

# ALGARVE PROMOTION BUREAU



[www.visitalgarve.pt](http://www.visitalgarve.pt)  
[www.algarvepromotion.pt](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt)  
[www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf)  
[www.algarveconvention.com](http://www.algarveconvention.com)

## Media Information Pack 2012

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- 1. Algarve Promotion Bureau 2011 tourism summary**



The Algarve has long been regarded as a favourite destination for UK travellers and in 2011 this was further strengthened. Over 3.1 million Brits arrived into Faro airport over the 12 month period, 56.4% of total arrivals and an increase of 9.8% on the previous year. London Gatwick was the most popular flight route, followed by Manchester, Stansted and Liverpool.

The UK continues to be the strongest market for the Algarve and the tourism industry is thriving in the region which currently has over 34 five-star hotels, 141 four star hotels and 229 three star hotels and further growth is set to continue into 2012.

Over 4.2 million room nights were achieved in 2011, which was a 14.7% growth on 2010. September was the best performing month with 600,167 room nights.

The Algarve Promotion Bureau continues work to further strengthen and growth this through the UK trade and media. Key areas of focus and development include sun and sea, nature, spa and wellness, nautical activities and MICE.

## 2. Back to Nature in the Algarve

### ***Algarve promotes Via Algarviana route***

One of the best ways to see the Algarve hinterland is on foot, bicycle or horseback along the Via Algarviana, an extensive 240km network of paths stretching across the Algarve between Alcoutim in the east to Cape St Vincent in the west. Stretching the entire length of the Algarve, the paths take visitors through the municipalities of Alcoutim, Castro Marim, Tavira, Loulé, Silves, Monchique, Lagos and Vila do Bispo, where there is lots to explore. Each section is divided into 30km stretches so visitors can break up the itinerary, otherwise the full route can be walked in fourteen days, cycled in five days and followed on horseback in nine days. Visitors travelling the route will be accompanied by knowledgeable guides and will stop off overnight at quaint hotels and pousadas along the way. For more information on the Via Algarviana itineraries please visit: [www.viaalgarviana.org](http://www.viaalgarviana.org)



### ***Algarve launches new walking route on west coast in 2012***

In Spring 2012, the Algarve will be launching the Vicentina Route along the rugged western coast of the region. The route will run from Santiago do Cacém in the Alentejo to Sagres in the Algarve and is to be integrated into the extensive European GR11 route part of the GR footpath network of paths, tracks and trails which will connect Sagres to St. Petersburg. 60% of the land in the Algarve is protected and the new route is part of a tourism initiative to promote areas of the Algarve beyond its popular coastline. For more info visit: [www.casasbrancas.pt/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=293&Itemid=82&lang=en](http://www.casasbrancas.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=293&Itemid=82&lang=en) and [www.rotavicentina.blogspot.com/#!http://rotavicentina.blogspot.com/p/o-projecto.html](http://www.rotavicentina.blogspot.com/#!http://rotavicentina.blogspot.com/p/o-projecto.html)



### 3. Hotel and resort news

#### ***Conrad Algarve Resort set to open in 2012***

The new Hilton resort and spa in Quinta do Lago, Conrad, is a luxury development by Imocom and Hilton and is set to open in the second half of 2012. The new resort is over 1,400 square metres and will feature 158 guest rooms and suites designed to reflect a contemporary Portuguese style. The grounds will include themed gardens, swimming pools and lakes and a luxurious 1,500 square metre Spa and health club. The hotel will feature a selection of restaurants offering some of the best Portuguese and international cuisine together with a stylish wine and cocktail bar with alfresco terrace. The resort is also able to cater for exclusive meetings and events and boasts fully equipped Conrad meeting rooms, a 24-hour business centre as well as a large ballroom with access to private gardens. The hotel, situated in a prime seven hectare mixed development site, approximately 10km from Faro International Airport, will enjoy a key position close to some of the world's most famous golf courses.

[conradhotels1.hilton.com/en/ch/hotels/index.do?ctyhocn=FAOAPCI](http://conradhotels1.hilton.com/en/ch/hotels/index.do?ctyhocn=FAOAPCI)

#### ***New Hotel Cascade offers five-star luxury in the Algarve with new facilities to open in 2012***

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 2011 the Hotel Cascade situated within the Cascade Resort on the beautiful peninsula of Ponta da Piedade, Lagos, opened its doors as part of its soft opening offering attractive introductory rates. Fulfilling the vision of Swiss-born entrepreneur Urs Wild, Hotel Cascade features 86 rooms while the Cascade Resort extends over approximately 90 acres comprising of 58 apartments divided into one or two bedrooms and luxury villas for sale or rent.

Facilities at Cascade Resort now include the newly opened Tainai Spa featuring products by the leading BARBOR skincare brand. The spa is equipped with state-of the art facilities including a number of specialist treatment rooms, chill-out zone and a heated pool complete with sun deck. The most recent facility is the newly opened gym which offers a professional training and nutritional advice service and advanced indoor training technologies with the latest innovations in weight and cardio training.

The Cascade Resort also boasts its own sport academy. The *Cascade Performance Sports Academies* are run by renowned personalities from the world of professional international sport such as Sven-Göran Eriksson and Stefan Edberg. The resort will also feature a Golf Academy designed by European Golf Design, the golf design company for the PGA European Tour. The football facilities are now complete whilst the Golf Academy as well as Tennis courts are due for completion in 2012. The Kids Parc is also due to open imminently and further facilities which include the wet spa, a medical centre and Praceta (village square) will open in 2012. [www.cascade-resort.com](http://www.cascade-resort.com). To access a selection of high resolution photos visit: [www.cascade-academy.com/CASCADE\\_HOTEL\\_2011.zip](http://www.cascade-academy.com/CASCADE_HOTEL_2011.zip)

#### ***New Onyria Palmares Beach and Golf Resort due to open in 2013***

The brand new Onyria Palmares Beach & Golf Resort will feature 172 luxurious rooms and 463 units on offer for residential tourism. All rooms have stunning sea views over Lagos bay and are within walking distance from the beach. The golf course was both designed and officially opened by Robert Trent Jones II on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011, while the construction of the hotel and residential units began this year. Juan Morro is responsible for the project which is due to open in 2013 and the resort will include a club-house, Spa, restaurants and meetings rooms. [www.onyriapalmares.com](http://www.onyriapalmares.com)



### **Radisson Hotel to open in the Algarve in June 2012**

The Algarve is eagerly anticipating the opening of the new Radisson Hotel Portimão in June 2012. The luxury hotel will feature 192 rooms, a stylish bar, two restaurants, a conference centre, two pools, a spa and tennis courts. [www.radissonblu.com/resort-spa-portimao](http://www.radissonblu.com/resort-spa-portimao)

### **Epic Sana Hotel**

Opening second semester of 2012 is the Epic Sana Algarve Hotel (Sana Hotels). A 5\* hotel with 162 bedrooms, 24 suites, 43 apartments, SPA, 4 pools, 1 interior pool, kid's club, baby centre, sports track, restaurants, bars, congress centre with 3.143sqm of meeting rooms, located on Falésia beach, Albufeira.

## **4. Algarve golf update:**

The International Golf Travel Market (IGTM) organised by Reed Travel Exhibitions has selected the Algarve to host IGTM 2012. The exhibition will be the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the world's premier global event for golf tourism suppliers, buyers and media and is to take place from **12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012** at the **Tivoli Marina Hotel in Vilamoura**.

### **Algarve courses ranked among TOP 100 golf courses in continental Europe**

*Golf World* magazine has rated the following Algarve golf courses among their 'Top 100 courses in continental Europe':

- 24<sup>th</sup> place: San Lorenzo
- 26<sup>th</sup> place: the new Onyria Palmares course, Lagos
- 57<sup>th</sup> place: the new Quinta do Lago South course
- 64<sup>th</sup> place: Oceânico Amendoeira (Faldo)
- 71<sup>st</sup> place: Oceânico Old course, Vilamoura

The Algarve remains a popular choice for UK golfers and the region continues to invest in golf tourism with the development of new golf resorts and courses. The Algarve Promotion Bureau was delighted with *Golf World's* ratings which support the region's reputation as a top golfing destination.

### **Algarve launches From the Algarve with Love golf promotion for third winter running**

Following the continuing success of the *From the Algarve with Love* golf promotion launched in 2009, the Algarve Promotion Bureau is pleased to offer groups of eight golfers the chance for one golfer to stay and play for free for a third year running.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 and 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 groups of eight golfers will pay for just seven receiving free accommodation with no green fees to pay for one player. This fantastic offer is available in conjunction with 44 hotels and 25 golf courses across the Algarve. Golfers will be able to take advantage of the *From the Algarve with Love* promotion through golf tour operators worldwide when booking a minimum of three nights. [www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf)





