



ALENTEJO  
**TRANSALENTEJO**  
**WALKING**  
**TRAILS**  
BAIXO ALENTEJO E  
ALENTEJO LITORAL

PORTUGAL



ALENTEJO PORTUGAL  
**TRANSALENTEJO**  
**WALKING**  
**TRAILS**  
BAIXO ALENTEJO E  
ALENTEJO LITORAL



## INDEX

- 04 Context / Regional location**
- 05 Key to the map / Useful and emergency contacts**
- 06 Description / How to use this guide**
- 07 Signage / Conduct and safety recommendations**
- 08 Memories of the Mills of Alvito**  
Alvito  
Distance: 14,8Km  
Approximate duration: 5h  
Level of difficulty: Medium
- 12 In the Age-old Vineyards of Vila Alva**  
Vila Alva, Cuba  
Distance: 19,7Km  
Approximate duration: 5h to 6h  
Level of difficulty: Medium
- 16 Through the São Cucufate Vineyards Vidigueira**  
Distance: 17,9Km  
Approximate duration: 5h to 6h  
Level of difficulty: Medium +
- 20 Cerro da Águia Route**  
Ferreira do Alentejo  
Distance: 13,8Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Medium -
- 24 Aljustrel has a Mine**  
Aljustrel  
Distance: 12Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Low
- 28 A Journey to the Origins of Portuguese Nationality**  
Namorados, Castro Verde  
Distance: 11,7 Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Medium

- 32 Hills and Valleys of Santana da Serra**  
Santana da Serra, Ourique  
Distance: 13,5Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Medium
- 36 Along the Odelouca Stream**  
São Barnabé, Almodôvar  
Distance: 9,5Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Medium
- 40 Lord of the Martyrs Route**  
Alcácer do Sal  
Distance: 12,5Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Low
- 44 Grândola Hills Route**  
Grândola  
Distance: 24Km  
Approximate duration: 6h to 7h  
Level of difficulty: High
- 48 Santiago Between Farms and Oak Groves**  
Santiago do Cacém  
Distance: 14Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Medium
- 52 The Sines Coast**  
Sines  
Distance: 11,2Km  
Approximate duration: 3h  
Level of difficulty: Medium
- 56 From Santa Clara to the Dam**  
Santa Clara a Velha, Odemira  
Distance: 10Km  
Approximate duration: 3h to 4h  
Level of difficulty: Low

## CREDITS

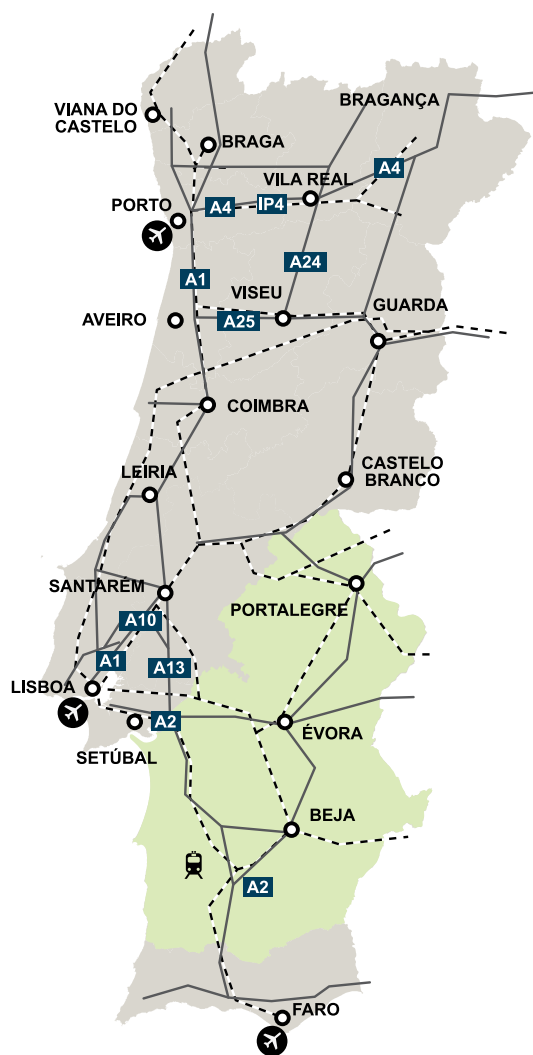
Published by: Turismo do Alentejo, ERT (DATA)  
Authorship of the Routes: Municipality of Alter do Chão, Arronches, Avis, Campo Maior, Castelo de Vide, Crato, Elvas, Fronteira, Gavião, Marvão, Monforte, Nisa, Ponte de Sor, Portalegre and Sousel.  
Technical Coordination: SAL Sistemas de Ar Livre Lda.  
Texts: José Pedro Calheiros  
Photographs: SAL and Rights Reserved  
Map Base: Army's Geospatial Information Centre  
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www.visitalentejo.pt/en; www.portuguesetrails.com

Graphic Design: InfoPortugal  
Translations: Inpokulis.Lda.  
Printing: Estria, Produções Gráficas, S.A.  
Print Run: 7.500  
Legal Deposit: 469471/20  
ISBN: 978-989-54791-3-9  
Online guides and maps: www.visitalentejo.pt/en/

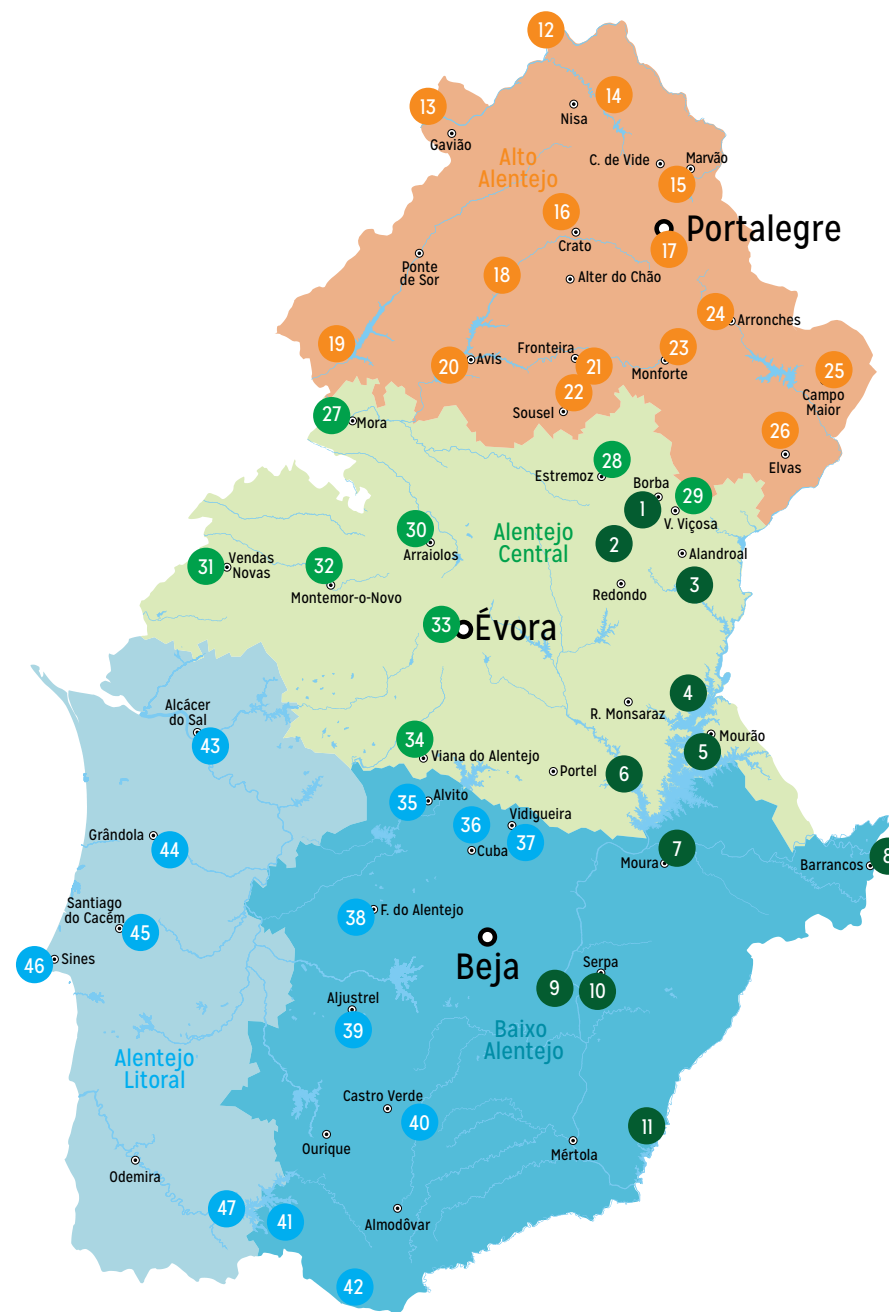


## CONTEXT

Located in southern Portugal, the Alentejo is a vast territory covering an area of approximately one third of the country's mainland. This is a region of diverse landscapes where you will encounter different types of terrain and vegetation and a vast array of natural and cultural heritage. The cities, towns, villages and rural spaces in the Alentejo are well-preserved and authentic. As a result, the region is a favourite destination for all those who enjoy walking as a leisure pursuit.



