

ALTO ALENTEJO



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Carpets, marble, tiles, horses, coffee and wines

One of the sub-regions of the Portuguese mainland. With about 12 420 km², it comprises the districts of Portalegre and Évora the capital and the most important city, today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inserted in the great Alentejo, the biggest region of Portugal, it presents in its main typical dishes, the bread, "migas", "açorda", black pork and gazpacho, among others. With the exception of the São Mamede and Marvão mountain ranges, the rest of the territory is composed of plains.



ARRAIOLOS | ESTREMOZ | ALTER DO CHÃO

Departure for Arraiolos, an Alentejo town whose calling card is the quality of its carpets as well as its peculiar round-shaped castle, built in the Romanesque-Gothic style from the early 14th century. The town's heritage is the famous Arraiolos carpets, hand-embroidered by generations of embroiderers. Pay a visit to a carpet factory. Proceed to Estremoz, the "white city" of Alentejo, which takes its epithet from the deposits of white marble - the famous "Marble of Estremoz" - that made the city known all over the world. The extraction of this kind of marble makes Portugal the second largest exporter in the world. It is the city of many kings and queens of Portugal, with particular emphasis on King D. Dinis and Queen Santa Isabel, who is perpetuated in a white marble statue. The entrance to the old town is made through the historic castle wall, which is a must-see. Free time for lunch. We suggest Mercearia Gadanha or Adega dos Potes, which is a 10-minute drive from the town and is better known as Tasca do Ti Gato. This restaurant is renowned for the quality of their wine, fermented in huge clay pots which can be admired in the cellar. After the meal, pay a visit to the Berardo Museum in Estremoz, located in the Tocha (or Henriques) Palace. This museum is a joint initiative of the Berardo Collection and the Town Hall of Estremoz, and it depicts what is considered the largest and most important private collection of tiles in Portugal. In it you will find 800 years of tile history in Portugal! The journey continues to Alter do Chão. Overnight stay at the Hotel Vila Galé, a boutique hotel dedicated to the theme of equestrian art and part of the Royal Stud Farm. Overnight stay.

ALTER DO CHÃO | CASTELO DE VIDE | PORTAGEM | MARVÃO | BEIRÃ

The Alter Royal Stud Farm, the birthplace of the Lusitano horse, was created in 1748 by King João V, and is considered to be the oldest in the world. Apart from seeing the horses, make sure not to miss a visit to the falconry. Watch the flight of the falcons and be amazed by the magnificence of these animals. Proceed the journey to Castelo de Vide, and you will be surprised by the castle surrounded by white houses which stands out in the landscape making it a dream-like medieval scenario. But the biggest surprise is in the village, where you will find one of the best preserved Jewish quarters in Portugal. Pay a visit to the old synagogue, which is now a museum. Take a walk through the labyrinth of streets and witness the Jewish presence and the signs of many Hebrew generations' worship on the doors of the houses. Visit the Parish Church of Santa Maria, where the two faiths, Christian and Jewish, celebrate Easter side by side. Continue the tour to the village of Portagem. Park in the square and walk across the old Roman bridge. Visit Terrius a shop at a water mill by the river Sever, which is a true ambassador for the good products of the region. Proceed to Marvão and go across the Portas de Rodão and enter this Alentejo village, standing at a height of 840 meters, in the heart of the Natural Park of Serra de São Mamede. Make sure to take in the 360 degree views that reach Spain, Serra da Estrela and the city of Castelo Branco. Marvão, a medieval town protected by walls, is one of Portugal's treasures. Take a look at its picturesque corners, Manueline pillory, gothic windows and wrought iron balconies. Time to see one of the most popular terrace cafés in Portugal: Castelo Café Lounge, which is like a balcony with a view to Alentejo. See for yourself. Then, take a trip back in time in the middle of the Alentejo. Winding along the National Road 359, just a few kilometres from Marvão, you reach the old and historical railway station of Marvão/Beirã, created in the 19th century and classified as Architectural Heritage. Trains no longer run in this station, but you will live the experience of sleeping and waking up in it: the "Train Spot Guesthouse" ! Overnight stay.



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BEIRÃ

Although there are no trains, it is a must to take a ride on the rails, on quadricycles adapted for the effect and called "Rail Bike Marvão". In this kind of bicycle or "contraption" as it known, you pedal without any mechanical aid. All you need is the strength of your legs to ride through nature and see the wildlife in the Serra de São Mamede Natural Park, keeping Marvão Castle always in sight. It is unforgettable two-hour ride. Take the rest of the day to relax. Overnight stay.

