

OUTDOOR TRAVEL



THE ACTIVE HOLIDAY COMPANY

EUROPEAN WALKING HOLIDAYS

2024-2025

PORTUGAL – EASTERN ALGARVE

8-day / 7-night centre-based group guided walking tour in the sunny South of Portugal



Portugal's premier holiday destination is the Algarve, and this walking holiday focusses on the laidback and less touristic Eastern Algarve. Based in the charming, historic town of Tavira, this tour will take you to picturesque fishing villages, through the incredibly beautiful and unspoilt Mata Nacional de Conceição (Tavira National Forest) and along a sunny and spectacular coastline teeming with wildlife.

The Algarve is renowned for the beauty of its glorious coast; however, a deeper exploration of the region reveals a land rich in history, culture and scenic contrasts. Groves of figs, oranges and almonds are found in abundance between the cork-oak clad slopes of the northern mountains and the golden sands and red cliffs of the south.

Our one-hotel walking holidays offer a choice of two guided walks on 5 days – usually an easier walk or a more challenging option – you decide which one best suits your interests and fitness levels.

Cost from: **\$3575** per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$835

Departures: 28 November, 5 December 2024
6, 20 February, 6, 20 March 2025

Includes: 7 nights' comfortable hotel accommodation with ensuite bathroom, 7 breakfasts, 7 evening meals, experienced walks leader, 5 guided walks and local transport to and from the walks, entrance fees, per itinerary.

Not Included: Meals and drinks not mentioned, personal expenses, transport / excursions on your free day. Airport transfers from Faro are not included but these are recommended and can be pre-booked at extra cost - ask for details when you make your reservation.

Accommodation: **Hotel Vila Galé Tavira**, a 4-star hotel situated on the banks of the Ria Formosa, in the centre of the town of Tavira, has 268 ensuite bedrooms, simply decorated in a distinctive Arabian theme reflecting Tavira's rich history. The hotel has an indoor/outdoor pool, a spa pool and Turkish bath. Surrounded by Parque Natural da Ria Formosa, it is still within easy walking distance to the shops and sidewalk cafés of Tavira.



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Trip Grading: Walking easy to moderate distances. Choice of easier walks of 8-11km generally over gently undulating terrain with ascents up to 210m or harder walks of 13-16km with some short but steep ascents up to 360m ascent in a day.

Suggested itinerary (Routes are determined by the walk leaders each day and are subject to change):

Day 1: Arrival day

Plan to arrive at the hotel by mid-afternoon. Your guides will meet with you and your fellow walkers after dinner to discuss the walking routes planned for this week.

Day 2: Ria Formosa Nature Park

Our route explores the salt pans and lagoons of the Ria Formosa, an important wetland area serving as a stopping point for many bird species as they migrate from northern Europe to Africa. We follow the park's network of paths that snake between salt marshes, lagoons, and tidal flats to the golden sands of Ilha de Tavira, an island known for its beaches and wildlife-watching opportunities. We take the ferry to Quatro Águas then walk the final short distance past snowy white salt pans back to Tavira.

Day 3: Montes Serranos Trail

A popular trail passing through the traditional villages that typify Tavira's countryside and offers far-reaching views over the Serra do Caldeirão – a gently undulating mountain range that forms the border between the Algarve and Alentejo regions. Keep your eyes open for sightings of the impressive Bonelli's Eagle overhead – with a wingspan of up to 180cm, it's one of the largest birds of prey on the Iberian Peninsula. The longer walk continues to Cachopo, a mountain hamlet famous for its handmade cork products, honey, wool and cheese, and its traditional schist houses dating from the 12th and 13th centuries – quaint cottages made from local stone.

Day 4: Palace and Ruins

We start our walks in the small town of Estói in the foothills of the Serra do Caldeirão. The Rococo Palácio of Estói, with its French inspired gardens, was built at the end of the 19th century for a local aristocrat, and is now a Pousada (state owned hotel). At the other end of the historical scale are the Milreu Ruins, amongst the most important remains of the Roman presence in the Algarve, and now classified as a national monument. After visiting the ruins we walk on quiet tracks and roads through sleepy villages in the low hills of the Serra. The longer walk also visits the historic town of São Brás de Alportel, with a Museum of Costume offering a fascinating insight into the traditions and culture of the Algarve, and the café-lined Largo Square in the heart of the old quarter.

Day 5: Free day

No walks are organised. You may like to take an excursion to historic Faro, perhaps enjoy a leisurely day around Tavira, or just relax by the pool at the hotel.

Day 6: Vila Real de Santo António and the Coast

We walk from either the coastal town of Cacela Velha with its impressive fortress, or the seaside resort of Altura. We walk through charming fishing villages and on sandy beaches to the city of Vila Real de Santo António on the Guadiana River, which forms the border with Spain. Built in 1773 by the Marquês de Pombal on the site of a small fishing village, we may see remnants of the sardine and tuna fishing industry, which was once its economic mainstay. The town has an impressive lighthouse, an upmarket marina area and many fine restaurants for lunch.

Day 7: The Guadiana River

Both walks focus on the Guadiana River. The easier walk follows the course of the river from the charming waterfront resort of Laranjeiras to Guerreiros do Rio before circling back via the scenic hilltop town of Corte das Donas. Along the way, we visit the Roman ruins at Montinho das Laranjeiras and learn about life in the borderlands between Portugal and Spain at the River Museum. The longer walk hikes up Miradouro do Pontal to gaze out across the Guadiana River into southern Spain, explores the ruins of a once mighty Moorish castle, and follows sections of an old smuggling route once used to transport illicit goods into Spain.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast.

Outdoor Travel offers similar centre-based guided walking holidays in the **Western Algarve** in Portugal, and in areas of France, Italy and Spain including **Provence**, the beautiful **Cinque Terre**, or **Catalonia and the Costa Brava**. Other European destinations include **Croatia, Turkey, Slovenia, Norway** and **Ireland**.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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