## REGIONAL LOCATION



## KEY TO THE MAP

### Alqueva

- 1 The Fantastic Serra D'Ossa
- 2 Hermits of the Serra D'Ossa
- 3 Conquest of Terena
- 4 Writings in Stone and Lime
- 5 Across the Living Heritage of Mourão
- 6 From Almeira to Alqueva With the Lake at Your Feet
- 7 Rout of Água de Moura
- 8 From Serra Colorada to Cerro do Calvário
- 9 Watermills and Fortresses of Guadiana
- 10 Trail of Azenha da Ordem (Watermill)
- 11 Arround the Cork Plantation (Montado)

### Alto Alentejo

- 12 Conhal Gold Mine Trail
- 13 Tagus River Valley Slopes
- 14 Fantastic Landscapes of Póvoa e Meadas
- 15 The Fabulous Apartadura Dam
- 16 Flor da Rosa Historical Route
- 17 Senhor dos Afritos Pilgrimage Route
- 18 Seda Castle Route
- 19 Discovering Montargil
- 20 Maranhão de Avis Reservoir
- 21 Exploring the Ribeira Grande
- 22 The Fantastic São Miguel Hill
- 23 The Dolmens of Rabuje Route
- 24 Fortress and Valiant Town of Arronches
- 25 Defensive Structures of Campo Maior
- 26 Lines of Elvas

### Alentejo Central

- 27 Mora, an Eternal Love
- 28 Monumental Estremoz
- 29 Exploring the Royal Road
- 30 Between Stitches and Hills of Arraiolos
- 31 The Pork Sandwich Route
- 32 Montemor Olive Orchards and Oak Groves
- 33 From Évora to Alto de São Bento
- 34 Pilgrimage Route to Nossa Senhora de Aires

### Baixo Alentejo e Litoral

- 35 Memories of the Mills of Alvito
- 36 In the Age-old Vineyards of Vila Alva
- 37 Through the São Cucufate Vineyards
- 38 Cerro da Águia Route
- 39 Aljustrel Has a Mine
- 40 A Journey to the Origins of Portuguese Nationality
- 41 Hills and Valleys of Santana da Serra
- 42 Along the Odelouca Stream
- 43 Lord of the Martyrs Route
- 44 Grândola Hills Route
- 45 Santiago Between Farms and Oak Groves
- 46 The Sines Coast
- 47 From Santa Clara to The Dam

## USEFUL AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Turismo do Alentejo, ERT:  
Tel.: +351 284 313 540  
geral@turismodoalentejo-ert.pt  
[www.visitalentejo.pt](http://www.visitalentejo.pt)  
[www.portuguesetrails.com](http://www.portuguesetrails.com)

Alentejo Promotion Office  
Tel.: +351 269 498 680  
info@turismodoalentejo.pt  
[www.visitalentejo.com](http://www.visitalentejo.com)

SOS Emergency and Rescue: 112  
SOS Forests and Fires: 117  
SOS Environment and Nature:  
808 200 520 sepna@gnr.pt

## DESCRIPTION

The TransAlentejo Network presents the systematised organisation of a selected set of walking routes throughout the Alentejo, perfectly structured and signposted, chosen from among the several such routes in each municipality's territory. The choice of one route per municipality showcases the best that this territory has to offer in terms of landscape, natural values and heritage, creating a network of the best regional offerings for walking enthusiasts. Each of these routes is part of the respective Municipal Walking Route Network that can be discovered through each municipality's promotional platforms. The structuring and publication of the TransAlentejo Walking Routes began in 2014, with 11 municipalities in the territories of the Great Alqueva Lake, in the first of a set of four guide books, covering the 47 municipalities in the Alentejo Region:

- TransAlentejo Alqueva
- TransAlentejo Alto Alentejo (Upper Alentejo)
- TransAlentejo Alentejo Central (Central Alentejo)
- TransAlentejo Baixo Alentejo e Alentejo Litoral (Lower Alentejo and Alentejo Coast)

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The TransAlentejo Guide contains plenty of support information about each of the trails presented in it.

- The guide features a detailed description of each route together with a summary of five points of interest that you will find along the route.
- A map of each route has been provided by the Army Geospatial Information Centre, showing the outline of the route and identifying all of the points of interest.
- The signposts and other indications on each route are compliant with the markings ratified by the Portuguese

These guides and routes are intended solely for the purposes of tourists and individuals walking for personal enjoyment, on their own or in the company of family and/or friends, taking advantage of the different trails that have been properly studied, mapped and signposted. For professional use or organised tourist walks, this guide serves as a starting point for the exploration of a territory that has much to offer participants in your group programmes. More details can be obtained by contacting the Alentejo Regional Tourism Board, Municipal Tourism Departments or some of the many different tourism recreational companies, tour operators and accommodations throughout the Alentejo. They will be delighted to provide you with all of the best offerings for anyone who enjoys walking as a leisure pursuit. Competitive sporting events, races, bicycle tours, motor vehicle outings or other sporting or recreational events are not permitted on the marked walking routes published in this guide unless proper authorisation has been obtained from the landowners and the competent authorities.

Camping and Mountaineering Federation, as shown in the diagram.

- The online presentation contains comprehensive information about each route, with fact sheets provided on various viewing platforms, full support texts and external links for more information.
- The routes should always be walked in the direction indicated and which corresponds to the order of the points of interest.
- Signposting on the trails is two-way but this is solely to ensure your safe return in the event that you have to turn back.

## SIGNAGE



Right way



Wrong way



Turn left



Turn right

## CONDUCT AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Walk in a group. If you do decide to go alone, leave details of your planned route either at your accommodation or at the local fire station or GNR/PSP police station before setting out. Do not forget to let them know that you have returned safely.
- Check the most recent updates on the route's information panel or other places where local information is available, such as the local tourist office, council offices or police station.
- Pay close attention to places marked as hunting reserves and to the dates of the hunting season. Do not go walking when hunting events are taking place.
- If you are going on an organised walk, always obey the guides' instructions.
- Do not use the walking routes for running, cycling or driving in motorised vehicles.
- Choose the region where the route is located to stay in, have meals and go shopping. Meet and mingle with the local residents.
- Wear suitable clothing and footwear. Take sufficient food and water with you for the whole day, as well as a means of communication and a personal first aid kit.
- Listen to your body. If you are tired, very hot or cold, have a fever or an allergic reaction, are thirsty, hungry or uncomfortable for any reason, stop immediately and try to make your way to safety. If you have to, do not

hesitate to call for help or assistance.

- Stay on the marked trails and be respectful of private and public property. If you open any gates or raise any barriers along the way, be sure to close or lower them again behind you.
- Do not gather samples of minerals or plants and try to avoid disturbing wildlife and livestock by keeping as far away from them as possible.
- If you take your dog with you, it should always have a collar and you should keep it on the lead whenever you are going through built-up areas, farms or places with livestock. Make sure your pet does not disturb other walkers or local residents.
- Take care in places where there could potentially be danger. If in doubt, turn back.
- Be particularly cautious when crossing streams, bridges, roads, streets and railway lines.
- Be respectful of the natural surroundings. Avoid wearing garish colours and making unnecessary noise.
- Keep all your rubbish with you until you find an appropriate bin to put it into.
- Do not light fires or use naked flames for any reason. Avoid smoking. If you must smoke, do so only in places where it is absolutely safe to do so.



# MEMORIES OF THE MILLS OF ALVITO

## ALVITO

When you arrive in Alvito you are at the heart of the Alentejo geographically-speaking, since it is equidistant from practically the entire territory. However, it is also the heart in the emotional sense of the word, based on the authenticity of the abundant historical heritage and a productive rurality based on its agricultural offering. Bearing witness to the area's cereal producing past are the many windmills that give this route its name.

The country roads leave the whitewashed buildings of Alvito behind and soon lead you into a scenario where the country scenery seems to be endless. To start with, the dirt tracks through the countryside are moderately hilly but become steeper on the hills where the historic windmills are located. Nowadays the mills have either been abandoned or have been converted for use as villas. Standing in the Praça da República, right in the town centre, Alvito Castle serves as the starting point. Go past the monumental fountain in Largo do Roque and head northwards along Rua do Matadouro. This takes you out of the built-up area almost immediately. The route takes you along a dirt track from which you can see varied scenery consisting of rural spaces and forests. Old-growth olive trees alternate with cork oak groves and wide open grazing land where you will often see livestock roaming freely. After the route veers south you can do an out-and-back side trip to see the ruins of the sixteenth-century Chapel of São Pedro (Saint Peter), which has fabulous murals from the following century. Back on the country path now, head west at the junction and follow a service trail through

the meadows until you reach a different country path that will lead you to a point where the national roads EN257 and EN383 intersect. Cross over the EN257 (please take great care doing so!) and then walk for about 300 metres along the edge of EN383, veering to the left on to another country path leading to the São Pedro Mill. Head back downhill via Monte da Tapada. As soon as you reach the municipal road, leave it again and start going uphill through the eucalyptus grove on your left. Half-way up, turn right on Serra de Vila Nova. Now head downhill in a southerly direction until you reach the municipal road. Cross over it and go uphill to Serra de São Miguel. From here you can enjoy an admirable view over Alvito and Vila Nova da Baronia. Go downhill along a little trail next to the fence until you approach Quinta da Ratoeira and then keep going until you reach the road that crosses it a bit farther on. This will let you go to Monte das Cabras with its windmills standing guard. From the hilltop, walk until you approach national road EN257 and then take the historical rural trail through the old-growth olive trees. This will lead you into the town of Alvito, which you cross, admiring its most famous monuments as you go.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR2  
AVT

**Route:** Memories of the Mills of Alvito

**Location:** Alvito

**Distance:** 14,8Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 366m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 195m Max 391m

**Approximate duration:** 5h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Type of surface:** Country paths

**Start and finish:**

Praça da República, Alvito

**Geographical coordinates:**

N38°15'26" W07°59'30"

**Where to park:** Public car park nearby

**Useful Contacts:** Alvito Tourist Board

Tel.: +351 284 480 808; E-mail: turismo@cm-alvito.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### ALVITO CASTLE

Situated right in the town centre, this fortress was commissioned by D. João II in the late fifteenth century and was always used as a residence by the Lords of Alvito. It has an austere and sturdy door, with finely carved features in Manueline style. Belonging to the Casa de Bragança, it has been operating as a pousada since the 1990s.



### TRADITIONAL OLIVE GROVE

A traditional olive orchard is an extensive plantation of olive trees; in many cases, these will have been farmed for hundreds of years using age-old practices to grow the trees and harvest the olives. These olives are always of superior quality; after they are crushed in the press, the resulting olive oil is always high in quality, often with quite distinct characteristics in terms of aroma and flavour.



## MEMORIES OF THE MILLS OF ALVITO NOT TO BE MISSED

### CORK OAK GROVE

Oak groves, a man-made ecosystem, are characteristic of this territory. They are forests of cork and holm oak with a very delicate balance and which only exist in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Cork oaks are robust trees whose bark is hugely important from a commercial point of view. The bark is actually the cork and it is removed with great care from the tree trunks every nine years.



### CHAPEL OF SÃO PEDRO

This chapel dedicated to Saint Peter is located on a hill in a remote spot, which is why it is referred to as an "Ermida" in Portuguese (= hermitage). Built in the early sixteenth century, it contains murals relating to the apostle mentioned in the seventeenth century and underwent work to expand the porch in the eighteenth century. Its design and location suggest that it may have been built here due to the Christianisation of the former site of an Islamic kubba.



