

THE WHITE EDIT

OUR FULL GUIDE TO GETTING MARRIED IN PORTUGAL

You can legally marry in Portugal, without having to fulfil any residency requirements, in either a Civil wedding ceremony or a Catholic ceremony. Non-Catholic religious ceremonies are not legally recognised in Portugal and the Anglican churches based in Lisbon, Oporto, Estoril and the Algarve are not licensed for marriages. Many couples choose to avoid the legalities and paperwork involved and have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK to fulfil the legal requirements, followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Portugal at a venue of their choice.

Civil Ceremony

In Portugal, civil ceremonies are conducted by the local registrar and take place at either the civil registry office (Conservatória do Registo Civil) or a location of your choice.

There are no residency requirements for couples wishing to have a civil ceremony.

This also applies to same-sex couples. It has been legal for same-sex couples to be married in Portugal since 2010.

Religious Ceremony

You can have a religious ceremony if...

- one/both of you are Catholic and neither of you are divorced.

No residency rules apply. A Roman Catholic wedding is legally binding and will take place in a Roman Catholic Church.

Non-Catholic religious ceremonies are not legally recognised in Portugal and the Anglican churches based in Lisbon, Oporto, Estoril and the Algarve are not licensed for marriages.

Wedding Blessing / Humanist Ceremony

The private, non-denominational, non-institutional nature of a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony gives you the flexibility to marry when, where and how you want. There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to take place in a licensed building. Therefore, you can hold your ceremony wherever you like —at your favourite restaurant, in a private villa, on a secluded beach or in the middle of an olive grove. The choice really is yours. There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to follow a set structure so it can be as formal or informal as you like — you can have a traditional Church Ceremony with the religious parts replaced with readings and vows or you can have a light-hearted ceremony with humorous readings and vows. Once again, the choice is yours. These ceremonies are usually performed by a celebrant who will be able to help you select the style, structure, readings, music and vows that reflect your tastes and feelings as a couple resulting in a highly personalised and unique, non-religious ceremony.

Please note: If you do choose to have a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony you will also need to have an official civil ceremony in order for your marriage to be legally binding.

Civil Ceremony

You can legally marry in Portugal without having to fulfil any residency requirements, in either a civil wedding ceremony or a Catholic ceremony. Non-Catholic religious ceremonies are not legally recognised in Portugal and the Anglican churches based in Lisbon, Oporto, Estoril and the Algarve are not licensed for marriages. Many couples choose to avoid the legalities and paperwork involved and have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK (to fulfil the legal requirements) followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Portugal at a venue of their choice.

**** A civil ceremony is easier to arrange than a religious ceremony in a Catholic church. ****

Civil Ceremony Civil ceremonies are conducted by the local registrar and take place at either the civil registry office (Conservatória do Registo Civil) or a location of your choice. You can even have your wedding ceremony on one of Portugal's many beautiful beaches although a license will be required. During the busy summer months (mid June-mid September), it may only be possible to get such a license for after 7pm.

The process:

1. Contact the local civil registry office (Conservatória do Registo Civil) in the city/town where you wish to get married to find out about local marriage laws, including what documents you and your partner will need to provide.

You will probably require the following documentation:

- A CNI or equivalent from your home country. This document confirms you are not married in your home country and there are no other impediments to the marriage.

Information about UK-issued CNIs can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/portugal>

Non-UK citizens can click [here](#) for details on how to obtain the relevant certificate from their home country.

- Birth certificate (long form version).
- A valid passport.
- If you are widowed, you must provide both your previous marriage certificate and the death certificate of your husband/wife.
- If you are divorced or your marriage was annulled, you must provide the relevant certificates.

If you are using the services of a wedding planner to help you with the paperwork you will also need a Procuração; a Power of Attorney document drawn up by a notary (Notário). Your wedding planner can obtain this for you.

Please note: Documents issued outside of Portugal must be translated into Portuguese and have a Hague Apostille from the relevant issuing office in your country of residence (For UK issued documents go to www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised).

If the name on any of your documents doesn't appear exactly as it does on your birth certificate, you will need to provide the Portuguese marriage authorities with evidence of your name change (Eg. adoption certificate; marriage certificate; deed poll). If you fail to do this, the authorities may refuse to allow the marriage to go ahead.

- 2.** Your wedding must take place within 3 months of approval being granted.
- 3.** The ceremony must be conducted in Portuguese. You are not legally required to have the ceremony translated but you may arrange for this to take place.

*** the legal ceremony can be quite formal (and lack romance) without traditions such as the bride being given away or the sharing of personal vows. ***

- 4.** Once the ceremony has taken place, you will be issued with an international wedding certificate.



Religious Ceremony

You can have a religious ceremony if...

- one/both of you are Catholic and neither of you are divorced.

No residency rules apply. A Roman Catholic wedding is legally binding and will take place in a Roman Catholic Church.

** If you wish to have a non-Catholic religious ceremony in Portugal, you will need to have a civil ceremony first in order for your marriage to be legally binding. **

Couples planning to have a Catholic marriage ceremony in Portugal need to allow several months for all the documentary requirements to be met.

The process:

1. Contact the priest of the church where you would like the ceremony to take place.
2. Visit your local parish priest to discuss your plans to marry in Portugal. He will be able to guide you through the process and documentation required. You will probably require the following documentation:
 - A pre-nuptial enquiry form.
 - A valid passport.
 - Baptism Certificate issued from the parish of your baptism.

Please note: the certificate must be dated between three to six months prior to your wedding.

- Confirmation Certificate issued from the parish of your confirmation.

Please note: the certificate must be dated between three to six months prior to your wedding.

- A CNI or equivalent from your home country. This document confirms you are not married in your home country and there are no other impediments to the marriage. Information about UK-issued CNIs can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/portugal> Non-UK citizens can click here for details on how to obtain the certificate relevant to their country.
- A certificate confirming the completion of a pre-marriage course (Pre Cana). Your priest will inform you whether this is required.
- Permission from your Parish Priest(s) to be married outside your own parish (Letter of Freedom)
- If one of you is not a Catholic, a dispensation, issued by the Bishopric of the home country, is required.

Increasingly, many couples are choosing to have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK to fulfil the legal requirements, followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist

Wedding Blessing / Humanist Ceremony

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Please note: If you do choose to have a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony you will also need to have an official civil ceremony in order for your marriage to be legally binding.

*** Although we have done our best to ensure the information above is correct, please note it is intended only as a guideline and should not be regarded as legal advice. ***

