

USTOA EXPLORES PORTUGAL FOR ITS OUT OF COUNTRY BOARD MEETING



From left to right: USTOA Chairman and Executive Vice President of EF Education First Dana Santucci; Visit Center of Portugal, Press, Trade & Market Research Filipe Pinto; Visit Portugal President Carlos Abade; TAP Air Portugal Country Manager USA and Canada Fenanda Ottavio and CCRO Marco Cruz; USTOA President and CEO Terry Dale; Delta Airlines Sales Account Executive Brad Drake and United Airlines Sr. Manager Leisure Sales Jeannie MacDonnell.

NEW YORK (May 20, 2024) – [The United States Tour Operators Association \(USTOA\)](#) held its Out of Country Board Meeting in Portugal from April 14 to 21, 2024. A group of 23 senior executives representing USTOA tour operator members convened for an in-depth experience sponsored by Visit Portugal and co-hosted with Visit Center of Portugal. The visit was co-sponsored by Delta, TAP Air Portugal and United Airlines.

The week-long mission kicked off with a full day of business development meetings and roundtable discussions, followed by a buyers and suppliers marketplace hosted by Visit Portugal. Thirty-four local Portuguese suppliers from hotels to ground operators met one-on-one with attending tour operators to build and nurture meaningful partnerships.

“Visit Portugal and Visit Center of Portugal were stellar hosts who put together an enriching program for our tour operator members that included historic, cultural and natural experiences, along with opportunities to engage with members of the travel and tourism industry in meaningful ways,” said Terry Dale, president and CEO of USTOA.



Panel of USTOA Delegates Address Local Portuguese Suppliers

Throughout the week, USTOA Active Member executives visited a number of historic and cultural cities and towns throughout Portugal from Lisbon to Alcobaca, Nazaré, Óbidos, Tomar, Fátima, Dão Wine Region, Santar, Viseu, Aveiro and Costa Nova.

USTOA Chairman Dana Santucci, executive vice president of EF Education First, said, “There are so many highlights from the week, especially the engaging discussions around sustainability, and the opportunities to foster new connections while exploring some of central Portugal’s breathtaking landscapes, historic sites, cultural wonders, and hidden treasures.”

Attendees explored Portugal with a schedule of activities including visiting the UNESCO-listed Monastery of Alcobaca, wine tasting in the Dão Region’s vineyard gardens, a walking tour of Aveiro, and much more.

“The 2024 USTOA Out of Country Meeting event held in Portugal represents a pivotal moment for Visit Portugal to showcase the diverse and rich offerings of our country, especially in the Center of Portugal,” stated Carlos Abade, president of Visit Portugal. “By hosting this influential gathering, we aimed not only to strengthen our connections with major US tour operators but also to illuminate the unique opportunities that our local suppliers presented. Through such partnerships, we are crafting a more dynamic and inclusive narrative for Portugal’s tourism, ensuring that every visitor can enjoy a truly authentic and memorable experience.”



USTOA Tour Operator Members Gather at Viseu’s Cathedral

Raul Almeida, president of Center of Portugal Tourism Board added, “This collaboration with USTOA is a testament to our commitment to showcasing the diverse offerings of the Center of Portugal. By inviting tour operators to experience our region firsthand, we aim to inspire them to broaden their portfolios, offering travelers an opportunity to immerse themselves in the authentic soul of Portugal.”

Almeida continued, “The meeting not only fostered meaningful connections between tour operators and local businesses but also sparked dialogue on sustainable tourism practices and community engagement initiatives. Through collaborative efforts, we aim to preserve the integrity of our region while providing enriching experiences for visitors.”

Dale concluded, “A special thank you to our hosts and sponsors in Portugal who each played a significant role in creating a memorable itinerary for our tour operator members. We are confident our time here will yield both short- and long-term results.”

For more information on USTOA, visit www.ustoa.com.

About USTOA:

Representing \$16 billion in revenue, the member companies of U.S. Tour Operators Association provide tours, packages and custom arrangements that allow six million travelers annually unparalleled access, insider knowledge, peace-of-mind, value, and freedom to enjoy destinations and experiences across the entire globe. Each member company has met the travel industry’s highest standards, including participation in the USTOA’s Travelers Assistance Program, which protects consumer payments up to \$1 million if the company goes out of business. As a voice for the tour operator industry for more than 50 years, USTOA also provides education and assistance for consumers and travel advisors.

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