BEIRÃ | CENTRO DA CIÊNCIA DO CAFÉ | ADEGA MAYOR | HERDADE DE ADAENS

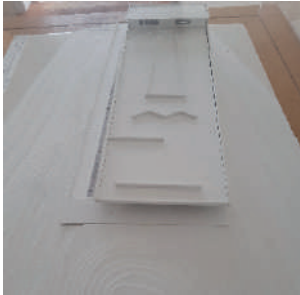
Departure (via Portalegre and Arronches) towards Campo Maior. It is a serene and quiet town in the South of Portugal, very close to the Spanish border and it is considered the capital of coffee! Just 5 Kms before arriving to the town, enter the property of the Nabeiro Group (Herdade das Argamassas) and visit the CCC- Coffee Science Centre - an interactive and technological exhibition area, where you can taste some of the best espresso coffee. Then it is time for a wine and charcuterie tasting at Adega Mayor. Time for lunch. Short trip to Campo Maior. We suggest the restaurant O Azeitona. Then you go back to the Nabeiro Group property because it is time to check-in at Herdade de Adaens Novos, a paradisiacal and calm place full of tranquillity, which is the experience of a lifetime. It is almost like an amusement park for grown-ups, where you can sleep in old railway carriages, which are set on rails erected just for this purpose, with the old "Stop, Listen and Look" signs. Overnight stay.

HERDADE DE ADAENS | ELVAS | VILA VIÇOSA | REDONDO

Departure to Elvas, also known as "Queen of the Border", one of the hidden pearls in Alentejo. Due to its strategic position near the border with Spain, Elvas has been marked by war throughout times. Its military history can be revisited through a tour of the rich military heritage of the city. Its fortifications, together with the Forts of Santa Luzia and Nossa Senhora da Graça, are considered to be among the largest and best preserved fortification bastions in the world. Just like the centre of the town of Elvas, they are very well preserved. However, any description of the city would be incomplete without mentioning Elvas's ex-libris, the Amoreira Aqueduct. This is the most important example of hydraulic architecture in Portugal. The trip continues to Vila Viçosa, known as the "Princess of the Alentejo". Although small, it is one of the Alentejo's most precious and charming jewels, a "museum town". The region's marble, of superior quality and renowned internationally, is abundant in the region and is explored and extracted from about 160 existing quarries. Pay a visit to the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa, the most emblematic monument of the town, making the home of the Dukedom of Bragança. Time for lunch. We suggest the restaurant "Taberna dos Conjurados". Proceede to Redondo, a nice village in Central Alentejo, with affable, humble and hospitable people. At the entrance of the village, you will discover the "Olaria Pirraça", a workshop of traditional Alentejo pottery which is made and painted by hand here. The clay is shaped by hand, an art which requires a minimum experience of 8 years. This is the time it takes to train a potter, a man who gives shape to the pieces by hand. Overnight accommodation will be at the charming Hotel Convento de São Paulo, surrounded by wooded gardens.



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REDONDO | HERDADE DO FREIXO | ÉVORA

Departure from Redondo to Herdade do Freixo, an agricultural company whose main activity is wine production, located in the small village of Freixo and covered by the Municipal Ecological Reserve. It is a landscape Eden which includes the vineyards and the spectacular underground cellar. Take a guided tour of the interior of the winery, which was awarded "Building of the year 2018" by the renowned architecture website Archdaily in New York. After the visit to this emblematic building, you will enjoy a commented tasting of the Premium Wines, which will give you the chance to appreciate the character and elegance of the Herdade do Freixo wines, the red Freixo Reserva and the white Freixo Reserva. The journey continues to Évora, the Capital of the Alentejo. Take a walking tour of the historic centre, which includes the Roman Temple (also known as Temple of Diana), the Cathedral (a huge gothic structure begun in the 12th century), St Francis Church (gothic and baroque architecture) and the Chapel of Bones. Free time for lunch. We recommend a restaurant which best represents the flavours and traditional cooking of Alentejo: the "Fialho". Take a short drive to the Ecorkhotel, a property with a great focus on sustainability and energy efficiency, making it the 1st certified ecological hotel in Portugal. Afternoon and night to rest. Overnight stay.

ÉVORA/...

After breakfast, return where you started...



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#WETRAVELTOGETHER




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