### WINDMILLS

Now abandoned or converted for use as villas, these structures, built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, belong to the last generation of cereal-grinding mills. Historically, the idea of harnessing wind power to grind cereals is attributed to the Persians, who arrived in Europe during the period when the Moors settled in the Iberian Peninsula, and subsequently spread all over the continent.



# IN THE AGE-OLD VINEYARDS OF VILA ALVA

## VILA ALVA, CUBA

A land of age-old vineyards and ancient knowledge and skills, with immense landscapes and a town that is white by name ("alva" in Portuguese means "white") and white by nature, the whitewashed houses gently tumbling down the hillside. The fields around Vila Alva are not solely devoted to vineyards. Oak groves, olive orchards and cereal fields that turn golden in summer are also features of the landscape. And there is also a vast expanse of water, the beautiful reservoir of Albergaria dos Fusos stretching for as far as the eye can see, its mirror-like surface contrasting with the hills that form its horizon.

Leave the centre of Vila Alva along Rua da Misericórdia until you reach the Chapel of Santo António (Saint Anthony) on a hilltop to the west of the village. Go around the chapel on the left and follow the old lath and plaster wall of the former entrance to the hamlet. Now take the main path leading to the dam. Keep going along the main dirt track through areas of olive orchards, oak groves and rock-rose until you begin approaching the arms of the reservoir. Go down to wall of the Albergaria dos Fusos Dam and admire the scenery. Turn back past the abandoned buildings that used to house the dam workers, go back along the path for a short way and turn right to enter the oak grove. There is a gate here that you will need to open to do so, please be sure to close it again after you go through. Go downhill and turn on to an old abandoned track that takes you alongside part of the dam's discharge channel. The scenery here is beautiful. Turn on to the paved road and, when you reach the water, turn right on to the dirt track. Go past Monte da Ribeira and keep straight on till you reach the road, where you should turn left. Walk along the edge of the road (taking great care) for about 500 metres then turn

on to a dirt track on the right that takes you through vineyards. After a short downhill section through vineyards, cross the stream and keep going straight ahead through more vineyards until you can go round the end of them on the left. Now go through areas of oak grove and more vineyards until you reach the road. Cross over and continue alongside the grapevines. At the artificial pond, turn right until you reach the road again and then turn left. Keep going along the edge of the road for about 1,200 metres, passing the Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Represa. At the junction, take the paved country road on the left and after 1,000 metres turn right towards the hill where Monte do Zambujeiro is located. Turn left before you reach the hamlet and head downhill through the oak grove. Please remember always to close the gates behind you as you go. Cross the road and take the dirt track alongside the pine and olive trees. After passing the olive orchard, turn left on a slight upward incline, and then right until you reach the paved country path, where you should turn left. Keep going along the paved road until you reach the cemetery and the Chapel of São João (Saint John) and arrive back in the centre of Vila Alva.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
CUB

**Route:** In the Age-old Vineyards of Vila Alva

**Location:** Vila Alva, Cuba

**Distance:** 19,7Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 329m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 163m Max 261m

**Approximate duration:** 5h to 6h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Type of surface:** Country paths e estradas secundárias

**Start and finish:**

Vila Alva, Cuba, Civil Parish Office

**Geographical coordinates:**

N38°14'59" W07°54'00"

**Where to park:** Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area

**Useful Contacts:** Cuba Tourist Office

Tel: +351 284 419 900

E-mail: dulce.lopes@cm-cuba.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### VILA ALVA

People have lived here since prehistoric times. Seat of the municipality until 1854 and always an important town, it became a favourite with the clergy and nobility who began visiting it frequently. As a result, it gained benefits in terms of culture and art. The planting of the vineyards and orchards also dates back to this period, along with the construction of mills and many churches and chapels lined with frescoes and hand-painted tiles.



### ALBERGARIA DOS FUSOS DAM

Also known as the Alvito Dam, this is an important structure that provides drinking water for various localities in the Alentejo, serving around 30,000 inhabitants. It is located on the Odivelas Stream and began operating in 1977. Standing 48.5 metres high, and with a crest length of 1,100 metres, it holds a useable volume of 130 million cubic metres.





## IN THE AGE-OLD VINEYARDS OF VILA ALVA NOT TO BE MISSED

### CORK OAK GROVE

The oak groves are a man-made ecosystem typical of the Alentejo. They are forests of cork and holm oak with a very delicate balance and which only exist in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Cork oaks are robust trees whose bark is hugely important from a commercial point of view. The bark is actually the cork and it is removed with great care from the tree trunks every nine years.



### VINEYARDS

The vineyards of Cuba, which includes those of Vila Alva, are a special case in the Alentejo's wine production. While not unique, a significant percentage of production here comes from tiny estates, contrasting with how production is generally carried out in the rest of the territory. With high quality soils, protected from the north winds by the uplands of Portel and strongly influenced by the basin of the River Guadiana and, now, the Alqueva Lake, extraordinary microclimates are created for grape-growing. Vinification is wisely still done in earthenware vessels, ancient knowledge and skills coming together to create famous flavours.



### CHAPEL OF NOSSA SENHORA DA REPRESA

This small chapel, with its ancient oracle to São Caetano (Saint Cajetan), was an important sanctuary consisting of the little church and a few nearby houses for use by the hermits and pilgrims who, at one time, came to the temple in large numbers. The Chapel of São Caetano was an important regional pilgrimage centre due to the renown of the miracles attributed to the actions of the original patron saint; in the eighteenth century his image was considered to be the most miraculous in the whole kingdom.



# THROUGH THE SÃO CUCUFATE VINEYARDS

## VIDIGUEIRA

This is the land of small vineyards, rented plots of Crown land, and the ancient skills and knowledge of monks and farmers. Sheltered from the north winds by the uplands of Portel and Mendro, the fertile lands in the valley became home to various civilisations whose historical legacy lives on in the town of São Cucufate. Following on the heels of the Romans came the skilful convent crafts that have survived to the present day, in the form of wine produced in earthenware vats, olive oil and even locally-grown oranges in the land was once the County of Vasco da Gama.

This is a route that takes you through endless fields in lands where vines, vegetables and fruit trees are grown on tiny plots of land. The trails are always along country paths or roads with little traffic and there is only one demanding climb that takes you to the top of the Santo António Hill. However, when you are rewarded with the sublime view from the summit, you will see your effort rewarded. Leave Vidigueira from the garden opposite the town hall in the Praça da República. Take Rua Miguel Bombarda, admiring the Igreja da Misericórdia (Church of Mercy) as you go. A bit farther on, veer slightly to the left to take a look at the clock tower, and then go back to the path. Continue through Largo 5 de Outubro, where you can admire the curious waterfall in the embedded fountain. A bit farther on, on Rua de Santa Clara, turn left to visit what remains of the now almost-disappeared Vidigueira Castle and go around it on Rua do Castelo. Leave the town along Rua de Santa Clara and start heading through an area of countryside with fruit and olive orchards. Go past the sixteenth-century Chapel of Santa Clara which was used by large numbers of fervent worshippers. Leave the paved road at the second exit on the left, turning on to the dirt track through the vineyards and olive orchards. Go through a thickly wooded area and cross the stream, observing the small and very old arched stone footbridge. A bit farther on, you can take a short out-and-back side route to

see what remains of the enclosure where the now completely-disappeared Franciscan convent used to be. Keep going along the same type of path until you reach Vila de Frades, famous for its wine produced in earthenware vats and as the birthplace of writer Fialho de Almeida. Go through the historical town centre and exit through the vineyards, keeping going until you reach the EN258 road. Turn right, bringing you out along a dirt track in the direction of the São Cucufate Museum Hub, which is worth spending some time visiting. Leave along the paved access road and turn right on to the EN258 road. Walk on the left-hand edge of the road and take the second exit on the left, leading you into the vineyards. The route now takes you along a trail through the vineyards, where there are different routes between the various plots. Follow the signposts and the map very carefully. Join the road coming from Cuba and then turn right on to the EN258 road, shortly afterwards, begin the climb, to the right, up to the Chapel of Santo António. This is an out-and-back section of the route. Once you reach the top of the hill, you can admire the 360° unobstructed view of the surrounding countryside. Go back down to the EN258 road and take the first turn-off to the right. Immediately before the farmhouse on your left, turn on to the dirt track and follow the main path through the olive orchards and vineyards until you reach the town of Vidigueira. Go past the cemetery and this will bring you back to the starting point.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
VDG

**Route:** Through the São Cucufate Vineyards

**Location:** Vidigueira

**Distance:** 17,9Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 268m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 179m Max 308m

**Approximate duration:** 5h to 6h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium +

**Type of surface:** Country and city paths, secondary roads

**Start and finish:**

Praça da República, Vidigueira

**Geographical coordinates:**

N38°12'33" W07°48'00"

**Where to park:** Parking available in the immediate vicinity, within the built-up area

**Useful Contacts:** Vidigueira Tourist Office  
Tel.: +351 284 437 408

E-mail: [turismo@cm-vidigueira.pt](mailto:turismo@cm-vidigueira.pt)

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### CHAPEL OF SANTA CLARA

This is one of the oldest chapels in the area around Vidigueira. It was built in 1555, having been commissioned by the second Count of Vidigueira, D. Francisco a Gama, and his wife, D. Guiomar de Vilhena. A rectangular building, crowned with battlements and abutments topped with truncated cone-shaped pinnacles, the style of its construction is associated with Manueline period, with Norman Gothic influences.



### VILA DE FRADES

Located in the far north-west of the municipality, Vila de Frades is just two kilometres from Vidigueira. The two towns are separated by the Freixo Stream, which rises in the Mendro uplands and flows south to join the Odearce Stream. One of the region's most important historical landmarks is located in the civil parish: the ruins of São Cucufate.



## THROUGH THE SÃO CUCUFATE VINEYARDS NOT TO BE MISSED

### FRADES BRIDGE

A stone footbridge over small stream, the Frades Bridge has remained intact despite being hundreds of years old. It was built using the principle of balancing forces in an arch, an ancient and very sturdy technology, as can be seen here.



