that lends the valley it's name. A river cruise boat looks like a picture from Viking Cruise Lines.



FARNSNIENTE



How far can you get in 40 minutes? See tree circled in the upper right. An urgent message on my phone says I'm needed back at the hotel, soon. Upon my return I find it's to help empty a wine bottle. Don't mind if I do!



Dinner is  us, of course. Lots of vegetables but even more tender beef. We enjoy it but try to be good. We don't eat too too much.

[Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

Subscribe Form

Email Address

Submit

