



# ALGARVE

## THE Umayyad Route



Project  
funded by the  
EUROPEAN UNION



ENPI  
CBCMED  
Cross-Border Cooperation  
in the Mediterranean

# ALGARVE

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algarve

## Algarve. The Umayyad Route

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## Umayyad Project (ENPI)

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The Umayyad Route seeks to reveal the profound human, cultural, artistic and scientific relationship between East and West and the way in which the Greco-Roman legacy was passed on to Europe through al-Andalus. This route was the path along which the Arabs came to the Iberian Peninsula and Europe, but it was also a channel for the transfer of knowledge and perfectly illustrates the close collaboration between East and West. Of these multiple contacts the most important things that have survived the wear and tear of history are a common cultural and artistic background, a shared history and heritage. This is the *raison d'être* of these routes, which seek to forge links and strengthen the relations between the different peoples they encompass, united by a common past.

The Umayyad Route retraces part of the journey followed by the dynasty founded by Muawiya ibn Abi Sufian from its capital in Damascus and its subsequent expansion along the southern shores of the Mediterranean to the Iberian Peninsula. The route begins therefore in the Near East before heading off along the Mediterranean across North Africa. It follows the path by which Arabic civilization came to Europe and which gave rise to the Caliphate of Cordoba, where the Hispano-Muslim civilization flourished for various centuries. The itinerary starts at its easternmost point in Jordan and Lebanon, passing through Egypt and Tunisia, with a stopover in Sicily, and ends up in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal).

## The Algarve and the Umayyad

The Algarve stretches along the southern coast of Portugal. Over time, this region has been under the influence of the Mediterranean Sea and its people. It has approximately 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is currently divided into 16 municipalities, which reveal the diversity and specificity of its territories. It has a population of roughly 450,000 inhabitants and its main economic activity is tourism.

The geographical territorial boundary of the Algarve corresponds to the space that belonged, in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, to the Visigoth provincial diocese and later, from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, to the *Kūra*, the Islamic province of Ossónoba. This is the Portuguese territory with the longest diachrony, where the Algarve place name has its origin in the Arabian term *al-Gharb* (*occident*), a case where the etymology of words tells us a lot about the past of a region.

The Visigoth diocese of Ossónoba was conquered in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century (713) to the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus by the troops of 'Abd al-'Aziz, Mūsa's son and governor of Ifrīqiya, currently Tunisia.

During the Islamic conquests, between 711 and 713, this area of the Iberian Peninsula was considered to be the end of the known world. The Arab geographical



Satellite image of the Algarve

The Algarve in the Mediterranean Area



tradition called the Atlantic Ocean the “Ocean of Darkness” (*al-bahr al-muzlim*), attributing to this scenario a number of extraordinary actions.

From the year 756 until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the southern coast of Portugal was under the Arab-Muslim rule, suffering a strong influence of Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, with a population composed of a majority of Hispano-Goths subject to the increasing miscegenation with Berbers and Arabs. From the 9<sup>th</sup> century, during the height of the Umayyad central power, the progress introduced by the Islamization and Arabization drastically changed the aspect of the society of this zone of Gharb or the Western part of Al-Andalus.



A night view  
of the Castle of Silves

The Umayyads also gave the Algarve a new design of urban space from which the historical areas of today's cities are direct heirs. At the time, the urban centres of al-Andalus were organized around two poles: the citadel and the medina.

The citadel is a key element in the profile of the Islamic city that we have inherited. It was always located in the easiest place for defence within the walled area of the urban centre, with a direct exit to the outside and another one to the city streets. It was like another city, also enclosed with walls, within the centre of power. The city concentrated political power, the elite of courtiers, the means of military defence and, in case of siege, the resistance means such as food and water.

The medina, that surrounds the fortress except for one of the sides, was organized in neighbourhoods by crafts, ethnic groups or religions. In the latter case the main neighbourhoods were known as Jewish quarters or *moçarabias*. In relation to Christian and Jews, the Umayyads practiced a congregating policy in the Algarve that had its exponent in the Church and Convent of the Ravens, important place of Christian Mozarabic rite, where Christians and Muslims gathered in pilgrimage.

During the Caliphate and Taifa periods, Xelb (Silves) and Santa Maria (Faro) were the most important cities



Representation of 10<sup>th</sup>-  
century Norman boats in  
a Bayeux tapestry

in the Algarve. Xelb (Silves) even became its capital, being equipped with an important river port and a shipyard, specializing in the construction of boats.

The current Algarve, once belonging to al-Andalus, had a large number of villages and rural settlements, thanks to the soil's fertility. Its main crops were wheat and dried fruit (almonds and figs).

Between 844 and 861 (9<sup>th</sup> century), the attacks of the Vikings constantly threatened the security of the people from al-Andalus. This fact caused permanent changes in the Umayyad policy regarding the management of the Atlantic coast. The Cordovan Emir, being alarmed by this threat, even devoted himself to setting up a surveillance and defence system of the Atlantic coast in order to avoid Norman piracy. This measure led to the development of a real naval policy in the Portuguese coast.

The Umayyad rule in the Mediterranean and the Algarve was a significant period of economic and cultural prosperity that influenced the Portuguese culture forever. The enjoyment of literature and poetry in classical Arabic developed throughout the entire region, but especially in Silves, which was considered to be a centre of al-Andalus knowledge transmission.



The scene of the Muslim  
fishermen next to the walls  
of Faro (*Cantigas*,  
by Alfonso X the Wise)



12 Algarve. Umayyad Route

Of the Umayyad legacy in the Algarve, it is worth highlighting the traces of urban walls and of *husun* –sets of fortified palaces, the property of clan groups that dominated the territory and its natural resources. Also noteworthy is the set of places of memory that, due to the absence of physical record, became a markedly immaterial heritage. In addition, there are a lot of archaeological remains, which are exhibited in museums throughout the region.

The Umayyad Route in the Algarve is a journey through the ancient paths of the region, which includes fourteen locations which are among the most authentic and representative in terms of landscapes and culture of the Algarve.

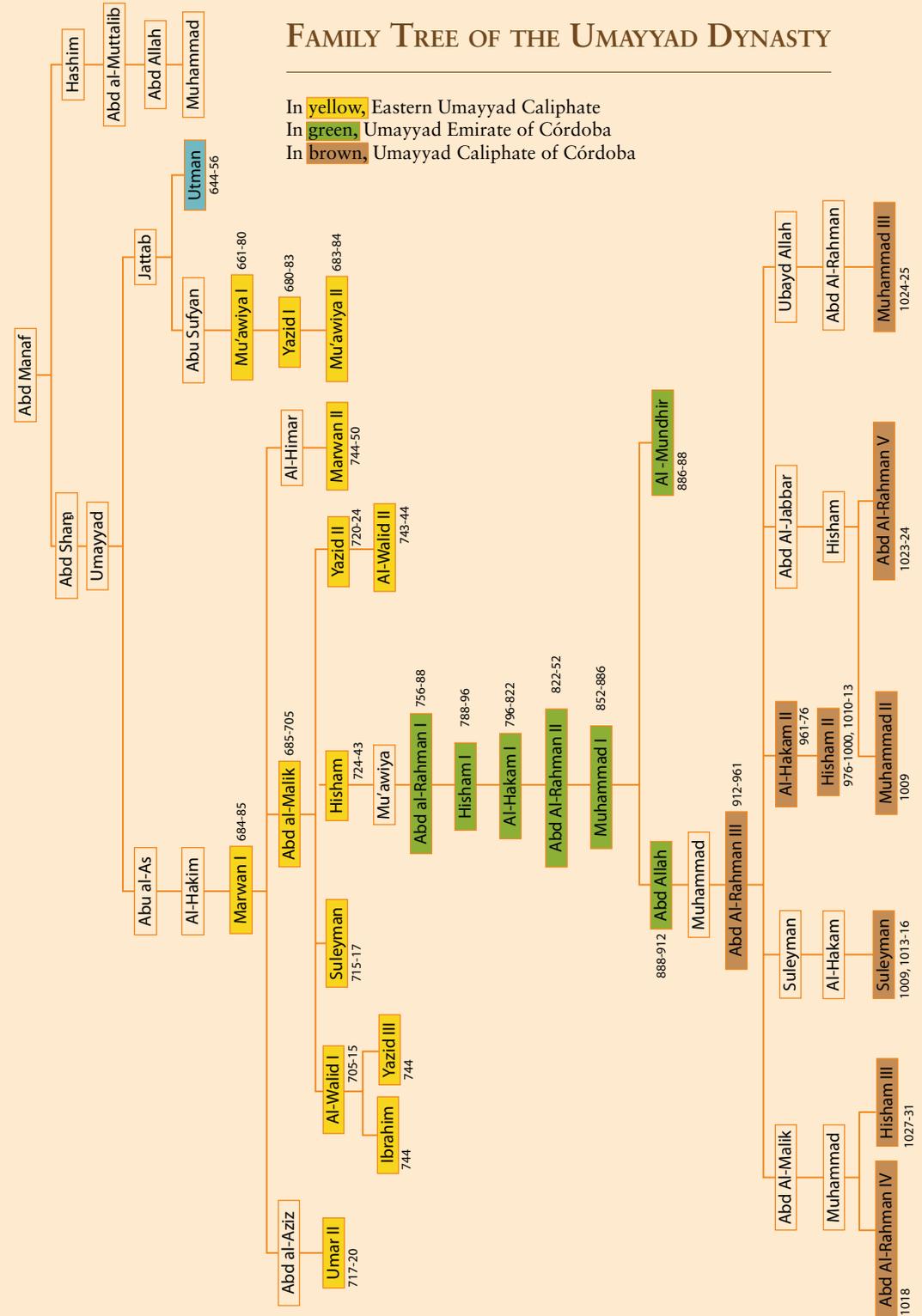
Travellers taking this route will enjoy the great landscape diversity of the territory that includes three distinct geomorphologic areas: the mountains, the ‘Barrocal’ and the coast, and appreciate the reserve areas, national parks and protected landscapes, as well as numerous classified sites that will surprise all nature lovers. The local gastronomy and ancestral traditions that one can still experience in the Algarve complete an enriching and certainly unforgettable cultural circuit.

The itinerary of the Umayyad Route in the Algarve is an invitation to discover the natural and cultural heritage of this territory, which includes fourteen populated locations dating from the Umayyad Period.



Detail of the Algarve coast in 1646

View of the Atlantic coast, Sagres



# The Umayyad Route in the Algarve





## ITINERARY

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THE UMAYYAD ROUTE  
IN THE ALGARVE

# Alcoutim



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Castle / Municipal Archaeology Museum | 4. Museum of Sacred Art / Chapel of Santo António  |
| 2. Mother Church                         | 5. Town Hall   |
| 3. Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Conceição  |  Tourist Office |



Alcoutim in 1790 in a design by J. S. de Vasconcelos

Alcoutim and the Guadiana River

Alcoutim is a municipality located in the northeast corner of the Algarve, along the Guadiana River, surrounded by mountains covered with rockroses, olive and almond trees which bloom in winter, and where the white houses with the typical Algarve chimneys distinguish themselves in the midst of the landscape.

Menhirs and dolmens testify to the human presence in this municipality since the late Neolithic and early Chalcolithic periods (about 3500 BC), and since at least 2900 BC, copper, iron and manganese deposits attracted a lot of people to Alcoutim. However, the Romans were the ones who developed the mining industry in the region, building accesses and transporting across the Guadiana River to the Mediterranean Sea the metals that the empire needed.





The covert-way

Until the 14<sup>th</sup> century the territory remained oblivious to Royal interests, but in 1302, D. Dinis granted the Order of Santiago the patronage of the churches of Alcoutim and its municipality and he ordered the territory to be populated.

In 1304 the same monarch granted a foral charter to the population. The castle was founded during the reign of D. Dinis, while the completion of the work occurred under the reign of his son D. Afonso IV.

General view  
of Alcoutim

Bridge over a stream

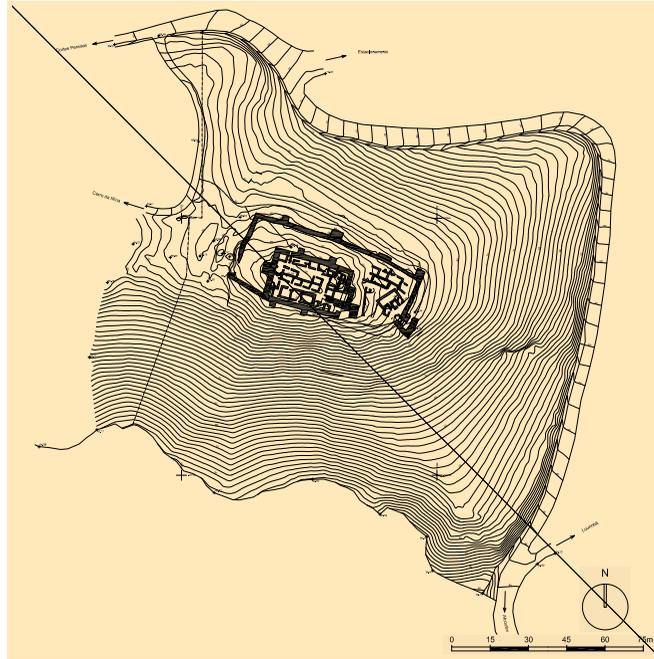
After the Restoration wars, Alcoutim lost its strategic importance. This fact coincided with the decline of the mining activity that, together with the relative poverty of agricultural land of the municipality, led to economic stagnation, a situation that has changed gradually in recent decades.

## To Visit

### Castelo Velho (The Old Castle)

About one kilometre from Alcoutim, crossing the Cadavais Creek, the visitor will find, on a hill overlooking the river, the ruins of the Old Castle, which are considered to be one of the most outstanding monuments of the Islamic period in Portugal. Its typology corresponds to a rural fortress of the Umayyad

View from the  
Old Castle of Alcoutim



Topographic plan of the Umayyad castle of Alcoutim

era, which was built in order to control navigation and the mining trade in the Guadiana River.

The Old Castle with the Guadiana River in the background

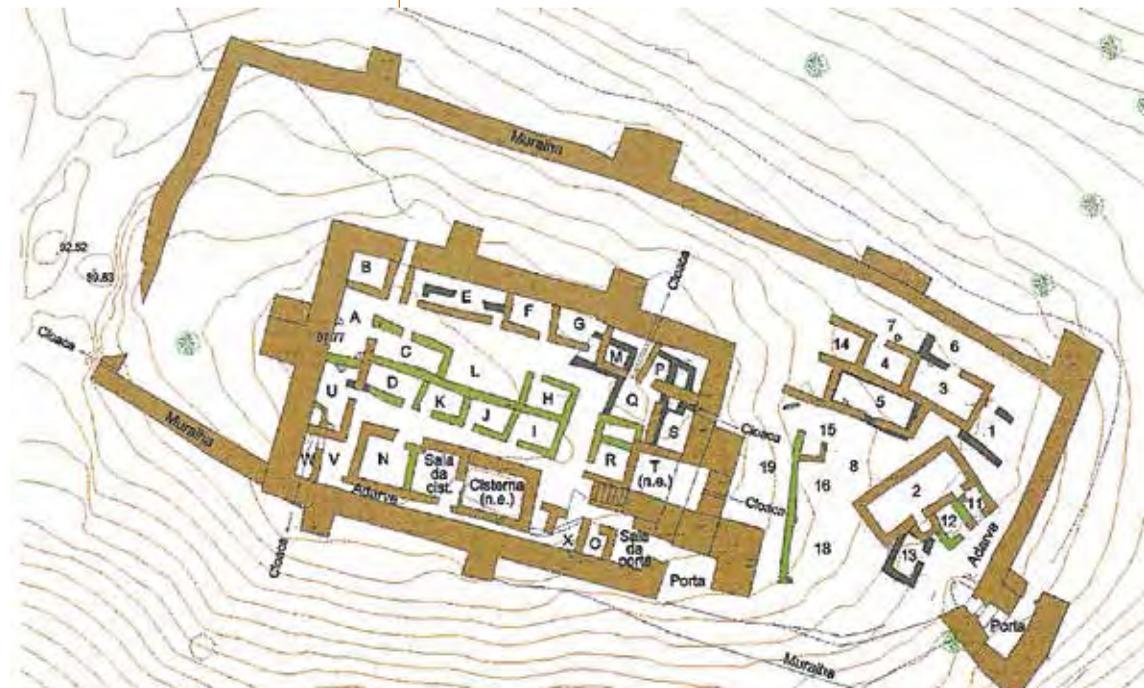


Detail of the use of greywacke for the construction of the Old Castle

Built of shale and greywacke, it dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries and corresponds to a small *alcázar* dating from the Emiral-Umayyad period.

Archaeological findings associate its foundation with the reigns of Abd al-Rahman II (822-852) or Muhammad I (852-886). The various compartments –mosques, courtyards, streets, kitchens, and bedrooms– constitute a housing complex of a fortified palace type, which was inhabited by an extended family clan, possibly belonging to one of the Berber tribes that settled in the region. Some of the objects and the remarkable collection of Umayyad board games discovered in this place are on exhibition in the Municipal Archaeology Museum of Alcoutim Castle.

Plan of the Old Castle





Interior view of the castle

### Castelo da Vila (Town's Castle)

Located on a hill overlooking the river, the site where the castle of the late medieval period is settled was, according to archaeological excavations, occupied during the Iron Age or at the beginning of the Roman occupation. Built in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century by order of D. Dinis as a border fortification, it underwent fundamental changes in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It still preserves part of the walls with battlements and loopholes. Inside, the visitor will gain access to the

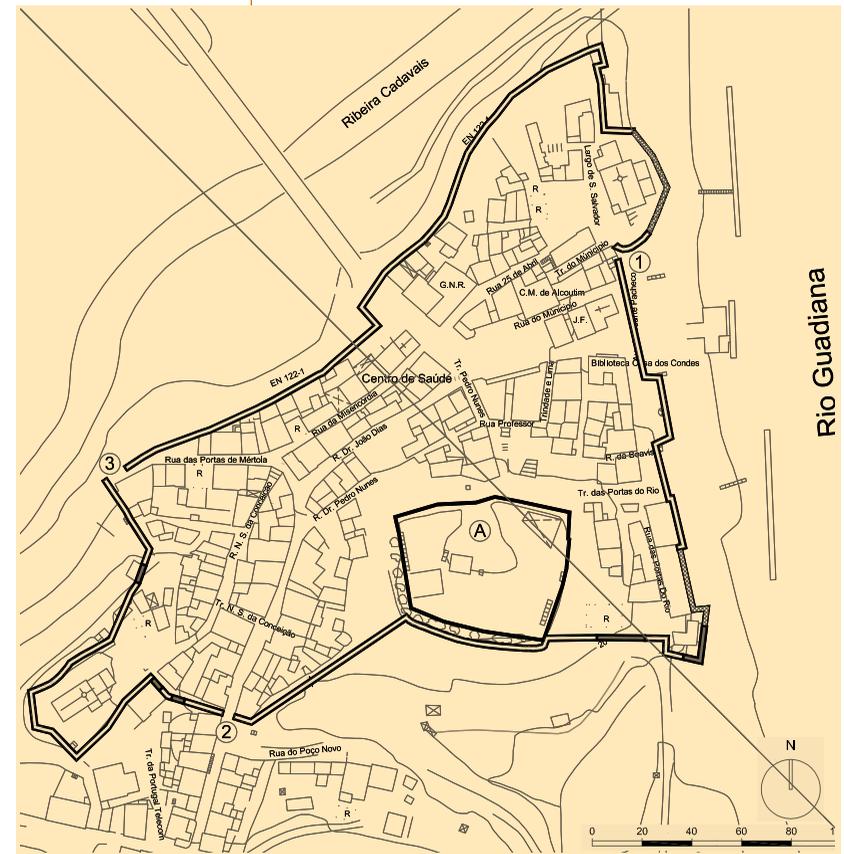
Exterior of Castelo da Vila



Castle of Alcoutim. Interior of the Municipal Archaeological Museum

Municipal Archaeological Museum, which exhibits the archaeological findings of the municipality as well as the remains of the buildings discovered during the excavations. There is also a room with a large and rare collection of Umayyad board games, which came from the Old Castle.

Plan of Alcoutim and the Town's Castle (A)



## Historic Centre

In its narrow and steep streets Alcoutim preserves the typical side of the quiet atmosphere of a *Serra* (hilly) town.