### WINERIES OF VINHO DA TALHA

The basics of producing wine in earthenware vats have barely changed in over 2,000 years. In general terms, the grapes are crushed and are then put into the earthenware vats where fermentation occurs spontaneously. During fermentation, the grape skins that rise to the surface and form a solid cover are stirred with a wooden rake and pushed down into the must, so that they give the wine more colour, aromas and flavours. There is an orifice with a tap near the bottom of the vat. The wine goes through the filter formed by the grape pulp and comes out the tap pure and clear. It is a simple and natural process, just like the wine that it produces.



### ROMAN RUINS OF SÃO CUCUFATE

The Roman villa of São Cucufate is a set of Roman ruins that has been very well-preserved over the course of 2,000 years of history. This archaeological site consists of vestiges of spas, a garden and a temple; this last was later adapted for Christian worship as the convent dedicated to São Cucufate (Saint Cucuphas). It is believed to have been an important farmhouse, bearing witness to the antiquity and importance of this activity in the Alentejo. Rooms with vaulted ceilings inside the building would have been used to store earthenware vats for wine and olive oil, local agricultural products that were prized by the Romans.



# CERRO DA ÁGUA ROUTE

## FERREIRA DO ALENTEJO

This is vast territory filled with gentle landscapes, where times passes at its own pace. Legend has it that, in the fifth century, it was the valiant wife of the local blacksmith who, armed with sledgehammer, defended the city of Singa against invading barbarians. A defensive fortification was built on the site where the Castle of the Order of Saint James once stood, and which today is where the local cemetery is to be found. Today, the fields around Ferreira are fertile olive groves that shape a productive rural landscape and provide a restful view for the eyes and souls of passers-by.

Exploring Ferreira do Alentejo on this route is an opportunity to enjoy the restful sight of never-ending fields, where the farmlands, irrigated orchards, olive groves and livestock are all indicative of teeming life and generate wealth from every patch of land. Accessible to any walker, these lands combine immense plains with noteworthy high points that afford views extending for as far as the eye can possibly see. Start out at the Tourist Office, right next to the Calvário Chapel, and go along Rua Capitão Mousinho towards the Igreja Matriz (Main Church) of Ferreira do Alentejo. Continue through the square named after Comendador Infante Passanha, at the rear of the church and, at the corner of the square, head towards the Igreja da Misericórdia (Church of Mercy) and the cemetery, where Ferreira Castle once stood. After passing the cemetery, continue along the paved road on the left until you reach a large olive grove; turn right here, on

to a dirt track. Keep going along the track, passing the aerodrome, until you have to turn left towards the large farm and livestock buildings of the Vacaria da Torre. Head towards the weir but, before you reach it, take the dirt road to the north. At the first junction turn right and continue along the right bank of the reservoir. After you pass the old olive grove, take the first left next to the new olive grove and start the climb towards Cerro da Água. From here you can admire a view over all of the surrounding fields. Start the gentle descent towards the distribution station for the irrigation system and go around it until you reach a little stream nestling in the valley. Turn left here and go around the edge of the centre pivot irrigation system. Go right on the paved road, beside the massive walnut tree belonging to Quinta do Pereiro and continue along the country road towards the town of Ferreira do Alentejo, heading back along the same road you came out on.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
FAL

**Route:** Cerro da Água Route  
**Location:** Ferreira do Alentejo  
**Distance:** 13,8Km  
**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 212m  
**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 122m Max 207m  
**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h  
**Level of difficulty:** Medium -  
**Type of surface:** Country paths  
**Start and finish:**  
 Ferreira do Alentejo Tourist Information Office  
**Geographical coordinates:**  
 N38°03'42" W08°07'03"  
**Where to park:**  
 Public car park at the site  
**Useful Contacts:** Ferreira de Alentejo Tourist Board  
 Tel.: +351 284 739 620;  
 E-mail: turismo@cm-ferreira-alentejo.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### TOWN OF FERREIRA DO ALENTEJO

Located on a small rise, surrounded by extensive plains, the town of Ferreira do Alentejo is today an important agricultural production centre, in particular olive groves and the production of olive oil. Legend has it that there was once a city here, founded by the Romans, called Singa, and that it was defended from invading barbarians by the wife of a blacksmith, armed with heavy iron sledgehammers. This is why the town was given its name ('ferreiro' in Portuguese means 'blacksmith'). All that remains of the mediaeval castle is its memory, since it was demolished in the 19th century and the stones were used to build houses in the town. The town cemetery was built on the now-vacant site of the castle.



### CHURCH OF NOSSA SENHORA DA ASSUNÇÃO

The original building housing the Main Church of Ferreira do Alentejo was founded in 1320 by the Order of Saint James of the Sword. It subsequently fell into ruin centuries later. It was roofless in 1571, at which time it is believed to have been remodelled. The highlight of the current church is the fine Baroque portal with an arch resting on pilasters, topped by two scrolled volutes that frame an elegant stone coat-of-arms of the Order of Saint James, in an oval surround. Inside, you will find the image of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of the Conception) that accompanied Vasco da Gama on his voyage to discover the sea route to India.

## CERRO DA ÁGUA ROUTE

### NOT TO BE MISSED

#### COMENDADOR INFANTE PASSANHA

Luís António da Fonseca Infante Passanha, Commander of the Order of Our Lady of the Conception of Vila Viçosa, was Mayor of Ferreira from 1874 to 1886. He played an important role in the development of the municipality, especially in terms of the construction of various public utility facilities. In Portugal, the late 19th century was marked by a growing affirmation of municipalism and considerable improvements, for the time, at regional and local level.



#### FERREIRA CASTLE / CEMETERY

A castle once stood at the town's highest point, possibly the place where the first human settlement here was, or where a Roman town or city was established. The ancient fortress is thought to have been built on the orders of D. Gualdim Pais of the Knights Templar, but it was undoubtedly the Order of Saint James of the Sword that built a mighty castle on the highest and most strategic site in Ferreira. In 1838, the Parish Council decided that the castle, in ruins and serving no useful purpose, should be demolished and the public cemetery built on the vacant site. The original castle stones now form parts of many of the town's buildings.



#### OLIVE GROVE

A traditional olive orchard is an extensive plantation of olive trees; in many cases, these will have been farmed for hundreds of years using age-old practices to grow the trees and harvest the olives. The new farming methods and the availability of water thanks to the irrigation zone created by the big Alqueva Lake are enabling the implementation of other types of olive production, known as intensive and super intensive. These use modern planting, treatment and harvesting methods, boosting the profitability of the production; however, in terms of taste, they cannot always match the quality of the traditional products.



# ALJUSTREL HAS A MINE

## ALJUSTREL

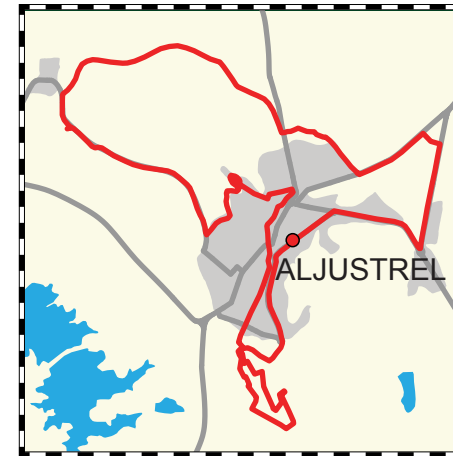
This is the famous Roman Vipasca, one of the major mining centres in the empire, which broke new ground deep below the earth's surface. Later it was the Islamic "Al-lustre", a term that clearly refers to the lustre and light that could be seen on the surface in the form of pyrites and their geological counterparts. However, Aljustrel also has glistening grain fields, dotted with old-growth trees, cut across by small streams and cradled by charming never-ending scenery, sweeping views and endless soul.

The town of Aljustrel lives from and for the mine. It is so deeply framed by the mine that almost all of the surrounding area is a mining town, with some seams being worked and others already stabilised and museumised. Even the subsoil of the urban space is exploited in its depths. Much of what exists on the surface can now be seen on this route, which also takes in the rural world that lives beyond that of the mining industry. The old primary school is the starting point from which to explore the vast landscapes around Aljustrel. Go up Avenida 1º de Maio to reach the roundabouts that lead to mining town. From here you can see some of the old machinery on display, as well as the noteworthy winch used for vertical transport up and down the mine shaft. When you get into the mining neighbourhood of Vale d'Oca, immediately take the wooden walkway from which you can see some signs of the mining that took place here from Roman times to the late twentieth century. At the end of the walkway, go past the compressed air hub that supplied air to all of the underground galleries, and then past another winch. From here you can contemplate all of the old mining space, now restored. Turn around and go back into the mining neighbourhood, taking a look at a few surviving examples of miners' houses with the bathroom on the other side of the street.

Go right into the centre of Aljustrel along Rua Vasco da Gama, Rua 31 de Janeiro, Rua Latino Coelho, Rua José Francisco Silva Álvaro, Rua Cândido dos Reis and Praça 13 de Janeiro, then go underneath the arch and along Rua Dr. Manuel Joaquim Brando. At the end, turn left and go up Rua São João de Deus, where you will see the Igreja Matriz (Main Church) at the top, and go past the Municipal Museum, the former Municipal Council building. After the church, climb the magnificent stairway of the Church of Senhora do Castelo (Lady of the Castle) and stop to drink in the breathtaking view. Continue along the side walkway and go down through the town, turning right after the bullring. Keep going alongside the old mine works and take a look at what remains of an open-air seam from the interpretative scenic viewpoint. When you see the São João mining neighbourhood, turn right along the old Estrada de Aljustrel and keep going till you reach the cemetery. Turn left, go past the sports facilities and, a little farther on, turn left again when you see the grain silos and the abandoned railway station. Turn right before the supermarkets, bringing you on to the legendary National Road 2, which takes you into the town. At the roundabout, turn right and go back into the built-up area. At the next roundabout, turn left along Avenida 1º de Maio, until you get back to the starting point next to the old primary school.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR2  
AJT

**Route:** Aljustrel has a Mine

**Location:** Aljustrel

**Distance:** 12Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 270m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 137m Max 245m

**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h

**Level of difficulty:** Low

**Type of surface:** Urban paths, wooden walkways, country paths

**Start and finish:**

The old primary school in front of the 25th of April Garden

**Geographical coordinates:**

N37°52'39" W08°09'46"

**Where to park:** Public car park at the site

**Useful Contacts:** Aljustrel Tourist Office;

Tel.: +351 264 601 010; E-mail: turismo@mun-aljustrel.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### TOWN OF ALJUSTREL

Located in a valley between two hills in the very centre of the Baixo (Lower) Alentejo. Its existence has long been associated with the rich mineral deposits emerging on the surface in a huge "iron hat". The town grew up around the old castle, with modest houses on terraces on the hillside and sweeping landscapes all around it. A land of hard work and sweat, its people are inextricably linked to mining and to dryland farming in the vast grain fields.