**From the Algarve with Love** participating golf courses:

Holes	Golf Course	Webpage
18	Boavista Golf	<a href="http://www.boavistagolf.com">www.boavistagolf.com</a>
18 + 9	Palmares Golf	<a href="http://www.onyriapalmares.com">www.onyriapalmares.com</a>
18+9	Penina Championship Course	<a href="http://www.lemeridien.com/penina">www.lemeridien.com/penina</a>
18	Golfe do Morgado	<a href="http://www.cshoteis.com">www.cshoteis.com</a>
18	Golfe dos Álamos	
18	Pestana Alto Golf	<a href="http://www.pestanagolf.com">www.pestanagolf.com</a>
18	Pestana Vale da Pinta	
18	Pestana Gramacho	
18	Pestana Silves	
18+9	Oceânico Faldo	<a href="http://www.oceanicogolf.com">www.oceanicogolf.com</a>
18	Oceânico O'Connor	
9	Pine Cliffs	<a href="http://www.luxurycollection.com/golfalgarve">www.luxurycollection.com/golfalgarve</a>
18	Herdade dos Salgados	<a href="http://www.salgadosgolf.com">www.salgadosgolf.com</a>
18	Oceânico Old Course	<a href="http://www.oceanicogolf.com">www.oceanicogolf.com</a>
18	Oceânico Pinhal	
18	Oceânico Laguna	
18	Oceânico Millennium	
18	Oceânico Victoria	
18+9	Pestana Vila Sol	<a href="http://www.pestanagolf.com">www.pestanagolf.com</a>
18	Vale do Lobo Ocean	<a href="http://www.valedolobo.com">www.valedolobo.com</a>
18	Vale do Lobo Royal	
18	San Lorenzo Golf Course	<a href="http://www.sanlorenzogolfcourse.com">www.sanlorenzogolfcourse.com</a>
18	Benamor Golf	<a href="http://www.benamorgolf.com">www.benamorgolf.com</a>
18+9	Castro Marim Golf	<a href="http://www.castromarimgolfe.com">www.castromarimgolfe.com</a>
18	Quinta do Vale Golf Resort	<a href="http://www.quintadovale.com">www.quintadovale.com</a>



**From the Algarve with Love** participating hotels and resorts:

Hotel	* Cat	Webpage
Crowne Plaza Vilamoura	5	<a href="http://www.crowneplaza.com">www.crowneplaza.com</a>
CS Morgado Golf Hotel	5	<a href="http://www.cshotelsandresorts.com">www.cshotelsandresorts.com</a>
CS Salgados Dunas Suites	5	
CS Salgados Grande hotel	5	
CS São Rafael Atlantic Hotel	5	
CS São Rafael Suite Hotel	5	
CS Villa das Lagoas Holiday Apartments	5	
CS Palm Village	5	
Dom Pedro Golf Resort	5	
Dona Filipa & San Lorenzo Golf Resort	5	<a href="http://www.donafilipahotel.com">www.donafilipahotel.com</a>
Grande Real Santa Eulália Resort & Hotel Spa	5	<a href="http://www.realhotelsgroup.com">www.realhotelsgroup.com</a>
Hilton Vilamoura As Cascatas Golf Resort & Spa	5	<a href="http://www.hilton.com/vilamoura">www.hilton.com/vilamoura</a>
Le Meridien Penina Golf & Resort	5	<a href="http://www.lemeridien.com/penina">www.lemeridien.com/penina</a>
Pestana Alvor Praia	5	<a href="http://www.pestana.com">www.pestana.com</a>
Pestana Vila Sol	5	
Sheraton Algarve Hotel at Pine Cliffs Resort	5	<a href="http://www.luxurycollection.com/algarve">www.luxurycollection.com/algarve</a>
Tivoli Marina Vilamoura	5	<a href="http://www.tivolihotels.com">www.tivolihotels.com</a>
Tivoli Victoria	5	
Vale d'Oliveiras Quinta Resort & Spa	5	<a href="http://www.valedoliveirasresort.com">www.valedoliveirasresort.com</a>
Vila Vita Parc Resort & Spa	5	<a href="http://www.vilavitaparc.com">www.vilavitaparc.com</a>
Yellow Lagos Beach Hotel	5	<a href="http://www.yellowhotels.pt">www.yellowhotels.pt</a>
Aqua Pedra dos Bicos	4	<a href="http://www.detailshotels.com">www.detailshotels.com</a>
Costa D'Oiro Ambiance Village	4	<a href="http://www.sonelhotels.com">www.sonelhotels.com</a>
Dom Pedro Marina	4	<a href="http://www.dompedro.com">www.dompedro.com</a>
Formosa Park Hotel	4	<a href="http://www.formosapark-hotel.com">www.formosapark-hotel.com</a>
Four Seasons Fairways   Quinta do Lago	4	<a href="http://www.fourseasonsfairways.com">www.fourseasonsfairways.com</a>
Monte da Quinta Suites	4	<a href="http://www.mqresort.com">www.mqresort.com</a>
Pestana Delfim	4	<a href="http://www.pestana.com">www.pestana.com</a>
Pestana D. João II	4	
Pestana Viking	4	
Real Bellavista Hotel & Spa	4	<a href="http://www.realhotelsgroup.com">www.realhotelsgroup.com</a>
Tivoli Carvoeiro	4	<a href="http://www.tivolihotels.com">www.tivolihotels.com</a>
Tivoli Lagos	4	
Tivoli Marina Portimão	4	
Vale d'El Rei - Suite & Village Resort	4	<a href="http://www.valedelrei.com">www.valedelrei.com</a>
Vila Galé Ampalius	4	<a href="http://www.vilagale.pt">www.vilagale.pt</a>
Vila Galé Atlântico	4	
Vila Galé Cerro Alagoa	4	
Vila Galé Lagos	4	
Vila Galé Marina	4	
Vila Galé Praia	4	
Vila Galé Tavira	4	
Yellow Alvor Beach Hotel	4	
Yellow Monte Gordo Beach Hotel	4	<a href="http://www.yellowhotels.pt">www.yellowhotels.pt</a>



### **Laranjal wins Best Golf Course 2011 Award**

Laranjal, the newest of the Quinta do Lago golf courses, celebrated winning *Best Golf Course* in the Portuguese Travel Awards 2011. After being short-listed among five top golf courses in Portugal, Laranjal was voted the winner at an exclusive award ceremony held at the five-star Már de Ar Hotel on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011. Voters from across Portugal voted for Laranjal via an online facility over the summer period. Victor Lopes, Operations Manager at Laranjal said, 'We are delighted to receive this award. The team work very hard to ensure golfers receive the best experience possible when they play Laranjal. We are very proud of this accolade and will continue to do our best to ensure golfers enjoy the course'. Laranjal was designed by Jorge Santana de Silva, originally an orange grove, its narrow fairways and well defined greens require concentration and accuracy to navigate the testing route laid out on a rolling and distinctive terrain. It is a par 72 with five par 5s, eight par 4s and five par 3s set amongst pines, cork-oaks and orange trees with a natural water course and five beautiful lakes. [www.quintadolagogolf.com/en/golf/laranjal/](http://www.quintadolagogolf.com/en/golf/laranjal/)

### **Trent Jones II officially opens golf course for new Onyria Palmares Beach & Golf Resort**

On 11<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Robert Trent Jones II officially opened the 27-hole golf course he designed for the new Onyria Palmares Beach & Golf Resort which is due to open in 2013. Following the opening, an audience of special guests were invited to play the course alongside the architect. Palmares is composed of three returning nine-hole loops: Alvor, Lagos and Praia that can be played in any sequence.

The Alvor course plays through pine tree-lined corridors with the majority of holes ascending hillsides or descending through intimate valleys. The parkland setting disappears momentarily and the area of mature trees is replaced with a series of more exposed holes. As the round concludes, the course ascends once again into parkland.

The Lagos Course begins with the same parkland character, incorporating the only two lakes found on the entire site in the short par-three third hole and the long par-four sixth. Holes seven and eight immerse golfers in expansive dunes on the south-west portion of the site before the loop concludes by ascending back to the clubhouse amid a more parkland setting.

The Praia is classic seaside dunes-land exposed to the elements. Four seaside holes are bracketed by the beach and the railway line, after descending from a parkland setting. Abruptly, the second hole whisks golfers into the true coastal links, which continues to the closing hole: a strong, uphill par-five, rising back out of the dunes through a deep valley to an amphitheatre just below the clubhouse.

Trent Jones II said: "The Algarve is a renowned golf destination, much like Pebble Beach or St Andrews. So when I first came here I said "Well I have to play up here, we have a lot of good golf courses in this region". But when I saw the land I thought Wow! Maybe once a decade I might get a piece of land to work with like this.' [www.onyriapalmares.com](http://www.onyriapalmares.com)

## **5. Algarve Promotion Bureau launches online early booking campaign**

The Algarve Promotion Bureau launched an online integrated campaign to drive early summer holiday bookings to the Algarve in 2012. The campaign portal ([www.bookingalgarve.co.uk](http://www.bookingalgarve.co.uk)) works alongside the Algarve's website to provide information about the destination as well as operating as a direct booking portal.





The Algarve Promotion Bureau is working with 19 participating hotel partners who are offering great value packages for a summer escape to the Algarve. Each hotel has developed a bespoke package for the website with offers ranging from a 25% discount or four nights for the price of three to special extras including dinner for two, golf rounds and relaxing spa treatments.

