



# Authentic Algarve



Arranged by Travel Editions

**October 2024 - 8 days from \*£1,899pp**

This tour sees us travelling to the Algarve where we base ourselves in Tavira, a town with its unique mix of traditional architecture and Moorish influences. Our itinerary combines breathtaking beaches with Portuguese culture. Highlights include the dramatic inlets and lagoons of the Ria Formosa National Park, ancient salt pans and breathtaking mountain scenery.

We visit quaint fishing villages, authentic market towns, local museums and an award-winning olive oil farm. We also cross the border into Spain to visit the charming old quarter of Ayamonte. We're confident that this varied and well-balanced tour will provide memories that will stay with you long after your trip.



12th Century Castle, Silves



Ayamonte

This holiday is operated by Travel Editions Group Travel

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\*Based on 20 passengers



Tavira Roman Bridge

## Day by day itinerary

### Day 1

#### Travel to Tavira

Fly from London Gatwick to Faro airport. On arrival transfer to our hotel in Tavira. In the evening there will be a welcome drink and dinner included at the hotel restaurant.

### Day 2

#### Tavira and Tuna Museum

This morning we begin our Algarve experience in earnest by enjoying a walking tour around the fishing town of Tavira. The town is set on either side of the meandering Rio Gilao and combines two Mediterranean staples: Moorish architecture and a golden sand beach. The ruins of a hilltop castle, an old Roman bridge and a

smattering of Gothic and Renaissance churches are among its historic attractions. Tavira is often described as the Algarve's most charming town – here, as you wander the labyrinth of cobbled streets and picturesque plazas, you will see many houses tiled in the traditional Portuguese style. Lunch will be provided at a local restaurant. In the afternoon we travel by coach to the Tavira Salt Pans where you will have the opportunity to walk through the wetlands. The supply of fresh seawater in the salt pans provides nutrition to all life in the wetlands. This in turn ensures a rich flora and fauna while flamingo, stork, stilts, avocet and bee-eaters can all be found here. The remaining part of our day will include a visit to the tuna fish museum and fluvial (river) beach – both a fascinating reminder of the area's history. Dinner will be under own arrangements.

### Day 3

#### Moncarapacho and Loule

Two marvellous sites today. We begin by travelling by coach to the small idyllic village of Moncarapacho, set

amidst Olhão's countryside.

Moncarapacho produces some of the best olive oil in the world. It is here that we learn much more about this local delicacy. We visit Monterosa Olive Oil Farm where our guided tour takes us into the groves providing us with delicious oil tasting and information about the fascinating art of olive oil production. We then proceed to the centre of this delightful village for lunch (included) at a local restaurant.

After lunch we then head to the authentic Portuguese market town of Loule with its characterful historic centre. Loule is a wonderful place to experience authentic Portuguese life. The focal point of Loule is the Arabian inspired covered market, with stalls selling fresh produce and regional handicrafts. Surrounding the markets are tree-lined plazas and a warren of alleys, barely altered since the medieval period. Within the historic centre is an ancient castle, Gothic church and traditional tradesmen's houses. We then round off our day with a visit to the renowned family-owned winery of



Covered market, Loule

Quinta da Tor. Here we enjoy wine tasting and learn about wine production processes while taking in breath-taking views of the mountains. We return to the hotel for the evening. Dinner under own arrangements.

#### Day 4

##### Monchique; Foia and Silves

Today we delve into the Algarve's rich and fascinating past. We begin with a trip to Serra de Monchique (Monchique Mountain) that stands high above the sea and is home to some of the most charming walking trails in the Algarve. We discover unusual flora and fauna along with magnificent freshwater waterfalls and beautiful views of the surrounding area. During the morning we visit Monchique village, nestled in the scenic hillside with its 12th century church, market, brightly coloured buildings and cobbled streets. Lunch will be at a restaurant in Monchique. After lunch, we will visit the historic town of Silves with an optional visit to its 12th Century Castle and its Gothic Cathedral (entrance to the Castle and Cathedral payable locally). Our day also includes the breath-taking drive

up to Foia, which at nearly 3000ft is the highest point in the Algarve. From here, on a clear day, you can see across to the Atlantic Ocean. We return to the hotel. Dinner by own arrangement.