A few minutes' walk leads the visitor to the discovery of simple, centuries-old houses and the Church of Mercy (*Igreja da Misericórdia*). It is worth going to the river bank for some moments of rest, in the company of a cool drink, on a terrace facing the water, and watch the fishing boats coming back to the shore, the yachts anchored in a small marina or the Spanish town of Sanlúcar de Guediana on the other side of the river.



Traditional street in Alcoutim

Alcoutim and the Guediana River



Main nave, demarcated by columns with Corinthian capitals

## Mother Church (Igreja do Divino Salvador - Divine Saviour Church)

It is one of the best examples of the Early Renaissance times in the Algarve, built between 1538 and 1554 in the place of a medieval church. Later it underwent some reconstructions. An elegant gateway is topped by the Coat of Arms of the Marquises of Vila Real and those of the Counts of Alcoutim, interlaced with the characteristic holm oak branches and the inscription "Alleo", associated with the lifting of the Moorish siege of the newly conquered city of Ceuta by D. Pedro de Menezes (1418/1419).

The Mother Church and the viewpoint over the Guediana River



## Chapel of Santo António

Located at the lower part of the village of Alcoutim near the Guadiana river, this chapel, whose foundation date is unknown, may have belonged to the Earl of Alcoutim.

Inside there is a neoclassical altar decorated with marble painting.

Today, the Chapel of Santo António is home to the Museum of Sacred Art of Alcoutim, which allows visitors to enjoy an exhibition of the Churches of Alcoutim. It consists of an interesting collection of objects of religious art from various churches around the region.



Chapel façade

Interior of the Chapel of Santo António

## Pego Fundo River Beach

In a fully rural agricultural landscape, northeast of the Algarve, this river beach benefits from a beautiful natural pool of the Cadavais creek, a tributary of the Guadiana River, resulting in a very quiet and bucolic spot.



View of the river beach of Alcoutim



Ruins of Montinho das Laranjeiras

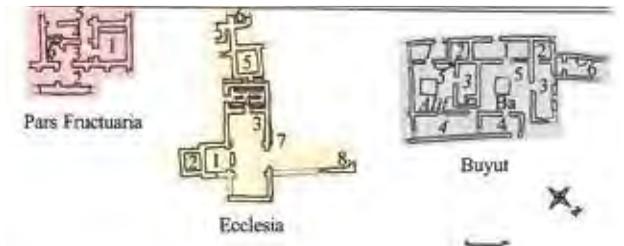
On the right, plan of the ruins of Montinho das Laranjeiras

Below, Montinho das Laranjeiras Mozarab monastery by the Guadiana River

## Nearby

### Mozarab Monastery of Montinho das Laranjeiras

During the Umayyad period, agricultural exploitation activities located near the Guadiana River made use of the structures already existing in the Roman period, as in the case of Montinho das Laranjeiras, 9 km south of Alcoutim. The *villa* was divided into three distinct areas: the *pars fructuaria*, *ecclesia* and *buyut* (houses), respectively from the Roman, Visigoth and Islamic periods. The discovery of Caliphal ceramics suggests that Montinho das Laranjeiras might have been a Mozarab monastery, but right now the only certainty is the fact that the Early Christian church remained open for worship during the Islamic Umayyad period.



## Guerreiros do Rio

The River Museum is located in this picturesque settlement. It provides information about the Guadiana river and its history, the old fishing gears, the life of fishermen and of the people who live in the surrounding mountain areas.



In the two pictures above, rooms of the River Museum



Lavajo Menhirs

## Castelo das Relíquias (Relic Castle-Giões)

The ruins of a fortress of Muslim origin (8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries) with quadrangular plan and massive towers, occupy two mountain tops overlooking the Vascão River. A clan family that controlled the Serra (mountainous) territory densely populated by “alcaria” villas and small hamlets, is said to have lived in this small fortress. It has drystone walls, made of shale and greywacke blocks, where earth and small stones fill the intermediate spaces and the centre.



Church and waterwheel in Vaqueiros, near Alcoutim

## And Also...

### The Guadiana River

There is a road along the riverside that allows the visitor to follow the Guadiana River from Alcoutim to Alamo. This route consists of a landscape of raw beauty, which is softened by the water, the colour green and the flowers. However, it is by boat that the visitor can best discover the many delights of the river. In Alcoutim, we can rent a boat to go up or down the Guadiana. Upstream from Alcoutim, it is worth visiting the curious *Rocha dos livros* (Rock of Books), which looks like a stone bookshelf, as well as d'El Rei Island. Downstream, we will discover a long and lovely path made of smooth curves dotted with the white houses of the riverside villages.

### The world of birds

Sparsely populated, with vast expanses of scrubland, the municipality of Alcoutim is a real paradise for birds and for those who are interested in observing them. Dozens of species choose these mountains as their habitat.

Here we can find predator eagles, common buzzards, black kites, European hawks and kestrels, as well as some species of songbirds such as finches, nightingales and larks. Alongside the Guadiana River and its riverbank, friendly storks, mallard ducks, moorhens, kingfishers, sandpipers and many other birds build their nests.

Goldfinch and blackbird



## The good flavours of the mountains

The gastronomy of Alcoutim and its municipality smells like mountains and vast spaces. It has a wide range of lamb and pork dishes, and in the hunting season, there are also delicious dishes based on rabbit, hare, partridge and wild boar. But the visitor can make a meal with only homemade wine, a tasty bread baked in the old wood oven, olives, ham, sausage, *chorizo* and sheep and goat cheese, produced according to secular precepts.

Alongside the Guadiana, the menu expands to include fresh mugils, barbels and eels grilled over charcoal embers. And who can resist a plate of freshly caught lamprey?

Local desserts following ancient recipes, some of them of Islamic origin, seduce a sweet tooth with *empanadilha* pastries, bread dough cakes, *filbós* (fritters), *folar* Easter (cakes), *pupias* (merengues) and *nogado* (nougats), made from almond and honey, which are famous throughout the Algarve. As a digestive, nothing better than a glass of fig or *medronho* (strawberry tree) spirit, distilled for a long time in copper stills in the mountain areas.



Traditional *chorizo* sausage



Cane baskets

## Blankets, baskets and much more

Some of the ancient handicraft traditions are still preserved in the villages of Alcoutim. The skilful hands of women make shawls, thread and wool socks, straw hats and lace (Vascão, Penteadeiros, Vaqueiros, Fernandilho...)

The baskets made from reeds that grow alongside the Guadiana River still occupy the free hours of craftsmen in Alcaria Queimada and Traviscosa. The hooves of the mules and donkeys that helped work the fields were treated by blacksmiths, and, in Pereiro, we can visit the Blacksmith Museum that documents this activity. It is interesting to see the work of the saddle-makers in Pereiro, who manufacture, with straw, linen and wool yarn, colourful cantles and other harnesses.

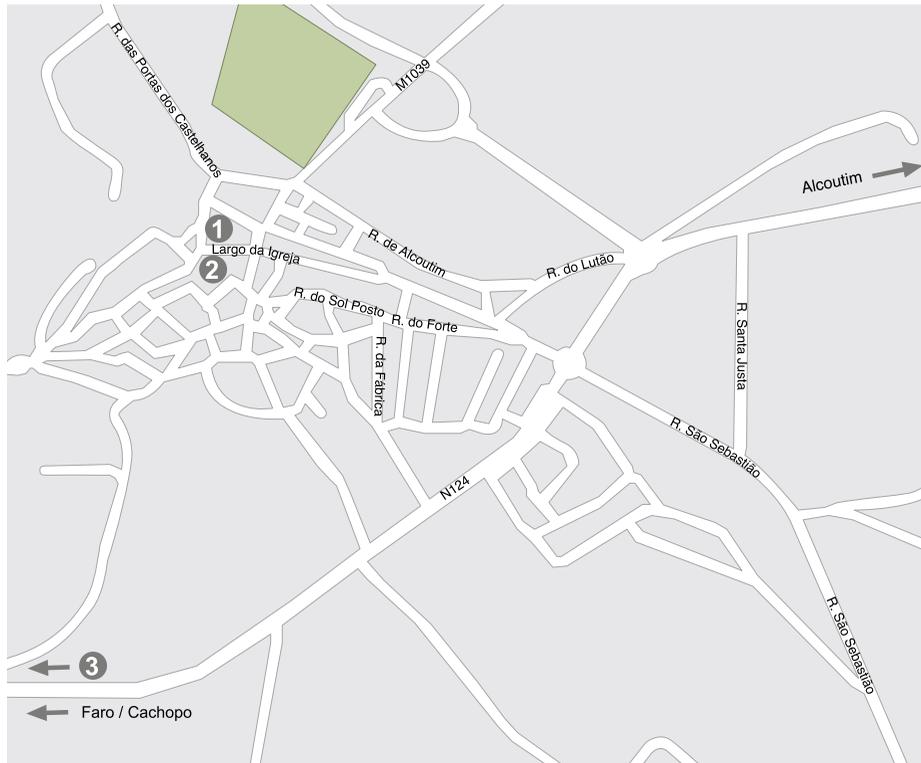


Traditional mountain stew



Basket  
handicraft  
work

## Martim Longo



1. Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição
2. Parish of Martim Longo
3. Museum Centre of Santa Justa (Monte da Barrada)



Rockrose

Foupana Stream

**M**artim Longo is a village in the Algarve belonging to the municipality of Alcoutim that invites the visitor to the enjoyment of nature.

Its highest peak, that reaches a height of 353 m, is crowned by a windmill.

Although it was already inhabited during the Roman occupation, its foundation is not known. It experienced a great expansion between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, which went far beyond the size of the town of Alcoutim. This area was associated with the existence of the wool industry and the fact that many of its inhabitants dedicated themselves to the profitable work of mule-driving. As a matter of historical curiosity, it is worth mentioning the existence of a small community of African origin during that period.



## To Visit

### Mother Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição

It might have originated from an ancient mosque, from which it preserved the minaret, that was adapted to a bell tower. The cylindrical buttresses are also likely to be Muslim. It has simple gothic portals, while the interior consists of three naves separated by pointed arches. The capitals of the columns have inverted trunk-pyramidal shape, with Byzantine influence, which is rare in Portugal.



Central nave in the  
Mother Church



Interior of the  
Mother Church

The high altar and side altars, with altarpieces in Renaissance style, were rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There is an interesting set of images with an emphasis on Our Lady of Conceição (18<sup>th</sup> century). On the walls there are decorative figures that were painted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A curious capital with gargoyles serves as a baptismal font.

The valuable sacred treasure consists of vestments from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and silver objects.

Among the cultural values of Martim Longo we find the Chapels of the Holy Spirit and São Sebastião, which originated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the Chapel of Santa Justa, dating from the late Middle Ages, about 5 kilometres away.

### Museum Centre of Santa Justa

It is located in the town of Santa Justa and is dedicated to the Primary School. In this centre, the visitor can observe a 1950-60 classroom with all the elements and materials used then, without questioning the methods applied at the time.

Forte (fort) roundabout



Exterior of the  
Mother Church



Church of Cachopo

## Nearby

### Cachopo

At about 17 km from Martim Longo, we find Cachopo, a mountain village belonging to the Tavira municipality. The natural landscape and the historical and archaeological heritage well deserve a detour.

The most prominent monuments from the Neolithic period are the funerary ones, such as the Dolmen of Masmorra (Alcaria Pedro Guerreiro) and the Dolmen of Pedras Altas (Monte da Mealha); the circular houses, commonly known as *palheiros* (haystacks); the buildings of prehistoric origin that can be seen in Mealha; and also the Museum Centre of Cachopo, where one can learn more about the mountainous part of this territory and the traditional techniques of blacksmiths, saddlers, weavers and agricultural workers.



Traditional chimney



White stork

## And Also...

Martim Longo is a place that invites the visitor to practice activities related to nature: trekking and bird-watching, observation of butterflies and other species of animals.

Storks, swallows, golden orioles, azure-winged magpies, kingfishers, woodpeckers and little ringed plovers nest here. It is also possible to find wild boars, foxes and rabbits.



A serra (mountain area) in the Algarve



Traditional pastry and jute dolls, typical from Martim Longo

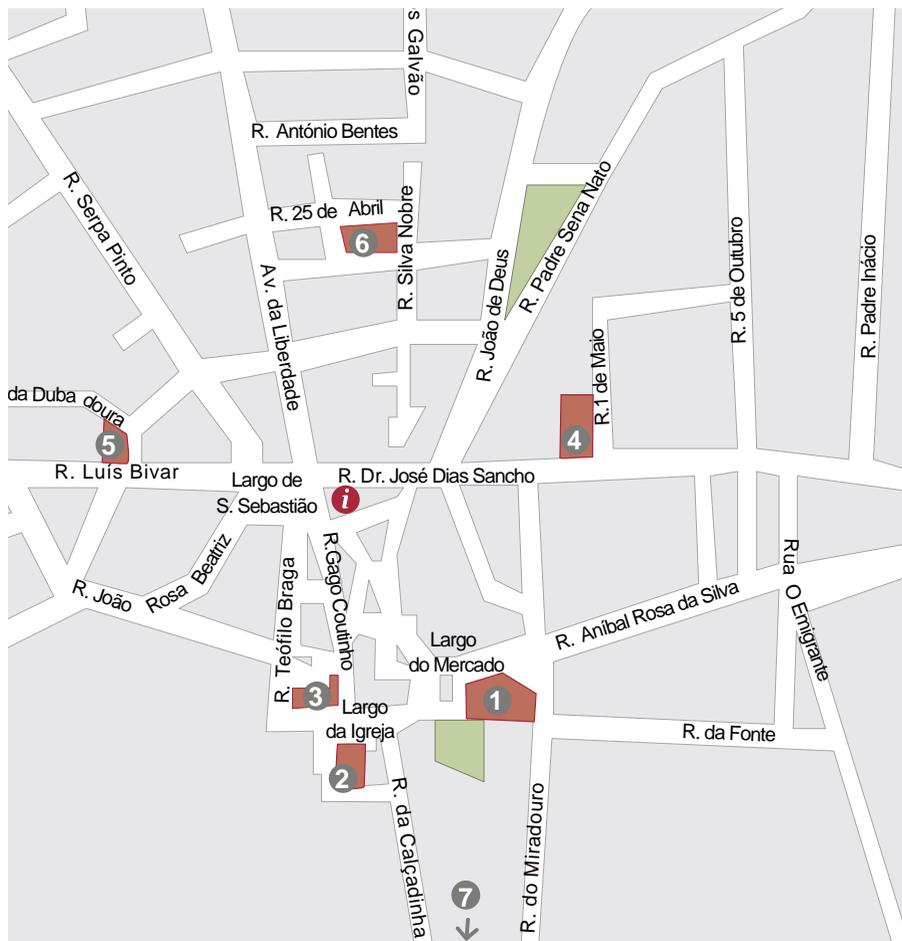


## Gastronomy and handicrafts

The gastronomy of Martim Longo is very similar to that of Alcoutim, the municipality to which it belongs and where mountain food products predominate.

As for the local handicrafts, the famous “Flor da Agulha” jute dolls are typical. With a height of 20 cm and complex elaboration, 36 different dolls depict typical figures of the region such as woodsmen, shepherds and harvesters, and represent traditional activities such as carrying firewood, baking bread or spinning.

## São Brás de Alportel



- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Old Episcopal Palace                                | 5. Church of São Sebastião |
| 2. Mother Church                                       | 6. Municipal market        |
| 3. Town Hall   | 7. To the "Calçadinha"     |
| 4. Algarve Ethnographic<br>Traditional Clothing Museum | Tourist Office             |



Typical street

Panoramic view of  
São Brás de Alportel

This municipality of the Algarve invites the visitor to the pleasure of rest and tranquillity. It is a typical Algarve village, where the streets are shaped by low and white houses as well as buildings that have their façades decorated with tiles, stonework and iron balconies. The flowers on the windows confer a particular character to the place. São Brás de Alportel is embraced by the hills, which are full of rockroses, cork oaks and strawberry trees.

In São Brás de Alportel the earliest sign of human occupation dates back to prehistoric times. Roman and Islamic periods are the ones that have left more testimonies.

In modern times, this small interior village of the Algarve witnessed the construction of the Episcopal Palace, which became a summer residence for the Bishops of the Algarve, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the establishment of the Republic, in 1910.



In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, São Brás de Alportel benefited from a great development, thanks in part to its location. It became the crossroad of the routes linking Loulé to Tavira and Faro to Almodôvar. This fact favoured the sale of the main product of the region –cork–, whose large-scale production and processing turned this place into the national capital of cork. As a result of the economic development, the population of São Brás increased significantly and in 1914 this rural area was elevated to a municipality.

Some years later, the village went into decline due to the fact that many factories moved to the North of the country, which had better communication routes. This situation provoked a surge of migration that lasted for decades.



Main Chapel in the Mother Church

Traditional house



Exterior of the Mother Church

## Visits

### Mother Church of São Brás de Alportel

Built on the site of a church that probably dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the current structure was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1755 and extended considerably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Chapel of Senhor dos Passos contains gilded carvings inspired by the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> century depicting saints. Among the statues, those of the Archangel São Miguel, São Libório and Santa Eufemia, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are worth mentioning. In the baptistery, there is a neoclassical altarpiece in marble. The churchyard is a good viewpoint to admire the surrounding landscape and the sea.

### Former Episcopal Palace

Built in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries for the bishops of the Algarve as a place of refuge from the summer heat, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the building underwent several modifications that altered its structure. What remains of the original palace today is a part of the main building and a baroque vaulted fountain with eight spouts, integrated into a garden.

Baroque fountain at the Episcopal Palace



## The “Calçadinha” in São Brás de Alportel

The old road of the Roman road network, the “Calçadinha”, is one of the ex-libris of the archaeological heritage of São Brás de Alportel. This road connected Ossónoba (Faro) to the Roman settlement of Milreu (Estoi) and Vale do Joio (S. Brás de Alportel), and it was presumed that it also provided a connection to Pax Julia (current Beja).

The road of the “Calçadinha”, which can be accessed from the historical centre, close to the church, has an extension of 1,480 metres. Today, only two of its sections are preserved. They are referred to as “A” and “B” and are separated by a stretch of a few metres that was once paved.

In addition to the road, we also suggest a visit to the Welcoming and Interpretation Centre of the “Calçadinha”, which offers a set of information services and permanent exhibition room with information about the “Calçadinha”. Outdoors, there is a green area for recreation and a place reserved for recreating activities of the past.



The “Calçadinha”

Welcoming and Interpretation Centre of the “Calçadinha”



Above and below, Algarve Ethnographic Traditional Clothing Museum



## António Bentes House of Culture / Algarve Ethnographic Traditional Clothing Museum

Installed at the residence of a former donkey driver enriched thanks to the cork trade and industry, this building is a good example of bourgeois architecture of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to an exhibition of costumes typical of the Algarve in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is also a collection of popular religious sculptures. The old farm buildings contain about twenty old vehicles once used in the Algarve, ranging from carriages and buggies, which were the favourite means of transport of rich people, to mule carts and ox-drawn wagons, used by farmers and farm labourers. The museum also includes an exhibition of agricultural tools and harnesses, as well as an area dedicated to cork processing industries.

## Historic Centre

Low white houses in the popular architectural style stand alongside more noble buildings, the façades of which are decorated with tiles, ornate stonework and cast-iron verandas, which hark back to São Brás de Alportel’s prosperity in the years when the cork industry was booming. A walk through the streets of São Brás de Alportel thus becomes a tour through the development of the town. The building of the Town Hall is the beautiful brick-coloured house, which hosted the House of Orphans (Casa das Órfãs) and was the birthplace of local Roberto Nobre. The former Episcopal Palace and the Dr. Estanco Louro Municipal Library are also the must-visit reference points.

Historical centre



## Nearby

### Cork Route

The cork oak is one of the most important tree species in the country. It belongs to the valuable natural heritage of the municipality. The best cork in the world and the cork industry were born here. Its expansion was a determining factor in the foundation of this municipality, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, it is still one of its most representative and emblematic features. Currently, it is experiencing a new period of growth, which combines fashion and tourism.

The Cork Route (<http://www.rotadacortica.pt/>), will lead the visitor through the cork oak groves and will find out about the history and techniques for the extraction and processing of cork. It is worth following this route that integrates six points of interest: Heritage, Nature, Rural Life, Tradition, Innovation and Knowledge.



Cork industry and cork transformation in the municipality



Interior of the Serra (mountain range) do Caldeirão



Bengado Mediterranean windmill

### Bengado Windmill

The Bengado Windmill is located at Sítio do Bengado, about 600 m from the EN 270 and 4 km away from São Brás de Alportel.