The participating hotel partners in the early booking promotion are:

HOTEL	WEBSITE
Aqua Pedra dos Bicos Hotel	<a href="http://www.aquapedradosbicos.com">www.aquapedradosbicos.com</a>
Aquashow Park Hotel	<a href="http://www.aquashowparkhotel.com">www.aquashowparkhotel.com</a>
Cabanas Park	<a href="http://www.algarveresorts.net/en/cabanas">www.algarveresorts.net/en/cabanas</a>
Costa D'oiro Ambiance Village	<a href="http://www.sonelhotels.com/uk/costadoiro_index.htm">www.sonelhotels.com/uk/costadoiro_index.htm</a>
CS Vila das Lagoas	<a href="http://www.cshotelsandresorts.com/eng/cs-apartments/cs-vila-das-lagoas/cs-vila-das-lagoas.aspx">www.cshotelsandresorts.com/eng/cs-apartments/cs-vila-das-lagoas/cs-vila-das-lagoas.aspx</a>
Four Seasons Fairways	<a href="http://www.thebookingbutton.co.uk/properties/FOURSEASONSDIRECT">www.thebookingbutton.co.uk/properties/FOURSEASONSDIRECT</a>
Holiday Inn Algarve	<a href="http://www.holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/algarve/faoap/hotel/detail">www.holidayinn.com/hotels/us/en/algarve/faoap/hotel/detail</a>
Hotel Algarve Casino	<a href="http://www.solveverde.pt/hoteis">www.solveverde.pt/hoteis</a>
Hotel Apartamento Foz Atlantida, Monte Gordo	<a href="http://www.uk.fozatlantida.com">www.uk.fozatlantida.com</a>
Hotel Quinta do Lago	<a href="http://www.hotelquintadolago.com">www.hotelquintadolago.com</a>
Longevity Wellness Resort Monchique	<a href="http://www.longevitywellnessresort.com">www.longevitywellnessresort.com</a>
Loule Jardim Hotel	<a href="http://www.loulejardimhotel.com/uk/">www.loulejardimhotel.com/uk/</a>
Monte da Quinta Resort	<a href="http://www.montedaquintaresort.com">www.montedaquintaresort.com</a>
Pestana Delfim	<a href="http://www.pestana.com/en/">www.pestana.com/en/</a>
Quinta Pedra dos Bicos	<a href="http://www.algarveresorts.net/en/qtabicos">www.algarveresorts.net/en/qtabicos</a>
Rocha Brava	<a href="http://rochabrava.com">http://rochabrava.com</a>
Vale d'Oliveiras Quinta Resort & Spa	<a href="http://www.valedoliveirasresort.com">www.valedoliveirasresort.com</a>
Villa Termal das Caldas de Monchique	<a href="http://www.monchiquetermas.com">www.monchiquetermas.com</a>
Vila Vita Parc Resort & Spa	<a href="http://www.vilavitaparc.com">www.vilavitaparc.com</a>

## 6. Algarve launches TV campaign with the Travel Channel and Sky Sports

The Algarve Promotion Bureau has launched a series of TV campaigns on the Travel Channel and Sky Sports which ran from October 2011 to March 2012. The Travel Channel is an inspirational, informative and entertaining channel and presents a uniquely panoramic and objective perspective on the travel experience. Sky Sports is the brand name for a group of sports-oriented television channels operated by the UK and Ireland's main satellite pay-TV company, British Sky Broadcasting. Sky Sports is the dominant subscription television sports brand in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The concept behind the campaign was to develop an advertising campaign to be communicated through a range of media channels in order to promote the Algarve as a strong year round destination with more to offer beyond its sun and sea product. The Travel Channel and Sky Sports campaigns therefore aims to achieve three main objectives:



- Drive bookings to the Algarve for winter 2011/12 and summer 2012
- Drive awareness of the Algarve's high quality multi-product offering including the award winning golf options
- Promote the new Algarve Europe's most famous secret brand

The Algarve Promotion Bureau is anticipating positive results from the campaigns and the region looks forward to welcoming more visitors looking to escape the harsh British winter for the warmer climes of the Algarve with an average of 18°C in the winter months.

## **7. Visitor satisfaction survey reveals Portugal is fulfilling tourists' expectations**

**8.**

According to a recently published visitor satisfaction survey conducted for Turismo de Portugal in the high season, 95% of tourists who had travelled to Portugal said their holiday had fulfilled or exceeded their expectations. Of those surveyed, the terms 'climate', 'hospitality' and 'beaches' were most frequently used to define their experience of Portugal and 86% said they intended to holiday in Portugal again.

The Tourist Satisfaction Survey was conducted by GfK Metris for Turismo de Portugal at the end of July and beginning of August, and involved more than 800 interviews at Portuguese airports with tourists from Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Holland, Ireland and Brazil.

The overall feedback from the survey concluded that a large number of foreign tourists are visiting Portugal for the first time. These tend to be young couples travelling with friends staying in high-quality accommodation who are more likely to use the internet to choose their holiday destination.



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## ALGARVE AT A GLANCE

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**Location:** Southernmost region in Portugal framed by a 200km coastline

**Capital:** Faro

**Climate:** The Algarve has a warm climate with mild winters and on average 300 days of sunshine a year. Summer temperatures can reach above 30°C and winter temperatures stay between 10 – 18°C

**Getting there:** Faro is approximately two and half hours from London airports (regional airport travel times vary) and is served by 26 UK airports

**Currency:** Euro (€)

**Visas:** No visa is required for UK passport holders – (please call the Portuguese consulate in London for Visa enquiries on: 0207 291 3770)

**Local time:** GMT

**Clothing:** Lightweight, cotton summer clothing is best for the summer months with casual but smart options for dinner. During winter months there will still be warm days but take trousers and a light jacket for the cooler evenings

**Language:** Portuguese but most people, especially in areas popular with tourists, speak English. A local word that visitors might like to remember is 'Bom Dia' meaning 'Good Day'

**Business hours:** Most shops open Monday – Friday from 9.30am until midday and then 3pm to 7pm. On Saturdays shops are open from 9am until midday

**Electricity:** 220 volts (two-pin plug)

**Telephone:** Portugal's country code is +351

**Tipping:** Generally 5 – 10% if you are happy with the service

**Number of 5\*, 4\* and 3\* hotels:** 5\* – 34, 4\* – 141, 3\* – 229

**Number of Blue Flag awarded beaches:** 74

**Number of golf courses:** 38 (18 and nine-hole championship-standard courses)

**UK visitor arrivals:** Total number of UK passengers to and from Faro airport between January and December 2011 was 3,169,056 - 56.4% of the total inbound passengers and an increase of 9.8% comparing to 2010

**Official websites:** [www.visitalgarve.pt](http://www.visitalgarve.pt) / [www.algarvepromotion.pt](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt) / [www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf) / [www.algarveconvention.com](http://www.algarveconvention.com)



## ALGARVE – AN IDYLIC YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION

The Algarve, derived from the Arabic term 'Al Gharb' meaning 'The West', is situated in the extreme south of Portugal. The region is a delight to visit all year round with golden sandy beaches on the coast offering a haven for sun seekers whilst the sleepy hillside villages further inland offer peace and tranquillity for those looking to get away from the stresses and strains of everyday life.



### Must See

Resorts including **Albufeira**, **Armação de Pêra**, **Praia da Rocha**, and **Vilamoura**, are among the Algarve's main holiday destinations. Offering an excellent selection of accommodation, beaches, entertainment and a variety of nightlife ranging from cabaret shows at casinos to lively discos and quaint, welcoming bars, it is no surprise that the Algarve has visitors coming back year after year.

The coastal city of **Faro** is the region's capital. Faro stands out as an important commercial, artistic and cultural centre. Often simply passed through by visitors as a gateway, the city in fact offers fascinating architecture as part of the region's rich history.



**Sagres**, on the western coast was the place where Infante D. Henrique (Henry the Navigator) founded a school of navigation during the 15<sup>th</sup> century thus instigating a culture of maritime exploration. Moving east, Henry the Navigator also had a great influence in **Lagos**. Set in one of the largest bays in the Algarve, Lagos was once an important naval centre and is now an attractive, bustling town. Evidence of its important naval history is still visible today with a large statue of Henry the Navigator gazing out to sea situated in one of the town's main squares.

Despite being most famous for its sandy beaches, the inland villages of the Algarve offer visitors peace and quiet in its lush green hills. The cork and oak forests are a haven for nature lovers and provide the natural habitat for the Iberian Lynx, now an endangered species. Just as interesting are the Algarve mountains of **Serra de Monchique** where you can relax at the natural thermal spa of Termas de Monchique once described as 'sacred' by the Romans.

**Tavira**, situated on the edge of the Ria Formosa Nature Park, is a must-see for visitors to this area of the Algarve. This pretty town is abundant with historic churches and fine mansions as well as a plethora of excellent restaurants where you can sample delicious local seafood.

Once a rich and powerful city, today **Silves** is a sleepy town lying in the foothills of the Serra de Monchique mountains. Believed to have been founded by the Phoenicians, its cathedral and red sandstone castle remind visitors of its rich and industrious Moorish past, which came to an end after a three-month siege led by King Sancho I in 1189.





Silves boasts the best preserved castle in the Algarve. Built on the site of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Palace of the Verandahs, its turreted walls dominate the town and provide panoramic views over the surrounding countryside. The town's 13<sup>th</sup>-century Gothic Cathedral, built on the site of a former mosque, contains a number of Crusader tombs and a jasper statue of Nossa Senhora da Conceição believed to date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

**Vila Real de Santo António** is 53 miles (85km) east of Faro and is neatly designed on a geometric grid system. Radiating out from the central square, the Praca Marquês de Pombal with its dramatic paved radial mosaic floor and central obelisk is edged with orange trees. The town is on the west bank of the River Guadiana. Back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the original town was flooded by the sea, and was rebuilt by the Marquês de Pombal who had rebuilt Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake. The reconstruction was completed in just five months leaving a tidy town with streets lined by elegant 18<sup>th</sup> century townhouses, and a long esplanade along the riverbank where strollers can enjoy an impressive view. Visitors can take river tours inland along the Guadiana River from Vila Real de Santo António.

## Activities

The clear blue waters of the Algarve are ideal for **water sports** where thrill-seekers can find windsurfing, kite boarding, diving and jet skiing readily available. The Algarve is also well-known for its world-class **golf** courses, which make it one of the most popular golfing destinations in the world. The region's wonderful climate makes the Algarve a golfer's paradise with international, amateur and professional competitions taking place throughout the year.



The Algarve coast also provides a haven for wildlife with the **Ria Formosa Nature Park**, home to a variety of species, situated between the beach of Ancão and the beach of Manta Rota, and also the **Parque Natural da Costa Vicentina** (on the west coast). These areas of outstanding natural beauty are ideal for hiking and boating.

**Culture** vultures can delight in the many reminders of the Algarve's rich and varied history such as the castle and cathedral of Silves and the castle of Castro Marim.

