

The Silver Coast – elegant towns, sparkling beaches and wine-making country

The coastline starts in the south just outside Lisbon with Guincho beach, a wide swathe of sand backed by a wild landscape, close to the swish resort of Cascais. It's a great escape from the heat of Lisbon city, and attracts surfers and fashionable Lisboetas. Moving further north up the coastline you'll find fortified Obidos, built as a wedding present from King Dinis to his Spanish bride, Isobel of Aragon. It's an amazingly preserved medieval town – a living museum with ancient buildings and monuments, narrow streets and whitewashed houses with windows bedecked with flower boxes. Walking the ramparts, visitors can enjoy views of windmills, vineyards and orchards, and the shops are piled high with local handicrafts.

Horse-lovers should head to Golega during the first 2 weeks of November, for the eight-day national horse fair principally devoted to the famous Lusitano breed. The grand parade, which features a wonderful procession of horses and riders, all splendidly attired, is the highlight.

Moving north into the region of Beiras, you'll discover deep forests, high mountains and a temperate coastline with often deserted beaches. Figueira da Foz beach hosts a summer beach football tournament, with many star players joining in the fun. Follow the river inland a little from Figueira, and you'll reach Coimbra, the elegant university town at the heart of the Beiras. Boasting one of the oldest universities in Europe, the rarefied atmosphere of the town has attracted scholars for centuries. It is also the home to the romantic tragedy of Prince Pedro and his forbidden lover, Ines, who was murdered by order of the King, and whose blood is still said to colour the stone in the botanic gardens of the palace (now one of our recommended hotels). The area is full of culinary delights, from the overpowering Serra da Estrela cheese, to "ovos moles" (delicious egg cakes) and Dao, one of Portugal's finest red wines.

Finally, you reach the regions of Duoro and Minho, dominated by the Duoro (the golden river) which winds its way down from the heights into Porto city, home to Portugal's most famous export, Port wine. The city rises spectacularly from the river mouth. On one side lies the world heritage quayside of higgledy-piggledy houses and winding streets; on the other a string of bars and restaurants among the old port warehouses. The wineries of the region, set in lush vegetation, are open for tours and tastings, so don't miss out.

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 Lisbon with BA, TAP, Easyjet, Monarch, BMI, Aer Lingus or to Porto with TAP and Ryanair.

Combine With

Lisbon to incorporate a city break, or for longer holidays continue on south for the beaches of the Alentejo and the Algarve.

Golf

An excellent area for golf, rivalling the Algarve.

For more images & hotel details see c-boutiquehotels.com
To book call **08717 500070**

The Silver Coast, stretching through the Estremadura and Beiras regions north of Lisbon up to Porto, is becoming an increasingly popular alternative to the Algarve for holidays in Portugal. Holidays on the aptly named Silver Coast offer sparkling sandy beaches, enchanting fishing villages, elegant towns and verdant rolling landscapes. The iodine-rich waters in this undiscovered stretch of Portugal make for excellent bathing conditions and its temperate climate (with spring-like temperatures in winter and fresher summers than in the south) is also ideal for golf holidays. The traditional Portuguese way of life is untouched here and the annual festivals and fairs add marvellous colour and flare.



Our Recommended Hotels on the Silver Coast

The Cascais Fort
The Coimbra Palace
The Vine House