It is a Mediterranean fixed mill, built in stone, with a cylindrical shape and an area of 42.50 m<sup>2</sup>. It is an example of a *cabresto* mill, the oldest drive system that uses rope and milestones for the rotation of the roof, in search of the best quadrant. Now, its triangular sails run in the wind as a testimony of the time when they played an important role in the life of that rural community. They invite tourists to discover their ethnological dimension and experience their bucolic imagery.

In its surroundings there are two sites in the municipality having a rich heritage in terms of local traditions, natural landscape and historical testimony – Mosque and Bengado. On the horizon we can admire the Serra do Caldeirão and the Atlantic Ocean, kissing the sky.





Above, viewpoint at São Brás de Alportel. Below, waterstream banks



## Landscapes and Chapels

Around São Brás de Alportel, the viewpoint along the old guesthouse, with the breath-taking landscape of the hills descending to the sea, and two small chapels of São Romão (originally from the 16<sup>th</sup> century) and Alportel are really worth visiting. Just a few kilometres to the north of São Brás de Alportel, located at an altitude of 330 metres, the viewpoint of Castanhas contemplates the village and looks over the sea. The viewpoint of Alto da Arroteia also benefits from a beautiful landscape of the interior of



Castanhas viewpoint

Landscape at São Brás de Alportel

the Algarve, at an altitude of 360 metres. In Caldeirão, at an altitude of 464 metres, the viewpoint of Alto de Ameixeira, built in the North of Cova-da-Muda, is the privileged place to appreciate the horizon. It offers a picnic area, where one can enjoy the beauty of the place and learn more about the geology, flora and fauna of the region, by reading informative panels.



## And Also...

Full of cultural manifestations, São Brás de Alportel maintained on the banks of the river of time a valuable treasure of living history, made of traditions. The Shrovetide (*Entrudo*) disguise, the *Maios* dolls, the Festival of the Popular Saints, the Fair of Serra, the folklore, the singing of *Charolas* and the chords of the accordions, which continue to enchant generations, are some of the cultural traditions that are relived year after year.

### Hallelujah Festival (Flower Torches Festival)

The Flower Torch Procession is one of a kind in the country. It is a unique manifestation of the people's feelings. As an expression of faith, on Easter Sunday, the ground is covered with flowers and the torch is lifted high to the rhythm of the chorus in honour of the resurrected Christ. The village is decorated and the balconies are ornamented with beautiful quilts. It is a day of celebration and in the afternoon, the churchyard is filled with sounds and flavours, with popular music and the almonds of São Brás.



Accordion



Street and candles decorated with flowers



Corn porridge (*xarém*)



Above and right, fig, almond and carob sweets

## Serra-flavoured cuisine

The tasty stews, the *gazpacho* soups, the chicken with chickpeas meal, the corn porridge and eggs with tomatoes are just some of the typical dishes of the local cuisine that is rich in flavour and tradition. In the hunting season, the tasty wild rabbit spiced with wine is not to be missed.

The typical sweets of São Brás de Alportel are real temptations for the palate. They are based on honey and dried fruit such as almond, fig and carob, and are simply delicious. The typical tender almonds of São Brás, traditionally prepared in a copper pot, are especially famous. The brandy slowly distilled from the fruit of the strawberry tree, which grows in the hills and is also used to prepare excellent wild herbal liqueurs, is very much appreciated.





The first evidence of human occupation in this area dates back to the Neolithic period, although it is estimated that, like the rest of the Algarve, it was inhabited since Palaeolithic times. Archaeological findings also confirm human settlement in the Copper, Bronze and Iron Ages. Many people occupied the territory, but it was the Romans who left a lot of evidence, although it is considered that the name Estoi has a pre-Roman origin, deriving from the Greek word “stoa” which means portico.

## To Visit

### Roman *Villa* of Milreu

The Milreu Roman Ruins correspond to a rustic *villa*, a complex that was built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and restored in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

They consist of a big manor house, agricultural facilities, a bathhouse and a temple. As for the residential area, which can be visited today, it made use of the part of the buildings of the former villa and was organized around a central peristyle –with 22 columns–, which surrounded an open courtyard with the garden and respective water tank. The villa was decorated with mosaics of Tunisian origin, representing the marine fauna.



Temple in the Roman *Villa* of Milreu

Roman mosaic representing fishes



Satellite image of the Roman *villa* of Milreu

Later findings underline a long tradition of Milreu as a place of worship, demonstrating that in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, the pagan temple was transformed into a Christian Church. This enclosure was also used as a cemetery in the Islamic period. Only in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when the domes collapsed, Milreu is likely to have been abandoned. However, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, this place gained a new life, when, on the long-abandoned ruins, a house was built –a unique and precious example of the Algarve-type of civil architecture with cylindrical buttresses.

In the Umayyad period, Arab graffiti drawn on a column were found in Milreu. The graffiti refer to four generations of the al-Hammu family, who were individuals of Muladi origin, i.e. local people converted to Islam. This epigraphic source, together with the archaeological sources, allow us to confirm the continuity of the settlement, in Milreu, almost until the end of the period of the Caliphate of Córdoba, certainly associated with the use of water that supplied the ancient thermal baths and the rustic villa.

The column is part of the permanent exhibition in the Interpretation Centre of the Roman Villa of Milreu.

### Estoi Palace

The Palace of Estoi, in the Rococo style, is today part of the chain of hostels “Pousadas de Portugal”. It was built in 1840 by Francisco José Pereira do Carvalho e Vasconcelos, a court nobleman of the Algarve Coat of Arms.



Column decorated with Arab graffiti

A view of the Estoi Palace



Palace Gardens

It is a vast building. Some parts of its façades are covered with tiles that have a floral decoration and different scenes. Inside, the stucco ceilings, the furniture, the Chapel, the Noble Hall, the living and dining rooms, the two tea pavilions and the Crib House are worth highlighting. At the entrance to the Palace, the Cascade House displays a copy of the “Three Graces”, the work by the Italian sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822). In niches, there are statues of Venus and Diana.

The gardens of the Palace, in the late-Romantic style, are arranged in several plans, with staircases, lakes, marble and ceramic sculptures.

Original interior room at the palace





### Mother Church (Church of São Martinho)

The Mother Church of Estoi was founded at the place of the old medieval chapel. It was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, under the guidance of the Italian architect Francisco Xavier Fabri. Nowadays, it is endowed with a majestic neoclassical façade.

Staircase leading to São Martinho Church



Interior and main altar

## Nearby

### Landscapes

The lands between Estoi and Santa Bárbara de Nexe offer breathtaking views over the *Ria Formosa* and the Atlantic Ocean. They also contain ancient windmills and water wells, in close proximity to the old roads.

## And Also...

### The traditions

In gastronomic terms, Estoi, just like the rest of the municipality of Faro to which it belongs, offer traditional dishes such as the brined mackerel, the corn porridge, the *cabidela* rooster, the lamb or goat with peas, among others, which are worth trying.

A view from the Palace gardens





Traditional chimney

A land of traditions, it cyclically celebrates the feasts associated with main annual events such as Christmas, Carnival and Popular Saints. The arrival of spring is celebrated with the traditional “Maio”, the life-sized dolls that are placed in front of the house on the first day of May.

But the most characteristic festivity of the village is the one that takes place every year, on May 2, when Estoi celebrates the Festival of the Pine Cone (Festa da Pinha). It is a centuries-old tradition that is connected with the celebration of spring and the rebirth of nature. Being simultaneously of religious and pagan origin, this festival involves local people and attracts thousands of visitors to watch the final procession.

It was founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by donkey drivers of Estoi as part of the celebrations in honour of Our Lady at the Foot of the Cross (Nossa Senhora do Pé da Cruz), the patroness of the Confraternity and, according to a legend, as a gesture of gratitude to the Virgin for the miraculous salvation from an attack of wolves.

It is a pilgrimage that includes a parade of one hundred horse riders and carts that are decorated with flowers. It is full of pilgrims dressed in typical costumes of the Algarve.

The procession, with a length of 1 km, leaves from the village of Estoi in the morning and walks 15 km, crossing land paths, municipal and national roads in order to get to the pine forest of Ludo, in Almancil, where an outdoor lunch is held in a great fraternization, surrounded by music and joy. In the afternoon, the procession proceeds to the village of Santa Bárbara de Nexe and at night, already illuminated by torches, it crosses the village of Coiro da Burra, coming back to Estoi, arriving to the Church of the Foot of the Cross, where a monumental bonfire in honour of Our Lady is lit with the remains of the torches, rosemary and pine cones that are fetched from the pine forest of Ludo.

Street of Estoi



# Faro



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Cathedral  | 9. Municipal Market                                   |
| 2. Convent of Nossa Senhora da Assunção /<br>Municipal Museum     | 10. Chapel of Santo António do Alto                   |
| 3. Church of Misericórdia   | 11. Church of São Francisco                           |
| 4. Maritime Museum Almirante Ramalho Ortigão                      | 12. Cidade Velha (Old Town) / City Walls              |
| 5. Chapel of São Sebastião  | 13. City Hall   |
| 6. Lethes Theatre   | 14. Algarve Regional Museum                           |
| 7. Church of Ordem Terceira de Nossa Senhora<br>do Monte do Carmo | 15. Arco da Vila                                      |
| 8. Church of São Pedro  | 16. Algarve Tourism Board                             |
|   | Tourist Office and Arco da Vila Interpretation Centre |



Fountain at  
São Francisco Square

View of the dock of Faro



Faro, a city located near the *Ria Formosa*, is the capital of the Algarve. Its historical area is quite rich and its islands of extensive white sanded beaches connect the city to the sea.

The origin of Faro dates back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Iron Age (the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC). It is in this period that Ossónoba (Ushshunuba), the pre-Roman place name that designated the city until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, was born. It was a colony or a Phoenician trading post until the beginning of the Roman occupation of the Algarve in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

During the Umayyad period, Faro was the first regional capital of the Islamic province (*kura*) of Ossónoba.



Street at Vila Adentro

Historical centre and view over the *ria* (estuary)

At the time of the Umayyad, port towns such as Silves and Faro, experienced an increase in their populations due to the activity generated by the import of goods through their ports.

The prosperity and wealth of the Islamic City of Faro were based both on the navigability of its port and on the productivity of its surroundings. According to al-Razi, from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, agricultural products were exported, such as olive oil, linen and figs from the region between the Guadalquivir and the Saint Vincent Cape. The aloe wood ('ud) from the *Ossónoba* region, as well as other plants, were also sold to distant lands.

Later, due to the power of an influential Mozarabic community (Roman Catholics belonging to the Visigoth rite), the city took the name of Santa Maria do Ocidente, as opposed to Albarracín (Santa Maria do Oriente).



Above and right, streets at Vila Adentro (historical centre)

In 1016, when the Cordovan Umayyad Caliphate lost its power, Santa Maria do Ocidente started the process of establishing itself as a Taifa kingdom. This fact enabled it to be a small independent kingdom, ruled by Ibn Harum, a family of Muladi descent, until 1051.

At the time of the Christian Reconquest, in 1249, the main economic activities of the city were fishing and salt trade. It was also in this period that the Jewish community affirmed its importance. Samuel Gacon was responsible for the printing of the Pentateuch (1487), which is considered to be the first book printed in Portugal.

In 1540, Faro was elevated to the category of city and in 1577, with the transfer of the Episcopal See from Silves to Faro, the city became the capital of the Algarve once and for all, surviving the attacks of English pirates commanded by the Earl of Essex in 1596, and the damages caused by numerous earthquakes.



## To Visit

### Arab Gate / Arco da Vila (Town's Arch)

The Town's Arch ("Arco da Vila"), a monumental gateway inaugurated in 1812, where the visitor will discover a niche with the image of São Tomás de Aquino, was built over one of the medieval gates of the walls. Inside the North-facing gate, there is a horseshoe arch *in situ*, one of a kind in the whole Algarve, attributed to the 11<sup>th</sup> century according to the keystones, that confer it a classic air.

On the left, Arco da Vila, original Arabic gateway. Below, Arco do Repouso in Vila Adentro



### City Walls and Castle

The defence walls of Faro were built by the Muslim Prince Ben Bekr in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The origin of the two fortified towers, defending the entrance of the Arco do Repouso, lies in the reinforcement of the defences of the city that was carried out in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Castle Walls at São Francisco square



The attack on the city by the troops of the Earl of Essex (1596) damaged the walls, but after the reconstruction, they were integrated into the new defences of the city.

The castle, which corresponded to the area of the Islamic citadel, underwent some changes at the time when it was adapted for cannons (17<sup>th</sup> century), with a ravelin attached to it.

It became mischaracterized when, in 1923, a new street (Rua do Castelo) was created inside it. The southern wall and footpaths were broken in order to provide a direct access to São Francisco Square.

Castle Walls



## Historic centre

It consists of three distinct areas: Vila Adentro, Mouraria and Bairro Ribeirinho, each of which marks a separate stage in the city's development from the Christian Re-Conquest to the urban structure that was consolidated in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Left, street in Vila Adentro. Below, Lethes Theatre



## Cathedral

This building of medieval origin corresponds to the ancient Church of Santa Maria, which was built in 1251, and from the primitive construction, only the first floor of the tower, which dominates the main façade, and the two chapels survived.

After the plunder and arson caused by the invasion of the troops of the Earl of Essex (1596), the building



Exterior area of the Cathedral

needed to be restored, and the major repairs were carried out after the earthquakes of 1722 and 1755.

The interior of the three naves, with columns of the Tuscan order, has interesting altarpieces in its numerous chapels, as well as a Baroque pipe organ that shows painted "chinoiserie" patterns.

Organ inside the Cathedral





### Faro Municipal Museum / Convent of Nossa Senhora da Assunção

The Convent was built at the place of the former Jewish quarter between 1528 and the 60s in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is an example of early Renaissance art in the Algarve. The church door has pilasters with figurative decoration. The harmonious cloister is formed by two floors and four groups of arches, with animal decoration on the gargoyles. The dome of the church shows Rococo decoration (18<sup>th</sup> century). There is an interesting watchtower (16<sup>th</sup> century). The museum integrates an important archaeological collection, particularly from the Roman and Medieval periods, as well as a valuable collection of sacred art.



Left and above, cloister of the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Assunção



Chapel of bones

Sacred art collection. Interior area of the Faro Municipal Museum

Exterior area of the Church of Ordem Terceira do Carmo



### Church of Ordem Terceira do Carmo

With its imposing façade and two bell towers, it marks the profile of the city of Faro. It dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Inside, there are different chapels profusely decorated with gilded woodcarving from the Baroque period. It was in this church that the first manifestations of the Rococo period took place in the Algarve. In the adjoining patio, there is a picturesque, but rather sinister Chapel of Bones (1816).

Interior area of the Church of Ordem Terceira do Carmo



## Nearby

### Beaches and islands

For those who like sand, sun and sea, Faro offers a long chain of dunes, which separates the sea from the *Ria* Formosa, an authentic paradise that gives the visitor the opportunity of getting a sun tan in real islands and of isolating himself in the vast kilometres of beaches.

The Faro Beach, accessible by road, integrates a centre with tourist equipment. The Beach of Barreta island, truly quiet and lonely, can be accessed by boats in the summer. It is excellent for those who have a boat, or for those who can rent it and want to have the horizons of beach and sea all for themselves. The Farol Island has a small nucleus of fishermen houses. All the rest is sand... It can be accessed by boat from Faro (in summer) and Olhão (all year around).



Satellite view of the *Ria* Formosa (estuary)

Barreta Island (Deserta)



Culatra Island was a former fishing village that a few decades ago was made up of houses with wooden walls and thatched roofs, all in an environment of picturesque fishing activities that extended to the estuary for shellfishing. Its quiet beaches and family atmosphere are really noteworthy. The visitor can get there by boat from Olhão (all year around).



Right and below, aerial views of the *Ria* Formosa



### Natural Park of *Ria* Formosa (estuary)

Faro is situated in the very heart of the *Ria* Formosa, one of the most important wetlands of Portugal, with an incomparable heritage. Classified as a Natural Park, the *Ria* Formosa covers an area of 60 km, from the Municipality of Loulé to Vila Real de Santo António. The headquarters of the *Ria* Formosa Natural Park is located at Quinta de Marim, in the Municipality of Olhão. The territory, of approximately 60 ha., includes an Environmental Education Centre where the visitor can observe different passerines, water birds, a tide mill, archaeological remains and newly restored traditional dwellings, among other points of interest. This route, in a restricted area, represents the most significant natural components of this protected territory.

## And Also...

### The delicious cuisine

The main dishes of the Algarve cuisine are present in Faro. Those who would like to appreciate the typical recipes of fishermen must taste the fish soup and the razor-shell rice.

It is difficult to make a choice between regional sweets, because all of them contain tasty almonds and delicious figs of the Algarve as their common ingredient. The best digestive, at the end of the meal, is a glass of a fig or strawberry-tree spirit.



Above, razor-shell rice. Left, dried figs



Above, Portuguese pavement. Right, commercial area at Rua de Santo António

### The art of the people

Faro is an ideal place to get to know, in a short period of time, the colourful universe of the Algarve handicraft, to which the local craftsmen add tiles with traditional themes. Further inland, in Santa Bárbara de Nexe or Estoi, the women still weave palm leaves to make carrycots, hats and carpets.

The popular and religious festivals, the legends and superstitions, the fishing gears that are used in the *Ria Formosa* and on the Island of Faro, as well as the works in stone of Bordeira are aspects that also identify the traditions of this municipality of the Algarve.



# Silves



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Castle                               | 9. Tower of the City Gates   |
| 2. City Walls                           | 10. Mansion of the Viscounts of Lagos  |
| 3. Cathedral                            | 11. Town Hall  |
| 4. Church of Misericórdia               | 12. Islamic Culture Interpretation Centre  |
| 5. Municipal Archaeology Museum         | 13. Municipal library  |
| 6. Pelourinho                           | 14. Mascarenhas Gregório Theatre   |
| 7. Chapel of Nossa Senhora dos Mártires | 15. Cross of Portugal  |
| 8. Old Bridge                           |  Tourist Office |



Detail of a glazed tile. Islamic Culture Interpretation Centre

Panoramic view of the city of Silves with the castle and the river

**I**n Silves, the past merges with the present. On the coast, the traditional lifestyle of fishermen is still kept alive and the blue sea beaches attract visitors in search of warmth and relaxation.

In the city of Silves, history and heritage enrich the tourist experience. Colourful citrus orchards and rolling hills form a landscape that invites to discover the rural side of the Algarve.

The Arade River, which in ancient times was one of the main routes of communication with the interior of the Algarve, allowed many people to settle in Silves. Among them, the Arabs with particular relevance, for they turned Silves into the Islamic capital of the Algarve.



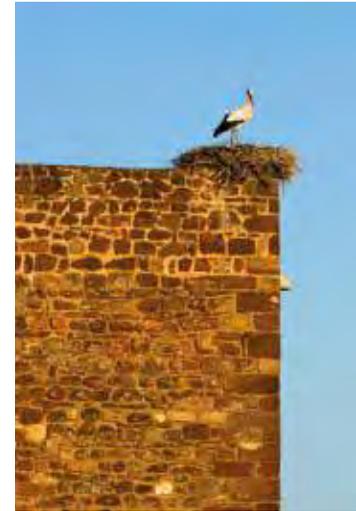


Archaeological excavations in Silves

The first reference to Silves (*Xelb*), according to Arab sources, dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It refers to the fact that, after the attack against the coastal cities of al-Andalus (844), the Ambassador of the Cordovan State left its river dock at the behest of the Umayyad emir ‘Abd al-Rahman II, toward the Court of the Norman King of Denmark, in order to sign the peace treaty after the defeat of the invaders:

“(‘Abd al-Rahman II) ordered al-Gazal to go to an embassy with the person sent by the Viking King [...] he showed up in Silves (Silb) where a boat had been prepared with all the necessary [...] when they were passing by a big headland that goes into the sea and that is known by the name al-Aluwiya (Saint Vincent Cape) they were caught up by a storm.”

Ibn Dihya



White stork on a fortification

General view of Silves with the *Alcáçova* (fortress) in the background

### Silves in the Arab chronicles

The city of Silves, *Silb* in Arabic, at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, was fortified in a period of great instability, with the Muladi Bakr Ibn Bakr Ibn Yahya.

From ancient times it has received compliments from historians for its agriculture, commerce, medina and walls, as well as for the evolution of the existing life:

“Silves is the biggest city in the Algarve. It is built near a river, where the influence of tides is noticeable.”

Al-Razi, 10<sup>th</sup> century

“The village is beautiful, it has many elegant buildings and markets. The population speaks a very pure Arabian dialect... The people from the countryside are very welcoming...”

