

MARRIAGE IN PORTUGAL

American citizens who are contemplating marriage in Portugal should understand that Portugal is not a place to conduct a quick marriage. U.S. citizens wishing to marry in Portugal may do so only in accordance with Portuguese law. Marriages cannot be performed at the American Embassy, nor can the Embassy aid in circumventing Portuguese marriage regulations.

Civil and church marriages are both recognized as valid. Baptismal certificates are required only if the marriage is to be performed in a Roman Catholic Church. Civil marriages are performed and registered at Civil Registries (Conservatórias do Registo Civil). There are eleven in Lisbon. You must use the Civil Registry which services the area in which you reside.

In order to be granted permission to marry in Portugal you must meet the following requirements of the Portuguese Civil Registry Code:

1. Residence - One party to the marriage must be in Portugal for a minimum of thirty days before notice of the intended marriage can be given. An U.S. citizen permanently residing in Portugal must present his or her residence card. A temporary resident or visitor must present his or her passport.
2. Birth Certificate - You will need a certified copy of your birth certificate issued within the last six months. If the marriage is to take place in the Azores, a certified copy of your birth certificate, issued within the last three months, is required.
3. Certificate of "No Impediment" (Certificado de Capacidade Matrimonial). The Embassy provides a letter addressed to the Civil Registry regarding the impossibility, by law, of issuing a Certificate of "No Impediment".

Consular Certificate – The Portuguese authorities also require a consular certificate for marriage purposes. This consular certificate is based on the U.S. citizen's registration at the consular section. We also provide a letter explaining that U.S. birth certificates do not contain any amendments regarding previous marriages.

It is your responsibility to produce the relevant documents, such as a divorce decree or death certificate, to prove that any previous marriage has been legally terminated. Those documents, like the birth certificate, must be certified and issued within the last six months (for mainland Portugal) or the last three months (for the Azores).

Please note that any of the above documents originally issued in any language other than Portuguese must be translated into Portuguese and authenticated by a Portuguese notary public. The Embassy does not have a translating service, but can furnish a list of translators.

Before leaving Portugal, you should have your Portuguese documents certified at the Procuradoria Geral da República, Rua Escola Politécnica, No. 140, Lisboa. This will facilitate acceptance of proof of your marriage in Portugal once you leave the country. Further information may be obtained in the U.S. from the Portuguese Embassy or Consulate or in Portugal from your local Portuguese Civil Registry.

NOTE: American citizens contemplating marriage may wish to consider getting married in Gibraltar where the entire process may be accomplished in as little as 2-3 days. Further inquiries should be addressed to the Marriage Registrar in Gibraltar at (350) 72289 or (350)78303.