

How Did Portugal Happen? (Short Animated Documentary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpaM7Klh5jE> Transcript:
<https://dontveter.com/ec/portugal.pdf>

The history of Portugal is a long and interesting one, its influence is widespread and not only did it affect the rest of the European continent, but its sailors bridged the world's oceans.

Few parts of the world would be the same were not for Portugal, but where did this nation come from?

Who founded Portugal and, well, to put it bluntly, how did Portugal happen?

In order to find this out we need to travel back to the turn of the 12th century when the Iberian Peninsula looked like this.

The south was dominated by the ??? emirate and the majority of the people in Iberia at this time were Muslims.

They had, over the centuries, converted from Christianity after the Islamic conquests of the 8th century.

Whereas in the north, Christianity endured and was the religion of the small independent states there.

These northern states were the kingdoms of Leon, Navarre and Aragon as well as the county of Barcelona and the states were, to put it mildly, not exactly happy with their southern neighbors.

The way they dealt with their southern neighbors was via in-depth discussions and, just kidding, crusade time.

These crusades brought the devout from many of the European states to help them. One such man was Henry of Burgundy.

In 1095, he went south, married the king of Castile's illegitimate daughter and was given the County of Portugal to rule.

Long story short, he died, his wife had an argument with their son and heir, Alphonso.

After a war with Castille, Alphonso exiled his mother to a convent and then ruled as the count of Portugal.

After 1128, a short eleven years later, Alphonso decided that being a count wasn't as cool as being a king and so he renounced his fealty to Leon.

There was a war which Alfonso won, and after this Portugal became an independent kingdom. Alfonso was crowned Alfonso the First.

Also before continuing, the name Portugal derives from the settlement of Porto Cale which eventually became the city of Porto.

As you'll have noticed, the fledgling kingdom of Portugal is quite a bit smaller than the one we know today and this is where outside help came in.

So the Knights Templar had previously helped Alphonso in his war for independence and they had been generously rewarded for their help.

Afonso could count on their help in his plans to 1) preserve his kingdom's independence and 2) to strengthen it by expanding southwards.

And, by sheer luck, in 1144 the crusader state of Edessa fell to the Muslims and so the Pope, doing what medieval popes did best, called for a crusade.

Many answered the call and rather than take the overland route, many opted to sail around Iberia.

On their way, they stopped off in Portugal where they met Alfonso who asked for their help.

The crusaders weren't really interested in helping at first, until Alfonso sweetened the deal with cash.

Specifically, they could take all of the spoils from helping him take the strategically important city of Lisbon.

The crusaders laid siege to Lisbon in 1147, and it wasn't too long before the city surrendered due to starvation.

For many that was enough crusading and whilst a couple of thousand crusaders continued on their way to the Holy Land, many of the English opted to settle in Portugal.

Portugal's southward expansion would continue until its borders reached this.

In the 13th century, Lisbon was made the country's capital. Portugal's place in history had begun.