Al-Idrisi, 12<sup>th</sup> century



In 1013, under the government of Banu Muzayn, during the first Taifa period, Silves became an independent Kingdom of the Umayyad Caliphate of Córdoba.

From the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Silves positioned itself as the economic, political and demographic capital of the whole region.

Al-Mutamid (Beja 1040 - Agmat 1095), the poet king of the *Taifa* of Seville met love, poetry and music in Silves, when his father sent him at the age of twelve, to conquer the city. Whilst its governor, at the famous Varandas Palace, with the company of poet Abu Bakr Ibn Ammar, he shared poetry nights, music, wine and courtesans. The poems they wrote gave them the title of greatest Hispanic Arab poets of the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Silves was one of the main cities of the Algarve that was conquered by the Christians in 1189 who, two years later lost it again to the Almohads until it was definitely conquered in 1249.



Above, interior side of the Almedina Gateway in Silves.  
Below, Al-Mutamid Ibn Abbad Square



Above, traditional Portuguese tile showing a medieval vessel. Right, parapets of a traditional house



Entrance to the Silves Castle flanked by the statue of King D. Sancho I

In 1266, D. Afonso III gave a charter to Silves and ordered the construction of a cathedral on the foundations of the old mosque. The city maintained its importance and was the capital of the Algarve until the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Episcopal See transferred to Faro.

Because of the 1755 earthquake and the Liberal Wars afterwards, Silves underwent difficult times, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it prospered again thanks to the cork industry.

Today, Silves bets on cultural tourism as a factor of economic development, attracting thousands of tourists to its historic centre and to the events organized in its territory.



## To Visit

### City walls

The current walls correspond to the two structuring poles of the cities of al-Andalus: *Alcazaba* (fortress) and Madina.

The defences of Silves, in addition to the castle that corresponds to the ancient citadel, were composed of several lines of ramparts that surrounded an area of about 13 ha., which could, if necessary, accommodate up to 10,000 people.

All that remains of these medina walls are a few stretches built from red sandstone and *taipa* –a mixture of clay, gravel, sand and lime–, which is very well compacted between two drop sides, visible on the north face.



Medina walls



The Medina of Silves

Views of the Castle

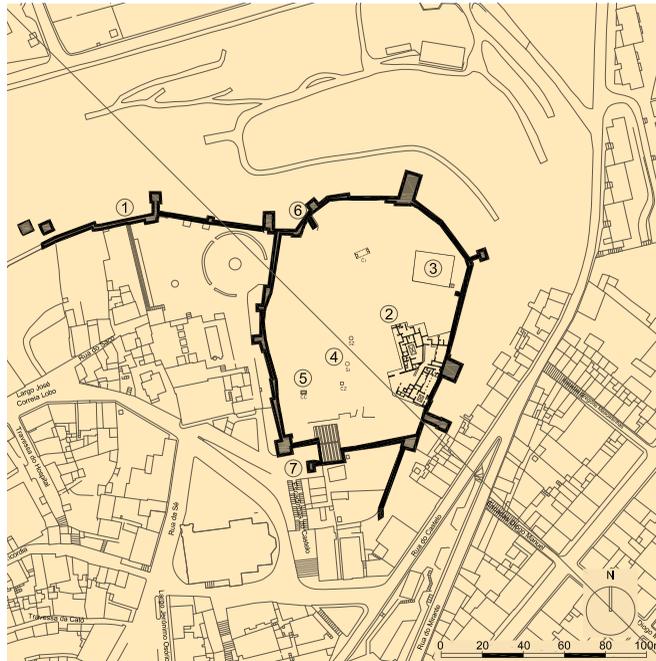
### Castle

The biggest castle in the Algarve and the most beautiful military monument of the Islamic period in Portugal was probably built in the Umayyad period, on a late Roman fortification (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries). Eleven towers, two of which are watchtowers, and strong walls cover an area of approximately 12,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The entrance door is defended by two towers. In the north-facing walls we also find the Gate of Betrayal.

Four of the towers, modified at the time of the reconstruction, that was carried out in the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century, have Gothic doors, domed halls and stones marked with the initials of the medieval stonemasons.





Plan of the *Alcáçova* (fortress) of Silves

1. Medina Walls
2. Almohad buildings
3. Water tank
4. Silos
5. Cisterna dos Cães (Dogs water tank)
6. Porta da Traição (Gate of Treason)
7. Entry

The castle, which gave shelter to the old Islamic fortress, contains a very deep well (about 60 m), a big cistern with four domes based on high columns and big underground silos for grain storage. Its towers and walls are a magnificent viewpoint over the surrounding landscape.



On the left, Medina gate. Below, towers and walls



Medieval ceramic pieces. Municipal Archaeology Museum



### Municipal Archaeology Museum

On the right side of the only remaining door of the Medina we find the Municipal Archaeology Museum.

Inside, the visitor can see a cistern-well, covered with stone and *taipa*, of Islamic origin (11<sup>th</sup> century), with a depth of 18 m and a diameter of 2.5 m, which has a spiral staircase that gives access to its bottom.

Next to the building and visible from inside thanks to the glass construction of the subsequent elevation, there is a section of the Almohad wall that used to surround the ancient city. The *chemin de ronde* and the tower of this section can be visited from the top floor of the Museum.

Its collection gathers a remarkable set of pieces from the Umayyad Medieval Muslim period, proving the wealth and importance of the city in that historical period. The various archaeological excavations have shown (through the ceramic remains found) the existing Arabization process found in many urban areas within the Algarve adopting techniques and traditions coming from the East.

Islamic cistern-well. Municipal Archaeology Museum





Old Cathedral

### Old Cathedral

It was built out of beautiful red sandstone from the region, possibly in the place of the old mosque. The beginning of its construction dates back to the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century or early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The main façade is dominated by the Gothic portal, spanned by a backdrop that ends in a veranda held up by corbels with gargoyles. The circular window and two buttresses complete the elements of the primitive construction. The rest of the façade and the towers are Baroque. In the exterior, the big pointed window with four small columns next to the staircase, and the fine ensemble that makes up the high altar of the church are also worth mentioning.

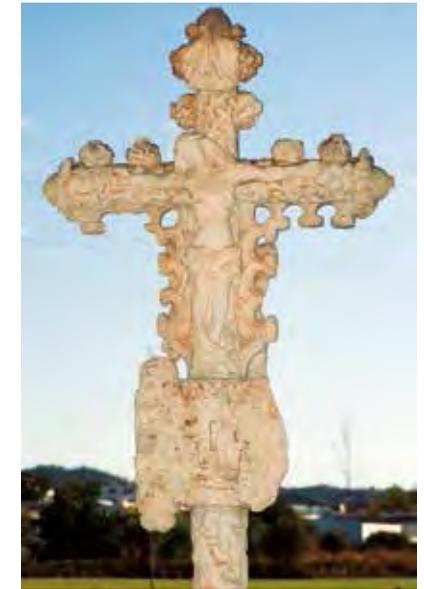
The interior consists of three naves, with plain pillars and pointed arches. The transept and the apse, known for their beauty, give a good example of Gothic art.



Above, portal of the Old Cathedral. Left, interior area



Cross of Portugal



### Cross of Portugal

It is located next to the old road that used to establish the links with the north and with the kingdom of Portugal. The exact date of its construction is unknown (15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century). It is one of the most beautiful crosses in Portugal. On one side, it has a representation of the crucifixion and on the other, the Mater Dolorosa.

Main façade of Church of São Bartolomeu de Messines



### Nearby

#### The discovery of menhirs

The area of São Bartolomeu de Messines, the largest parish in the municipality of Silves, is rich in traces of the past. Among them are the menhirs, testimonies of the megalithic culture (4<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia BC) in the Algarve, like those of Monte de Alfarrobeira, converted to a decorated stele in the Bronze Age, and those of Cerro da Vilarinha, Gregórios and Abutiais, which are still preserved. The Sanctuary of Rocha (Rock), in Vale Fuseiros, consisting of small open pits in the rock and with a length of almost 100 metres, belongs to the same period.

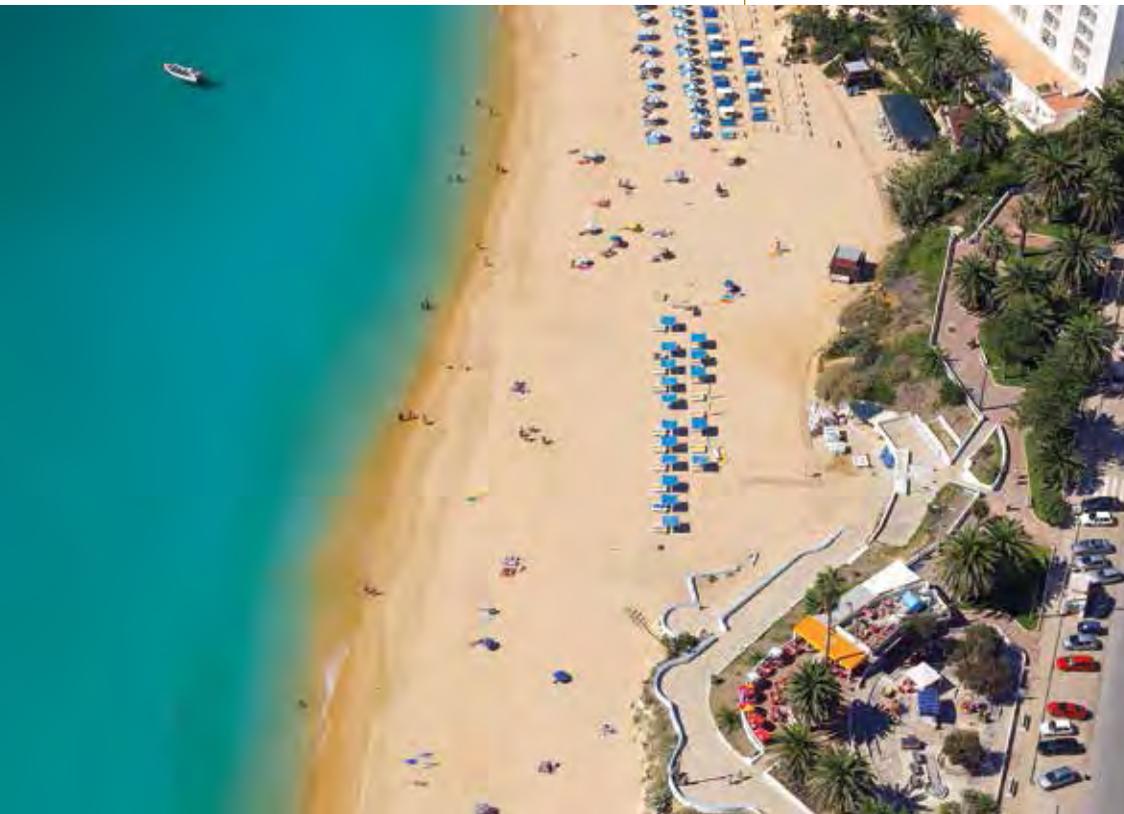
## Armação de Pêra Beach

Armação de Pêra was, for centuries, a village of fishermen who were attracted by the abundance of fish, mainly tuna and sardines, which were salted and sold in the South and Centre of the country. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at the initiative of a prosperous boats and fishing gear owner, a small fortress, of which only one of the walls and the gateway with the royal coat of arms remain, was built on a small elevation overlooking the sea in order to defend the village against the attacks of pirates and corsairs. Inside the fortress, the Chapel dedicated to Santo António dates back to the same period.

Nowadays, Armação de Pêra maintains its typical fishing activities in Praia dos Pescadores. But it is the tourists, attracted by the expansive sands and warm waters, that give it a cosmopolitan, lively and colourful life.



Above and below,  
Armação de Pêra Beach



Arade Dam

## The Arade River

For millennia, boats from the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea went up and down the river. This route is a walk through history, which starts in Silves and immediately after in the former peninsula, where the factory and fortress of Cerro da Rocha Branca was situated. Further downstream, we will find the remains of a medieval watchtower and, on Rosário Island, there are traces of the presence of Romans. It was on this stretch of the river that the crusaders landed their boats when they captured Silves for the first time. Before that, in 966, a fleet of Viking ships, willing to plunder, was surrounded and partially destroyed.

Continuing downstream, the visitor will reach Portimão and the sea, as well as the fortifications that defended the river mouth.

Silves Old Bridge  
over the Arade  
River





On the left, woven palm leaves (*empreita*). Above, cane basketwork

## And Also...

### Arts and crafts of all times

The delicate bobbin laces made by craftswomen in Silves as well as the weaving of palm leaf and coarse esparto grass carried out by the women of small villages scattered around the municipality, are examples of the ancient techniques and traditions that are kept alive in our days. More in line with contemporary tastes are the tiles, ceramic pieces, miniatures of typical Algarve houses, bedspreads and cushions made out of bright coloured linen scraps, which are made in Silves, as well as jewellery and other decorative objects that are produced in the mountain village of São Marcos da Serra.

### The pleasures of eating well

In places near the sea, fresh fish is understandably the main attraction at the dinner table. Sardines, horse mackerel, sea bream, sea bass and many other types of fish are caught and served from the grill, with a slice of lemon. Sea food, including lobster, shrimps and clams, is also abundant. And for those who want to try traditional fishermen's recipes, there is a fish stew, sardines dipped in flour and fried, and horse mackerel with lime.

Further inland, the cuisine has a different flavour. Here we can try corn porridge and slices of Barrocal (mountain) pork with orange juice.



Seafood and beans stew



Grilled sardines



Fig and almond stars

As for the sweets, Silves is famous for its *morgados*, which are decorated with leaves and flowers made of sugar, its *lesmas*, which are filled with a sweet egg paste, and the *folhados* (puff-pastry) of Messines.

At the end of the meal, depending on the time of the year, the oranges, tangerines, pomegranates, figs and grapes, which are grown in the fertile orchards that cover a big part of the Silves municipality, are always welcome. The local bees make honey from wild rosemary and the fruit of their labour is not to be missed either. The visitor should also try the strawberry-tree spirit distilled in the mountain villages.



Grotto in Carvalho Beach

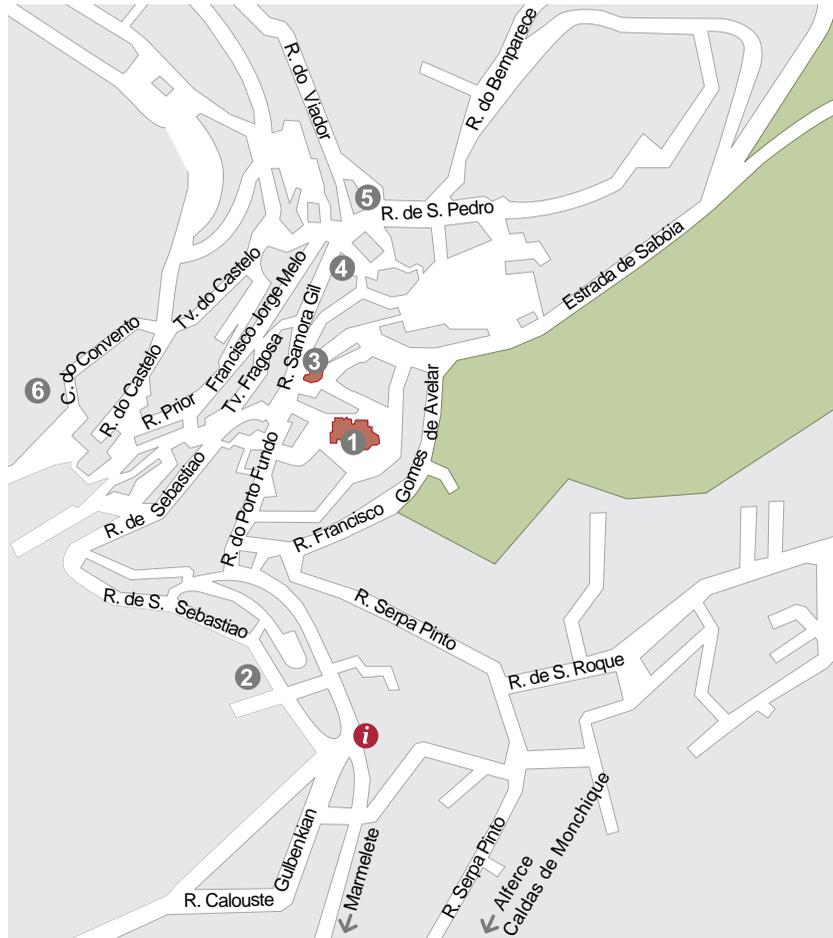
### Marine caves

From Armação de Pêra Beach, we can make pleasant boat trips to discover the amazing marine grottoes that are located on the Algarve coast, particularly on the coast between the municipalities of Silves and Lagoa.

### Medieval times

In August, with the Medieval Fair, which attracts thousands of visitors, Silves fills with sounds, voices, colours and aromas typical of the time when the city was the capital of the Algarve.

# Monchique



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Mother Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição | 4. Town Hall   |
| 2. Church of São Sebastião                     | 5. Chapel of Senhor dos Passos                       |
| 3. Church of Misericórdia                      | 6. Ruins of the Convent of Nossa Senhora do Desterro |
|  | <b>i</b> Tourist Office                              |



Caldas de Monchique

Panoramic view of the village and the Mother Church bell tower

It is said that the Serra de Monchique is the garden of the Algarve. Outlined between the two highest points of the region, Fóia (902 m) and Picota (774 m), it offers the freshness and moisture that are brought by the crystal clear rivers that run along it, as well as diverse and luxuriant vegetation that surprises those who come from the warm beaches of the coast.

Its numerous viewpoints provide landscape pictures of unique beauty. Here the visitor can see practically the entire Algarve limited by the sea and the extensive plains of Alentejo. The village of Monchique is situated in the mountainous area and is comparable to a Christmas crib. It has a Mother Church that represents one of its oldest monuments. The thermal establishment of Caldas de Monchique, unique in the Algarve, is one of the other attractions of the municipality.





Street in  
Monchique

The Romans were the first to settle in Monchique, in search of the healing benefits of its sodium bicarbonate waters that are rich in fluorine, particularly indicated for respiratory and muscular-skeletal disorders.

Starting from the Islamic period, this place, known as *Munt Sâqir*, which means Sacred Mountain, prospered due to the production of goods such as honey and strawberry-tree spirit.

Nowadays, the visitors are still attracted by this picturesque mountainous region, which is characterized by the fresh air, the quality of its famous thermal waters, its handicrafts, the delicious cuisine and traditions of its people.



Monchique. Left,  
vegetation. Above,  
Fountain



Above, cobbled street.  
Below, detail of an urban  
façade. On the right,  
traditional house



## To Visit

### Historic centre

The traditional architecture of the Algarve is expressed in the houses with white walls, in masonry, and in the colour of the doors and windows, although on the coast the chimneys are very different. The steep hills and narrow streets confer this village a certain exoticism, increased by the presence of camellias and hydrangeas, fruit trees, evocative gardens and orchards. It provides a justification for a long discovery tour through different corners of the Algarve.

To realise that Monchique is a beautiful village, we just need to go to Largo de São Sebastião and its viewpoint to observe the white houses that descend the hill and resemble a small crib wrapped in greenery, flowers and freshness.





Interior of the Mother Church

### Mother Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição - Our Lady of Conceição

Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, this church is famous for its beautiful Manueline doorway, with twisted columns ending in pinnacles. The side doorways, which are simpler, belong to the same period.

The interior is made up of three naves. The capitals of the columns, resembling twisted ropes, repeat the decorative motif of the main entrance. In the chancel, there is a carved and gilded altarpiece (18<sup>th</sup> century) that is quite distinctive in design: on the arch, there are two angels holding up the sun and the moon, while two powerful atlantes support the entire set. The *Capela do Santíssimo* contains a small collection of 17<sup>th</sup>-century tiles. Those on the Manueline dome include four panels depicting suffering souls in purgatory and the ones on the walls show St. Francis saving souls and St. Michael killing the devil.

In addition to the interesting collection of statues, the church also has a number of ceremonial objects that once belonged to the monastery of *Nossa Senhora do Desterro* (Our Lady of Banishment), dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as well as some valuable vestments.



Street in Monchique



Exterior view of the convent

### Ruins of the Convent of Nossa Senhora do Desterro (Our Lady of Banishment)

Founded in 1631 by Pêro da Silva, who became the viceroy of India, this Franciscan convent was severely damaged by the earthquake of 1755. Currently, the ruins of the Convent of *Nossa Senhora do Desterro* retain their charm and stand in a very pleasant place, where we can enjoy a magnificent view over Monchique and the surrounding hills.