### ALJUSTREL MINES

Located on the Iberian pyrite seam, the mines hold a vast deposit of volcanogenic sulphide rock, commonly known as pyrites and have been mined since antiquity. The famous Vipasca Bronze Tablets date from the Roman period and have the first legislation regulating mining activity engraved on them. From the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century, this was one of the main mining complexes in Portugal for sulphides, from which iron, copper, zinc, lead, silver and gold were extracted.



## ALJUSTREL HAS A MINE NOT TO BE MISSED

### CEREAL FIELDS

The cereal steppe is characterised by the extensive farming of dryland cereal crops in a farming system that comprises a variety of cultivated or fallow cereal fields to make the best use of the land. It is a land of wide open spaces with swaying grasses and trees sporadically dotting the landscape. The steppes are hugely valuable from an ecological point of view, as they are inhabited by steppe-dwelling birds and small mammals that often serve as prey for birds of prey and predatory mammals.



### RUINS OF ALJUSTREL CASTLE

Human occupation of Aljustrel Castle dates back to prehistory and, more specifically, to the Copper Age some 7,000 years ago. During the Roman period, the stronghold is believed to have been expanded and fortified giving rise to the castle in the Muslim period. The castle once had a stone wall all the way around it with a keep and various barracks. Nowadays, the hill where the castle stood is occupied by the Church of Nossa Senhora do Castelo (Our Lady of the Castle).



### SANCTUARY OF NOSSA SENHORA DO CASTELO

Built in the fourteenth century and always connected to the faith of the municipality's inhabitants, who directed their prayers and thanks for miracles to her. The church is small and modest in comparison with the magnificent monumental staircase used for pilgrimages that start off in the town centre and go to the square outside the chapel. The view is sublime from up here, this being considered one of the best viewpoints in the Alentejo.



# A JOURNEY TO THE ORIGINS OF PORTUGUESE NATIONALITY

## NAMORADOS, CASTRO VERDE

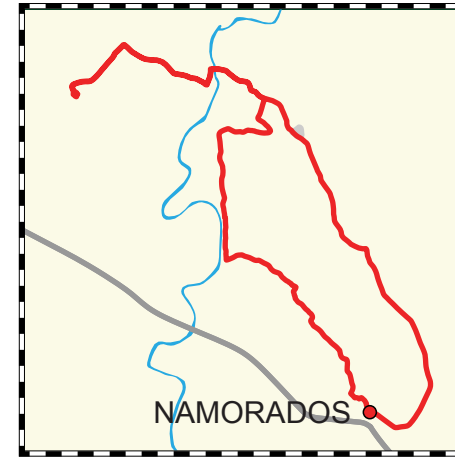
The cereal fields of Castro Verde mark the lines of the horizon in every direction, giving you the impression that you could walk to infinity. The starting point for this route is Namorados, a curious name that harks back to the habit of positioning younger soldiers in less dangerous battlefield locations. It once served to guard the ore existing underground and now discretely guards secrets of endless paths. Reaching the Cerro de São Pedro das Cabeças is the equivalent of conquering the best of Portugal's legendary history, where the origins of Portuguese nationality lie.

Vast spaces deserve walks where the horizon disappears in the distance on a route that pays tribute to the cereal fields. On this circular route, you will find yourself walking for kilometres past vast fields of cereal crops and then having the opportunity to reach the high point of São Pedro das Cabeças. The starting point is in a place called Namorados, which once served as a stronghold to safeguard ore and – who knows – perhaps guarded by young soldiers from whom it gained its name. Pass the fountain on your way out of the village and take a country path that leads you past the Alentejo hamlets of Cabeças and Chaminé das Cabeças. Just before you reach Monte Roxo, the branch leading up to the hilltop begins. This is the path that you must follow out and back in

order to return to the starting point at the end of the walk. Turn left after you pass the stream and a little farther ahead, on the right, you will find the country path that leads uphill to São Pedro das Cabeças, the legendary site of the Battle of Ourique, where D. Afonso Henriques defeated five Moorish kings. After visiting the site, retrace your steps until a little way beyond Monte do Roxo and turn right through the grove of scattered cork oak trees, passing an old and olive orchard nicely laid-out in straight lines. Go around on the left-hand side of the dam you will see ahead of you and head southwards towards the hamlet which you can see in the distance. Keep to the country path between the croplands and small vegetable gardens.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
CVR

**Route:** A Journey to the Origins of Portuguese Nationality

**Location:** Namorados, Castro Verde

**Distance:** 11,7 Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 267m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 169m Max 246m

**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Type of surface:** Country paths

**Start and finish:**

The Garden in Namorados, Castro Verde

**Geographical coordinates:**

N37°39'14" W08°00'33"

**Where to park:** Open space for parking at the site

**Useful Contacts:** Castro Verde Tourist Office;

Tel.: +351 286 328 148;

E-mail: [posto.turismo@cm-castroverde.pt](mailto:posto.turismo@cm-castroverde.pt)

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### HAMLET OF NAMORADOS

This little hamlet once belonged to a network of fortified dwellings that were set up in pre-Roman times to safeguard the ore extracted in the region and exported from here to the Mediterranean. As the port was in Mértola, the ore had to be transported by road over the course of several days and safely guarded in places such as this. The name "Namorados" was inherited from the fact that younger warriors were stationed here, where they could normally be better protected in battle, due to their age.



### CEREAL FIELDS

The cereal steppe is characterised by the extensive farming of dryland cereal crops in a farming system that comprises a variety of cultivated or fallow cereal fields to make the best use of the land. It is a land of wide open spaces with swaying grasses and trees sporadically dotting the landscape. The steppes are hugely valuable from an ecological point of view, as they are inhabited by steppe-dwelling birds and small mammals that often serve as prey for birds of prey and predatory mammals.





## A JOURNEY TO THE ORIGINS OF PORTUGUESE NATIONALITY NOT TO BE MISSED

### ALENTEJO MONTE (HAMLET)

These hamlets are the direct descendants of the rural type of Roman villa. Privately-owned, they are home to several families whose mutual connection is usually work-related. There is always a grander main house belonging to the owner and his or her family, houses for the resident workers and accommodation for any casual workers or visitors. Support structures for crop-growing and livestock are perfectly integrated into the space, as are workshops, transformation and storage facilities, and, sometimes, social structures such as a school, church and police station. They are normally located on high ground with plenty of fresh air and sunshine, and afford excellent visibility over their dependent farmlands.



### HILL OF SÃO PEDRO DAS CABEÇAS

A Mannerist-style chapel that marks the spot where the Battle of Ourique is thought to have taken place on 25 July 1139. It is a sanctuary and pilgrimage site, largely built in sixteenth-century style, which can be seen in the construction of small single-nave churches. It features a round triumphal arch set on pillars and the high altar is made of wood with a stone niche. Legend has it that this chapel was one of seven sister chapels that could all be seen from each other: Senhora do Amparo in Mértola; Senhora de Guadalupe in Serpa; Senhora da Cola in Ourique; Senhora do Castelo in Aljustrel; Senhora da Saúde in Martim Longo; Senhora da Piedade in Loulé; and Senhora de Aracelis in Castro Verde.



### BATTLE OF OURIQUE

The Battle of Ourique took place in the fields of the Baixo (Lower) Alentejo on 25 July 1139, the birthday of both D. Afonso Henrique and of São Tiago (Saint James), whom popular legend had determined as the patron in the battle against the Moors. Here, this saint is referred to as "Santiago Matamouros" (Saint James the Moor-slayer). The battle occurred during one of the Christians' incursions into territory held by the Moors with the aim of seizing livestock, slaves and other booty. It is said that, during this battle, the Lusitanians decapitated five Moorish kings. This is merely legend, however, fed by nationalist fervour during the sixteenth century, at the height of the Sebastianism period. In the late nineteenth century, this legend was fully embraced by Alexandre Herculano and Almeida Garrett, and still remains a major episode in the Portuguese fighting spirit.



# HILLS AND VALLEYS OF SANTANA DA SERRA

## SANTANA DA SERRA, OURIQUE

The terrain is quite hilly and is marked by hills separated by valleys carved out in an area that is already a transitional one leading into the Algarve uplands. The landscapes are seemingly endless, in a sea of green and boulders. Dotted around the countryside you will see ruined hamlets that bear witness to bygone days when people lived in scattered settlements and the inhabitants struggled to make a living in these lands.

This is demanding route that goes up- and downhill, along the crests of the many hills in the region. The paths themselves are wide and easy to walk on but there is not much shade so you will be exposed to the sun for almost the entire length of the walk. Set off from the car park at the entrance to Santana da Serra and go through the village towards the urban bridge. Cross the bridge and take the cemetery road as far as the junction. Cross the bridge and take the first right along the riverside path. At the next junction, keep left and go past the cluster of houses and then take the path on the right towards the woods. The route always follows the crest line, affording fantastic views all along the way. Turn left at the next main junction and when you come to an abandoned hamlet make a sharp left turn as the route turns eastwards

again. At the next two junctions, take the paths on the left. Then head right and go past an inhabited cluster of houses. Watch out for the next very sharp turn to the left, off of the main path, and head downhill towards a pond. Turn left at the bottom and go past a stone niche next to the path that people have turned into a kind of altar dedicated to various popular saints. Turn right at the next crossroads. Keep to the right until you see a windmill on the top of the hill, which you reach by going up a very steep path before re-joining the main path. From the windmill you can admire a completely unobstructed 360° view all the way to the horizon. Re-join the main path and keep straight on until you reach the crossroads at the entrance to Santana da Serra. Go into the village and retrace your steps until you arrive back at the starting point.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
ORQ

**Route:** Hills and Valleys of Santana da Serra

**Location:** Santana da Serra, Ourique

**Distance:** 13,5Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 486m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 165m Max 330m

**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Type of surface:** Country paths

**Start and finish:**

Car park at the entrance to Santana da Serra

**Geographical coordinates:**

N37°29'54" W08°17'59"

**Where to park:** Car park at the site

**Useful Contacts:** Ourique Tourist Office;

Tel.: +351 286 510 414; Email: turismo@cmourique.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### VILLAGE OF SANTANA DA SERRA

Santana da Serra covers an area of 190 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 850 inhabitants. It is located in the southern part of the municipality of Ourique, precisely where the Alentejo plains transition to the Algarve uplands. The civil parish of Santana da Serra is very hilly; between the hills there are deep valleys with streams and gullies, and a number of backwashes from the Santa Clara Dam. The entire civil parish is criss-crossed by tortuously winding paths and is inhabitant by a variety of birdlife and wild animals.