Visitors to the Algarve can expect much more than sunbathing on long stretches of golden sand and can spend time concentrating on **health and wellbeing** amongst the calm and glorious settings. Many resorts have high quality **spas** and for those interested in alternative therapies there are specially-equipped **thalassotherapy centres, meditation centres, Tibetan Buddhist centres** and the **natural spa of Monchique**. An entire holiday can be designed around health and wellbeing as the dedicated centres are also health farms where guests can simply immerse themselves in a special personalised programme.



## Gastronomy

The Algarve's charming villages, such as Alvor and Alte, are perfect places to stop and sample the local cuisine from the freshly caught **sardines** – a local speciality – to barbequed **tuna steaks** which can be washed down with a glass of Portuguese chilled **vinho verde**.



**Cataplana**, a traditional dish consisting of clams, mussels, bacon, chorizo, garlic, onions and olive oil and the **Caldeirada fish stews** are a delicacy in the Algarve and are dishes that every visitor must try. From the tuna steak of Tavira to the octopus of Santa Luzia, the Algarve excels in seafood cuisine. Local cockles, razor clams, oysters, squid and cuttlefish are also common on menus due to the fishing tradition of the region. Inland delicacies include **almonds, oranges** and **figs** that are great fresh and in desserts.

## Fun Festivals and Events



In February each year there is a carnival being celebrated in most parts of the Algarve, but none has such a deeply rooted tradition as the **Loulé Carnival**. The city fills up with colour as visitors and locals gather to watch the vibrant parade. This procession of colourful floats with over-sized puppets, samba groups and lots of music is a huge festivity in the region.

For five days, the **Med Festival** brings life and excitement to the streets of Loulé's historic centre at the beginning of the summer (June). World music originating from Morocco and various southern European countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal as well as other forms of art, including handicraft exhibitions, dance performances and street theatre will keep any

visitor enthralled.

A paradise for seafood lovers, the annual **Festival do Marisco** is held in August each year in the Jardim do Pescador Olhanense in the town of Olhão just five kilometres east of Faro and the gateway to the Ria Formosa Natural Park. One of the most important gastronomic events in the Algarve calendar, the Festival do Marisco, is an opportunity for local fishermen to proudly display their catch on one of the hundreds of stalls that line the fishing port. Offering visitors the chance to sample some of the local delicacies, a wide range of seafood is available ranging from grilled sardines to fried shrimps and of course the traditional cataplana, a much-loved Portuguese dish. Music and folk dancing accompany the festival with performers encouraging both locals and visitors to eat, drink and enjoy the superb atmosphere.



At the end of August, Castro Marim and Silves **return to the Middle Ages** in a historical re-enactment. During four days and nights the castle of Castro Marim once again plays host to kings and queens, knights in shining armour, jesters, buffoons, noblemen and ladies as the entire court takes part in a procession. Jousting tournaments – on foot and on horseback – street theatre performances, banquets accompanied by medieval music and a handicrafts and merchandise fair complement the entertainment enabling visitors to relive the magic and mystery of times gone by.



## **Sporting Events**

Witness the great skill and expertise of the world's top drivers who will be racing along the roads and tracks of the Algarve in May competing in the **Portugal Rally**. The route combines vast open stretches with some technical and challenging tracks. Situated only eight kilometres from Faro International Airport, the Algarve stadium is the setting for the event's closing ceremony while also acting as the rally's operational centre.

**F1 Power Boat World Championship** is the first event of its kind to be held in Europe bringing together some of the leading drivers and teams in the sport. Held in Portimão in May this unique event brings moments of tension and excitement to the estuary of the River Arade, transforming the riverside area of Portimão into a natural amphitheatre where thousands of people can watch the racing.

Prepare to be blown away by the spectacular moves of the world's finest kite surfers at the **Kitesurf World Championship** in Portimão in July. This exciting new sport attracts many young people and during the event Portimão will come alive with nightly entertainment.

**Vale de Lobo Grand Champions tennis tournament** is held every August. Over the four days Vale do Lobo plays host to tennis fans from all over Europe who will enjoy the luxury resort, some great tennis and one the Algarve's most beautiful beaches.

September is the month for speed as Portimão hosts the final stage of the **Powerboat P1 World Championship**. Powerful single-hull vessels slice through the water at speeds in excess of 160 kmph offering plenty of excitement for fans and visitors to the region.

October is the month for golf when the world's greatest golfers travel to Vilamoura to take part in the **Portugal Masters**. Considered to be one of the leading golf events with a prize pool of three million Euros, the Masters held its third edition in Portugal in October this year which took place at the Oceânico Victoria Golf Course.



**Municipal de Motorcross G.P – Cortelha.** The village of Cortelha is home to the World Motocross Championship and brings some of the world's finest motocross drivers to Cortelha. The competition, entitled the Portugal Grand Prix, takes place in the heart of the Serra do Caldeirão Mountains providing a stunning back drop for the competition.

**FICA – Festival Internacional De Cinema Do Algarve Portimão.** The annual Algarve International Film Festival, (FICA - Festival Internacional de Cine do Algarve), in the town of Portimão, is Portugal's oldest cinema event. It centres on a short film competition open to animated and live-action 35mm shorts.

**Concentração Internacional De Motors Do Algarve, Faro.** This fair is devoted to motoring enthusiasts and is the largest event of its kind in Europe. With live concerts each night, 24 hour bars, bike shows and professional stands. Test-ride your dream bike and get all the information on the H-D range, in the H-D demo truck. A free shuttle service runs from 11am on Thursday to 8am on Sunday to take people to and from Faro.

**Sardine Festival, August in Portimão –** This festival offers the chance to enjoy some tasty grilled sardines from the surrounding waters of Portimão. The festival also features as part of Folkfaro in Faro in September.



**World cup beach football** – The Algarve Cup is an annual event featuring some of the world's top women's football teams. The Algarve cup was founded in 1994 and has become the third most prestigious competition in women's football.

**2012 Quarteira ITU Triathlon European Tour** – On the weekend of March 31 and April 1<sup>st</sup> the city of Quarteira (Loulé) hosts, once again, a major international triathlon event. 2012 it's an Olympic year, meaning that every single ITU Ranking Point counts for those who wish to be in London competing. The stage is set and many of the major players of the sport will travel to Algarve to fight for precious points or to put themselves on track with the best possible preparation. This year, besides the Elite Athletes, a large contingent of Junior Athletes will compete in Quarteira, the only international level race on European soil before the European Junior and Elite Championships three weeks later in Israel.





## BACK TO NATURE IN THE ALGARVE



The Algarve has become a popular tourist spot for nature enthusiasts and attracts visitors from all around the world. It has some beautiful wildlife and stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean to offer which will delight nature enthusiasts.

The Algarve is home to an abundance of **wildlife, flora and fauna**. There are many animals to be seen ranging from bird species to the native Iberian Lynx, now an endangered species. There is a range of fun ways for nature enthusiasts to observe the wildlife that inhabits the

Algarve from mountain biking to hiking tours..

The **Ria Formosa Natural Park** is home to a variety of species, situated between the beach of Ancão and the beach of Manta Rota just off the coast from Faro. It is Portugal's largest protected coastal zone and ironically owes itself to the fact that due to the onset of mass tourism in the Algarve in the 1960s, developers considered the region too desolate for tourism development so it was spared the high rise buildings and resorts that characterize much of southern Europe.



Declared a protected zone in 1995 and covering over 18,000 hectares, the Parque Natural da Ria Formosa is ideal for hiking and boating. The park is comprised of sand dunes, marsh lands, lagoons and fresh water lakes. Its diverse group of inhabitants includes birds, fish, mammals and amphibians. The park is famous for its bird watching, with many birds resting and feeding here during the winter months. One of the most popular species of bird that you can spot here is the Flamingo. Accessible by road or ferry from Faro and Olhão it makes a great day out for exploration. Visit the recuperation centre for birds, follow the self-guided nature trails and admire the park's elegance on a ride in a traditional fishing boat.

The other national park in the Algarve is the **Costa Vicentina National Park**. The park extends along the rugged western coast and is characterised by its unexplored countryside. The main attraction to this area is the natural beauty of its beaches and dramatic cliffs. An abundance of wildlife can be found in the Costa Vicentina National Park on the Algarve's secret west coast, where the stunning coastline framing the Atlantic Ocean offers a breathtaking backdrop.



One of the best ways to see the Algarve hinterland is on foot, bicycle or horseback and the **Via Algarviana** trail has created an extensive 240km network of inland paths stretching across the Algarve between Alcoutim in the east to Cape St Vincent in the west. The aim is to connect these paths with the Trans-European paths while promoting eco and nature tourism. Each section is divided into 30km stretches so visitors can break up the entire itinerary while staying in rural tourism developments and traditional



villages. The full route can be walked in 14 days, cycled in five days and travelled on horseback in nine days with the aid of knowledgeable guides. [www.viaalgarviana.org](http://www.viaalgarviana.org)

The **Sagres Bird Watching Festival** is an annual event on the nature calendar. Between August and November, the Sagres Peninsula in the western Algarve becomes the main migratory corridor in Portugal for a range of bird species including a number of birds of prey. Thousands of birds can be seen crossing the sky during the migration due south, where it is common to see over 190 different species. The municipality of Vila do Bispo, in partnership with the Association Almargem and SPEA, offer a fascinating programme full of activities for visitors to the festival to showcase the regions bird species. Field trips for beginners, boat trips, researchers, thematic lectures, workshops, games, discussions and activities for environmental education are just a few of the items on the agenda. [www.birdwatchingsagres.com](http://www.birdwatchingsagres.com)

Visitors can stay at a reclaimed traditional Algarvian village, **Aldeia da Pedralva**, near Vila do Bispo in the Costa Vicentina which, previously almost abandoned, was transformed into an active village. This is the perfect location to get away from it all and experience the nature and active tourism offerings such as surfing, kite-surfing, bike-riding, trekking and fishing. 32 typical village houses have been transformed into comfortable self-catering houses and a restaurant and grocery stores provided jobs for the remaining nine villagers. The school house was transformed into an Apple certified learning centre where visitors can learn a new skill such as photography and web design. [www.aldeiadapedralva.com](http://www.aldeiadapedralva.com)





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## ALGARVE – A PAR-FECT GOLFING PARADISE

[www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf) / [www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf\\_ebrochure\\_ENG](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf_ebrochure_ENG)

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The Algarve has some of the world's best golf courses with many courses designed by some of golf's most famous names. However, the high standard isn't only down to the designer with all courses having immaculate fairways and smooth greens, paired together with the fantastic surrounding scenery, golfers will be in golfing paradise in the Algarve.