In the old garden of the convent, there is an imposing magnolia tree, a very old one, which is classified as being of public interest and is believed to have been brought from India by the founder of the convent.



### Caldas de Monchique

Caldas de Monchique is located between the blue of the sky and the green of the mountain. It consists of a set of recovered historical buildings and is the unique thermal spa of the Algarve. The Romans already bathed in Monchique, enjoying the benefits of its excellent thermal waters, indicated for respiratory and muscular-skeletal disorders, as well as for beauty treatments with a great moisturizing effect.

Among the many attractions of this location, it is worth highlighting the wooded park that goes up the hill, where the light and shade effects, the soft whisper of the river and the secular trees create the ideal environment for a relaxing stroll or a nice picnic on the stone tables.

### Nearby

#### Alferce

It is a nice village with houses typical of the rural architecture of the Algarve. The pointed door, the triumphal arch and the ribbed dome of the chancel of the São Romão Mother Church remind us that it was built in the Middle Ages. Nearby, in a place of great

Caldas de Monchique  
thermal baths



Above, exterior area of the  
Mother Church of Alferce.  
On the right, interior of the  
Church

Below, chapel of São  
António. On the right,  
Church of Nossa Senhora da  
Encarnação in Marmeleite

landscape beauty, the ruins of the Castle Hill (*Cerro do Castelo*), a fortification of concentric walls, contain archaeological remains of different human occupations from the Bronze Age to the Umayyad period.



### Marmeleite

In addition to the low white houses of the Algarve, there is a colour palette not lacking warm sunrays. Places of interest include the bucolic Chapel of Santo António, provided with a viewpoint from where one can enjoy the beautiful landscape of the village of Monchique, and the Church of *Nossa Senhora da Encarnação* (Our Lady of the Incarnation), dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.





View of Fóia with the Atlantic at the background

## Fóia

To visit Monchique means to discover, almost at every turn, a panorama of sea and mountains. But in order to appreciate all the beauty of the horizons, we should go to Fóia, which, with its 902 metres, is the highest point in the Algarve. There, the view covers the Cape of St. Vincent (and further north the Serra da Arrábida, near Lisbon) and Faro, as well as a vast semicircle of mountains.

Many millennia ago, a mass of eruptive rock broke off a piece of schist that forms the whole Algarve. The rocks that originated the mountains are syenite and a particular kind of these, because of its particular features, was called “foiaíte” and became forever associated with Fóia, where one of the outcrops took place.

Foiaíte, Monchique's kind of rock



View of Monchique

## And Also...

### Trekking

Those who visit Monchique and like trekking, have at their disposal different thematic routes through which they will discover different villages, waterfalls, windmills, chimneys and monumental trees.

Beans stew with meat and cabbage

### Mountain Flavours

Dishes made with rice and beans or chestnuts are not to be missed. Equally tasty are the many recipes based on pork, such as the homemade sausages and blood sausages, including *farinheiras* and *molhos*. Another local delicacy is ham, that is cured following centuries-old methods. Its flavour is truly unforgettable.

Honey is a common ingredient in nearly all the desserts. The most famous ones are the *bolo de tacho* and *pudim de mel*. The honey of Monchique has an



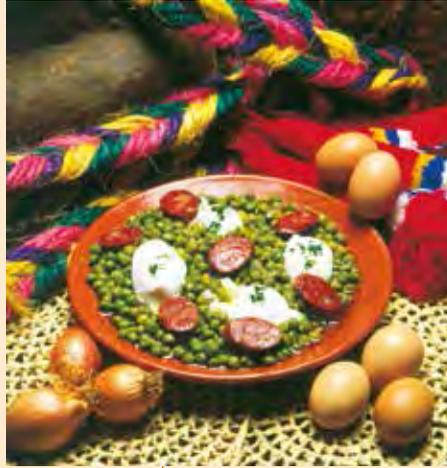


ancient reputation. Its extraction and sale is known since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It mixes many flavours of wild flowers and is nowadays a certified product.

At the end of a meal, nothing better than a glass of strawberry-tree spirit, made in copper stills.

### A land of handicrafts

The handicrafts of Monchique are based on a wide variety of activities that persist in time and continue their development in traditional moulds. This knowledge passes from generation to generation, reflects a way of life and constitutes an important identity factor of this locality. Wicker baskets, wooden spoons, knives and other kitchenware, scissor chairs, ceramics, pottery and weaving are some examples of the diversity of creations, which are linked both to specific economic activities and to folk art.



On the left, honey cake. Above, peas with eggs



Above, *medronhos* (strawberry tree fruit).  
On the right, Fóia mountain landscape

Scissor chairs

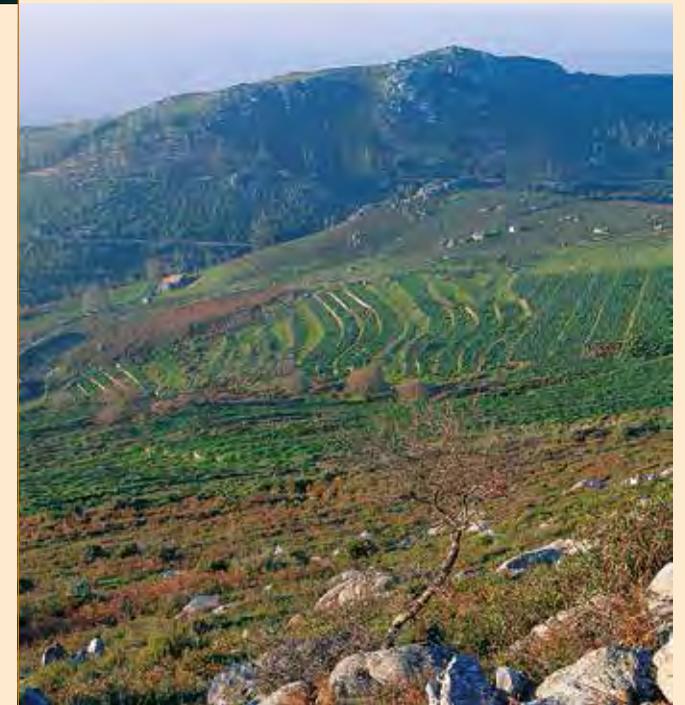


### Nature

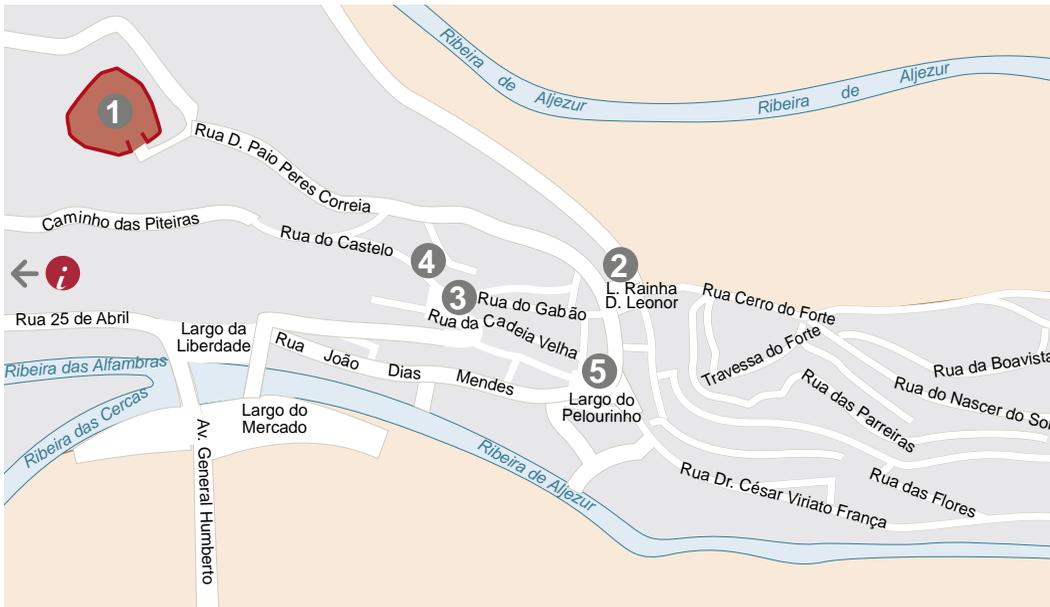
In terms of temperature and precipitation, the Serra de Monchique enjoys a subtropical maritime mountain climate. For this reason, here we can find exotic plants such as yams. It also offers a gorgeous botanical garden with more than 1,000 species of plants that in many cases constitute the south-western limit of Europe.

Oak, cork, chestnut and strawberry trees, as well as hundreds of colourful wild flowers, make this mountain a real paradise for those who are interested in botany.

Those who appreciate birdwatching will find here dozens of species: grey herons, the goshawks, common buzzards, golden eagles, short-toed eagles, water hens, wood pigeons, turtle doves, cuckoos, owls, kingfishers, wrens, nightingales and great tits among many other.



# Aljezur



- 1. Castle
- 2. Misericórdia Church and Sacred Art Museum
- 3. Antoniano Museum
- 4. Painter José Cercas House-Museum
- 5. Municipal Museum of Aljezur
-  Tourist Office



Above and below, panoramic views of Aljezur

Being bordered by the sea and mountains, the municipality of Aljezur reflects this dual influence in its landscapes. While the coast is marked by high cliffs, beneath which there are a lot of beaches and dunes, the hinterland is a place of rolling hills, covered with vegetation. Between them, there is a broad strip of fertile fields and valleys, where the tradition of cultivating vegetable gardens, sweet potatoes and peanuts is still maintained.

Those who travel around the municipality of Aljezur have an opportunity to rediscover peace and tranquillity, to experience silence that is only broken by the birds singing and the melody of the waves crashing on the rocks, to appreciate astonishing landscapes of the sea horizon, the green fields and the high hills, filled with the perfumes of nature.





The settlement of the municipality of Aljezur dates back to prehistoric times. During the five centuries of Islamic presence, it experienced a period of great prosperity. In fact, the village of Aljezur was founded in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by the Arabs, who built an imposing castle here.

In 1249, D. Paio Peres Correia conquered Aljezur to the Moors. In 1280 it was granted a charter by D. Dinis and later, in 1504, by D. Manuel I.

After a period of prosperity, which coincides with the maritime discoveries and with the flow of agricultural

View from the castle of Aljezur

Panoramic view of Aljezur



Above and below, Aljezur castle

products from the village to Lagos, Aljezur went through very difficult times, later worsened by the earthquake of 1755. The earthquake destroyed a large part of the village and completely ruined the Mother Church. In order to build this church, which would trigger a new urban agglomerate, the intervention of the Bishop of the Algarve, D. Francisco Gomes do Avelar was needed.

## To Visit

### Castle

It is situated at the top of a hill overlooking the river. Human occupation of the castle dates back to the Iron Age. It ensured the control of the river port that established the connection with the sea and the protection of the population from enemy attacks.

There is some controversy regarding the construction of the castle. Some researchers attribute it to the Umayyad period (10<sup>th</sup> century). Others, despite the fact that the structure of the castle is not built in “taipa”, which characterizes the Almohad constructions, consider that it was likely to have been built in the Almohad period.





Left, a view from the castle. Above, castle walls and towers

Traditional street



In any case, it is a vast walled space with two towers—the first one is round and the second square—, which reinforce the defences. It was seriously damaged by the earthquake of 1755. Inside, there is a cube-shaped cistern, covered with a dome. Its walls provide beautiful panoramic views of the surroundings.

### Historic centre

In the streets descending from the top of the hill, where the castle is situated, there are typical houses showing the rural architecture of the Algarve, with their colourful window parapets enhancing the white façades. At the bottom of the castle hill, we find the “Fonte das Mentiras” (Fountain of Lies), which is associated with the legend of a beautiful Moorish girl and the conquest of the fortress.

Algarve rural architecture in Aljezur



### Mother Church (Church of Nossa Senhora de Alva - Our Lady of Alva)

It was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and its interior is made up of three naves with an imposing main altar. It has a valuable 18<sup>th</sup>-century statue of Our Lady of Alva, flanked by two 17<sup>th</sup>-century statues, probably taken from the ancient mother church, which was destroyed in 1755. The side chapels contain 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century altarpieces, taken from the former Convent of Our Lady of “Desterro” (Banishment), in Monchique. There is also a Manueline-style baptismal font (16<sup>th</sup> century).



Above, interior of the Mother Church. On the right, exterior view





Exterior of José Cercas Museum House

### José Cercas Museum House

This museum contains the pictures and drawings of the famous Aljezur painter José Cercas and other national artists, furniture, sacred art and faience. The small garden has a wonderful view over the castle, the valley and the village.



It is located in the building that was once the Town Hall. Archaeological findings, especially ceramic pieces and Umayyad coins, trace the history of human settlement in the Aljezur municipality, from 7000 BC to the Bronze Age and the Muslim occupation.

The Aljezur Municipal Gallery, which is attached to the museum, displays temporary art exhibitions.



Archaeological remains of the ribat at Arrifana

On the left, reproduction of an ancient house at the Municipal Museum. Below, building of the Municipal Museum



Fortress of Arrifana, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century



### Ibn Qasi and the Arrifana ribat

Ibn Qasi, “(...) built a monastery in an important *alqueria* in Silves (...)”, when “(...) a multitude of hermits and war people took a side, among them the following: Ibn Wazir (...) Ibn Anane (...) Ibn Almúndir (...) Ibn Abú Habibe, and many other important individuals in the western part of Andalus.”

Ibn al-Khatib, 14<sup>th</sup> century

*The Arabs in the works of Alexandre Herculano,*  
transl. by D. Lopes (1910)

### Ribat da Arrifana

This important monument, located in the Ponta of Atalaia, about 1 km north of Arrifana and 9 km from Aljezur, is the only one of its kind in Portugal and the second one in the Iberian Peninsula.

On the one hand, the “ribats” were places of strategic surveillance and territorial defence, associated with a cavalry of Islamic warrior monks, and on the other hand, they were places where a restricted group of disciples initiated the religious thought of a Master.

In Arrifana you can find the archaeological remains of a convent-fortress dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, where the Sufi Master Ibn Qasi lived in spiritual retreat.



Arrifana Beach

Interior area of the Mother Church of Bordeira



According to tradition, he wrote here a great part of his mystical work *The Removal of the Sandals*, a title associated with the story of Moses written in the Koran (Chapter 20, verses 3-39 and Chapter 79, verses 15-21).

Nowadays, this place forms a natural viewpoint from which wonderful panoramic views over the Vicentina Coast, the impressive cliffs and the secluded beaches can be contemplated.

## Nearby

### Bordeira

This village is surrounded by mountains and cultivated fields. Some streets maintain the picturesque traditional houses. The ruins of an old mansion can be found here. Do not miss a visit to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century church. On the main and side altars there is a beautiful woodcarving dating from the Baroque era. The triumphal arch and altarpiece of the high altar, with the images of Our



Exterior of the Mother Church

Bordeira Beach

Lady of the Incarnation (*Nossa Senhora da Encarnação* -18<sup>th</sup> century), São Francisco, Santo António, São Luís (17<sup>th</sup> century) and São Sebastião (probably from the 16<sup>th</sup> century), deserve special appreciation. Its side altarpieces date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Next to the main door of the church, there is a Manueline portal (16<sup>th</sup> century) of unknown origin and great beauty.





Two rooms at the Sea and Land Museum in Carrapateira

## Carrapateira

A recently restored fortress that defended people against the Berber and Algerian Corsairs (17<sup>th</sup> century) and a church dedicated to *Nossa Senhora de Conceição* are the only monuments of this town overlooking the sea. In the church, that features Manueline-style doorways (16<sup>th</sup> century), there is a carved altarpiece on the high altar with 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century statues.

Another place of interest is the Museum of the Sea and Earth, where the visitor can get familiar with both the sea life and land-based activities, by means of audio-visual elements and the representation of objects and utensils that are used in the daily performance of these traditional activities.

Near the village, at the top of a steep cliff, we can find the ruins of a seasonal settlement of the Muslim fishermen (12<sup>th</sup> century).



Fishermen Islamic village at Carrapateira

Right, beach. Below, street and windmill in Odeceixe



## Fishing in the Atlantic coast in the Islamic Period

One of the most popular products was the valuable ambergris, produced by a sperm whale, that was collected in the Atlantic coast from Cádiz to Lisbon. This product, sold in Córdoba, became famous to a point that it was exported to Egypt. The historical sources at the time also make reference to shell fishing by the fishermen and tuna fishing with harpoon.



## Odeceixe

It offers the visitor a beautiful landscape of houses scattered across the hills, with the sea in the background.

The Seixe River runs across the town. There is an interesting Wine Cellar Museum in one of its streets that recreates the traditional atmosphere of production and storage of wine. The main church in honour of Our Lady of Piedade (17<sup>th</sup> century) has some beautiful statues from the same period. There is also an interesting Manueline-style heptagonal font (16<sup>th</sup> century) and a triumphal stone arch belonging to the same period.

The restored windmill is fully operational and is a centre of tourist attraction.

## And Also...

### *Costa Vicentina* beaches

The sea has carved high cliffs from the schist and greywacke hills along the coast, where birds nest and wild flowers grow. Here and there, in bays that face the sun and the ocean, there are dark sand long beaches along almost 40 kilometres of a magnificent and well-preserved coastline.

The visitor must see the beaches of the Aljezur coastline, of a unique and wild beauty, and visit the calm and seldom frequented Vale dos Homens and Carreagem; the wide Amoreira, at the mouth of the Aljezur River, which allows a sea and river bathing; the Monte Clérigo, an extensive beach with good access and support equipment; Arrifana, with its picturesque fishing port; the seldom frequented Canal and Vale Figueira, with its natural beauty; Bordeira, surrounded by big dunes and magnificent landscapes and finally Amado Beach, in the southern part of the Carrapateira village, which is a real paradise for surf and bodyboard lovers.



Goose barnacles

Beaches of Monte Clérigo and Amoreira



Sweet potato

### The delicious traditional cuisine

With the sea so close at hand, there is no lack of fresh fish. The skilful cooks grill it over an open fire or cook it in tasty stews called “caldeiradas”. We can also taste seafood of different kinds here. One of the local specialties are goose barnacles, ripped out of the rocks bathed by the sea.

Sweet potato, grown in fertile valleys, rich in water, is an indispensable ingredient of the typical dishes and cakes of the region. It can be accompanied by wine, produced on the sunny hillsides, or by the strawberry-tree spirit, distilled in copper stills in the mountain areas.

### The art of the people

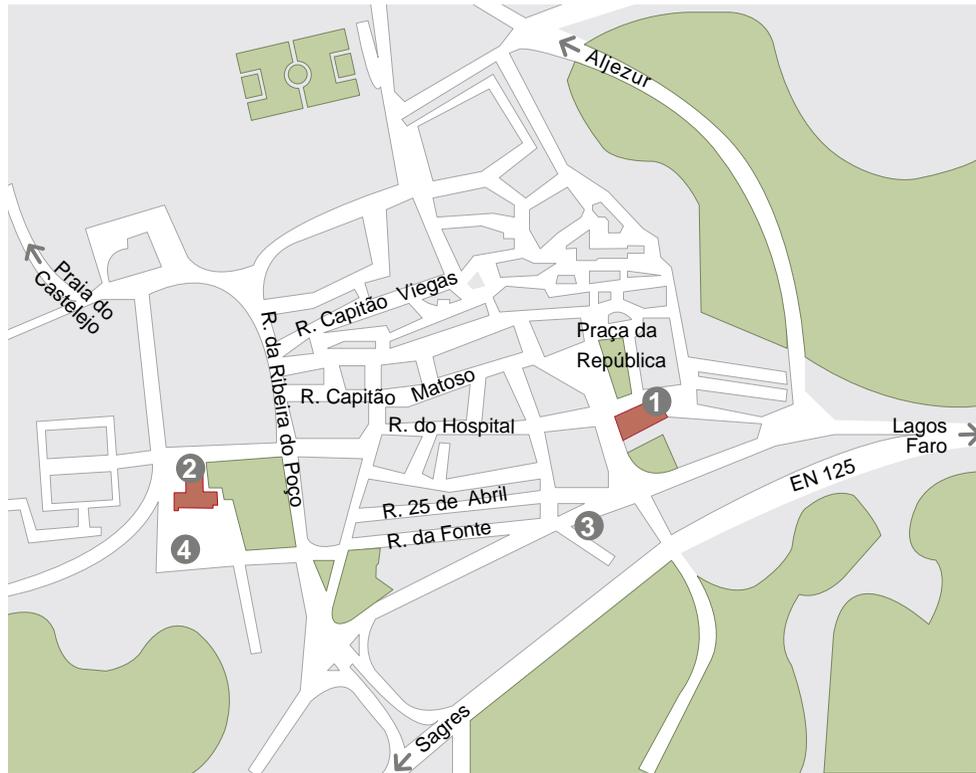
In the municipality of Aljezur there are still artisans who produce traditional basketry and the picturesque wooden spoons, reminiscent of rural life. People also remember the traditional manufacture of basketwork chairs, once to be found in every home. The women of Aljezur continue to make lace bedspreads and doilies, as well as bags, blankets and rag rugs, using old patterns. Pottery is a craft that has experienced a strong revival and some locals produce pottery work of high quality. Items are also made of plaster, reproducing lamps resembling typical Algarve chimneys, with a marked Arab influence, which are used both inside and outside the houses.



