

## PORTUGAL – WESTERN ALGARVE

8-day / 7-night centre-based group **GUIDED** National Park & coastal walks in the south of Portugal



Portugal's premier holiday destination is the Algarve and this walking holiday takes you away from the beach crowds to focus on the spectacular National Parks. Explore the wild Atlantic coast with dramatic cliffs, secluded coves and unspoilt beaches, and the most south-westerly point of the European mainland, Cape St Vincent. From the town of Sagres, walk well-made paths through a variety of landscapes; green hills with eucalypts and colourful wild flowers with prolific bird life and the many typical and historical towns. Discover the nearby town of Lagos with its colourful tiled buildings, old town wall and fishing port. Savour the fabulous local food and immerse yourself in Portuguese culture as you meander the cobbled streets of the old towns.

Our one-hotel walking holidays offer a choice of two guided walks each day – usually an easier walk or a more challenging option – you decide which one best suits your interests and fitness levels. There is also a free day midweek for you to explore or relax and an excursion may be arranged to local places of interest.

**Cost from:** \$4220 per person (twin share)

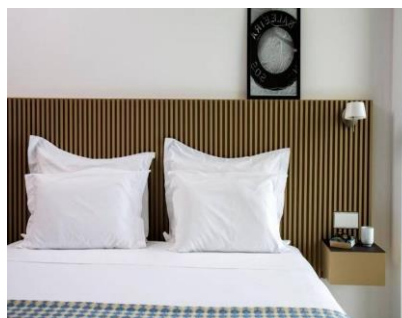
Single room supplement from \$1140

**2024 Departures:** 29 February, 14 March, 7 April

**Includes:** 7 nights in comfortable hotel room with ensuite bathrooms, 7 breakfasts, 7 evening meals, experienced walks leader, 5 guided walks, local transport to and from the walks.

**Not Included:** Meals and drinks not mentioned, personal expenses, transport / excursions on the free day. Airport transfers from Faro can be pre-booked at extra cost and we recommend you take these – ask for details.

**Accommodation:** With an enviable seafront location, the 4-star **Memmo Baleeira Hotel** is just a three-minute walk from the beach and Baleeira harbour. All rooms come with sea views and stylish décor. The elegant restaurant serves Mediterranean classics, many cooked in its traditional wood fired oven. Other facilities include an outdoor pool with comfortable sun loungers, plus a bar and terrace area, perfect for alfresco drinks on warm evenings.



**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**

**Trip Grading:** Walking easy to moderate distances. Some sections of rough or rocky terrain. Choice of easier walks of 7-11km on good paths with some rough sections with ascents up to 210m or harder walks of 10-18km with some rough and rocky paths and ascents up to 390m ascent in a day.

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

#### **Day 1: Arrival Day**

Arrive Sagres by mid-afternoon. Meet with your guides and fellow walkers after dinner to discuss the week's walks.

#### **Day 2: Alvor Estuary**

We explore the estuary of the Alvor river, the centre of life on the western Algarve for centuries. Not only do the village's fishermen net clams and oysters here, but countless species of bird gather to do the same. Evidence of this tidal lagoon's importance throughout the ages can be found at Abicada – the remarkable ruins of a Roman villa that archaeologists believe once belonged to a wealthy seafood merchant. Our walk passes by the salt pans and trickling waters of the Odiáxere stream and marshland – a prime spot for catching sight of Alvor's birds of prey. Or, from Figueira we journey south along the estuary, past the Roman ruins at Abicada, and exploring the coast to discover the unique habitats where the lagoon meets the sea.

#### **Day 3: Around Sagres**

The soaring sea cliffs around Sagres provide views over some of the Algarve's most dramatic scenery. Europe's most south-westerly point is Cape St Vincent, a wild, windswept headland of jagged cliffs rising 70 metres above the crashing waves. Cape St Vincent Lighthouse throws out a beam visible from 60 miles – it's one of Europe's brightest lighthouses. We walk across the beautiful city of Sagres to visit Fort Sagres, perched on a blustery outcrop over the churning waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The 15<sup>th</sup> century fortress was built to protect the town from coastal invasion, and ships often sheltered here while waiting for calmer seas to round Cape St Vincent. We then walk west along the coast, following ancient cliff-top fishermen's paths. After exploring beaches, coves, and small bays, we end our walk at either Beliche Fortress or past Cape St Vincent at Telheiro's Beach.

#### **Day 4: Monchique Mountains**

A panoramic landscape of mountains scattered with small, whitewashed villages, the Serra de Monchique seems made for trekking. This igneous rock massif of low mountains features diverse indigenous wildlife and two of the Algarve's tallest peaks, Foia (997m) and Picota (773m). Our walks provide great views over the Demo Valley and the Monchique range, as well as glimpses of the sea and the distant Odelouca and Arade dams. We visit the archaeological site of Cerro do Castelode Alferce, an Islamic fortification likely erected in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Day 5: Free Day**

No walks are organised. You may like to take an excursion to visit Lagos and walk the town trail or take a boat trip from Luz or Lagos. Perhaps enjoy a leisurely day and just laze by the pool at the hotel.

#### **Day 6: Vicentine Coast**

Wedged between the Atlantic and the Monchique Mountains, the Vicentine Coast has stunning landscapes, lots of flora and fauna but very few people. Vicentina Natural Park is the longest stretch of protected coastline in Portugal and is sprinkled with pristine beaches framed by schist and limestone cliffs. Our walks either follow the Fishermen's Trail, a coastal path used by locals to access the beaches and fishing grounds, and pass the ruins of Arrifana Fortress; or take the Coastal Biodiversity Observation Path to Amoreira Beach then through marshland and the small hills of Mariares, to Aljezur, and onwards past Aljezur's Castle ending at Arrifana beach.

#### **Day 7: Seven Hanging Valleys Trail**

Named for the seven watercourses that have shaped the coastal cliffs into spectacular formations, the Seven Hanging Valleys Trail is one of the Algarve's most magnificent hikes. We begin our walk through these undulating valleys at Centeanes. The path is not technically difficult, but there are a few places where the terrain is slippery. The coastal trail passes the Alfanzina Lighthouse and rises above Carvalho Beach. Along the way, there are many lookout points for striking views of limestone stacks and natural arches.

#### **Day 8: Departure day**

Tour ends after breakfast. Group transfer to Faro airport is available at additional cost.

**Outdoor Travel** offers similar centre-based guided walking holidays in Spain, France or Italy including in **Catalonia, Provence** and the **Cinque Terre**. Other European destinations include **Croatia, Turkey, and Ireland**.

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:**

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