### ALENTEJO MONTE (HAMLET)

These hamlets are the direct descendants of the rural type of Roman villa. Privately-owned, they are home to several families whose mutual connection is usually work-related. There is always a grander main house belonging to the owner and his or her family, houses for the resident workers and accommodation for any casual workers or visitors. Support structures for crop-growing and livestock are perfectly integrated into the space, as are workshops, transformation and storage facilities, and, sometimes, social structures such as a school, church and police station. They are normally located on high ground with plenty of fresh air and sunshine, and afford excellent visibility over their dependent farmlands.

## HILLS AND VALLEYS OF SANTANA DA SERRA NOT TO BE MISSED

### ROCK-ROSE (CISTUS LADANIFER)

Cistus ladanifer is a flowering plant in the Cistaceae family. The name of the rock-rose genus – Cistus – comes from the fact that its fruits are globe-shaped capsules containing between seven and ten compartments. The leaves excrete an aromatic resin, called ladanum, which is used in perfumes, especially as a fixative. In the past, it was used as an analgesic and sedative, mixed with other ingredients. A very curious method is used to collect ladanum, which involves allowing flocks of goats to graze in areas of abundant rock-rose. The animals' coats and beards are then combed to collect the resin.



### CEREAL FIELDS

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### WINDMILLS

Now abandoned or converted for use as villas, these structures, built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, belong to the last generation of cereal-grinding mills. Historically, the idea of harnessing wind power to grind cereals is attributed to the Persians, who arrived in Europe during the period when the Moors settled in the Iberian Peninsula, and subsequently spread all over the continent.



## ALONG THE ODELOUCA STREAM

### SÃO BARNABÉ, ALMODÔVAR

Almodôvar's vast territory is a mystery waiting to be explored, in terms of both its geography and its history. People have lived here since the Neolithic period, and stones engraved with Southwest Script have been found here, taking us back 2,500 years into the past, to a time when stone was the support for the written word. Various civilisations have been responsible for shaping Almodôvar's identity; crossing the Serra do Caldeirão uplands, they gave rise to hamlets such as São Barnabé, known as the capital of medronho, the famous brandy made from the fruit of the strawberry tree.

This is a route which takes you through expansive uplands and deep valleys carved out by torrential water courses and by the Odelouca stream, the central focus of a terrain marked by peaks that afford scenic views for as far as the eye can see. Set off from the Igreja Matriz (Main Church) of São Barnabé and head towards Monte da Cruz and Zambujal. When you come to the turn-off towards the fountain, take the gravel path on your left and go up the steep hill. From here you can admire a marvellous view over the whitewashed houses of São Barnabé. Go around the built-up part of Monte das Covas and you will already be able to catch a glimpse of the Odelouca Stream, as you begin your descent into the valley and pass a small fountain. Cut across to the left and

head downhill towards the stream. Follow the stream, taking the dirt track that runs alongside it, bounded by patches of impressive Mediterranean woodland. Move away from the stream and start climbing the hills, passing the abandoned Monte do Carneiro and always keeping to the main path. When you reach a point called Portela de Odelouca, where trails cross, you have to turn back around a sharp bend to the right, taking the route along the peaks, with never-ending 360° views all the way to the horizon. From here, walk down a gently-sloping watershed until you reach Monte do Pipeiros; from there, descend even farther until you reach Barranco de Pipeiros, following a wide road that takes you alongside the gallery forest and back to the starting point in the village of São Barnabé.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR6  
ADV

**Route:** Along the Odelouca Stream  
**Location:** São Barnabé, Almodôvar  
**Distance:** 9,5Km  
**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 408m  
**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 234m Max 451m  
**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h  
**Level of difficulty:** Medium  
**Type of surface:** Country and forest paths  
**Start and finish:** Igreja Matriz (Main Church) of São Barnabé (Saint Barnabas), Almodôvar  
**Geographical coordinates:** N37°21'26" W08°09'55"  
**Where to park:** Public car park at the site  
**Useful Contacts:** Almodôvar Tourist Board; Tel.: +351 286 662 057; E-mail: turismo@cm-almodovar.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### VILLAGE OF SÃO BARNABÉ

The village is located in the bottom of the valley, although legend has it that ancient populations wanted it to be on the hilltop, contrary to the interests of a wealthy landowner. The legend therefore indicates a clash of cultures between the forebears of the hill-dwellers and the Roman colonisers, who preferred to live in fertile valleys, next to rivers and roads. After the Christian reconquest, this area was colonised by the Order of Saint James of the Sword, giving it a patron saint and an existence that persists to the present day.



### ODELOUCA STREAM

The Odelouca Stream springs from the Serra do Caldeirão uplands, in the civil parish of São Barnabé, flowing for a total distance of almost 93 kilometres. It flows in an east-west direction, eventually joining the River Arade, which it serves as a tributary. Flowing almost all year round, it winds its way through very deep valleys between the hills and serves as a prime habitat for many different species of plants and animals.



## ALONG THE ODELOUCA STREAM

### NOT TO BE MISSED

#### MEDRONHO BRANDY

A type of traditional fruit brandy made from arbutus berries, the fruit of the strawberry tree, which is very common in these uplands. Great care is taken with the fermentation process and distillation takes place in copper stills, enhancing the very traditional component of the drink with unique aromas and flavours. Apart from being used to make brandy, the berries can also be eaten fresh, in sweets, jellies, liqueurs or as an ingredient in confectionery.



#### HILL OF CALDEIRÃO

The uplands of the Serra do Caldeirão are located between the transitional Barrocal area in the Algarve and the plains of the Alentejo. Essentially comprising ancient schist and greywacke formations, these are low hills, with the highest peak rising to a height of 577 metres. The terrain is very undulating, consisting of hills and valleys carved out by the many torrential streams flowing through the area.



#### THE GUERRILLA'S TALE

These hills and valleys once sheltered one of the most famous guerrillas in Portugal's history. His name was José Joaquim de Sousa Reis, a wealthy tenant farmer from the area and a staunch supporter of the Miguelist cause in the 1832-1834 civil war. He refused to be a party to the peace talks in Évoramonte and kept up his armed fight in the form of guerrilla warfare against the liberalist intentions to appropriate land in the uplands. Headquartered in São Barnabé, he was very successful in the battles that he fought in the Algarve, prior to being captured and executed by firing squad in 1838.



# LORD OF THE MARTYRS ROUTE

## ALCÁÇER DO SAL

Exploring Alcácer do Sal is almost like entering the Alentejo through the great Atlantic road, which is the River Sado. A splendid riverside settlement since prehistoric times, its importance grew in the Roman period, as the first port of access to the whole empire. Built in mediaeval times, the castle is one of the most important symbols of the Christian reconquest and of the installation of the order of Saint James of the Sword. The surrounding fields are today immense rice paddies; this cereal crop has made its mark on the landscape, gastronomy and the natural habitats for the fauna and flora.

This is an easy trail that takes you alongside the rice paddies, little vegetable gardens and cork oak groves next to the banks of the River Sado. You will be walking along country paths and farm tracks, which are used by farm workers and the local residents. Leave Alcácer do Sal by going alongside the River Sado in the square named after Pedro Nunes, one of the most important Portuguese scientists of all time. The steep streets and alleyways lead half-way up the hill, affording good views over the river, until reaching the Sanctuary of Senhor dos Mártires (Lord of the Martyrs), for which the trail is named. The sanctuary was founded by the Knights of Saint James in the thirteenth century. Afterwards, the route takes you along country paths through areas of small farms, crossing the national road by means of an underpass,

and then continuing in the same rural scenario. While you are walking through the farmland, you will begin to catch glimpses of the wetlands with their rice paddies and the stone pine forests which mark the untouched natural section of the route. This is an area teeming with birdlife, in particular white storks and various species of herons. You will pass the Bairro do Olival Queimado (Burnt Olive Grove Neighbourhood), a modern hamlet, and then once again find yourself in an area of small farms until you reach Alcácer do Sal's sports fields. From there, you head down into the town centre, passing the mediaeval castle on the way. The last part of the trail takes you through steep narrow alleyways which portray the Moorish influence on this sleepy town, stretching down the hillside to the river.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
ASL

**Route:** Lord of the Martyrs Route  
**Location:** Alcácer do Sal  
**Distance:** 12,5Km  
**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 197m  
**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 3m Max 65m  
**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h  
**Level of difficulty:** Low  
**Type of surface:** Country paths e urbanos  
**Start and finish:**  
 Praça Pedro Nunes, Alcácer do Sal  
**Geographical coordinates:**  
 N38°22'15" W08°30'47"  
**Where to park:**  
 Public car park at the site  
**Useful Contacts:** Alcácer do Sal Tourist Office  
 Tel.: +351 265 009 987  
 E-mail: turismoalcacer@m-alcacerdosal.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### ALCÁÇER DO SAL

The territory's capital city was settled by people in the distant past, thanks to its prime position next to the River Sado, a veritable "roadway" connecting it to the Atlantic. In the Roman period, the large imperial city flourished and after the Christian reconquest it was a strategic connection point between the coast and the inland area that now corresponds to the Alentejo. The people of Alcácer live from and for the river, with fishing and rice crops being the main drivers of the region's economy. Today it is a tourist destination bursting with all sorts of stand-out nature tourism attractions.



### PEDRO NUNES

This notable scientist, considered the greatest Portuguese mathematician ever to have lived, was born in Alcácer do Sal in 1502. The founder of navigation theory, his greatest discovery was the rhumb line, which revolutionised navigation and map-making; but his greatest invention was the nonius, named in his honour. His written works include Tratado de Esfera (Treatise on the Sphere) and De Crepusculis (About Twilight).