### The Western Courses

Heading from west to east you will arrive at the Boavista and Palmares golf courses. **Boavista** offers a variety of attractive and interesting holes. From the first to the last putt on the 18<sup>th</sup> green it promises a sensible game for the average player. The Par 71 course is surrounded by breathtaking views and sublime scenery making it one of the most enjoyable courses to play.

**Palmares**, an interesting course, is best known for its breathtaking scenery. The setting is idyllic with the majority of the holes on gentle slopes above the extensive beach stretching from the new Lagos marina to the mouth of the Alvor River. Course architect Frank Pennink took full advantage of the magnificent site and, in passing, threw in a sequence of five pure links holes between the railway and the beach evoking memories of famous British layouts. The upper holes wind through groves of almond and fig trees and the course is renowned for its annual Almond Blossom tournament week in February. It is then that the trees, covered in a mass of pink and white bloom, create an unforgettable sight.



Going a little further east but staying in the western Algarve, there are ten golf courses to choose from. The grandfather of all courses in the Algarve is the **Penina Championship Golf Course** designed by Sir Henry Cotton in 1966. The Par 73 golf course is a flat challenging course mainly designed for the stronger player. Sir Henry Cotton thought that the course was suited too much for the long hitter, so the strategically placed water hazards make this hard for all levels to play. Visited by the most famous golf players worldwide, it has hosted the prestigious Portuguese Open ten

times.

Situated between Portimão and the sea, the **Pestana Alto Golf Course** is perfect for sea views when playing. Founded in 1991 and designed by Sir Henry Cotton, the Par 70 course is challenging to a player's ability with strategic bunkers, dog-legs and well placed trees. The course starts off well with a simple Par 3 but it is very deceiving to players. The hardest hole is the 16<sup>th</sup> Par 5 as it is considered to be one of the longest holes in Europe at 589 yards.

Opened in 2003, the **Golf do Morgado** course is a challenging Par 73 18-hole golf course situated in Portimão. Features include large greens and deep, demanding bunkers which require good putting skills and accuracy.



Set beside its sister course, the Morgado, the **Golf dos Alamos** course is located in beautiful, unspoilt countryside. The Par 71 course provides a delightful variety of holes as well as tight fairways and greens with testing slopes. This is a great course to catch views of the Monchique Mountains.

**Oceânico Golf** increased its portfolio of courses in the Algarve to seven with the **Faldo and O'Connor courses at the Amendoeira Golf Resort**. Opened in September 2008 the Faldo Course, designed by Nick Faldo, is a 6,604 metre par-72 championship-standard course with a modern twist as cacti and wild herbs replace lush English woodland, and desert scrub bunkers of crushed limestone have taken the place of sandy tracts. The back nine holes are relatively hilly which lead to challenging play in an area with fantastic views.

The 6,719 metre par-72 O'Connor Course perfectly complements the Faldo Course whilst taking advantage of the rich valley soil. Christy O'Connor Junior's course incorporates the natural beauty of the Algarve such as orange groves and lakes. The 9<sup>th</sup> hole is considered a key hole, with a lake running not only to the right but also to the left of the second shot making it almost a two-part golf hole.

The **Pestana Vale da Pinta** Par 71 golf course was founded in 1992 by Ronald Fream and played host to the Seniors Tours for five consecutive years. This championship course is lined with many types of trees, one species even dating back 1,200 years



**Herdade dos Salgados** is a Par 72 golf course situated between Albufeira and Armacao and was designed by Pedro de Vasconcelos.

The course is surrounded by the sea and various lakes providing golfers with an interesting challenge. The key skill that needs to be utilised on this course is accuracy, as a slice shot could end up in a water hazard.

## The Central Courses

Going into the central courses of the Algarve, one of the most unique is the **Pine Cliffs Golf Course**. This is a unique course as it is set by a cliff and is only a nine-hole Par 32, however, it is certainly a must-play course. This small yet beautiful course is set among gorgeous pine trees and presents itself as a pleasant and charming course with good greens for that extra putting practice. The course saves the best hole for last as on the 9<sup>th</sup>, you play over a ravine and witness the beautiful views of the sandy beach below, suitably named 'The Devil's Parlour' hole.

One of the oldest courses can be found in central Algarve, aptly named the **Old Course**, of the **Oceânico Group**. This course was founded in 1969 and the Par 73 was designed by the great Frank Pennick. The course is set in tranquil surroundings and the architect took full advantage of the natural contours when laying out the course. The course starts off with reachable Par-4's, which lures golfers into a false sense of security as you reach the back nine. Three Par 5's including the 16<sup>th</sup> 522 metre hole, will decide your final score at the end.



**The Oceânico Victoria**, designed by Arnold Palmer, is the longest 18 hole golf course in Portugal. With almost the entire course on a flat surface, you have to really get some distance on the tee to have any chance of obtaining a good score making it a challenging play for any golfer. The Par 72 course comes complete with a 2,500 metre squared putting green at the start of the course, which is advisable to use as this will give you a feel of what the greens on the course have in store. The course helps you to relax with a series of lakes and waterfalls, which provide a beautiful backdrop as you play. The Victoria course was also host to the Golf World Cup, which was held in mid November 2005, and is also the host of the Portugal Masters, which took place in October this year.



The **Oceânico Laguna golf course** is laid out over a low-lying terrain and is situated in the area of Vilamoura. The course was opened in 1990 and is a Par 72 course that includes water hazards and 79 deep bunkers. The course is close to an environmental nature park, which was also created by Oceanico Laguna's developers.



The Par 72 **Oceânico Millennium golf course** was opened in 1999 and has an attractive and interesting layout, a good challenge for many golfers. The setting of this course within the surrounding countryside is truly outstanding and encompasses wooded areas and lakes. The front nine winds through forests, while the back nine involves open play giving golfers the opportunity to change their technique to suit the course.

The second golf course that was built in the area of Vilamoura was the **Oceânico Pinhal**. This Par 72 course was opened in 1976 and is set on a rolling parkland terrain. Many of the fairways are lined with trees, with some even turning up on the middle of fairways giving the golfer a bigger challenge.

The **Vila Sol** golf course is situated in Vilamoura and was designed by Englishman Donald Steel in 1991. This is a testing course for any golfer as in the first nine holes there are three Par 4 holes over 380 yards. On the back nine there will be a tricky green awaiting you on the Par 5 14<sup>th</sup> hole making it the most challenging hole on the course.

In keeping with its reputation for excellence, **Quinta do Lago Laranjal** takes great pride in the opening of its new and third 18 hole championship golf course. Laranjal.v Laranjal, originally an orange grove, is today a beautiful and totally different golf experience. It is a sanctuary for those seeking the finest in golf and personalised service. Its narrow fairways and well defined greens require concentration and accuracy to navigate this testing route laid out on a rolling and distinctive terrain.



The **Vale do Lobo Ocean course**, situated in Almancil is one of the oldest golf courses in the region. This Par 72 golf course was designed by Sir Henry Cotton in 1969 and is one of the reasons why the Algarve is named a top golfing destination in the golfing world. The fairways on this course are narrow and when playing, accuracy is the key to succeeding. Views of the sea are lined along the fairway providing a beautiful backdrop while you play. The best holes on this course take you along the cliff tops with the Atlantic sea in the background.



Opened in 1997, the **Vale do Lobo Royal course** is set along the coast, with stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean and the surrounding habitat. The Par 72 course features a green which is almost an island, and a cliff top carry-over making it one of the most unique courses in the Algarve.

**San Lorenzo** is a world class golf course, consistently ranked alongside some of the world's best golf courses. This Par 72 course is set alongside the Atlantic Ocean and the Ria Formosa Natural Park. The course was opened in 1988 and is one of the most challenging courses in the Algarve, with strategically placed bunkers and fairways leading up to the Ria Formosa Lake.

### The Eastern Courses

**Castro Marim** is a Par 71 golf course designed by Terry Murray. It is located close to Castro Marim. The course supplies views of the River Guadiana, which separates the Algarve and Spain. The course itself is very well designed with strategically placed bunkers and water hazards, which can cause problems for many golfers. It is a course that cries out for careful play as one too many mistakes could dramatically increase your score. This can be an extremely hard course for someone on a bad day so it is really aimed towards experienced golfers, however all skill types are welcomed.

The **Quinta do Vale** course was designed by the famous Severiano Ballesteros. The Par 72 course is very close to the Castro Marim course, taking advantage of the natural setting next to the River Guadiana. The course incorporates many doglegs, bunkers and hazards however, it has wide fairways to give you a helping hand. This is great for both amateur and professional players.



**Benamor** offers a pleasant playing experience to players of all standards. The course is undulating but not hilly and has views of the mountains to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south which are stunning. The indigenous olive, cork, carob, fig and almond trees which are many centuries old, feature for both aesthetic and playing purposes. Water hazards and sand bunkers are located to test the strategy and striking ability of each player.



