

## INTERNATIONAL PHARMACY

### Portuguese recipes

by Sven Siebenand / Pharmacies and drugstores are similar all over the world, but there are some differences from one country to the next. Portugal is no exception to this rule, as Luis Miguel Lourenço can report. The owner of a pharmacy not far from Lisbon, tells us about pharmacies in Cristiano Ronaldo's homeland. The pharmacist also explains why he is looking forward to the next FIP congress in the autumn in Düsseldorf.

**PZ:** Why did you decide to become a pharmacist?

**Lourenço:** My pharmacy has been in the family for more than 70 years. So, I grew up with the job. Being a pharmacist means that on the one hand I look after patients and can help them. On the other hand, I have to be a financial analyst and strategist. It's a combination I enjoy.

**PZ:** How do you go about studying pharmacy in your country?

**Lourenço:** As a subject, pharmacy is a master's degree course in Portugal consisting of four and a half years of study and a six month placement in a retail pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy. There are currently eight institutions in Portugal offering a master's course in pharmacy. Once you have your master's you can work as a pharmacist, in a retail pharmacy, for instance. There are around 2700 in our country. No-one is allowed to own more than four pharmacies. This means that there are no chains.

**PZ:** How are pharmacist's services paid for in Portugal?

**Lourenço:** Prescription medication is divided into various groups according to the wholesale price. There is a profit margin plus a fixed allowance for each group. Both the profit margin and the fixed allowance are staged differently from one group to the next.

**PZ:** Are there any problems that retail pharmacies in Portugal currently have to deal with?

**Lourenço:** Yes, certainly. Because the economy is performing poorly, prices for drugs have been reduced, which has an effect on the pharmacies' income and therefore on their capacity to survive. A second problem is the fact that the prices for medication are lower in Portugal than in other countries and products are therefore being exported. The unfortunate consequence of this is that the number of products available in Portuguese pharmacies is reduced.

**PZ:** Apart from supplying medication, what other services are provided by pharmacies in Portugal?

**Lourenço:** We offer vaccinations and blood tests, for example, and also disease management programmes, stop-smoking projects and medication analyses. Pharmacies have a good reputation in society. Because they offer easy access to the health concerns of the patients, and because of our highly-qualified staff.

**PZ:** In the autumn you will be going to the congress of the International Pharmaceutical Federation FIP in Düsseldorf. Why are you going?

**Lourenço:** I have been to every FIP congress since 2006. It is an outstanding opportunity to find out about world-wide trends in the retail pharmacy sector. I can share experiences with many colleagues from other countries at the congress and it allows us to learn a lot from each other. Germany is known throughout the world for its talent at organisation. So I expect a very well planned congress which will put the current and future challenges to our profession under the microscope. /



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Portuguese pharmacist