

Yoga and Ayurveda in Portugal

- The Portuguese have an abiding interest in ancient Indian systems of health like Yoga and Ayurveda. Any online search will reveal yoga's skyrocketing popularity in Portugal, especially in the last 3-4 years. Yoga vacations, detox retreats, wellness holidays and yoga teacher training programs are held at a variety of locations across Portugal. There are several Yoga studios that teach traditional Ashtanga, Sivananda, and Iyengar Yoga, as well as modern-day Vinyāsa Yoga, Hot Yoga, gymnastic Yoga etc. along with meditation, massage and Ayurveda. Some popular Portuguese celebrities are known to practise Yoga for stress management.
- The Portuguese Yoga Confederation (PYC) led by Shri Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda Maha Raja runs 62 Yoga ashrams across Portugal. Recognizing PYC's efforts in propagating Yoga and for its instrumental role in having the United Nations declare 21st June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY), the government of India has honoured Shri Jagat Guru Amrta Suryananda Maha Raja with the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian awards. Thanks to PYC's active efforts, more than 10,000 Portuguese school children practise Yoga across 162 schools. PYC is currently working with the Portuguese Ministry of Education and the Indian Embassy in Lisbon on a scientific project to empirically validate the physical, mental and emotional benefits of Yoga for school children. PYC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Sansthana (VYASA) in Bengaluru to collaborate in this project during the recent State Visit of the Portuguese President to India in mid-February 2020.
- The IDY celebrations started by the Embassy in collaboration with PYC, have further bolstered the popularity of Yoga with thousands of people participating in these events every year.
- There are more than 15 Yoga institutes and Indian yoga and meditation groups like the Art of Living, Isha Foundation, Brahma Kumaris, ISKCON Hare Krishna etc. in Lisbon and Porto. Some hotels in Portugal also have wellness centres where yoga classes are being offered. A list of such Yoga classes is given below*:

- 1.Portuguese Yoga Confederation
- 2.Art of Living Portugal
- 3.Casa Vinyasa
4. Iyengar Yoga Centre (follows BKS Iyengar school of Yoga)
5. Budha Dharma Centre
6. Sivananda Yoga Centre (follows Swami Vishnu Devananda)
- 7.Yoga Shankara Studio
- 8.Ashtanga Yoga Tree
- 9.Prema Yoga

10. Espaço Sadhana Bairro Alto
11. Padma Yoga Centre
12. Natha – Yoga Spiritual School and Tantra
13. Centros de Yoga em Portugal – CPYOGA
14. Associação de Yoga Integral
15. Abhyasa Yoga Centre

(* This list is taken from information available in the public domain. The Embassy neither takes ownership of this information nor endorses any of these Centres. It is simply a collation of publicly-available information for those interested.)

- A few Universities in Portugal also offer Yoga courses and training facilities:
 - i. In 2019, the Lusófona University (Private) introduced a Postgraduate Course in Yoga Instruction, aimed at individuals with some experience in yoga and interested in practical philosophies of life in the context of holistic health and well-being, and reflective awareness. The Course aims to provide a theoretical and scientific understanding and refinement of personal practice of yoga and meditation. It provides methodologies and development of pedagogical skills in teaching yoga, with 352 hours of face-to-face training on weekends (from 9 am to 6 pm) for 2 years. It includes practices of the techniques taught, research and theoretical work and practical internship during the 2nd year.
 - ii. PYC offers training at all major universities in Portugal through its Youth Department (since 2006) during exam period called the 'Yoga and Stress-free Exams Programme' in May-June through their ashrams spread across Portugal in major universities like-
 1. Faculty of Engineering, University of Porto.
 2. Faculty of Economics of Porto.
 3. Academic Association of the University of Aveiro.
 4. University of Beira interior (social services).
 5. Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Lisbon, Monte da Campus has regular classes through-out the year
 - iii. Short term courses on Yoga and Ayurveda are conducted in Lisbon University by Paulo Hayes and Paulo Meira.
- Also, since the last two years, a Teacher of Indian Culture (TIC) of the Embassy has been offering free Yoga classes for Portuguese people, Portuguese government officials and Judicial Police, as well as the Indian diaspora. Three online Yoga classes per week for more than 60 students are being held even during the COVID lockdown

Ayurveda

- Ayurveda is India's renowned traditional system of natural and holistic healing, based on the concept of harmonious alignment of a human being's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energies for optimal health. With increasing stress levels of modern life and the growing popularity of holistic wellness, there are over 300 Ayurveda practitioners across Portugal with a professional license for naturopathy and herbal medicine in line with the Portuguese legislation (Lei nº71/2013 of 02 September 2013). The Portuguese Ayurvedic Medical Association (AMAYUR) has professional courses in Ayurveda and also provides Ayurvedic treatments and consultations in Portugal through its national network of more than a 100 certified and recognized Ayurvedic Medical professionals, many of whom are conventional doctors of modern medicine. The list of all professionals of Ayurvedic Medicine and Therapies (region-wise) is at the link:

<https://amayur.pt/profissionaisamayur/>

AMAYUR also provides free Ayurvedic treatment to poor migrants and engages in assisting the local community.

- The Art of Living also has an active centre in Portugal. A highly-qualified Indian Ayurvedic Doctor offers online consultations with quarterly visits. The centre also offers Marma therapy to patients for rejuvenation and restoration as well as treatment and recovery from acute health symptoms.
- The Indian Embassy and entities like AMAYUR are working towards securing official recognition for Ayurveda by the Portuguese government, to ensure that the Portuguese people have access to authentic and affordable treatments and medicines.
- Government of India, through Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), offers scholarships to foreign nationals to pursue various Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) courses in India. Two Portuguese students are currently pursuing a 4-year Bachelors degree in Ayurveda at the Gujarat Ayurved University, Jamnagar on ICCR Scholarships. For more details and the procedure to apply for these scholarships, one can visit the section on 'Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scholarship Schemes' under the 'Education' header of the Embassy's website.