## Algarve golf courses:

Holes	Golf Course	Website
18	Boavista Golf	<a href="http://www.boavistagolf.com">www.boavistagolf.com</a>
18+9	Palmares Golf	<a href="http://www.palmaresgolf.com">www.palmaresgolf.com</a>
18+9	Penina Championship Course	<a href="http://www.lemeridien.com/penina">www.lemeridien.com/penina</a>
9	Penina Resort Course	
18	Golfe do Morgado	<a href="http://www.cshoteis.com">www.cshoteis.com</a>
18	Golfe dos Álamos	
18	Pestana Alto Golf	<a href="http://www.pestanagolf.com">www.pestanagolf.com</a>
18	Pestana Vale da Pinta	
18+9	Oceânico Faldo	<a href="http://www.oceanicogolf.com">www.oceanicogolf.com</a>
18	Oceânico O'Connor	<a href="http://www.oceanicogolf.com">www.oceanicogolf.com</a>
9	Pine Cliffs	<a href="http://www.luxurycollection.com/golfalgarve">www.luxurycollection.com/golfalgarve</a>
18	Herdade dos Salgados	<a href="http://www.salgadosgolf.com">www.salgadosgolf.com</a>
18	Oceânico Old Course	<a href="http://www.oceanicogolf.com">www.oceanicogolf.com</a>
18	Oceânico Pinhal	
18	Oceânico Laguna	
18	Oceânico Millennium	
18	Oceânico Victoria	
18+9	Pestana Vila Sol	<a href="http://www.pestanagolf.com">www.pestanagolf.com</a>
18	Vale do Lobo Ocean	<a href="http://www.valedolobo.com">www.valedolobo.com</a>
18	Vale do Lobo Royal	
18	Quinta do Lago Laranjal	<a href="http://www.quintadolagogolf.com/en/golf/laranjal">www.quintadolagogolf.com/en/golf/laranjal</a>
18	San Lorenzo Golf Course	<a href="http://www.sanlorenzogolfcourse.com">www.sanlorenzogolfcourse.com</a>
18	Benamor Golf	<a href="http://www.benamorgolf.com">www.benamorgolf.com</a>
18+9	Castro Marim Golf	<a href="http://www.castromarimgolfe.com">www.castromarimgolfe.com</a>
18	Quinta do Vale Golf Resort	<a href="http://www.quintadovale.com">www.quintadovale.com</a>



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## ZEN AND WELLBEING IN THE ALGARVE

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The Algarve has so much to offer visitors interested in health and wellbeing. An entire holiday can be designed around wellness, and visitors can simply feel their stresses slip away as they immerse themselves in a special personalised programme.

### Spas

The Algarve region's tranquil surroundings complement the harmony of the atmosphere in its many Spas. Visitors are offered special attention including medical consultations with specialist technicians such as hydrotherapists, beauticians, make-up artists, masseurs, nutritionists, and personalised programmes are developed in which treatments are adapted to suit the needs of each individual.



Visitors can indulge in a massage or treatment as part of a relaxing or energetic Algarve holiday and also undertake a full Spa holiday in a range of resorts. Special programmes are offered for relaxation, post-natal and anti-stress including thalassotherapy, relaxation massage, remedial massage, sports massage, reflexology, manual lymphatic drainage, stone massage and massages to ease the aching muscles of budding golfers!

These five-star Spas are part of luxury hotel complexes which guarantee quality and sophistication and provide a complete experience for a revitalising holiday.

### Alternative Therapies



As special places for relaxation and reflection, meditation centres offer the chance to rest mind and spirit by promoting natural and alternative therapies, and these spiritual retreats are becoming very popular in the Algarve.

In Lagos, in the western Algarve, visitors can try out supervised 'Juice Fasting' within detox programmes which combine alternative therapies such as yoga and meditation that help to renew and rejuvenate the whole body. Processes that use organic fruit, vegetable juices and selected herbs cleanse the digestive system eliminating toxins that have built up in the body.

For relaxation and meditation visitors can travel to the hills of Tavira in the eastern Algarve which is the perfect setting for rejuvenating holidays for the mind, body and soul. Amongst the many activities, Reiki, meditation, yoga, painting, Tai-Chi, aura reading, and children's workshops are all on offer.

Centres near the tranquil Ria Formosa Natural Park in the eastern Algarve offer visitors holistic treatments to distance guests from the stress of everyday life. In order to promote health and well-being there are a





wide variety of options for all ranging from yoga, Tai-Chi, various seminars and retreats to alternative therapies and treatments including massages, Reiki, acupuncture, reading and harmonisation of both the chakras and the aura, hypnotherapy, kinesiology and foot reflexology to name a few.

Guests in the Algarve can take part in lessons in Tai-Chi, meditation, yoga and treatments in Reiki therapy, past life therapy, psycho-energetic therapy, anti-stress therapy, anti-depression therapy, Tibetan Ayurveda therapy, feng shui therapy, homeopathy, naturopathy, shiatsu, reflexology, aromatherapy, floral therapy, crystal therapy and chromotherapy.

### **Tibetan Buddhist Centres**

Buddhism is becoming increasingly popular in the western world and the Algarve has several Buddhist centres for those that already adhere to the beliefs as well as those who are thinking of taking their first steps in this philosophy.

For those wanting to understand and practice Buddhist meditation, courses in Vipassana meditation can be taken on a ten-day retreat in areas such as Tavira and the Monchique Mountains where the participants learn the fundamental principles. Vipassana, meaning 'seeing things as they really are', is one of the oldest meditation techniques in India and has been taught for more than 2,500 years.

Situated in the heart of the Serra do Caldeirão, visitors can attend teaching and practice sessions, particularly when guest Lamas are staying there. Besides these events, a celebration is held with tsok offerings on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> day of each calendar month.

### **Thalassotherapy**

Thalassotherapy uses the natural minerals from the sea for healing such as saltwater, seaweed, sponges, corals and sea anemones for therapeutic purposes. As a preventive therapy, thalassotherapy promotes the sensation of rest and well-being through relaxing and invigorating natural treatments. Specialist centres can be found in the Algarve and sessions are supervised by qualified doctors, osteopaths, physiotherapists and hydrotherapists.



The Sofitel Thalassa Vilalara resort in Lagoa contains the Vilalara Hotel Thalassotherapy Centre which is set facing the Atlantic on the cliffs overlooking the Praia das Gaivotas. The Grand Real Santa Eulália, with its magnificent location on the famous beach of Santa Eulalia in Albufeira, also has a fantastic Spa with Thalassotherapy facilities. The therapies provided by the Thalassa Vilalara also include bath and swimming-pool treatments, showers, seaweed wraps, massages, hydrojet, cellulite reduction and lymphatic drainage, sprays and pressotherapy.



## **Caldas de Monchique – natural spa**



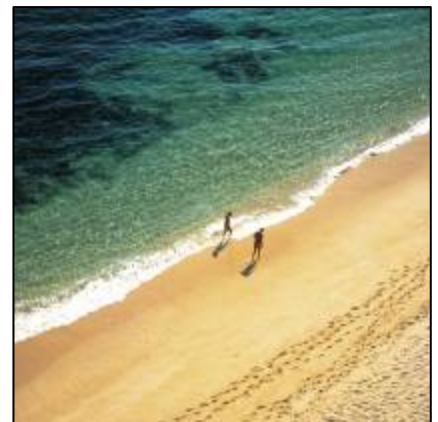
For visitors in the Algarve looking for wellbeing, a trip up into the hills of the Serra de Monchique where the natural spa of Caldas de Monchique can be found is a must. At 250 metres above sea level, set amidst lush green vegetation, lie the natural thermal springs referred to as 'sacred waters' by the Romans.

The Spa includes newly remodelled bathing facilities, innovative techniques and highly qualified, professional staff to provide a unique experience. The water that has brought so much fame to this Spa comes from eight springs, four of which produce mineral-medicinal water and are rich in bicarbonate, sodium, fluorine and silicon. Besides its relaxing properties, this water is recognised as being particularly good for the treatment of diseases of the respiratory tracts and the digestive system, as well as rheumatic and musculoskeletal pains. To combat these and other ailments, the waters of Monchique are used in the form of nasal irrigation techniques, sonic aerosols, nebulisation treatments, hydromassage baths and swimming-pools, Vichy showers, jet showers and mud applications amongst others. To complement the vast range of wellbeing services the Spa also organises concerts, dinner dances as well as painting and handicraft exhibitions.

## **Medical Tourism**

Due to increasing waiting lists and expense, more people are travelling abroad for medical treatment and combining treatment with a holiday. Portugal's number one region, the Algarve is investing in this sector to offer world-class treatments to compliment the tourism infrastructure. Hospital Santa Maria de Faro is a private hospital with a special agreement for UK patients. The hospital offers a range of dedicated treatments and facilities. [www.hpp.pt](http://www.hpp.pt)

Faro council are also planning to build two new private hospitals in the next five years. The range of services currently on offer includes leading medical tourism centres, 12 new hospitals and five-star health Spas which make the Algarve a perfect destination to recover in comfort following medical treatment.