## LORD OF THE MARTYRS ROUTE

### NOT TO BE MISSED

#### SANCTUARY OF SENHOR DOS MÁRTIRES (LORD OF THE MARTYRS)

A public necropolis since the Iron Age and the first Gothic pantheon in Portugal, used as a burial ground for the Portuguese masters of the Order of Saint James of the Sword. It is one of the country's oldest Christian monuments. The construction of the original church, of which only the Capela do Tesouro (Chapel of the Treasure) now remains, dates from the thirteenth century. It evolved from being a place used for Marian worship to one dedicated to Christ. From the very outset all the way to the present day, it has been a site of great devotion for the local people; a religious sisterhood based there looks after it.



#### RICE CROPS

The early twentieth century saw the initial stages of rice production being implemented in Portugal. Alcácer do Sal has been producing rice since 1760; today, the most commonly used seed varieties are "Chinês" and "Ponta Rubra". Alcácer's rice paddies, considered the largest in Portugal, are still producing and contributing to the country's economy.



#### RIVER SADO

The river's sources are scattered around the Serra da Vigia hills in Ourique and flow from south to north for about 180 km before reaching the ocean. This has always been an excellent communications route between the inland areas and the Atlantic; it is one of the main hallmarks of the territory and an important development hub. Between the plains on either side of the river, the vegetation consists mostly of extensive areas of croplands, including dryland crops, as well as oak, pine and olive trees, and, of course, the rice paddies. A hot, dry climate, despite the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean, accentuates the area's Mediterranean characteristics.



# GRÂNDOLA HILLS ROUTE

## GRÂNDOLA

In Grândola you will find a sea of green and one of the greatest cork oak forests in the entire Alentejo. Here is a natural space high in ecological value and boasting considerable biodiversity; a space where cork of the highest quality is produced, one of the greatest riches among the forest's resources. The terrain here is quite hilly, giving you a series of high points from which to admire vast landscapes and valleys with lively bubbling streams. In bygone days, many people called these places home, as can be seen from the numerous "Montes Alentejanos", hamlets built of lath and plaster and adobe, that dot the Serra de Grândola.

The Serra de Grândola Tour is the oldest marked short route (PR) footpath in Portugal, the markers having been placed on it in 1997. The route takes you through a large part of the territory, giving you the chance to explore the vast cork oak forests. It is quite challenging physically, in light of the many uphill and downhill stretches that you will encounter all along the way. Start in the centre of Grândola, in the garden next to the Paços do Concelho (Town Hall) to get to the fifteenth-century Igreja Matriz (Main Church), go past the market and the museum in the old Church of São Pedro (St. Peter). Cross safely over the national road using the footbridge, bringing you to a rural area marked by splendid old-growth olive tree. After a short distance, cross the Melides road and make your way into the oak forest, where you will always be following rural dirt tracks. The slopes are not steep but are sometimes long and you will begin to see old hamlets, some now abandoned and others still inhabited. Near Corte do Freire de Cima, you will come across an almost-secret water fountain, with

crystal-clear water running down from the schist slopes. The track winds its way up and down through the hills, climbing almost to its highest point, Outeiro dos Píncaros, from where practically everything is visible. As you follow this undulating terrain, you will come to another peak that affords an expansive view, before heading back downhill to the Grândola Stream, after crossing the road. Cross over the dry streambed or use the footbridge if there is water in the stream. From here you start the last uphill section until you see the Chapel of Senhora da Penha, the region's sacred hill. You will now be able to see the city of Grândola getting ever closer and, as you descend, the forest begins giving way to olive orchards and farmland, where you will see flocks of sheep and goats, as well as a few Alentejo pigs in their natural environment. You now need to take the footbridge back over the national road and make your way towards the centre of Grândola after enjoying this splendid walk through the uplands and the countryside.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
GDL

**Route:** Grândola Hills Route

**Location:** Grândola

**Distance:** 24Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 729m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 82m Max 306m

**Approximate duration:** 6h to 7h

**Level of difficulty:** High

**Type of surface:** Country and forest paths

**Start and finish:**

Jardim Dr. José Jacinto Nunes, Grândola.

**Geographical coordinates:**

N38°10'35" W08°34'07"

**Where to park:**

Public car park at the site

**Useful Contacts:** Grândola Tourist Board

Tel.: 269 750 429; E-mail: turismo@cm-grandola.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### HISTORICAL CENTRE OF GRÂNDOLA

By the late fourteenth century the village of Grândola had become firmly established and from then on the settlement continued to grow both in size and in importance, especially when the Order of Saint James of the Sword settled there. One of southern Portugal's important agricultural centres in the twentieth century, it was immortalised in the song that signalled the start of the Carnation Revolution on 25 April 1974.



### MAIN CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

This early Christian temple dates back at least as far as the fifteenth century, and probably earlier. It is dedicated to Santa Maria a Bem Dada. A plain building with few exterior windows and designed in Baroque and Neoclassical style, it has undergone renovation over the years. The inner sections of the altars and the Baroque-style chapels are more intricate in design.





## GRÂNDOLA HILLS ROUTE NOT TO BE MISSED

### TRADITIONAL OLIVE GROVE

A traditional olive orchard is an extensive plantation of olive trees; in many cases, these will have been farmed for hundreds of years using age-old practices to grow the trees and harvest the olives. These olives are always of superior quality; after they are crushed in the press, the resulting olive oil is always high in quality, often with quite distinct characteristics in terms of aroma and flavour.



### CORK OAK GROVE

Oak groves, a man-made ecosystem, are characteristic of this territory. They are forests of cork and holm oak with a very delicate balance and which only exist in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Cork oaks are robust trees whose bark is hugely important from a commercial point of view. The bark is actually the cork and it is removed with great care from the tree trunks every nine years.



### LATH AND PLASTER CONSTRUCTION

Ruined hamlets provide us with a clear view of how the lath-and-plaster construction system worked. Mud mixed with small stones and sometimes straw would be mixed together and firmly beaten down inside wooden boxes that served as moulds to build walls. After drying in the sun, the walls were waterproofed with several layers of whitewash, applied regularly.



# SANTIAGO BETWEEN FARMS AND OAK GROVES

## SANTIAGO DO CACÉM

These are the famous lands settled in mediaeval times by the Order of Saint James of the Sword, vital in the conquest and Christianisation of the territory that would later become the Kingdom of Portugal. It is from this memory that the name Santiago derives, and associated with this name is Kassém, from the Arabic, the civilisation that inherited the important Roman metropole of Miróbriga and various Celtic and prehistoric vestiges. Over time, the rural space was divided up and an attractive mosaic of working farms gave way to estates and oak groves that define a landscape of greenery and life.

This trail reveals two different but complementary aspects of the rural world. In the area closest to the urban centre we have small farms with orchards laid out on flat ground and served by good access routes. Gradually, these give way to hillier ground, with areas of pine and oak forests. The landscapes reveal how harmoniously people here live with their surroundings, sometimes creating scenery of outstanding beauty, marked by the distant view of the urban landscape of Santiago de Cacém. The garden at Quinta do Chafariz is a refreshing leisure area reminiscent of the romantic public spaces of the late nineteenth century. This is the setting-off point from which you leave Santiago do Cacém and head towards the farms in the Escatelares area, a name which harks back to the times when the territory was defended by artillery. An urban section of the route is immediately followed by dirt tracks in a countryside setting. This is an area with many farms and small-scale agricultural production pursued by inhabitants as a leisure activity. Gradually, the scenario changes into humanised oak forests and there is a

sense that nature is more intense and replete with charms in terms of the flora and birdlife that grow or live in this habitat. Complementing the oak forest is an orderly plantation of stone pine, an important resource for the production of pine nuts, and areas of grazing land occupied by huge flocks of sheep and goats. When you reach the hamlet of Santa Cruz, you will see the fifteenth-century parish church on the hilltop. This is a good place to stop for a rest, as there are public toilets and a restaurant with coffee shop. Nicely refreshed, continue following the trail along secondary roads and country paths, passing the fountain and the public washhouse, both very important in bygone days. Once more, farms are a scenic feature on the route, with orchards, small vegetable gardens and a population that is determined not to give up on this rural world almost lost in the mists of time. After seeing Santiago do Cacém on the horizon throughout your walk, you now cross over the railway line and enter the town. It's time to visit the historic centre replete with bourgeois architecture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
STC

**Route:** Santiago between Farms and Oak Groves

**Location:** Santiago do Cacém

**Distance:** 14Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 323m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 56m Max 232m

**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Type of surface:** Country and forest paths

**Start and finish:**

The garden at Quinta do Chafariz

**Geographical coordinates:**

N38°01'04" W08°41'51"

**Where to park:** Public car park near the market

**Useful Contacts:** Santiago do Cacém Tourist Board  
Tel.: 269 826 696;

E-mail: turismo@cm-santiagocacem.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### THE GARDEN AT QUINTA DO CHAFARIZ

This public leisure space was created in 2006 and boasts a prime location at the entrance to Santiago do Cacém and in close proximity to the Fountain of Nossa Senhora do Monte. The space offers a café and tourist information and people can spend their leisure time watching open-air shows and enjoying green spaces and shade.



### FARM AND LEISURE ESTATES

The Portuguese word "quinta" comes from the Latin meaning a market in the middle of a Roman camp or a hamlet. It could also refer to a type of tax – a fifth, since the Portuguese word also means this – payable to the owners or lords of the land. Nowadays, quintas are small spaces in the rural world, normally consisting of a house and perhaps small-scale farming or livestock, or simply a place for the owners to enjoy quiet leisure time.



## SANTIAGO BETWEEN FARMS AND OAK GROVES NOT TO BE MISSED

### CORK OAK GROVE

The oak groves are a man-made ecosystem typical of the Alentejo. They are forests of cork and holm oak with a very delicate balance and which only exist in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and in North Africa. Cork oaks are robust trees whose bark is hugely important from a commercial point of view. The bark is actually the cork and it is removed with great care from the tree trunks every nine years.



### CHURCH OF SANTA CRUZ

This small Christian temple built in the fifteenth century stands on a hilltop and is surrounded by a few houses, giving rise to the hamlet of Santa Cruz. The church's exterior is very simple in design and its interior is also modestly decorated. The name of Santa Cruz, which means Holy Cross, at this site, on the way into Santiago do Cacém was extremely important in the past as it was a clear indication to travellers that they were arriving into a Christian territory.