Wicker for basketwork



## Vila do Bispo



1. Mother Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição
2. Town Hall
3. Interpretation Centre
4. Cultural Centre



Vicentina Coast

In this municipality of *Costa Vicentina* (St. Vincent Coast), mysticism, nature and history blend with each other. For millennia, Sagres and Cape St. Vincent, under a dramatic natural backdrop of cliffs and raging sea, were places dedicated to local gods. The menhirs of prehistoric rites are yet another testament to the devotion of the peoples who occupied the territory.

In *Costa Vicentina*, the Corvo Church and its Convent, dedicated to St. Vincent, were an important centre of Mozarabic pilgrimage in the Umayyad period, from where we get abundant reports providing an account of the great mystic and spiritual value of the site. The geographer al-Idrisi believed that it was prior to the arrival of the Muslims to the Peninsula.

Lighthouse at  
Cape Saint Vincent



The prominence given to several places of Christian worship during the Umayyad period give us some idea of the influence and power of intervention of the Mozarabic community in the southern regions of al-Andalus.



A jackdaw, typical crow of the Vicentina Coast landscape

### Al-Idrisi and the Corvo Church

“It is located on top of a hill that goes into the sea. At the top of the building there are 10 crows, whose absence is difficult to notice. The priest who serve the church say wonderful things about these crows, but nobody believes these things could be said again. It is impossible to pass by without being part of the meal, a custom that one never misses and one always does because it is an old tradition, transmitted from time to time and with a long-standing practice.”

Al-Idrisi. Geographer, 12<sup>th</sup> century.  
*Descripción de L’Afrique et de Espagne*



Engraving depicting the Cape of St. Vincent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century



Prince Henry the Navigator. Detail of the Monument to Discoveries, in Lisbon

According to tradition, the body of St. Vincent, who was originally from Valencia, was transferred, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, to the Sacral Promontory. The hagiographic accounts coincide in the episode of discovery of the Saint’s body, close to Cape St. Vincent, adrift on a barge guarded by two crows. As a result of this miraculous rescue, the chapel and monastery were built, where people flocked to, coming from all corners of the Iberian Peninsula. Until mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, this was the most famous Christian shrine of al-Andalus.

It is also this place that evokes the Age of Discoveries around the enigmatic figure of Infante D. Henrique (Prince Henry), the Navigator.

For centuries this location prospered thanks to tuna fishing, an activity from which Infante D. Henrique obtained the financial resources to fund the maritime discoveries.



It was during the 15<sup>th</sup> century that Vila do Bispo gained greater importance, due to the stays of Infante D. Henrique in Sagres.

At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this region was systematically attacked by Moorish pirates and by the English privateer Francis Drake, who were responsible for huge losses that led to the construction of a new defensive system.

As in much of the Algarve coast, the 1755 earthquake caused widespread destruction in this region that currently constitutes –thanks to the memory of its history– an important tourist attraction.

General view  
of Vila do Bispo

Aeolic  
mills



Mother Church. Above,  
exterior area. Right,  
central nave

## To Visit

### The village and Mother Church

In Vila do Bispo visitors will find charming white houses, cascading down from the top of a hill crowned by the church tower, around which lie many houses portraying an ancient Algarve.

The central aisle of the parish church, with a typical 18<sup>th</sup>-century façade, is covered with blue tiles depicting vases and dolphins (1726). Attached to the Church there is a Museum with pieces of sacred art.



Interpretation  
Centre



### The Vila do Bispo Interpretation Centre

It offers diversified information on the culture and history of the municipality, mainly relating to the Portuguese discoveries. It also includes a temporary exhibition room.

## Cape St. Vincent

A sacred site since Neolithic times – a fact proven by the existence of important nuclei of menhirs and by reports of Greek authors (4<sup>th</sup> century BC)–, where religious ceremonies were held, involving libations and the prohibition of humans at night, as it was supposedly frequented by gods. In the Phoenician period it was almost certain that there was a shrine dedicated to the solar divinities of Hercules-Melcart and Kronos-Saturn-Baal.

For the Romans, the whole area was part of the Promontorium Sacrum (which gave rise to the name Sagres), the westernmost point where the sun, when setting, would boil the waters of the Ocean.



Beliche Fortress  
at Cape St. Vincent

View of Cape St. Vincent  
from Beliche Beach



Lighthouse in  
Cape St. Vincent

### Cape Saint Vincent in the Arabic Chronicles

“*Tarf el Orf* [Cape Saint Vincent] is a Hill that rises over and into the sea. Surrounding *Tarf-the-Orf* we will go through *Arrijana* and *Almagra*”. Near St. Vincent, quoted by the same author, is the city of Ossónoba [Faro] “whose sea throws amber towards the coast.”

Yaquut. Geographer, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century,  
Muyam al-Buldan, transl. from the “Magazine of  
the Centre of Historical studies of Granada  
and its Kingdom” (1920)

The fortress of Cape St. Vincent, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with reconstructions in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, features the coat of arms of D. João III. Inside, the visitor will find the former convent of the Hieronymite friars, founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the curious lighthouse, an updated version of the one erected in 1515.



Aerial view of the  
Fortress of Sagres

### Sagres and the fortress

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the frequent presence of Infante D. Henrique (Prince Henry) during the beginning of the Atlantic navigation and the discovery of the African coast all the way to the Gulf of Guinea, provided the association of this picturesque fishing port to the Discoveries.

At the Sagres Point, the buildings evoke the past of a place that is part of world history. Here, the fortress dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with successive reconstructions and repairs during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, is supplemented by ancient batteries that defended Tonel and Mareta beaches. Inside the visitor will find the Church of Nossa Senhora da Graça (16<sup>th</sup> century), a vast circle radiated with 43 m in diameter delimited on the ground by stones and known as the wind rose, and also the modern exhibition centre, where visitors can get all the information about the site.



Interior area of the  
Fortress of Sagres



Aspradantes menhir,  
in Raposeira

### The menhirs

The numerous menhirs (4000 to 3000 BC) in the municipality of Vila do Bispo are an interesting testimony of the past. Carved in white limestone, usually conical in shape and in some cases with relief decorations, they evoke ancient cults linked to fertility and the dead.

From Vila do Bispo towards Sagres, along the old road we will find a route to follow on foot and discover the menhirs of the so-called *Monte dos Amantes* (Lovers' Mount) itinerary.

Leaving Raposeira toward the beaches of Ingrina and Zavial, the traveller will see other menhirs, among them the Padrão menhir –one of the most representative and best preserved menhirs.

### The Fort of São Luis de Almádena

Near Boca do Rio we will find this strong bastion structure, dating from the Philippine period, dedicated to Saint Louis.



Fort of São Luis  
de Almádena

## The beaches

The coast that stretches north and east of Cape St. Vincent is cropped by over twenty beaches, all different in terms of charm. Some are sand shells at the bottom of cliffs; others are extensive beaches with a vast expanse of sea.



Beliche Beach in the Vicentina Coast

## Nearby

### Raposeira

One of the dwellings belonging to Infante D. Henrique (Prince Henry) is settled in Southwest Algarve. Tradition attributes him a house, so transformed today that hardly a 16<sup>th</sup>-century gateway lintel can be identified with this construction.

There are several houses bearing 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century gateways. The Mother Church of Raposeira dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and features Manueline gateways, a bell tower finishing in an octagonal pyramid and, in the back, a curious corbel with a human face.



Exterior area of the Mother Church of Raposeira



Main nave in Manueline style at the Mother Church of Raposeira

About 2 km from Raposeira, 200 m north from the EN 125 road, we will find the Chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The tradition associates the chapel to the place of prayer of Infante D. Henrique (Prince Henry). It is one of the oldest Gothic structures of the Algarve (possibly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century), consisting of a simple façade with an arched gateway and a rose window, a chancel with side columns in carved capitals, a coffered dome and side buttresses with gargoyles. Surrounded by a rural scenery, we can find the Quinta da Raposeira (farm), where ruins of a 15<sup>th</sup>-century manor house can still be found.

Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe





Ponta da  
Bandeira Fort,  
Lagos

Below, castle walls. At  
the bottom, a view over  
the city of Lagos



## Lagos

Lagos is a city in the Algarve that played an important role in the epic maritime discoveries. Holder of a relevant cultural heritage, it is also characterized by the natural beauty of its coastline, which is well worth a visit.



## And Also...

### The protected landscape of *Costa Vicentina*

The scenic beauty and the richness of the fauna and flora of the broad arch of the coast, which stretches from Belixe to Odeceixe, led to the creation of a Protected Landscape Area, which is part of the Natural Park of Southwest Alentejo and *Costa Vicentina*. Here we can admire dozens of species of wildflowers, observe animals such as the wild boar and the eagle in their natural habitat. The visitor will have the opportunity to take pleasant but always different walks, among cliffs and beaches.

### Tastes and Knowledge

The typical cuisine of Vila do Bispo reflects the dual influence of sea and land. This dual influence is present in traditional dishes such as the chickpea meal, the cabbage stew, the “xarém” with sardines and the delicious fish dishes: rice with grey bream, sea-bream or sharp-snout bream prepared in the oven, fish stew and fried moray eel.

Seafood is also a tradition: goose barnacles, mussels, periwinkles and limpets are a delight for seafood lovers.

Also worth highlighting are game dishes based on hare, wild rabbit, partridge and wild boar.

The skilled hands of women produce the fine bobbin lace of Vila do Bispo and Sagres, keeping a secular tradition that has always been associated with coastal locations. Similarly, the rural villages continue to produce works in palm and esparto: carrycots, baskets, doormats, etc.



Wild flower at  
the Vicentina  
coast

Conger and  
rice dish





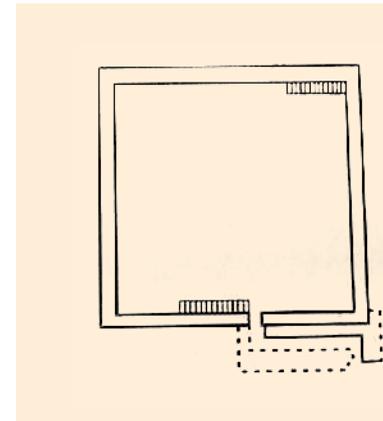
With the walls being rebuilt in 1300 and having been promoted to village by D. Manuel I, shortly after the death of King João V, Alvor lived the period of prosperity of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

However, the earthquake of 1755 caused major damage and the town never regained its former glory, losing the status of village during the times of Marquis de Pombal, recovering it only in 1938.

Alvor still preserves much of its charm of a typical fishing village, with streets of white houses and colourful fishermen boats, who, after a day of fishing, gather around the old fish market.



Sculpture dedicated to fishing at the Alvor Ria



Alvor Castle plan

## To Visit

### Alvor Castle

To the south of the Old Village there used to be a small *hisa*, in the area of the future Castle Square, with a military garrison, whose function would be to protect the fishing settlement against enemy landings in the southern beach.

As for the so-called Alvor Castle, of which two sections of wall with annexed houses still remain, it is difficult to find unanimity in the foundational chronology of this property, whereby it is believed that the origins of the Castle date back to the Muslim era, with its founding likely to be associated with the end of the Emirate or beginning of the Caliphate, due to the quadrangular plant of the property and the apparatus used, with irregular blocks arranged horizontally, mortared with lime, rubble and pottery shards.

It has an area of 828 m<sup>2</sup> and a perimeter of 115 m. The door faces north and is the main remaining original element.

Alvor Castle



### Marabouts of São João (St. John) and São Pedro (St. Peter)

These cubic-shaped chapels with a spherical dome of Arabic influence evoke the Muslim marabouts used as ascetic burial sites.



Left and below, the ancient marabout of São Pedro, covered with a spherical dome



### Mother Church of the Divine Saviour (Igreja do Divino Salvador)

It is a building dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The richly carved main entrance –one of the most beautiful in the Algarve– and the side entrance are in Manueline-style. Also of primitive construction are the columns that support the three aisles as well as the triumphal arch of the main altar and the holy water fountains. The altarpiece of the high altar dates from a later period, carved with an expressive image of the Lord Jesus, in real size (18<sup>th</sup> century).

Interior space formed by three naves at the Mother Church of Alvor



It is also worth mentioning the panel representing the Saviour. The sacristy, annexed to the Church, is an ancient Arabic marabout adapted to new functions.

Multi-coloured tiles with two biblical figurative panels –the washing of the feet and the Cenacle– from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, several images and ancient graves complete the remains of this small, but important, church.

The churchyard offers an excellent view over the *Ria de Alvor* (Alvor Estuary), the houses and the surrounding sea.



Above and right, Alvor Mother Church





Ria (estuary) of Alvor

### Ria de Alvor (Alvor estuary)

On one side, the sea; on the other, the liquid mirror of a wide estuary that stretches inland, separated by a wide and extensive dune. It is in this beautiful setting that dozens of species of migratory birds nest. Animal life continues in the marshes, while fishermen collect fish and molluscs with traditional arts. Discovering this almost ignored charm of the Algarve under the diffuse light of dawn is a feeling of total stillness, a memory that will last forever.

Ria (estuary) of Alvor



## Nearby

### Portimão



Canning factory. Interior of Portimão Museum

The white profile of a church on top of a hill and the narrow streets of the old neighbourhood of fishermen and traders are traits of Portimão that define its character of a secular city that is joined by the presence of the sea and extensive sands of Praia da Rocha (Rock Beach).

Of medieval Portimão only a few pieces of walls hidden by houses remain. It is the architecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that marks the profile of the historic centre, with two-floor homes with wrought-iron balconies, the ennobled stonework on the windows and doors, the trims with balustrades in stone and ceramic and the tiled walls.

A must-see is the Museum of Portimão, located in the city waterfront, in the century-old fish cannery *Feu Hermanos*, being a pole of cultural diffusion and a space of discovery of the most striking aspects of the industrial and maritime history of the city.

Fish preparation. Portimão Museum





### Neolithic necropolis of Alcalar

In Alcalar, about 8 km from Alvor, lies the important Neolithic/Chalcolithic necropolis (2000/1600 BC), with graves of varied typologies, from megalithic chambers to those with a false dome and side niches, that have been catalogued as a national monument. A part of the tombs is open to the public and offers an Interpretation Centre.

Above, exterior of the Neolithic necropolis of Alcalar. Below, interior area



### And Also...

#### The delicious cuisine

Alvor is a land of maritime and fishing tradition and of deep religious beliefs, a consequence of the misfortunes of hard work and the sea to which it has always been subjected. Consequently, the typical dishes of the village are based on fish: grilled sardines, fish stew, squid, clams, bean clams, cockles, corn porridge, clam *cataplana* and skewered monkfish.

Algarve-style fish stew

Clams



Fishing tools used by fishermen in Alvor

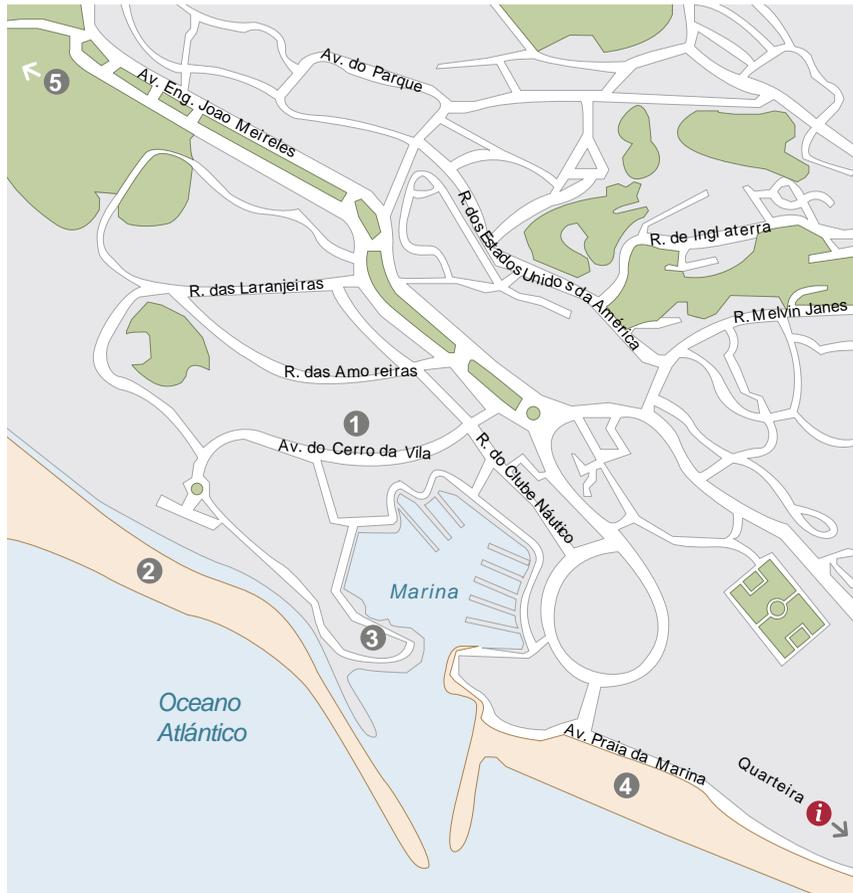
### The art of the people

Wicker and cane baskets, hats, mats, rugs and baskets in palm and esparto, lace and embroidery, copper works or useful and decorative pieces in clay, are some of the small treasures that the artisans of the municipality of Portimão, including Alvor, continue to produce using traditional materials, patterns and techniques.

Colourful stained glass and pieces moulded and decorated in porcelain are manifestations of a new craft, of a will to innovate by working creative attractive products with one's hands.



# Vilamoura



- 1. Archaeological Centre of Cerro da Vila
- 2. Falésia Beach
- 3. Vilamoura Marina

- 4. Marina Beach
- 5. Environmental Park
-  Tourist Office



Vilamoura  
Beach

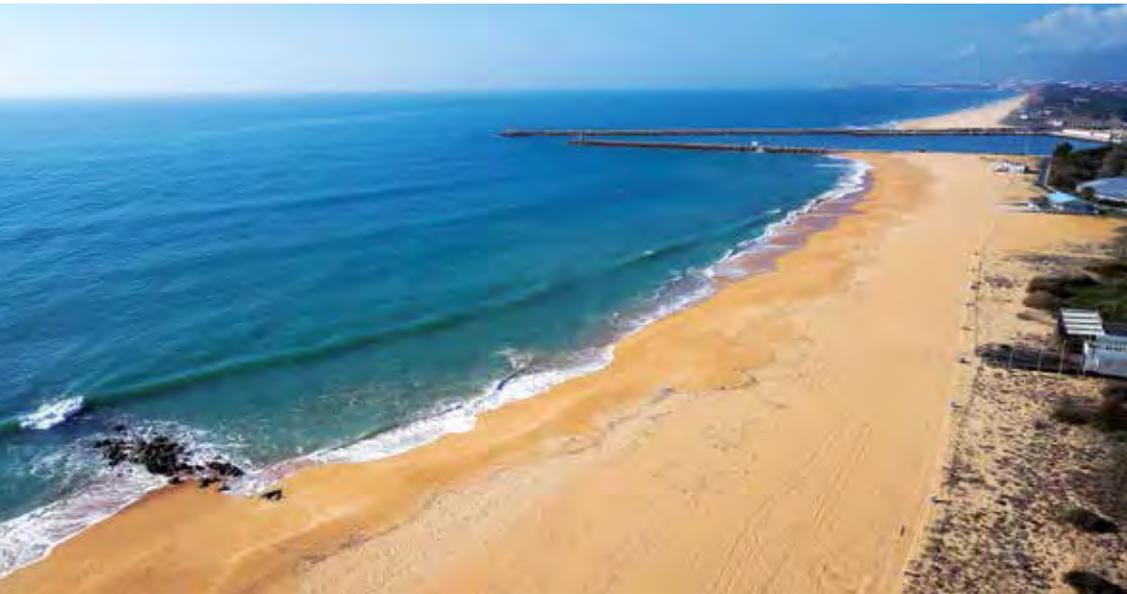
Belonging to the municipality of Loulé, Vilamoura is characterized by the cosmopolitan life it offers to the visitor, typical of large tourist centres.