## Spas in the Algarve:

Spa Name	Webpage
Grande Real Santa Eulália Resort and Hotel Spa	<a href="http://www.hoteisreal.com">www.hoteisreal.com</a> / <a href="http://www.realspathlasso.com">www.realspathlasso.com</a>
Hilton Vilamoura As Cascatas Golf Resort and Spa	<a href="http://www.7spa.com">www.7spa.com</a>
Hotel Algarve Casino	<a href="http://www.solveverde.pt">www.solveverde.pt</a>
Pestana Alvor Praia	<a href="http://www.pestana.com">www.pestana.com</a>
Pestana Viking	<a href="http://www.pestana.com">www.pestana.com</a>
Real Bellavista Hotel and Spa	<a href="http://www.hoteisreal.com">www.hoteisreal.com</a>
The Lake Resort	<a href="http://www.thelakeresort.com">www.thelakeresort.com</a> / <a href="http://www.blueandgreenhotels.com">www.blueandgreenhotels.com</a>
Tivoli Lagos Health & Fitness Centre	<a href="http://www.tivolihotels.com">www.tivolihotels.com</a>
Vila Galé Ampalius	<a href="http://www.vilagale.pt">www.vilagale.pt</a>
Vila Galé Praia	<a href="http://www.vilagale.pt">www.vilagale.pt</a>
Pestana Vila Sol Spa	<a href="http://www.pestana.com">www.pestana.com</a>
Vila Vita Parc	<a href="http://www.vilalararesort.com">www.vilalararesort.com</a>
Vilalara Thalassa Resort	<a href="http://www.vilavitaparc.com">www.vilavitaparc.com</a>
CS São Rafael Suite Hotel	<a href="http://www.cshoteis.com">www.cshoteis.com</a>
Vila Domilu Glam & SPA Hotels	<a href="http://www.viladomilu.com">www.viladomilu.com</a>
SPA Hotel Quinta do Lago	<a href="http://www.quintadolagohotel.com">www.quintadolagohotel.com</a>
Termal das Caldas de Monchique SPA Resort	<a href="http://www.monchiquetermas.com">www.monchiquetermas.com</a>
Monte da Quinta Suites	<a href="http://www.mqclub.com">www.mqclub.com</a>
Suites Alba Resort e Spa	<a href="http://www.suitesalbaresort.com">www.suitesalbaresort.com</a>
Vila Monte Resort – Kasbah Spa	<a href="http://www.vilamonte.com">www.vilamonte.com</a>
Memmo Baleeira Hotel	<a href="http://www.memmobaleeira.com">www.memmobaleeira.com</a>
Hotel Júpter	<a href="http://www.hoteljupiter.com">www.hoteljupiter.com</a>
Real Marina	<a href="http://www.real-marina.com">www.real-marina.com</a>
CS Atlantic	<a href="http://www.cssaorafaelatlanticalgarve.com">www.cssaorafaelatlanticalgarve.com</a>
Monte do Casal	<a href="http://www.montedocasal.net">www.montedocasal.net</a>
Crowne Plaza	<a href="http://www.crowneplaza.com">www.crowneplaza.com</a>
Hilton Conrad (opening soon)	<a href="http://www.conradhotels1.hilton.com">www.conradhotels1.hilton.com</a>
Villa Galé Albacora	<a href="http://www.villaplus.com/villagale">www.villaplus.com/villagale</a>
Porto Bay	<a href="http://www.portobay.com">www.portobay.com</a>
Ria Park	<a href="http://www.riaparkhotels.com">www.riaparkhotels.com</a>
Prainha Clube Centro Thalgo-Prainha	<a href="http://www.prainha.net">www.prainha.net</a>
Tivoli Marina Vilamoura Angsana Spa	<a href="http://www.tivolihotels.com">www.tivolihotels.com</a>
Tivoli Victoria Elements Spa by Banyan Tree	<a href="http://www.tivolihotels.com">www.tivolihotels.com</a>
Dom Pedro Golf Resort	<a href="http://www.dompedro.com">www.dompedro.com</a>
Longevity Wellness Resort, Monchique	<a href="http://www.longevitywellnessresort.com">www.longevitywellnessresort.com</a>



## ALGARVE – MEETING BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPECTATIONS

If you compile a checklist of the essential elements that make up the ideal conference and incentive destination, then the Algarve would seem to have it all...

**Easy access?** A little over two hours' flying time from most European cities, a wide choice of airlines and departure points and quick transfer times from Faro airport to the Algarve's major hotels, towns and resort complexes.

**Superb weather?** With mild winters, hot summers tempered by Atlantic breezes, and warm sunny shoulder seasons, the Algarve is a perfect year-round location for business and pleasure.

**Quality accommodation?** From five-star luxury courtesy of leading local and international brands to world-renowned golfing resorts, and from chic boutique hotels, historic pousadas and sumptuous all-suite developments to comfortable mid-range properties, the Algarve is capable of matching any event requirement or budget.

**Meeting and exhibition facilities?** In addition to its hotels, the region also boasts a wide range of top-class venues for conferences, conventions, business meetings, workshops, exhibitions, product launches, awards ceremonies, sporting events and cultural gatherings.



**Activities and incentive ideas?** Take your pick from golf, tennis and a host of water sports to sailing, hot air ballooning, aquatic shows, vineyard tours and jeep safaris, there will always be something to keep your delegates occupied outside the meeting room. With over a hundred miles

of superb beaches and the wide open spaces of the Monchique Mountains to choose from, delegates will have plenty to do in the region.

### Appeal

Looking for a destination with a rich history and culture, and plenty of variety? For social activities, convention add-ons or partner programmes, the Algarve has bustling, atmospheric towns and picturesque villages, Moorish castles and Baroque mansions, and a lively and thriving arts and entertainment scene, from museums and galleries to restaurants, casinos and a vibrant nightlife.

**Modern infrastructure?** New motorways and an excellent network of local roads make getting around this varied but compact region easy. Trains, boats, planes, yachts, cruise ships and helicopters are other transport options.





**Professional assistance?** Experienced and inventive destination management companies and other business service providers, from audio-visual suppliers to ground handling companies, will ensure your event goes off without a hitch.

**Value for money?** Portugal is one of the most inexpensive countries in western Europe ensuring budgets covering every aspect of your event – from hotel accommodation and room hire to food and drink – will stretch a long way, without compromising on quality.

## **MICE Venues**

The best solutions for large-scale events are especially concentrated in the areas of Albufeira, Portimão and Vilamoura where there are casinos and prestigious hotels capable of guaranteeing the perfect conditions for holding a wide range of different promotional activities and incentive events.

Throughout the Algarve region, in the municipalities of Albufeira, Faro, Lagoa, Lagos, Loulé, Portimão, Silves, Tavira, Vila do Bispo and Vila Real de Santo António, there are hotels equipped with conference areas designed to host all kinds of business events.

**Arade Congress Centre – Algarve** is the most recent venue to receive events in the region, and the only one exclusively adapted to the MICE industry. The venue is specially designed to receive congresses for up to 1,000 delegates and also, exhibitions, shows, concerts, products presentations and corporate events. Located near Arade river, it is just 60km away from Faro International Airport and has easy access to the main hotels, with 6,000 rooms nearby. [www.pavilhao-arade.com](http://www.pavilhao-arade.com)

**Portimão Arena** is one of the most recent, modern and innovative infrastructures in the Algarve. Versatility and modularity are its main characteristics, with the layout of the space varying according to the type of event and number of people involved, whether it is a small business meeting of ten or a large show for 8,000 spectators. [www.portimaoarena.com](http://www.portimaoarena.com)

**The Albufeira Municipal Auditorium** has exceptional conditions for putting on exhibitions and shows. Seating up to 368 people, the auditorium is fully equipped for the holding of congresses and conferences, as well as for putting on musical concerts, theatre, choral performances and films.

**Lagos Cultural Centre** frequently hosts exhibitions, musical concerts, theatre, dance performances, conferences and other recreational activities that are held in its various public spaces: conference rooms, an auditorium and two multi-purpose rooms.

## **Algarve International Motorpark**

The 200 million euro (£149 million) track in Portimão opened in November 2008 and has hosted major events such as the final round of the Superbike World Championship. It covers 300 hectares of land between Portimão and the hills of Monchique, with a capacity for 100,000 spectators. The motorpark complex also includes a 5-star hotel with event facilities, apartments and restaurants. [www.autodromodoalgarve.com](http://www.autodromodoalgarve.com).





### The Algarve by numbers:

**4,000** – The size in square metres of the multi-purpose Portimão Arena, a vast domed structure with retractable seating used for a variety of business, cultural and sporting events including shows, concerts, sports competitions and exhibitions

**1,000** – The seating capacity of the Algarve Congress Centre in Parchal, near Lagoa, the Algarve's first stand-alone conference and exhibition centre. With an additional 1,000 square metres of exhibition space it is also suitable for concerts, cultural events, product launches and fashion shows

**300** – The average number of days of sunshine a year in the Algarve

**104** – The number of beaches, two for every week of year, from sheltered dunes and rocky coves and bays to wide open stretches of white sand

**38** – The number of golf courses including some of the most prestigious names in the sporting world such as Quinta do Lago, Vale do Lobo, Penina, Alto and Vilamoura

**22** – The average temperature, in degrees centigrade, in October

**11** – The number of marinas including the modern purpose-built facilities at Vilamoura, Albufeira, Lagoa, Portimão and Vila Real de Santo Antonio. New marinas are also scheduled to be built soon in Faro and Ferragudo



## ADRENALINE RUSHES IN THE ALGARVE

Calling all thrill-seekers! Experience a range of exciting activities from kite-surfing to rock climbing to skydiving in the Algarve...

### Sports and Activities

The Algarve is well-known for its world class golf courses, which make it one of the most popular golfing destinations in the world, but if you prefer to try something different there are lots of sporting activities to choose from. There are also some extreme sports that will get the adrenaline pumping and the heart racing.

The southwest Algarve is home to Europe's last unspoilt coastline and this makes it the ideal place to go **surfing**. There are many opportunities for all skill levels with surf schools for beginners and novices and surf tours around the coast for the more experienced.



If you want to try something new, one of the best up-and-coming sports is **kite-surfing**. The northerly wind the 'Nortada' filters through the mountain range of the Serra de Monchique creating perfect year-round conditions for kite boarding. The Alvor Estuary is one of the best spots to learn kite boarding in Portugal and is one of the stops in the professional kite surfing world tour each year.

**Wakeboarding in Lagos** is a combination of water skiing, snowboarding and surfing and involves riding the waves on a wakeboard as you are pulled by a speedboat. Visitors of all skill levels are welcome and lessons are available to all along the coast of the Algarve.



If you prefer to take to the skies, tandem **skydiving, hang gliding and paragliding** are available all year round. These exhilarating sports provide some of the most scenic views of the Algarve.

**Micro-lighting** is another activity that can be enjoyed in the Algarve. A micro-light is a modified hand glider with a small engine at the front. Visitors can enjoy tours along the coast and watch the scenery pass by below.

**Rock climbing** in the Algarve offers the unique opportunity to explore its hidden and picturesque gems. Far from the busy crowds, you can emerge yourself in the magnificent tranquillity of deserted beach cliffs and hidden forests. With the Rocha da Pena being the best rock formation to climb, be prepared to use a large amount of physical and mental strength for a truly unforgettable climbing experience.

For a more aquatic experience, you can learn how to **scuba dive** in the Algarve. With some of the cleanest waters in Europe, the Algarve is the perfect place to witness some of the underwater marvels that the Atlantic Ocean has to offer. There are a number of dive centres along the coast including Lagos, Faro and Tavira where you can learn to dive with PADI instructors.



Some of the rock formations in the western Algarve are only accessible by water, explore the Algarve's caves and grottos in state-of-the-art **kayaks** and discover hidden coves to truly escape from it all.



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## FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY IN THE ALGARVE

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No matter how young or old the children are, the Algarve is the perfect holiday destination for families. Take a look below to see some of the top attractions – there is something to suit everyone's taste from racing tracks and ocean safaris to 4D cinemas and nature trails! With warm weather all year round it's easy to see why the Algarve is the perfect choice for a fun-filled family holiday.

### Nature

For families wanting to explore the wild-side of the Algarve there are a number of day tours offered throughout the region. From jeep safaris to canoeing through rivers, excursions promise to show off the very best of the Algarve's wild life. Full day trips are suitable for families with children aged 11 and above who love to explore the great outdoors.



Covering over 18,000 hectares the **Parque Natural da Ria Formosa** is comprised of sand dunes, marsh lands, lagoons and fresh water lakes. Its diverse group of inhabitants includes birds, fish, mammals and amphibians. Accessible by road or ferry from Faro and Olhão it makes a great day out for exploration. Visit the recuperation centre for birds, follow the self-guided nature trails and admire the park's elegance on a ride in a traditional fishing boat.

The Algarve is the perfect spot to see dolphins migrating from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. There are several companies that offer dolphin boat cruises which depart from Lagos, Portimão and Alvor. A boat ride is also the perfect way to enjoy the Algarve's fine weather.

### Water parks

Water parks are aplenty in the Algarve and can provide a whole day of family fun with the majority of parks open from early April to late October. For something a little different the **Zoomarine** combines entertainment with education, located just outside Albufeira, this is a fantastic day out for all the family. Top attractions include the dolphin interaction programme, the 4D cinema show that aims to teach children about the effects of global warming and deforestation, an aquarium filled with an array of marine life, and pools where visitors can simply rest and relax. [www.zoomarine.pt](http://www.zoomarine.pt)

### Aquashow Water Park

A theme park, water park and hotel are rolled into one at the amazing Aquashow water park. With nine water attractions and ten theme park attractions there is something for every member of the family. Top attractions include the new Air Racer which recreates stunts and flips in the air made by aeroplanes. It is the first entertainment of this kind in Europe and the second throughout the world. When the fun finally comes to an end check into the brand new 4\* hotel which opened in 2011. [www.aquashowparkhotel.com](http://www.aquashowparkhotel.com)

### On the beach

Some of the best beaches in the world can be found in the Algarve with golden sands and clear waters. The 200km stretch of coast offers endless fun and exploration for families. The region has 74 beaches awarded with **Blue Flag**







status for water quality, sanitary installations, parking and lifeguard services. The calm waters of the east coast beaches of Barril, Tavira, Manta Rota and Altura highlight the quality of the beach and water environments. These beaches are manned by lifeguards, have a number of restaurants nearby and are well equipped with shower facilities and sports equipment for hire.

### **Sports**

The Algarve is an adventure playground – with magnificent views to enjoy whilst horse trekking and bike riding, you will never tire of things to do. Visitors are enticed to enter its clear waters and try out one of the many exhilarating water sports on offer. Why not take a surfing lesson or have a go at kite boarding? There are a number of schools around the coast that are waiting to show you the ropes.

### **Accommodation**

The Algarve has a large range of hotels that are ideal for families. Many hotels have Kids Clubs which means Mum and Dad can ensure that their children are well looked after, and it is also a great way to find them playmates to share their holiday with. Once the kids are taken care of, Mum and Dad are free to take a well-earned break and spend quality time to relax and recuperate in the Algarve. There is plenty for grown-ups to enjoy including scenic walks, indulging Spa days, golfing on one of the fabulous greens or a day exploring the shops, cafes and restaurants.



## DISCOVER THE HIDDEN GEMS OF THE ALGARVE



From stunning landscapes formed by the sea and mountains and traditional towns in the hinterland, to ancient remains left behind from Neolithic, Roman and Moorish periods, the Algarve has much more to offer the UK visitor than the sun and sea holidays it is most famous for with a huge number of hidden gems to enjoy.

From the international hub of Faro small charming town with castle ruins, and quaint cafes and boutiques for vultures will not tire as churches are in influence. For a historical hotel with a Tavira, Hotel Convento da Graca, is a century convent. Just off the coast of beautiful, unspoilt beaches of Ilha de



travel East to find **Tavira**, a 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings those who like to shop. Culture abundance, as is the Moorish difference the Pousada de fascinating restored former 16<sup>th</sup> Tavira visitors will find the Tavira.

From Tavira it is easy to discover the **Ria Formosa Natural Park** which protects the coastline along the eastern Algarve and is famous for the sand banks that create a refuge for a variety of aquatic species. Boat trips can be arranged along the coast to observe the wildlife and visitors can walk through the park and see flamingos and the famous Portuguese water dog. These dogs have webbed feet and have been in existence for at least 2,000 years. They were used to help fishermen by herding fish into the nets and can still be found in Portugal today. Also running along the north-eastern border of the Algarve, towards the beaches of the south coast, the **River Guadiana** offers beautiful scenery. Enjoy a trip down this river and glide through areas of pastureland, past cultivated fields, ancient remains and small traditional white washed towns up to Alcoutim, the centre of an area which has been inhabited since 400 B.C.



On the western side visit the most south-westerly point of mainland Europe, **Cabo de São Vicente** (Cape St. Vincent), which boasts dramatic cliffs and coastal scenery and was considered the 'world's end' in the Middle Ages. Nearby, it was in **Sagres** that the epic maritime adventures of the Portuguese began under the command of Prince Henry the Navigator. Here you can enjoy a fantastic view over the Atlantic Ocean from the headland. Stunning coves and beaches can be found along the western side including the magical limestone cliffs at **Ponta da Piedade** where the view from the top is stunning, but

if you take the steps down it is even better!

Take some time out to appreciate the local crafts of the Moorish city of **Loulé**, particularly its painted pottery, brass and copperware. The neo-Moorish market place of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century **Igreja de São Clemente** and the **Igreja da Misericórdia** are also well worth a visit. Make the most of the warm hospitality of the local people as you relax over a loaf of bread and some chouriço sausage accompanied by the special Algarve medronho, a brandy made from arbutus-berries. Each February the vibrant town fills up with colour and cheer as visitors and locals enjoy a procession of floats with over-sized puppets, samba groups and



music of the Loulé Carnival.

Discover the **Serra de Monchique** and the historic landscapes, towns and traditions of the Algarve hinterland. It is known for the traditional architecture of the houses with white walls, carved stonework and special 'saia' (skirt) chimneys. A natural Spa can be found in the town where visitors can be pampered after climbing to the highest point in the mountains of **Pico da Fóia** which reaches 902 metres. Visit **Silves**, once a rich and powerful city but now a sleepy town lying in the foothills of the Serra de Monchique Mountains. Believed to have been founded by the Phoenicians, Silves cathedral and red sandstone castle ruin remind visitors of its rich and industrious Moorish past.

Not forgetting seafood lovers! The annual Festival do Marisco is held in August each year in the town of **Olhão** just five kilometres from Faro. This gastronomic event is an opportunity for local fishermen to show off their catch on one of the hundreds of stalls that line the fishing port, and also gives visitors the chance to sample some of the local delicacies. A wide range of seafood is available ranging from grilled sardines to fried shrimps and of course the traditional cataplana, a much loved Portuguese dish. Music and folk dancing accompany the festival, with performers encouraging both locals and visitors to eat, drink and enjoy the superb atmosphere.



**For more information on the Algarve visit:**  
[www.visitalgarve.pt](http://www.visitalgarve.pt) / [www.algarvepromotion.pt](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt)  
[www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/golf)  
[www.algarveconvention.com](http://www.algarveconvention.com)

**IMAGE LIBRARY:**

[www.turismodoalgarve.pt/galeria/galeria-algarve.html](http://www.turismodoalgarve.pt/galeria/galeria-algarve.html)  
[www.algarvepromotion.pt/trade\\_tools.php?lang=uk&](http://www.algarvepromotion.pt/trade_tools.php?lang=uk&)  
[www.imagesofportugal.com/main.php/v/algarve](http://www.imagesofportugal.com/main.php/v/algarve)

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