

PORTUGAL – SOUTHWEST ATLANTIC COAST & ALENTEJO WINES

8-days / 7-nights GUIDED & **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn easy to moderate cycling holidays



Discover the Southwest Atlantic coast and the pristine natural parks of Estuário do Sado, Lagoas de Santo André, Sancha, and Sudoeste Alentejano, finishing in the Costa Vicentina National Park. Learn about olive oil, cork extraction and its many uses, rice fields, pine forests, windmills, Moorish heritage, historic architecture, Portuguese politics, the dictatorship and many other intriguing facts.

A week exploring wild, most beautiful Portuguese landscapes, cycling on quiet roads and the occasional dirt track, these are generally flat, safe cycling routes with the odd challenging undulation. Cycle along the coast of the oldest and sunniest country in Europe and take the opportunity to cool off each day with a refreshing swim in the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean. See quaint fishing villages, resort towns and local restaurants serving fresh seafood with award winning Alentejo wines. The local food and wines are best showcased on the guided tour, as are our famous picnics which can be enjoyed while reclining in the white sands of secluded beaches.

SELF GUIDED cost from: **\$2175** per person twin share
Season supplements \$220 per person on selected departure dates
Single supplements \$595 - \$1010 per person (limited availability)

Departs: Daily from 1st April to 31st October 2020 (subject to a minimum of 2 people)

GUIDED cost from: **\$4510** per person twin share
Season supplements \$220 per person on selected departure dates
Single supplements \$595 - \$1010 per person (limited availability)

Departs: 25th April, 22nd May, 13th June, 4th July, 1st August, 19th September, 24th October, 2020
Additional departure dates for private groups, available on request.

Starts: Sesimbra **Ends:** Vila Nova de Milfontes

Grade: Easy to moderate cycling over undulating terrain with flat roads and some rolling hills, combination of secondary roads and unpaved paths. Distances each day 25 - 60km

Includes: 7 nights' comfortable accommodation with ensuite bathroom, daily breakfast, luggage transport between hotels, briefing; hire of multi-geared touring bike with helmet, pannier and basic repair kit, transfer Carvalhal to Santo Andre (optional), route notes and maps, 24-hour emergency telephone support.

Guided tour also includes: Welcome drink, 5 picnic lunches, 1 restaurant lunch, 5 dinners with wine, 1 wine tasting (if available), water and fruit, English-speaking tour guide, airport transfers, ferry crossing, tour information and support vehicle service, cycling jersey.

Not included: Meals not mentioned; personal expenses; gratuities; transfers to/from the starting/end points (except on the guided tour); drinks; entry fees; local city taxes (paid locally); or any extras.

E-bikes: Available on both the guided and self-guided tours for a supplement, please ask when booking. Numbers are limited so these must be booked and paid in advance.

Optional Extras: GPS hire available at extra cost of \$70 + security deposit – please request when booking

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Arrive in Sesimbra

Plan to arrive mid-afternoon at the hotel in Sesimbra, a picturesque fisherman's village in the heart of Arrábida Natural Park, about 40km south of Lisbon. There is an express bus service between Lisbon and Sesimbra that takes about an hour and has frequent daily departures.

Day 2 Sesimbra to Setúbal

cycling @ 40km

Today's ride starts with the visit to Sesimbra fisherman's market followed by a climb to the 12th Century castle for a view over the port. We ride down into the Arrábida Natural Park towards the sea. After a picnic lunch (*picnics and lunches mentioned are only included on the guided tour*) and a swim we cycle to the city of Setúbal.

There is the option of shortening the day's ride by taking a car transfer up to the castle (on the guided tour). For those feeling super fit you can cycle more on a mountain route adding 19km with an extra ascent of 250m.

Day 3 Setúbal to Carvalhal

cycling @ 35km or 61km

After breakfast we ride into the old town of Setubal then take the ferry crossing the Sado River, looking out for its resident pod of dolphins. We ride along the Troia peninsula, surrounded by sand dunes to a place for wine tasting (on the guided tour). We can take a swim at the beach before a picnic lunch. The 50km long white sandy beach is the biggest in Portugal.

After lunch, the wild egrets and storks will keep you company as we pass rice fields and evidence of a prosperous Moorish heritage. We offer a transfer or you can continue on to Santo André and the Sado Estuary Natural Park.

Day 4 Santo André to Santiago do Cacém

cycling @ 35km

After the initial warm up ride we explore the Santo André and Sancha lagoons freshwater lagoons and observe the wildlife especially the birds. We then follow the coast to visit a unique outdoor library made of marble, followed by a picnic in the cork oak forest. We can visit a very nice local family who own a small olive mill that is several generations old.

Our ride ends today in Santiago, an interesting small old town with great aristocratic architecture and a castle.

Day 5 Santiago do Cacém to Porto Covo

cycling @ 35km

Santiago do Cacém is a peaceful town that was freed from the Moors in 1157 by the Knights Templar. We have time to explore Santiago; the view from the castle is well worth the climb. Santiago also has the last operating windmill in the region and we can visit it before cycling towards the coast through green oak forests. We picnic again by the sea with a back-drop of picturesque schist cliffs. We ride the last few kilometres to the hotel in the fisherman's village of Porto Covo. There are impressive beach coves just 5 minutes away from the hotel where you can swim in the afternoon.