Occupying an area of 1,600 hectares, it is the largest luxury tourist complex in Europe. It features a marina, dozens of hotels, an academy and six golf courses, a casino, several nightclubs, tennis club, diving club and other recreational facilities.

Vilamoura  
aerial view

To complete this offer, Vilamoura offers its visitors 3 km of soft and golden sand beaches, framed by the blue sea and the strong ochre of the cliffs. With regard to the historical and cultural heritage, we find the archaeological station of Cerro da Vila with its Roman ruins.





Vilamoura  
Beach

Modern Vilamoura was born of the former Quinta do Morgado farm in Quarteira, which in turn comes from the Reguengo of Quarteira, mentioned in 1266 in the charter of Loulé awarded by King Afonso III. This farm, one of the largest and richest properties in the Algarve, was acquired in 1964 by Arthur Cupertino de Miranda who, at a time when tourism was taking its first steps in the Algarve, changed its name to Vilamoura, creating in 1965 Lusotur, a company to manage that territory.

## To Visit

### Cerro da Vila

The archaeological station of Cerro da Vila includes the ruins of a noble house or villa, built between 27 BC and 14 AD, public changing rooms, tanks for salting fish, the foundations of a funeral tower and a port area which are, still today, a living testimony of the importance of the Roman presence in this region.



Remains of the  
*tepidarium*,  
Cerro da Vila



Roman mosaics  
at the Cerro da  
Vila



Cerro da Vila.  
Archaeological remains

The site was also occupied by Visigoths and Muslims, as evidenced by a number of Islamic silos, opened inside Roman houses.

In the Islamic period, despite the dependency on Seville, it was a local family, the Banu Bakr, who had control of the region in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

The significant archaeological value of the ruins and the estate of pieces found, now on display in the Museum of Cerro da Vila, well justify a visit to the site.



Left, butterfly.  
Below, a  
dragonfly



## Environmental Park

The Vilamoura Environmental Park is a protected area occupying 200 hectares which is inserted in the area of agricultural reserve and National ecological reserve.

About fifty years ago they were plots used for agriculture, with dry land orchards, vegetable and cereal crops and pasture. With the abandonment of these activities in the 70s and with the swamping of most of these lands, the Vilamoura reed bed was formed which, together with artificial ponds meanwhile created, the ancient irrigation ditches, the riparian vegetation of the Quarteira River and the neighbouring golf courses, is home to a great diversity of birds and small mammals.

A stroll through this privileged space for contact with nature and the observation of flora and fauna can be done on foot, on horseback or by bike. With a sign-posted route offering two different itineraries, the Vilamoura Environmental Park also includes two bird watching observatories. Next to the Environmental Park we can gain access to the CENA-Centre for the Study of Nature and the Environment that welcomes visitors and provides them with all the information on the Park and nature conservation.

Night view of  
Vilamoura marina



## Vilamoura Marina

It is the largest marina in Portugal and occupies a prominent place in international recreational boating, with 825 berths.

It is equipped with a set of complementary services such as bars, terraces, restaurants, shops and a large pedestrian promenade. It is usually the site of several international sailing events, being also very sought after by fishing, windsurfing, jet-skiing and diving lovers, among other sports. Several cruises and boat trips depart from here every day.

General view of  
the marina





View over the city



Above, municipal Museum. On the right, Castle of Loulé



corresponding to a lobby, a hot room, a warm room and a cold room, as well as two tanks.

It is also interesting to visit the market, a neo-Arabic construction built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with its colours and hustle and bustle, and visit the many chapels that guard art treasures.

## Nearby

### Loulé

Loulé, city of contrasts and charms, captivates the visitor with the evocative battlements of its medieval castle, its narrow white streets where artisans maintain old traditions, the vertical lines of the minaret of an ancient mosque, today the tower of the St. Clemente Mother Church, and with the wide horizons of the sanctuary of Our Lady of Piedade, on top of a hill.

The Castle, of Islamic origin, is the place where the citadel is likely to have been settled and where the Town Hall would be set up later, today adapted to a Museum.

Inside the walled perimeter are the Islamic baths dating from the Almohad period, discovered during an archaeological excavation, with various divisions



Mother Church of São Clemente

Municipal market





On the left, exterior of the Church of São Lourenço. Above and below, interior tiles



## Almancil

The fact that, according to legend, a miracle happened in 1722 when people were searching water, led to the construction of the chapel of São Lourenço in Almancil, which deserves a visit.

A baroque architectural structure featuring an elegant dome and tile panels located on the main gateway and on the rear of the chapel are the main distinguishing elements of this temple. The tiles that line the walls, the arched roof and the dome that tells the story of the Saint's life –produced in Lisbon, in 1730– are one of the most extraordinary sets in Portugal, placing the chapel in an unmatched position in the history of art. The harmonious integration of the tiles with the gilded altarpiece of the high altar and the decorative elements of the triumphal arch and base of the dome are worth mentioning.



Above, *Fonte Grande* (Big water source). On the right, a typical Street in Alte

## Alte

Alte, the most typical village of the Algarve according to many people, emerged during the Roman occupation. The streets of the historical centre maintain much of its character in the whitewashed houses, the windows and parapets framed with colour, the laced chimneys and the quiet surroundings. The space around the church is a charming “postcard” of the true Algarve.

Bucolic and refreshing are the *Fontes Grande* and *Pequena* (Big and Small water sources), which for centuries were the meeting point for the village's women while they filled water pitches and washed their clothes. Today it is a pleasant place, always cool, with shady trees, stone tables and benches that invite the visitor to moments of rest or to a picnic.



## And Also...

### Cuisine with a taste of the sea and land

Well in accordance with its cosmopolitan atmosphere, Vilamoura's restaurants offer a wide choice in terms of international cuisine, without however leaving out the regional fish dishes, such as the horse mackerel in tomato sauce, the grilled sardines, cuttlefish in its ink, shrimp cream or octopus rice that can also be found in restaurants of nearby localities such as Quarteira. Taking a stroll to the inland villages of the municipality of Loulé, we can also try specialties such as the *cerejada* chicken, chickpea stew, corn stew and *xerém* porridge. Desserts such as the *Mexericos de Boliqueime*, the *Esquecidos de Alte* and the Loulé puff-pastry complete the menu, leaving place only for *medronho* (spirit) and liqueurs.



Above, a dish of mackerel in lime.  
On the left, *xerém* with sardines

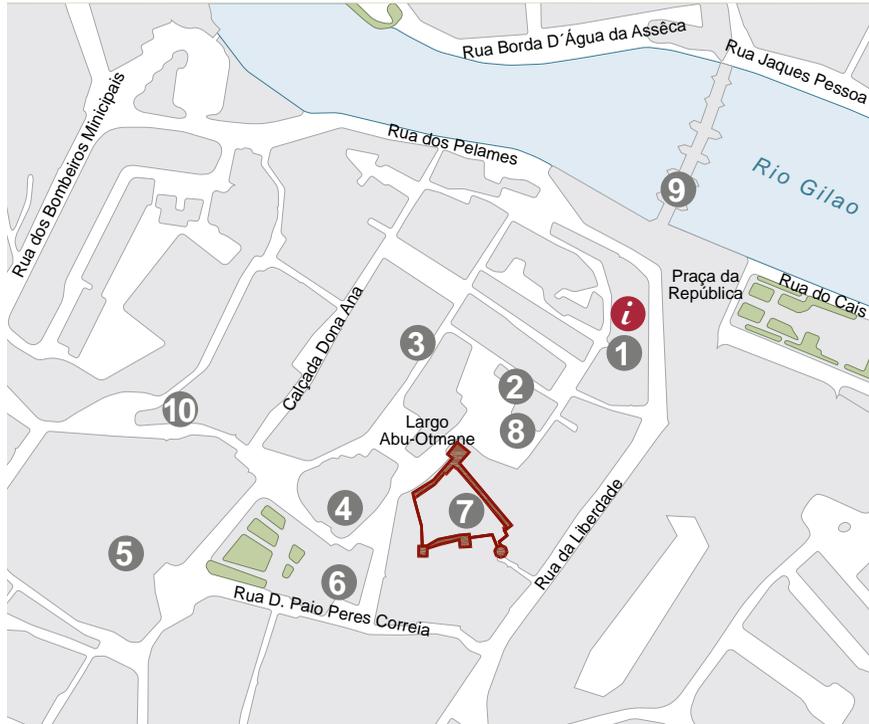


### Golf

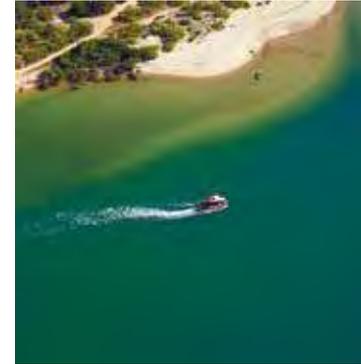
Golf is one of the main attractions of Vilamoura, and golf lovers have at their disposal eight courses and a gym. The Vilamoura Golf Club is the largest one in Portugal.



# Tavira



- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Church of Misericórdia           | 7. Castle                             |
| 2. Gallery Palace                   | 8. Solar do Corte Real                |
| 3. Church of Santa Maria do Castelo | 9. <i>Ponte Velha</i> (Old bridge)    |
| 4. Graça Convent                    | 10. Municipal Museum / Islamic Centre |
| 5. Santiago Church                  | <b>i</b> Tourist Office               |
| 6. São José Church                  |                                       |



Ria (estuary)  
in Tavira

The Old Bridge over  
the Gilão River

The Castle and the many steeples of churches, the mirror of a river where houses and gardens are reflected, the triangles of the hip roofs, the horizons of the beach and the sea make up the charms of Tavira, a city of art and history, a must-see in the Algarve cultural route.

Tavira met human occupation during the last moments of the late Bronze or early Iron Age, with a prosperous centre of Phoenician occupation being formed in the castle hill.

Tavira, the Muslim metropolis, developed quite late, in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was a sort of small commune or maritime republic of pirates, prosperous and proud of its autonomy. It was capable of putting up a strong successful resistance against the power

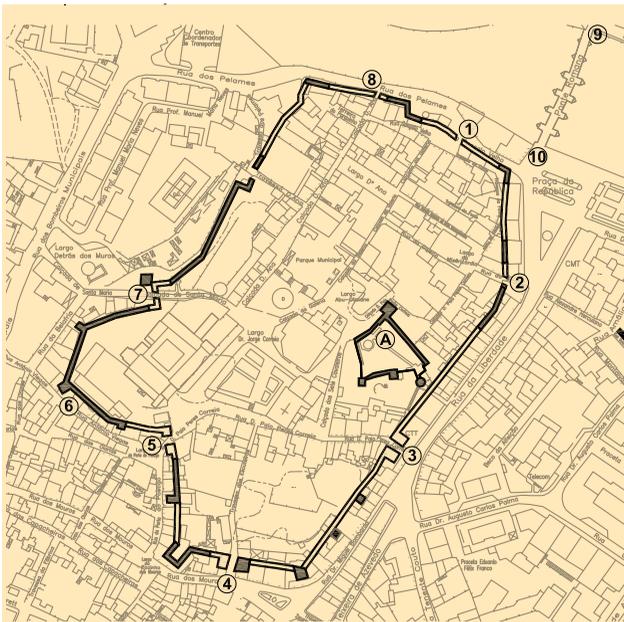




Archaeological excavations in the city

of the Almohads, twenty years after the start of the expansionist movement on the territories of al-Andalus. Between 1151 and 1167 it successfully resisted the two sieges of Almohad Caliph Abu Muhammad ‘Abd al-Mu’im al Qa’im.

In 1242 the city was conquered by the master of the Order of Santiago, D. Paio Peres Correia.



Ancient walls in Tavira, castle (A) and current state

- A Alcáçova (fortress) / castle
- 1 A Vila Gate
- 2 Gate of D. Manuel I
- 3 Afeição Gate
- 4 Buraco Gate
- 5 Gate of Postigo or dos Mouros (Moors)
- 6 Porta Nova (New Gate)
- 7 Gate of Vila Fria
- 8 Pelames Gate
- 10 Torre do Mar (Sea Tower) and "Principal" building

Right, stone-paved street on the urban pavement. Below, a bell tower



In the centuries that followed, Tavira acquired economic importance thanks to its port, which proved to be crucial during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in supporting the Portuguese garrisons in North Africa.

In 1520 the town was promoted to city by King D. Manuel I, thus recognizing the importance of this locality which was among the richest and most populous in the region, as can be deduced by the large number of churches and civil buildings erected in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

With the silting of the river mouth, which hindered the connection with the port, the epidemics of 1645-46 and the earthquake in 1755, Tavira saw much of its economic dynamism dissipate.



General view of Tavira

Gilão River

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Tavira found in tuna fishing and in the canning industry a new path towards economic prosperity. With the near extinction of tuna in the Algarve coast during the 1970s, the city focused on tourism, an activity that constitutes one of the pillars of its economy.



Interior area of the Islamic Museum in Tavira

## To Visit

### Islamic Centre of the Municipal Museum of Tavira

This centre documents the relevance of the medieval Islamic period in Tavira through a set of findings from various archaeological excavations carried out in recent years, most notably the iconic Vase of Tavira.

It is the latest centre of the Municipal Museum, which takes advantage of the expressive framework provided by a former section of medieval wall built in *taipa*.

It displays a capital with an Umayyad decoration of uncertain provenance and a photographic reproduction of the tombstone, in carved marble, of Bishop Julião de Cacela, dated March 21, 987, whose original version is held at the National Archaeology Museum.

Islamic vase decorated with animals and images dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century





Left, Arab Castle. Below, castle tower rebuilt at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century

## Castle

Together with the walls that surrounded the city, some of which still remain between the houses and the Misericórdia gate, it integrated the defensive system of the city. The original Moorish fortification was rebuilt by King D. Dinis (1261-1325).

From the top of the towers there is a wide view over Tavira and the surrounding countryside, including the sea.



Hip roofs in Tavira



## Historical Centre

In the 1500s, Tavira was the most populous city of the Algarve and a port of great strategic importance. This time marked the urban physiognomy of Tavira.

Traces of this glorious past are present in some streets, like the Pelames Street, where houses dating from 16<sup>th</sup> century are reflected on the waters of the river Gilão.

It is important to get to know the city of the Baroque period, present in many noble houses that hide in narrow streets or show themselves proudly on the banks of the River, with numerous triangular roofs –the famous treasure roofs of Tavira– and stonework carved to perfection.

Tavira has a secret that deserves to be discovered while walking the streets: grille doors, made of fine interwoven wood, evocative of the Arab heritage present in the culture of the Algarve.



Above, a traditional street. On the right, tile ornaments decorating the Church of Misericórdia



## The churches

Tavira is known as the city of churches, as it currently includes 21 temples that deserve the admiration of visitors, with emphasis on the Church of Santa Maria do Castelo, the Church of Misericórdia, the Santiago Church, the Church of São Paulo, the Carmo Church, the Church of São José do Hospital, the Church of São Francisco and the Church of Santo António, among others.



a



b



c



d

- a. Mother Church of Santa Maria do Castelo
- b. Church of Misericórdia
- c. Interior of the Church of São José do Hospital (or Holly Spirit)
- d. Church of Ordem Terceira de Nossa Senhora do Carmo



Civil architecture  
represented by the  
Palace Gallery

## The Palace Gallery

Its origin probably dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, having been renovated in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Also worth highlighting is the baroque stonework of the gate and windows of the upper floor, that is the most notable example of civil architecture of Tavira. Having been rehabilitated for cultural and artistic purposes, it is the central nucleus of the Municipal Museum of Tavira, hosting exhibitions that cover the history and diversity of the local heritage, while also including the new artistic expressions of contemporaneity.

Located at the Alto de Santa Maria, in the place of the ancient Phoenician settlement, it shows traces associated with the religious practices of these people. The excavations carried out in the lobby of the Palace led to the discovery of several wells dug in the rocks, which were interpreted as “Phoenicians ritualistic Wells” dating from the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, devoted to the worship of Baal, the god of storms.

Exhibition at the  
Palace Gallery



## Nearby

### Luz

The village of Luz de Tavira features very picturesque houses especially due to their parapets –many of them are masterpieces in plaster– decorated with geometric motifs or vegetables. In some cases, influences of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Art Nouveau are distinguishable in laced chimneys that stand above the roofs.



Mother Church of Luz de Tavira

Worthy of attention is the main church, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which keeps much of the primitive structure. The imposing Renaissance portico occupies a large part of the main façade. The roofs of the three naves are hidden by adopting an original solution that produces a very decorative effect, consisting of a dynamic pediment in a semicircle, framed by triangles. In the niche stands the statue of Our Lady of Luz (Light).

A side gate in Manueline style, very elaborate, with colourful decoration shaped like twisted rope will also attract the attention of the visitor. On the walls of the Church four stone rosettes stand out, symbolizing the sun, the moon and the stars.



Above, *Ria Formosa*. On the right, waterfowl



### Leisure Park of the Forest Perimeter of Conceição de Tavira

The leisure park of the Forest Perimeter of Conceição de Tavira is a natural area where a small herd of fallow deer live in semi-captivity, which visitors will be lucky enough to observe. It offers four hiking trails, a picnic area, a playground and a waterfowl observatory, being the perfect spot for direct contact with nature. One can often see mallards, azure-winged magpies, hoopoes, red partridges and turtledoves. Wild boars, rabbits, hares and Montpellier snakes, also coexist in this habitat.

Being located at the foot of Serra de Tavira, it was covered by forest at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its initial function was the exploitation of firewood for the lime kilns and tannins for the tanning industry. Today it is made up of acacias, eucalyptus, pine trees, cork oaks, holm oaks, cypresses and carob trees.

*Ria Formosa* at the Conceição area





Barril natural landscape

### Former tuna traps of Barril

In Barril there is a former tuna trap whose origin dates back to 1842. Its state of conservation is good, having been converted into a commercial area with shops, restaurants, cafes, ice-cream parlours and bars. Nearby it is possible to see, along the beach, a “cemetery of anchors” that has become iconic in this area.

Barril Beach and the “cemetery of anchors”



Above and right, traditional fishing boats



### And Also...

#### The pleasure of the sun and the sea

Between *Ria Formosa* (estuary) and the Atlantic Ocean, the extensive beaches of Tavira are an irresistible invitation for leisure. The *Ilha de Tavira* (island), the Cabanas beach and the Terra Estreita beach are accessible by boat, just as the Barril beach which is also accessible by foot or by a tourist train. Naturism lovers may also find here an official area for this purpose. It is located 1,500 metres away from the last area for parasols, next to the train terminal of Barril and towards the Homem Nu (naked man) beach.

Cabanas naturist beach



## Handicraft traditions

The persistence of ancestral techniques is a sign of life of popular culture –as the saddle-makers of Tavira and Cachopo do, who continue to decorate the cantles of mules with coloured wool yarn used in the *Sierra* for farming and for pulling colourful wagons.

Women in Cachopo weave –in wooden looms– colourful quilts made of wool and cotton, dyed with plants. In Cachopo, knitted garments decorated with embroidery based on wildflowers are also produced.

In Tavira there are also blacksmiths who perform artistic works in forged iron and women who transform lines into fine bobbin lace.

Conceição still preserves the ceramic tradition of potters, who produce the “traps” used in fishing and other utilitarian pots, with the artisanal production of tiles.



Traditional festival decoration



Above, *dom-rodrigo* traditional sweet. On the right, figs with oranges



## Good food and good wine

Fresh grilled fish is obviously a wise choice in a land of fishermen such as Tavira and other coastal towns. Besides fish, the visitor can also taste the lobster, shrimps, clams and other seafood captured in the sea or in the *Ria Formosa* (estuary).

Lovers of typical cuisine should try the tasty clam soup, the seafood bread dish, and also the razor clams, cockles, prawns and clams, the onion tuna, the *feijoada* (bean stew) with razor clams and the *xerém* (corn porridge) with clams, where the corn flour –called *xerém*– provides a very special taste. The visitor must also try the famous octopus rice of Santa Luzia. Equal in terms of reputation we have the mountain lamb in the pot, seasoned with fragrant bay leaves.