#### Day 5

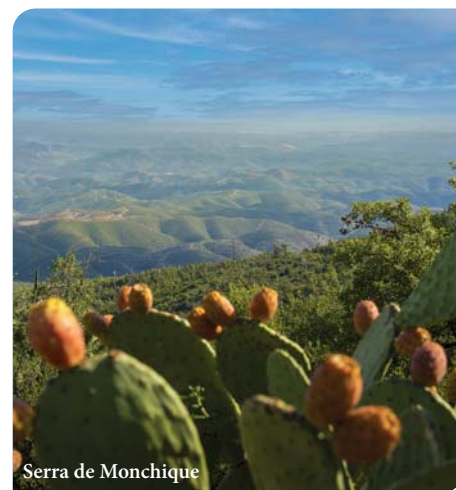
##### At leisure

Today is at leisure for you to relax or explore Tavira further.

#### Day 6

##### Ria Formosa Islands

Today we start the day in the traditional and characterful fishing village of Olhão, located in the heart of Ria Formosa Reserve. This characterful fishing village has a pretty waterfront and a maze of cobbled streets within the fishermen's quarter. The harbour opens onto the calm lagoons and waters of the Parque Natural da Ria Formosa, a small group of barrier islands. During the morning we embark on a boat tour and cruise among the fascinating islands of the Ria Formosa lagoons - a hidden gem of the Algarve. Here we see local fishermen at work, visit shellfish farms and enjoy the



Serra de Monchique

wonderful bird life. Lunch will be a delicious meal of locally caught fish at a restaurant on one of the islands. In the afternoon there will be a guided tour of Olhão and its bustling old quarter followed by some time to explore at your leisure. Dinner by own arrangement.

#### Day 7

##### Castro Marim Nature Reserve and Ayamonte

Our penultimate day sees us meandering with the River Guadiana through its fascinating marshland and across the border into Spain. In the morning our excursion begins with a short walk in the Sapal of Castro



Ria Formosa National Park

Marim Nature Reserve. Here the river winds its way through the plains, branching out into creeks and canals that flow into lakes, marshland and salt pans. Much of the reserve still operates in salt production and you will learn how table salt has been produced here for more than 2000 years. The mudflats and lagoons are of immense importance to resident and visiting birds. It serves as a nesting and wintering area to a wide variety of species. Here, it is possible to spot birds throughout the year, such as the white stork, flamingo and the black-winged stilt (the Reserve's most common species and therefore the symbol of the Nature Reserve) This outstanding area was declared a nature reserve in 1975 and covers over 2000 hectares.

Time for lunch is provided (not included) at a local restaurant in Castro Marim or Vila Real Santo Antonio. After lunch we venture onto the public boat to cross the border into Spain and to the town of Ayamonte. We head into the charming old quarter and visit the medieval hilltop castle of Castro Marim, once a stronghold of the

Knights Templar. Ayamonte is home to the 16th century Igreja de San Francisco and 15th century Igreja de San Salvador with its wonderful Mudejar ceiling. You might wish to ascend its tower to enjoy wonderful views back across to Portugal. We will round off our day with an opportunity to sample the famous 'Jamon Iberico' with a glass of local wine (included). We return to our hotel for our farewell dinner at a local restaurant in Tavira.

## Day 8

### Return flight to Bristol

Today is our departure day. We will transfer by coach to Faro airport for our return flight to London Gatwick.

### Where you stay

#### Vila Gale, Tavira (or similar)

Located in the heart of the historic town of Tavira, the four-star Vila Gale 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.



Vila Gale, Tavira

### Included

- Return flights with Easyjet or BA from London Gatwick to Faro – times to be confirmed
- Seven nights accommodation on B&B basis at the four-star Vila Gale Hotel, Tavira (or similar), based on shared occupancy of twin/double room
- Welcome drink and dinner at the hotel on the first evening
- Four lunches at local restaurants
- Farewell dinner at local restaurant
- Itinerary and coach transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Local guide and tour manager, throughout your stay in Portugal

### Not included

- Supplement for single occupancy guaranteed double room for sole use
- Upgrade to pool view room – double occupancy
- Upgrade to pool view room – single occupancy (in addition to single supplement)



Flamingos, Ria Formosa nature reserve