### HISTORICAL CENTRE OF SANTIAGO DO CACÉM

Influenced by thousands of years of history of the civilisations that inhabited it, the city of Santiago do Cacém now offers us some of the most striking vestiges of the last centuries. Highlights include the medieval castle, the sixteenth-century churches and the civil heritage built from the late eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, where the investments of the noble and bourgeois families of well-off farmers and businessmen prosper.



# THE SINES COAST

## SINES

Jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean, the Sines Peninsula is the westernmost point on the entire Alentejo coast. As a result of its connection to the sea, Sines is a port city, traditionally a base for fishing and, in the last few decades, an important deep-water port where there is a major maritime port. However, the good organisation of the territory in Sines means that magnificent scenery can be enjoyed along the coast, practically on the doorstep of the traditional and historical urban centre.

Start your walk right in the middle of the Vasco da Gama beach and go into Sines through the front door. The vast fishing and leisure bay boasts an extremely popular beach that is packed with people on summer days. Head north along the pretty pedestrianised avenue and admire Sines Castle on the clifftop, as well as the little houses clinging to the side of the cliff. Go past the fishing port where you will see the typical equipment and the artisanal fishermen going about their business, and keep going along the seafront until you go around the bulk liquids terminal, an important structure for Sines' economy. Leave the cycle route and turn left towards the cliff on the north coast, along the sandy clifftop trails. From here you can enjoy a fabulous view of the Atlantic coast. When you get to the Estrela do Norte Restaurant, go down the stairs or the ramp on to the north beach and keep going next to the cliff and then along the sands until you reach the O Guia Restaurant. Go back on to the

sands and head northwards until you come to a line of roundish bushes. Veer right here to a parking area. Leave the beach and take the dirt track through the pine groves and farmland until you reach the paved municipal road; turn right here. Use the overpass to cross the oil pipelines and when you reach the roundabout at the shopping area turn left on to the other roundabout. Take a little dirt track that runs alongside the road until you reach Baixa de São Pedro. From here, take country paths towards the urban centre. Turn right on the road, go past the Lidl supermarket and turn right on Rua Dr. José Miguel da Costa. From here, keep going straight on, first through a built-up area and then through farmland until you reach the cliff and can go down on to the footpath. When you get to the bottom, follow the wall of the Vasco da Gama beach which will bring you back to the starting point.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR1  
SNS

**Route:** The Sines Coast

**Location:** Sines

**Distance:** 11,2Km

**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 166m

**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 5m Max 58m

**Approximate duration:** 3h

**Level of difficulty:** Medium

**Type of surface:** Urban paths, clifftop trails, beach trails, country paths

**Start and finish:**

The Seafront Avenue at Vasco da Gama Beach

**Geographical coordinates:**

37°57'15"N 8°52'01"W

**Where to park:** Car park at the site

**Useful Contacts:** Sines Tourist Office;

Tel.: 269 860 095; E-mail: turismo@mun-sines.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### CITY OF SINES

Located on the far western edge of the Alentejo, on a peninsula that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean, the city of Sines is today one of Portugal's foremost ports, with terminals for cargo containers and fuels that supply the nearby refinery. Alongside its modernity, it retains a tradition of artisanal fishing and a diverse cultural and tourist offering, with many splendid beaches and events staged throughout the year.



### SINES CASTLE

A clifftop mediaeval fortress that has been in use since the Palaeolithic to the present day. It has always been a very useful defensive structure due to its prime location overlooking the Bay of Sines. The present castle was built in the first half of the fifteenth century. It is believed that the great Portuguese seafarer Vasco da Gama may have been born here, since his father was governor of the castle and lived here. Currently, the castle is (or should be) on every tourist's must-see list and is the venue for the famous Músicas do Mundo Festival.



## THE SINES COAST NOT TO BE MISSED

### VASCO DA GAMA BEACH

Located in the natural bay at the southern end of Sines Peninsula, this has always been an excellent berthing port. Successive protective structures with man-made pontoons have provided ever-increasing protection from the fierce Atlantic waters and, thanks to well-implemented work to recuperate and embellish it, the beach is now one of the main resort attractions in Sines. An extremely attractive pedestrian walkway stretches the full length of the beach, providing residents and visitors with a marvellous leisure space.



### NORTH COAST

Aqui situa-se o extremo sul do extenso areal de areias finas e brancas da costa atlântica do Alentejo. São mais de 60Km de praia que se estende desde este local até à Ponta do Adoxe na Península de Tróia. Esta é uma das maiores praias de toda a Europa e local privilegiado para o usufruto balnear, desportos de mar e prática de pesca desportiva de praia.



## FROM SANTA CLARA TO THE DAM

### SANTA CLARA A VELHA, ODEMIRA

In Santa Clara a Velha, history shows the importance of a controlled crossing point, such as the one implemented by the Order of Saint James of the Sword when they built the Chapel of Santa Clara de Assis (Saint Clare of Assisi). Here, we have the River Mira playing an important role, as the reservoir created by damming its waters supplies the entire region through a complex and well laid-out network of channels and distributors. Although man-made, the scenic setting for the lake is stunningly beautiful and anyone walking along its banks is sure to feel privileged.

This is a marvellously scenic route thanks to the mirror-like waters of the Santa Clara Reservoir. Before you get to the dam, the setting is the bottom of a valley alongside the green banks of a stream and farmland. The way back takes you over the hilltops, through thick woods of eucalyptus trees, affording splendid views. Leave Santa Clara a Velha from the garden next to the petrol station, cutting through the village towards the football pitch next to the stream. Then keep following the country path alongside the stream, passing crop fields, olive orchards and copses. When you get to

the large wall of the dam, take the road leading to the picnic park and then the footpath beside a discharge facility, until you reach the top of the dam. Cross over the dam to the other side and take the forest trail next to the eucalyptus grove on the bank of the reservoir. When you reach a small bay, head uphill through the eucalyptus trees and follow the forest trail until you reach the village of Santa Clara a Velha on its right-hand side. Go around the residential neighbourhood and this will bring you back to the starting point.



## FACTSHEET OF THE ROUTE



PR4  
ODM

**Route:** From Santa Clara to the Dam  
**Location:** Santa Clara a Velha, Odemira  
**Distance:** 10Km  
**Accumulated gaps in meters:** 340m  
**Minimum and maximum altitude in meters:** Min 45m Max 210m  
**Approximate duration:** 3h to 4h  
**Level of difficulty:** Low  
**Type of surface:** Country paths, walking trails  
**Start and finish:**  
 The garden at the entrance to Santa Clara a Velha  
**Geographical coordinates:**  
 N37°30'48" W08°28'36"  
**Where to park:**  
 Public car park at the site  
**Useful Contacts:** Santa Clara a Velha Tourist Office;  
 Tel.: +351 283 881 358;  
 E-mail: turismo.santaclaravelha@cm-odemira.pt

## NOT TO BE MISSED

### CHURCH OF SANTA CLARA A VELHA

The church is dedicated to Santa Clara de Assis (Saint Clare of Assisi) and its construction dates from the first half of the sixteenth century, with carved gilt and multicoloured altars dating from the eighteenth century. It is a building of Manueline, Baroque, vernacular religious architecture, whose typology is in line with that used by the Order of Saint James of the Sword, to which this building belonged.



### BRIDGE DONA MARIA DE SANTA CLARA A VELHA

Built in the eighteenth century, the bridge came into service at the beginning of the nineteenth century, serving the old Roman road that connected Faro (Ossónoba) to Beja (Pax Júlia). Because of this Roman road and perhaps also because it replaced an earlier bridge from the same period, this bridge was erroneously referred to as a Roman bridge for quite some time. This was the route taken in 1833 by one of the expeditionary divisions led by the Duke of Terceira, hero of Portuguese Liberalism. The bridge fell into ruin over time, partly due to use and partly due to stones being stolen from it; it was restored in 2005 and is today of considerable cultural interest.



## FROM SANTA CLARA TO THE DAM

### NOT TO BE MISSED

#### SANTA CLARA A VELHA DAM

Built on the River Mira in 1969, the dam begins some three kilometres upstream of the village of Santa Clara a Velha. Its primary purpose is to supply water for irrigation across the entire Mira Valley, as part of the national hydrological plan created by the Estado Novo (New State) in the 1950s. The drainage basin covers an area of approximately 520 km<sup>2</sup>, serving a reservoir with a total capacity of 485 million cubic metres. This is an earthen dam, with a zoned profile, a clayey nucleus and side support structures in schist. The area flooded by the reservoir is 1,986 hectares, with a perimeter of 242 kilometres.



#### ROCK-ROSE (CISTUS LADANIFER)

*Cistus ladanifer* is a flowering plant in the Cistaceae family. The name of the rock-rose genus - *Cistus* - comes from the fact that its fruits are globe-shaped capsules containing between seven and ten compartments. The leaves excrete an aromatic resin, called ladanum, which is used in perfumes, especially as a fixative. In the past, it was used as an analgesic and sedative, mixed with other ingredients. A very curious method is used to collect ladanum, which involves allowing flocks of goats to graze in areas of abundant rock-rose. The animals' coats and beards are then combed to collect the resin.



#### AZINHAL FOUNTAIN

Situated on the estate of the same name, this is an outstanding space for leisure and relaxation. The fountain was built in the late nineteenth century to supply many of the local residents with water, as well as the farmworkers in the fields. It underwent major restoration work in the late twentieth century, involving cleaning it up and installing a typical picnic park with tables crafted from piled-up stones, little houses, stairways and a niche housing a pretty red clay figurine of Saint Clare.



## WELCOME TO THE ALENTEJO

However long a walk is likely to be, it always begins with one small step. The Alentejo Tourism Board took “that step” when it began restructuring the entire region with a sustained and harmonised offering of Walking Routes in the TransAlentejo Network, in which each of the 47 municipal council participated by contributing the route that best dignifies their respective territories. The work of a vast team that gathered contributions, studied trails, compiled content and created the

final product perfectly deployed in the terrain and supported by the promotional and support documentation for the walkers. And this project, which is a work in progress, still has considerable room for growth in each of the municipalities. The Municipal Walking Route Network will form the basis of the Alentejo Walking Tourism Destination regional offering. All of this because we want your experience in the Alentejo to be as fulfilling as possible, so here is our challenge to you: Come and walk in the Alentejo!

“Whoever walks alone will get there faster, but whoever walks with others will go much farther.”

*Clarice Lispector*

## SUPPORT



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ISBN 978-989-98070-8-2



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