

The Alentejo – the ultimate in beach bliss

Be prepared to do nothing in the Alentejo but soak up the sun on one of its glorious beaches and round off the day with a great bottle of fruity wine (there's a burgeoning wine-making industry here) as the perfect complement to the rich local cuisine. Lamb, pork, olive oil, bread, wild aromatic herbs and, of course, fish are staples here in the area known as the breadbasket of Portugal.

Well, we say "nothing", but for more adventurous types, this is the place to get your adrenalin rush. Learn to surf (Carrapateira beach is surf-central), kite-surf or windsurf. The beaches are picture-perfect swathes of creamy sand backed by dark cliffs. Canoe up one of the many rivers of the region which open out into shallow lagoons on the coast. If the surf is a bit too much for some members of the family, these sheltered lagoons are great for sandcastle building, rock-pooling or just splashing about. Or simply walk or bike through the stunning countryside peppered with cork trees and wild flowers. The Alentejo interior is real cowboy territory and discovering the region on horseback is a delight. Eucalyptus trees and cork plantations stretch as far as the eye can see, whilst buzzards glide on the thermals above.

Odeceixe near the coast, and Odemira further inland, are two of our favourite white-washed towns. Both are snoozy settlements with rickety windmills, windows picked out in the characteristic azure of the region, and gentle rivers leading to the Atlantic. Zambujera do Mar and Vila Nova de Milfontes are a pretty coastal towns, both with obligatory enchanting beaches, colourful houses and good restaurants. The latter is the more fashionable, enjoying a lively but laid-back nightlife, but visit Zambujera in high summer and you'll catch one of Portugal's best international contemporary music festivals, "Festa do Sudoeste".

With warm temperatures from March to November, and cooling nights even in the midst of summer, the Alentejo is truly an all year round destination.

We encourage compassion for animals. If you go for a carriage or horse ride, please opt for services offering healthy animals. We encourage you not to support the "sport" of bullfighting. In Portugal, whilst the bull is not killed during the public fight, he is slaughtered afterwards and is tortured during the display.

Getting There

Fly direct from the UK to Faro with Ryanair, BA, TAP, Easyjet, MBI, Monarch, Jet2 amongst others, or to Lisbon with BA, TAP, Easyjet, Monarch, BMI, Aer Lingus.

Combine With

The more cosmopolitan Algarve to the south for ultimate beach bliss, or head north to Lisbon and the Silver Coast beyond, for a top to toe tour of Portugal.

Golf

The many golf courses of the Algarve are within a few hours' drive.

For more images & hotel details see c-boutiquehotels.com

To book call 08717 500070



Choose the Alentejo for holidays in Portugal and you'll be treated to a beach lover's paradise. This little known region stretches up Portugal's west coast ("Costa Vicentina") from the Algarve in the south to Lisbon in the north. Aching beautiful, deserted golden sands, flower-carpeted countryside, crashing surf and tranquil lagoons await you. Meandering rivers snake through the hills with rickety windmills on their crests and sugarcube towns dotted on their banks. Holidays on the Alentejo in one of our luxury self-catering guest houses are perfect for families, whilst our romantic boutique retreats are favourites for honeymoons in Portugal.

Our Recommended Hotels on the Alentejo

The Alentejo Surf Apartments

The Portugal River Ranch

The Portugal Beach Houses