For dessert, the choice is vast: from the Tavira puff-pastry to the *dom-Rodrigos*, the *cariços* and the meringues of traditional recipe.

The red wines of Tavira taste like the sun that ripens the grapes and enriches them in terms of sugar.



Handcrafted basketry



Above, dish of clams with pork. Below, rice and octopus stew



## Cacela Velha



1. Mother Church
2. Fortress
3. Casa do Pároco / Information Centre



Sentry box in the fortress  
of Cacela Velha

Cacela Velha, in the municipality of Vila Real de Santo António, is a small village of farmers and fishermen with one-storey whitewashed houses, a magnificent viewpoint over the sea and vast beaches along the *Ria Formosa* (estuary), which amazes everyone by the beauty of its landscape.

Inhabited by the Romans, it was an important village linked to fishing and fish salting.

Cacela Velha, the Islamic *Qast'alla*, a village well defended by a fortress, is quoted –in Arab sources– sometimes as being a *medina* and others as a *hisn* (rural fortification). However, it is certain that during the Umayyad period, between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was already an urban nucleus of some importance, dominating a territory that roughly corresponded to the ancient Roman city of Balsa.





Left, Cacela Velha.  
Above, the *Ria*  
Formosa (estuary)

#### Al-Idrisi and Castella

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the geographer al-Idrisi said about the city: "Castella is a fortress built on the coast; it is densely populated and there are many gardens and orchards planted with fig trees."

According to some authors, Ibn Darrach al-Qastali (958-1030), a poet from al-Andalus, was born in Cacela Velha.

Cacela Velha was probably raised to the condition of main leeward Umayyad *iqlim*, with a territory that stretched through the lands of the coast up to the river Guadiana.

Still in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Mozarabic Bishop of Ossónoba, Julian, was buried there, more precisely at the *Sítio da Fonte Salgada*, as evidenced by the tombstone, which denotes the continuity of Christian worship under Umayyad domain.

After the Christian re-conquest, Cacela became a village, with a Charter granted by King D. Dinis, in 1283.



Traditional  
houses at  
Cacela Velha

Church of  
Nossa Senhora  
da Assunção

The progressive silting of river Pedra Alva, which runs nearby, and the formation of the *Ria* Formosa set of dunes, pushed Cacela away from the sea and maritime activities, thus contributing to the reduction of the population.

The 1755 earthquake devastated what little was left of the village, which justified the loss of its status of village and its subsequent integration into Vila Real de Santo António, as decreed by Pombal.

### To Visit

#### Church of Nossa Senhora da Assunção (Our Lady of Assunção)

The Church dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, having undergone a reconstruction in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It shows a Renaissance-style doorway with the busts of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul and decorated pilasters. The interior is composed of three naves, with arches supported by columns with bases and capitals decorated with hemispheres and strings.

It also includes the Chapel of our Lady of Martyrs, with a panelled dome and Renaissance-style arch. It contains an image of Our Lady of Assunção (18<sup>th</sup> century) and two images of Christ (16<sup>th</sup> century).





## Fortress

Having been a castle during the Muslim domain, the fortress underwent reconstruction works when already in ruins, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, by order of King João III or D. Sebastião, with no certainty as to which of the two monarchs actually took interest in rebuilding the defensive structure.

It is known, however, that the latter personally inspected the works in 1573. It suffered various vicissitudes in the following centuries and reports from 1617 state that the wall was ruined on the cliff side.

The fortress was almost destroyed during the 1755 earthquake. Its current structure is attributed to D. Rodrigo de Noronha, who ordered its reconstruction, extending the works from 1770 to 1794. It features a trapezoidal plan with bastions at the protruding corners, and watchtowers.

Above and below, Cacela Velha Fortress



Historical Heritage Interpretation Centre. Casa do Pároco



## Casa do Pároco (Parish Priest's House) Information Centre

A space aimed at hosting visitors and for interpreting the historical, cultural and environmental heritage of Cacela and Vila Real de Santo António.

## Nearby

### Santa Rita

Between the Berrocal calcareous mountains and the *Sierra*, framed within the beautiful woods of Santa Rita, this village is characterized by its single-floor houses with typical parapets and offers a beautiful view over the entire county. Here, remains of a Roman dam consisting of a double wall with buttresses, now

Megalithic tomb at Santa Rita



partially destroyed, are found. This dam crossed the entire valley from one side to the other, allowing the waters of the stream to be used for irrigation in the surrounding land. Also worth highlighting in Santa Rita is the Chapel, the megalithic Tomb, the leisure park and the CIIP-Centre for Research and Information on the Heritage of Cacela, with archaeological collections from the Islamic period, coming from Cacela Velha.



Left and below,  
Manta Rota  
Beach

## Manta Rota

Located between the estuary of the Guadiana River and the beginning of *Ria Formosa*, Manta Rota includes a 12 km beach, one of the most extensive in Europe. Its setting allows the visitor to enjoy the warm waters and a unique microclimate. Vast sand dunes and lush pine trees almost touching the sea make Manta Rota one of the most desirable beaches of Eastern Algarve which, despite having become a tourist centre, still retains some of its fishing village character.



Plate of oysters

*Ria Formosa* (estuary)

## And Also...

### Nature and Culture

Cacela Velha is a location heavily marked by seafood and fishing traditions. Its proximity to the ocean and to *Ria Formosa* brings to the local gastronomy of Cacela much fish and seafood, especially shellfish, and in particular, oysters and razor clams.

In Cacela Velha, nature and cultural heritage combine to provide leisure activities such as hiking, biking, bird watching and observation of flora.



## Vila Real de Santo António



- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Mother Church of Nossa Sra. da Encarnação | 4. Obelisk                        |
| 2. Town Hall                                 | 5. António Aleixo Cultural Centre |
| 3. Manuel Cabanas Gallery                    | 6. Guadiana Marina                |



Above and below,  
Marquês de Pombal  
Square in Vila Real de  
Santo António

Vila Real de Santo António is a town by the sea and by the river. Located in the southeast extreme of the Algarve, whose geographical location has always been regarded as strategic in the defence of the territory. Currently it is a tourist destination that stands out for its historical and cultural heritage as well as for the quality of its quiet sandy beaches.

Although it existed as a small village in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was only in 1774 that Vila Real de Santo António was born, planned and built entirely from scratch. In its genesis lies a political decision of the Marquis of Pombal, who sought to assert the power of the Portuguese Crown in a territory coveted by the Spaniards. The urban design drawn up in Lisbon by the Casa de Risco was characteristic of the Enlightenment period and recommended an urban organization based on values such as planimetry, altimetry and volumetry, which explains the geometric outline of its streets.





Marina of Vila Real de Santo António

The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought great prosperity to Vila Real de Santo António, which took advantage of the abundance of fish of its waters to develop an important canning industry. A sign of the flourishing of the town was the fact that this had been the first place in the Algarve to receive gas lighting in the year 1886.

Vila Real de Santo António was elevated to the category of city in 1986.



Riverside promenade



Above, street. On the right, Praça Marquês de Pombal. Below, architecture in the historical centre



## To Visit

### Historical Centre

To appreciate the urban plan of Vila Real de Santo António, it is necessary to walk around the streets. We might start at the Marquês de Pombal Square, the heart of the village, with its radiant pavement from the Obelisk erected in 1776. It contains three of the main urban elements in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: the Church, the Town Hall and the old Guardhouse. Then, we would pass along a few blocks which were erected by private initiative, but where we can still see architectural forms. Then follow the line of façades in Avenida da República, bounded by two turrets, where we find the old customs building (Alfândega), with its wide gateway and triangular pediment, which is the end of the route. The visitor will be standing now close to the gardened banks of the Guadiana River, in front of the Spanish town of Ayamonte.



## Mother Church (Church of our Lady of Encarnação)

Built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it suffered several fires that disfigured it. It is worth highlighting the altarpieces from the side chapels in *rocaille* style and a good set of images dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, crowned by the statue of *Nossa Senhora da Encarnação*, by the sculptor Machado de Castro. The stained glass windows of the main Chapel and baptistery, installed in the 40s, were designed by the Algarve painter Joaquim Rebocho.



Mother  
Church



Avenue of  
República

## Manuel Cabanas Gallery

It displays the art of the painter and engraver, born in the county, who gave his name to the Museum. It contains the largest collection of wood engravings in the country. There is an interesting set of over 200 stones used in the lithographic printing of old packaging of canned sardines and tuna.



Above and right,  
António Aleixo  
Cultural Centre



## António Aleixo Cultural Centre

The building where the military headquarters were located at the time of creation of the Village, was later turned into a vegetable market. Now it is a multi-purpose space for cultural animation which bears the name of one of the most important popular poets in the country, born in Vila Real de Santo António.



Castle of Castro Marim

## Nearby

### Castro Marim

Castro Marim is a village with a history that makes it worthy of a visit. At the top of a hill, the Castle; on another the modern fort with a system of large curtains and extensive bastions. Whitewashed houses of colourful parapets, roof terraces and laced chimneys spread out between the two. Around the visitor, horizons of mountains, river and sea extend in all their grandeur.

The walled fence that used to surround the medieval village on the top of the mountain dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the Restoration War

Fort of São Sebastião and the village of Castro Marim



Above and below, castle of Castro Marim



(1640-1668) it was adapted to the new war techniques and the use of cannons.

On the large terrace, inside the fence stands the Old Castle, built in 1274 by D. Afonso III, as evidenced by the tombstone placed over the door which leads to the inside. It features a square shape, with circular turrets at the corners and on the two doors, there is a curious relief in form of a key and acronyms that were typical of medieval stonemasons.

The walls also include the ancient Church of Misericórdia and the ruins of the Church of St. Tiago (James) (14<sup>th</sup> century). South of the castle hill we will find the Fort of São Sebastião (St. Sebastian), from the Restoration period (17<sup>th</sup> century), featuring an impressive curtain of walls.

Aerial view of the Castro Marim Castle





Boat trip in the Gadiana River

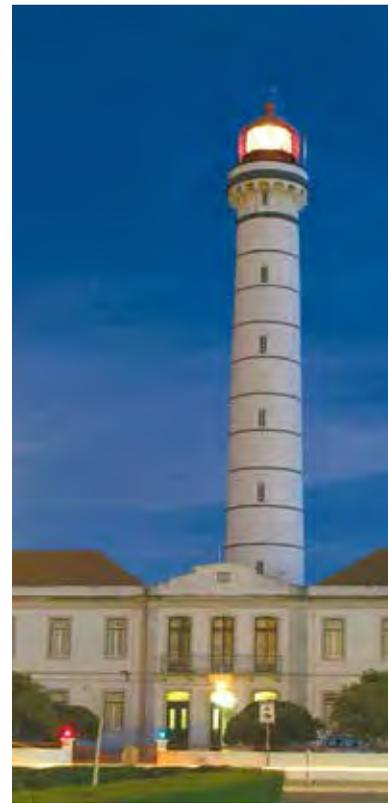
## And Also...

### Going up the Gadiana

Running between hills brightened by wildflowers and the green of the oaks and pines, the Gadiana River has been, for centuries, a border between Portugal and Spain. From Vila Real de Santo António, the boats perform, with regularity, the tourist upstream trip of the river. It is an opportunity to meet a different Algarve, admiring the white houses of the villages perched over the water, with the millennial Castle of Alcoutim guarding the river.



Castro Marim salt fields



Above, lighthouse at Vila Real de Santo António. Above right and below, coot and flamingos in the Castro Marim Salt Marsh. On the right, beach



### The charms of nature

In the Nature Reserve of the Marshland of Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António, and also in the Natural Park of *Ria Formosa*, bird and plant lovers can find prime locations for observation. Both have reception centres for guiding the visits.

The cool shade of the pine trees of the national forest connecting Vila Real de Santo António to Monte Gordo, is an invitation for invigorating walks and for discovering its flora and fauna.





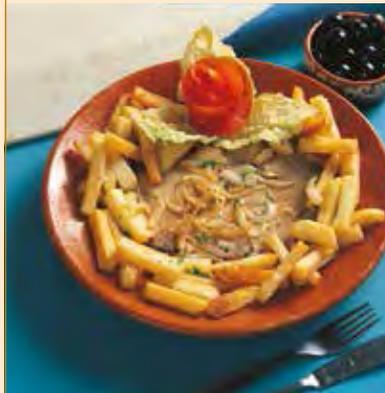
### Good fish and seafood

A land of fishermen means fresh fish, such as the delicious bream, bass, mackerel and sardines that are the delight of lovers of grilled fish. In terms of seafood, the clams and cockles, caught in the sands at low tide, deserve special mention, as do the more aristocratic prawns and lobsters.

Traditional recipes include various ways of preparing fresh or salted tuna, ranging from a thick steak, with plenty of onion and bay leaves for flavouring, to the *estupeta* where the tuna is served with a refreshing salad of peppers, tomatoes and onions. And who can resist the delicious cuttlefish in its ink, that turns your mouth black but tastes divine?

To end the meal, nothing better than a juicy orange or the typical sweets of the Algarve.

On the left, small cuttlefish in its ink. Above, seafood *cataplana*



Above, tuna dish. On the left, fig, almond and chocolate sweets



Making of fine bobbin lace



Saddler

### The art of the people

The fine bobbin lace, forever associated with fishermen's wives, indelibly marks the art of the county while still being produced in Vila Real de Santo António. Also from the past we have the harnesses and cantles decorated with colourful wool, produced by saddlers and used by mules in the farm work of the inland hills.

Currently, the new ways of the craft are exemplified by the puppets for the theatre or for collecting, by the pottery, the traditional chimneys, the basketry and weaving of palm leaves or by works in wood or tile.



## Festivities along the route

### Alcoutim

The *Festas de Alcoutim* (Alcoutim Festivities) take place annually in September. The varied programme includes activities such as sport, traditional games, music and other entertainment.

### São Brás de Alportel

On Easter Sunday, São Brás de Alportel stages the *Festa da Aleluia* or *Festa das Tochas Floridas* (Flower Torch Festival). There is no other procession like this one in Portugal. In the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, men carry torches decorated with flowers through the streets, also carpeted with flowers.

### Estoi

Every year, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, Estoi celebrates the *Festa da Pinha* (Pine Cone Festival). This is a very old traditional festival which celebrates spring, bearing also a religious character, as it serves to thank *Nossa Senhora do Pé da Cruz* (Our Lady at the Foot of the Cross). Local people and visitors take part in a procession featuring horseback riders and carriages decorated with flowers.

### Faro

In August, the region's oldest folk music group, the Grupo Folclórico de Faro, stages "Folkfaro". This international festival brings the traditions of the world to Faro in a unique display of music and dancing.

### Silves

The "Feira Medieval de Silves" (Silves Medieval Fair) takes place in August and attracts thousands of visitors. The city is transformed reliving the sounds, colours and aromas of the days when Silves was the capital of the Algarve.

### Monchique

In March there are regional flavours to be tasted at the *Feira dos Enchidos Tradicionais da Serra de Monchique* (Monchique Sausage Fair). The sausages are skilfully made with experience garnered over the centuries by the people of the uplands and perfected with the latest food hygiene and safety techniques. This is a chance to try and buy some typical local products.

### Aljezur

Aljezur's sweet potatoes have earned the label "Protected Geographical Indication" and are considered to be the best in the world. In November, the town hosts the *Festival da Batata-doce de Aljezur* (Aljezur Sweet Potato Festival), showcasing the best the region has to offer in terms of gastronomy, regional produce and entertainment.

### Vila do Bispo

Every October, Vila do Bispo, in Sagres, hosts the *Festival de Observação de Aves* (Birdwatching Festival), the largest event of its kind in Portugal. The location is notable for the particular importance of migrating birds in late summer and autumn, as well as for the specific bird species that can be observed here throughout the year.

### Alvor

Alvor lies right next to Portimão, the seat of the municipality, where every August the *Festival da Sardinha* (Sardine Festival) takes place. Whether served on a plate or on a slice of rustic bread, grilled sardines are a typical regional delicacy and an unmissable summertime treat in the Algarve.

### Vilamoura

Anyone taking the Umayyad Route in Carnival time should participate in one of the many festivities that take place all over the Algarve. Among the countless parades and parties held during Carnival, the most famous is Loulé Carnival. Also known locally as *Batalha das Flores* (Battle of Flowers), it is the oldest Carnival parade in Portugal.

### Tavira

Tavira is the community that represents Portugal with regard to the "Mediterranean Diet, Intangible Human Heritage", and every September the city celebrates the lifestyle associated with it by staging the *Feira da Dieta Mediterrânica* (Mediterranean Food Fair). The event consists of a producers' market, gastronomic activities and cookery workshops, Mediterranean music, healthy lifestyles, seminars, exhibitions, traditional games, street entertainment, theatre, guided tours and trips around the city's heritage and lots of other interesting activities.

### Cacela Velha

Every July, Cacela Velha comes alive with the *Noites d'Encanto* (Enchanting Evenings). The event introduces a handicraft market (souk), music and gastronomy that will take the visitor back to the medieval days when, in the former Gharb, people from different creeds and cultures lived together in harmony.

### Vila Real de Santo António

Regarding the Christian tradition of representing the birth of Jesus, the *Presépio Gigante* (Giant Crib) in Vila Real de Santo António is definitely worth visiting. Comprising over 4,000 figures, it can be admired at the António Aleixo Cultural Centre in December.

## Tourist Information Offices

### Faro International Airport

Faro International Airport  
8001 – 701 Faro  
37.019939, -7.967821  
Tel.: (+351) 289 818 582  
turismo.aeroporto@turismoalgarve.pt

### Albufeira

Rua 5 de Outubro  
8200 – 109 Albufeira  
37.087416, -8.252978  
Tel.: (+351) 289 585 279  
turismo.albufeira@turismoalgarve.pt

### Alcoutim

Rua 1.º de Maio  
8970 – 059 Alcoutim  
37.471423, -7.471447  
Tel.: (+351) 281 546 179  
turismo.alcoutim@turismoalgarve.pt

### Aljezur

Rua 25 de Abril, n.º 62  
8670 – 054 Aljezur  
37.315685, -8.803803  
Tel.: (+351) 282 998 229  
turismo.aljezur@turismoalgarve.pt

### Alvor

Rua Dr. Afonso Costa, n.º 51  
8500 – 016 Alvor  
37.130530, -8.593432  
Tel.: (+351) 282 457 540  
turismo.alvor@turismoalgarve.pt

### Armação de Pêra

Avenida Marginal  
8365 – 101 Armação de Pêra  
37.101578, -8.363360  
Tel.: (+351) 282 312 145  
turismo.armacaodepera@turismoalgarve.pt

### Carvoeiro

Praia do Carvoeiro (Carvoeiro Beach)  
8400 – 517 Lagoa  
37.097017, -8.471279  
Tel.: (+351) 282 357 728  
turismo.carvoeiro@turismoalgarve.pt

## Tourist Information Offices

### Castro Marim

Mercado Local (Local Market)  
Rua de São Sebastião  
8950 – 121 Castro Marim  
37.217257, -7.443782  
Tel.: (+351) 281 531 232  
turismo.guadiana@turismodoalgarve.pt

### Faro

Rua da Misericórdia, n.º 8 – 11  
8000 – 269 Faro  
37.014739, -7.934715  
Tel.: (+351) 289 803 604  
turismo.faro@turismodoalgarve.pt

### Lagos

Praça Gil Eanes (Former Town Hall)  
8600 - 668 Lagos  
37.102775, -8.672714  
Tel.: (+351) 282 763 031  
turismo.lagos@turismodoalgarve.pt

### Loulé

Avenida 25 de Abril, n.º 9  
8100 – 506 Loulé  
37.139073, -8.021448  
Tel.: (+351) 289 463 900  
turismo.loule@turismodoalgarve.pt

### Monchique

Largo S. Sebastião  
8550 – 000 Monchique  
37.316494, -8.555302  
Tel.: (+351) 282 911 189  
turismo.monchique@turismodoalgarve.pt

### Monte Gordo

Avenida Marginal  
8900 – 000 Monte Gordo  
37.178441, -7.450655  
Tel.: (+351) 281 544 495  
turismo.montegordo@turismodoalgarve.pt

### Olhão

Largo Sebastião Martins Mestre, n.º 8 A  
8700 – 349 Olhão  
37.025187, -7.841989  
Tel.: (+351) 289 713 936  
turismo.olhao@turismodoalgarve.pt

### International Bridge of Guadiana

A22 – Monte Francisco  
8950 - 206 Castro Marim  
37.236831, -7.437635  
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