Day 6 Porto Covo to Vila Nova de Milfontes

cycling @ 25km

Our journey visits the Natural Park of southwestern Alentejo and Vicentina coast. We visit the fortification built to protect the natural harbor – with its small islands - against pirate attacks. We can watch the fishermen unloading their catch of local caught fish and see lamprey eels drying in the sun.

On the guided tour we take lunch in a restaurant overlooking the beach. In the afternoon go to the beach or to explore the small streets and alleyways and the shops of Vila Nova de Milfontes. We stay at the riverside farm / hotel of Zambujeiro for two nights. You can enjoy sunbathing on the hotel's garden lawn or take a swim the large pool, which has underwater lighting at night

Day 7 Circular Route from/to Vila Nova de Milfontes

cycling @ 60km

On the last bike ride we follow roads only used by locals, mostly easy dirt roads. An alternative sealed road route is possible, but you would miss the amazing and colourful cliffs and pinnacle rocks standing precariously in the ocean. There are stork nests here, hidden coves to explore and small beaches.

Our final picnic is again at the beach, then after a lazy afternoon basking in the sun we return to Vila Nova de Milfontes. On the way, we stop for a last swim and drink on the fantastic beach of Almogrove.

Day 8 Tour ends in Vila Nova de Milfontes

The tour arrangements end after breakfast.

Vila Nova de Milfontes is one of the larger resort towns on the Alentejo coast with a regular bus service to Lisbon which take about 3.5 hours (frequent in summer but less so outside the high season).

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ALENTEJO TRADITIONAL FARMHOUSE STAY & CYCLING TOUR

8-days / 7-nights CENTRED-BASED **SELF-GUIDED** easy to moderate cycling holiday

For those clients who want to only unpack once and immerse themselves in the ebb and flow of life in the Alentejo region, we offer a week stay at a traditional farmhouse in the Portuguese countryside. Set amongst the cork oaks, vineyards and olive groves, the farmhouse offers modern comforts in a genuine, rustic atmosphere. The house maintains the traditional architecture of the Alentejo, with big chimneys, a picturesque painted blue stripe, air-conditioning and thick walls that keep the house warm in the cooler seasons and fresh in the summer. In the comfortable living room there is a huge fire place to sit by in the long winter evenings and a bar from which to buy your drinks, as well as books, music, television, DVD's and games.

Every morning enjoy a delicious breakfast of homemade jams, cottage cheese with olive oil and oregano or with honey and walnuts, homemade bread and cake, while overlooking the orange orchard that supplies your breakfast juice. Discuss the range of possible options with your experienced hosts and then head off on your cycling day. The daily bike rides through the scenic, rolling landscape offer a wide variety of experiences including visits to wineries, artisans and producers of local specialties, Medieval villages and the Évora historical center, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This tour offers the flexibility to do everything, some rides or nothing except meander around the farmhouse and relax. **E-bikes** are available on both the guided and self-guided tours for a supplement, please ask when booking. Numbers are limited so book early.

There is the option of a cooking class on Alentejo cuisine (at extra cost) and always access to very good Alentejo wine to go with the great food. The tour includes some dinners, but you can always arrange extra dinners at the farmhouse or visit one of the really good restaurants in the nearby town. This is a holiday absolutely ideal for families and children can spend hours playing in the orchards and woodlands that surround the farmhouse.

SELF GUIDED cost from: **\$1995** per person twin share

GUIDED cost from: **\$2440** per person twin share

Season supplements \$60 - \$130 per person on selected departure dates
Single supplements \$555 - \$755 per person (limited availability)

Departs: Évora Daily, year round (subject to a minimum of 2 people)

Includes: 7 nights' comfortable accommodation with ensuite, daily breakfast, 3 dinners, Welcome wine, cheese and oil tasting, briefing; hire of multi-geared touring bike with helmet, pannier and basic repair kit, return transfers from Évora bus station, route notes and maps, 24-hour emergency hotline support.

Guided tour includes the above and also: 2 wine tastings and 1 cheese and liqueur tasting, water and fruit, English-speaking tour guide, entry to Bones Chapel, Évora cathedral and Ducal Palace, cycling jersey.

Not included: Meals not mentioned; personal expenses; gratuities; drinks; other entry fees; local city taxes (paid locally); or any extras.



Other cycling holidays – guided in small groups or self-guided inn-to-inn with luggage transfers are available in other parts of Portugal and across Europe including Tuscany, Lake Como, the Alps or Dolomites, Amalfi or Cinque Terre coast in Italy; Provence, Loire Valley or Dordogne in France; along the Danube in Germany and Austria, in Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic or Switzerland. We offer cycling tours in the USA, Canada, Japan, South Africa, China, Vietnam and New Zealand or **Bike & Barge** cycling cruises in most areas of Europe:

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

- Call toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia