



Tour Information



Authentic Algarve





Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. **Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 3 months or more left on it) and has at least 3 months validity remaining from the date of travel.**

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

If you're a tourist, you do not need a visa for short trips to Portugal. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

Portuguese consulate: 3 Portland Place, London W1B 1HR; Tel: 020 7291 3770

Email: consulado.londres@mne.pt

Open Mon-Fri 0830-1600 (except Portuguese National holidays).

Important Changes to Requirements for British Nationals Travelling to the EU

The introduction of the Entry/Exit System (EES) will gradually be introduced by 12th October 2025 and is expected to be fully implemented by 10th April 2026. EES is a new electronic system that will replace the manual stamping of passports and will be used to register non-EU nationals entering and exiting EU countries. When passing through passport control upon arrival, you will need to present your passport and also have your photograph taken and fingerprints scanned. If you are travelling via Eurostar from St Pancras or via the Port of Dover, please note that a dual British-French border control is in operation. This means your photograph and fingerprints will be collected before boarding in the UK, and you will not need to go through this process again upon arrival in the EU. EES is free of charge, and you are not required to submit anything prior to travel. Please note, at the time of publishing, there is no information on the start date for specific ports of entry after 12th October. Check-in times should not be affected by these changes.

Irish passport holders and British passport holders with EU residency are currently exempt from these requirements.

For further information please visit:

<https://www.abta.com/tips-and-advice/planning-and-booking-a-holiday/upcoming-changes-travel-europe>



Tickets

You will be sent an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number, with your final departure documents. You will need to quote / show this reference number at the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass.

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit

www.britishairways.com

Transfers

On arrival in Faro, coach transfer to Vila Gale Hotel in Tavira (approx. 1 hour).

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

Border Control

At border control, you may need to show a return or onward ticket, show you have enough money for your stay, use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

Taking food into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.



Accommodation

Vila Gale Hotel, Tavira

Located in the heart of the historic town of Tavira, this four-star hotel offers spacious and comfortable rooms, as well as a restaurant, bar, outdoor pool and a health club. All rooms have private en-suite bathrooms as well as TV, free wifi, air-conditioning and hairdryer.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:

<https://www.vilagale.com/pt/hoteis/algarve/vila-gale-tavira>



Food

The roots of Portuguese food lie in both native peasant cookery and the ingredients obtained through trade routes established many centuries ago. Bread, rice, spices, pastries, sausages, and seafood — especially cod — remain the staples of many Portuguese meals. Wheat bread has been a standard of the Portuguese table since the eighth century, though you'll find a lot of cornbread, acorn bread, and carob bread in Lisbon, too. Portugal is also Europe's largest consumer of rice. The short-grain *carolino* is the best for runny rice stews like *arroz de tomate* (tomato rice) and *arroz doce* (rice pudding with milk, eggs, and cinnamon).

At a time when honey was still the dominant sweetener in Europe, Portugal's sugar rush started early, with expensive sugar arriving from the Portuguese island of Madeira in the 15th century, and later, from Brazil. Convent cakes and desserts — including the *pastéis de nata*, or egg tart — were developed by nuns with skill and patience, and certainly wouldn't be the same without sugar. For an introduction to this important part of Portuguese culture, there's nothing like visiting a traditional *pastelaria*.

Salt cod has been part of Portuguese culture since the Vikings came to trade cod for salt. This convenient relationship was a powerful asset for Portuguese navigators — ships armed with supplies of salt cod could travel further with a source of protein that didn't spoil. Since then, the Portuguese have fished — or rather, overfished — this national staple and today the country is the world's largest consumer of cod. Portuguese cooking honors this tradition in hundreds of recipes: grilled, baked, stewed, as part of rice dishes, and deep fried as fritters or cakes.

Portugal's love for fish doesn't stop with cod — Portugal is one of the top countries in the world when

it comes to seafood consumption. Nothing makes a Portuguese person happier than a barbecue full of grilled fish, especially during the popular June festivals dedicated to Santo António and São João that turn Lisbon and Porto into sardine central, filled with smoke, loud music, sangria, beer, caipirinhas, and pork sandwiches known as *bifanas*. Once a poor man's food, sardines are now so in demand that they've become expensive and harder to procure. Overfishing in the past didn't help, nor does climate change, which is pushing the fish to colder waters in the northern European sea.

Some restaurants will offer a set meal at a fixed — *menú do dia* — at lunchtime, generally good value for money. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, but it is customary to leave small change if good service is provided.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in Portugal are similar to the UK (and certainly earlier than in Spain). Lunch is normally taken around 1300: dinner is very often eaten any time after 1930.



Drink

Portugal is essentially a wine-drinking country. Port (*vinho do Porto*), the famous fortified wine or *vinho generoso* ("generous wine"), is produced from grapes grown in the vineyards of the Douro valley and mostly stored in huge wine-lodges at Vila Nova de Gaia, facing Porto across the Rio Douro. Portugal's wine regions — notably Alentejo, Bairrada, Dão, the Douro and the historic regions of Estremadura and Ribatejo — have acquired a strong reputation in recent years. Most wines are made in small cooperatives with local grape varieties, many peculiar to Portugal.

Portuguese wine lists (ask for the *lista de vinhos*) don't just distinguish between *tinto* (red), *branco* (white) and *rosé*, but between *verde* (green), meaning young, acidic and slightly sparkling) and *maduro* (mature, meaning the wines you're probably accustomed to). You'll find a decent selection from around the country in even the most basic of restaurants, and often in half-bottles, too.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast — daily

Lunch — 4 lunches included

Dinner — 2 dinners included



Destination

The Algarve, Portugal's southernmost region, is predominately known for its Atlantic beaches and golf resorts. Whitewashed fishing villages on low cliffs overlooking sandy coves were transformed in the 1960s, and now its central coast between Lagos and Faro is lined with villas, hotels, bars and restaurants. The region's western Atlantic coast and rugged interior are less developed. Tavira is a small city on Portugal's Algarve coast. It straddles the Gilão River, which reaches the sea through the inlets and lagoons of Ria Formosa Natural Park. Tavira Island has a long, sandy beach, plus salt pans that attract flamingos, spoonbills and other wading birds. In the centre, medieval Tavira Castle has city views. The Santa Maria do Castelo Church houses the tombs of seven knights killed by the Moors. There is more to the Algarve than sun, sea and golf courses. This tour will take you off the beaten path to explore the local cuisine through tours and tastings, as well as its wildlife and flora with walks through wetlands and mountain trails.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Tavira Salt Pans

Salt has been extracted around Tavira for years and years and, at one point, the sea salt was exported from Eastern Algarve all over the Roman Empire. Even then people spoke of the 'white gold' from the Algarve. In the nature reserve Ria Formosa innumerable small salt basins (Salinas) can be found. To this day, nothing but sea, sun, wind and human hands provide a fantastic pure quality of sea salt, called "Flor de Sal" because the water in this corner of the Atlantic Ocean is the purest in all of Europe. In the wetlands of the Ria Formosa tidal area, the salt basins or Salinas fill with water at high tide and empty it again when the tide is low. The supply of fresh seawater in the salt pans provides a lot of nutrition to all life in the wetlands. This in turn ensures a rich flora and fauna.

For more information about the Tavira Salt Pans, please visit:
<https://www.visitalgarve.pt/en/289/salt pans.aspx>

Sao Braz and the Cork Route

Until the middle of the last century, São Brás de Alportel was the cork capital of Portugal and, by extension, the entire world. About 54% of the

world's cork is produced in Portugal. High-quality cork requires a clean environment and clean air. São Brás de Alportel and its environment are well known for these traits. Even today, the old merchant houses in the town stand testament to the impact of this economic activity. The cork route (Rota da Cortiça) is the perfect way to learn more about the noble cork oak (sobreiro in Portuguese), the art of debarking and the fascinating features of this 100% natural raw material that is so much more than just a stopper in a wine bottle. It is no coincidence that the cork oak is protected in Portugal. Along the route, you can visit Nova Cortiça, a cork processing plant whose cork ultimately ends up in the champagne bottles of the large houses in France.

For more information about the cork route please visit:

<https://viaalgarviana.org/en/610/a-cortica-de-alportel-alportel-cork--sao-bras-de-alportel>

Serra de Monchique

Rising up between the Algarve and neighbouring Alentejo region is the Serra de Monchique, a range of rolling mountains clad in heavy forest. Here you will find the highest point on the Algarve; standing at 902m (2,959ft) is the peak of **Fóia** with its all encompassing views, which span the Algarve's south and west coasts all the way to Cabo de São Vicente. A few kilometres to the east of Fóia is the little market town of Monchique itself. Set amongst the pine, oak and eucalyptus forest of the hills, with its narrow cobbled streets, the town here is a world apart from the beach resorts the Algarve is better known for. Here the pace of life is far more sedate and the town has very much escaped any big developments.

For more information about Monchique, please visit:

<https://nowinportugal.com/monchique-the-hidden-town-in-the-mountains/>

Silves

Silves is a sleepy town of 10,000 inhabitants on the silted up Arade River, but back in the 12th and 13th centuries it was a thriving and prosperous Moorish city of over 30,000 people. Reminders of Silves' past are in the remains of the castle and its gardens. Outside the main entrance a bronze statue of Sancho I stands guard. There are great views of the surrounding countryside and the grounds of the

Castelo include a 5m-deep water cistern and well, known as the "Cistern of the Dogs." Only parts of the city walls in Silves still survive. Made of red sandstone and taipa - a mix of clay, gravel, lime and sand - they make for a distinctive sight. The impressive Torreão da Porta da Cidade (Tower of the City Gate) is one of the best preserved sections from the 12th and 13th centuries. Uphill from the Tower of the City Gate, the Gothic Sé de Santa Maria (Cathedral of Our Lady), close to the castle, has been renovated over the centuries but contains the tombs of several of the Crusaders who so bloodily "liberated" the town in the 12th century. The other church of note in Silves is the Ermida Nossa Senhora dos Mártires (Church of Our Lady of the Martyrs) which dates from the 16th century in the Gothic style with Manueline decorations. Inside is a Baroque altar and ancient tombstones from the 14th century.

For more information about Silves, please visit:
<https://www.algarve-tourist.com/silves-portugal-guide.html>

Olhão

Olhão is a small town situated in the Algarve and is known as one of the best Portuguese cities to eat fish. Whitewashed houses and narrow alleyways make this town a traditional regional town. In the early seventeenth century Olhão began to develop after some fishermen decided to settle in the area. Motivated by the abundance of water and the protection of the Fortress of São Lourenço, the inhabitants vigorously developed the area's economy. Olhão also had an important role to play in the rebellion of the Algarve region during the French invasions in 1808. In June of the same year, a popular uprising led to the expulsion of French troops from the village, a movement that later spread throughout the region. Nowadays Olhão is a city with 28,000 inhabitants and an important fishing port.

For more information about Olhao, please visit:
<https://www.visitportugal.com/en/NR/exeres/C8819108-1DE7-4602-B5D1-C5DF962DF7EA>

Ria Formosa Islands

The islands are a beautiful natural park of sandbanks, marshes, barrier islands and lagoons in the Algarve. It is an important breeding ground for many coastal birds such as Ibis, Oystercatchers, Egrets, Cranes and Flamingos and has also

traditionally been an area of oyster and salt farming, as well as fishing and shellfish harvesting.

For more information about the Ria Formosa Islands, please visit:

<https://wetravelportugal.com/ria-formosa-portugal/>

Sapal de Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António Nature Reserve

The Reserva Natural do Sapal de Castro Marim is located close to Villa Real de Santo Antonio on the eastern side of the Algarve, just a few minutes drive from the Portuguese-Spanish border and the Rio Guadiana river. The reserve covers an area of more than 2,000 hectares of wetland area consisting of marshes, saltpans, inlets and rural areas of schist and red sandstone. It is the oldest nature reserve in Portugal, having been classed as such in 1975. A great place for birding. Among the bird species found here are Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit, Caspian Tern, Greater Flamingo, Common Ringed Plover and White Stork. The characteristic vegetation of the marshes and the traditional saltpans results in a geometric patchwork of a landscape. Salt production is one of the main activities carried out in the marshes.

For more information about the nature reserve, please visit:

<https://www.visitportugal.com/en/node/156056>

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

Grading

This tour has been graded as **Moderate**: Walking between sites, lots of standing for viewing.

There are two slightly more demanding visits, the first to Serra de Monchique where some parts of the walk may be more challenging.

The second is to the Medieval castle of Castro Marim which has a steep ascent and descent on uneven cobbles. Both of these can be sat out for anyone who feels they are unable to do them.

The Basics

Climate – The weather in the Algarve at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +1 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Portuguese

Religion – Roman Catholic

National holidays – New Year's Day (01 Jan); Good Friday; Easter Monday; Freedom Day (25 Apr); Labour day (01 May); Corpus Christi (second Thursday after Whitsun; Portugal Day (10 Jun); St Anthony Day (13 Jun); St John the Baptist Day (24 Jun); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); Republic Day (05 Oct); All Saints' Day (01 Nov); Restoration of Independence (01 Dec); Immaculate Conception (08 Dec); Christmas Day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Some shops and restaurants do not accept credit cards so it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink, although some complain it has a strange taste, so it is generally recommended to drink bottled water, readily available in supermarkets and shops.

Shops and Museums – Shops are open Mon-Sat 1000-1400 and 1700-2000. Supermarkets and department stores tend to open 0930-2100/2200, and may open on Sundays in large cities. Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC)

Before you travel, make sure you've got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country.

For further information about the GHIC please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>



Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 09.00-17.00), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7841 023807 or 07441 343850

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate

Rua de São Bernardo 33

1249-082 Lisbon

info.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Telephone enquiries: 808 20 35 37 (if calling from within Portugal)

Consular phone lines are open 0900-1300 and 1430-1700.

Travel Editions Group Ltd

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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