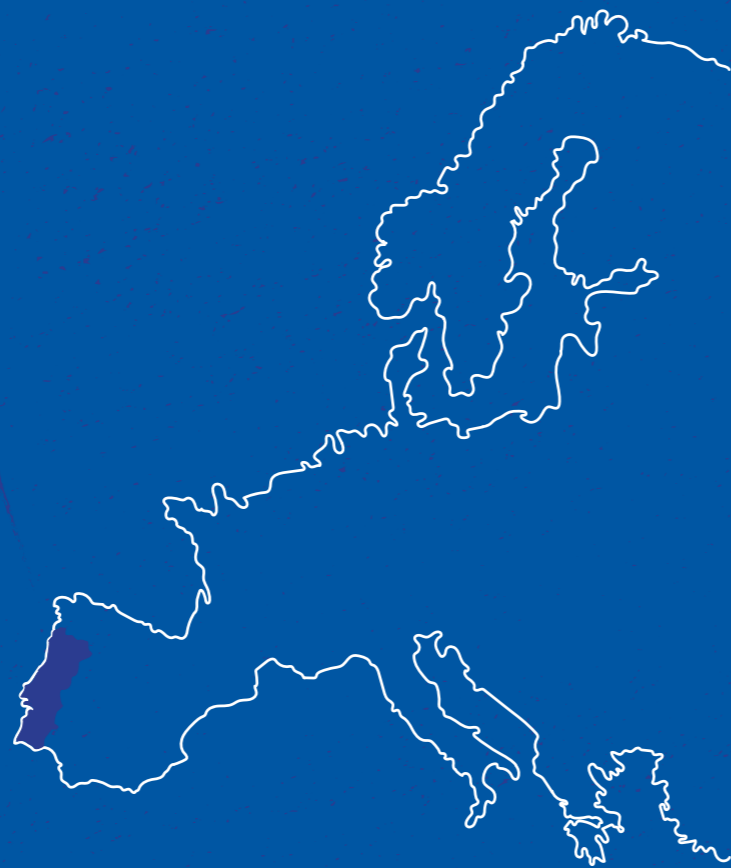


ALENTEJO

COME ALIVE



Alentejo



COME ALIVE

Discover the quiet charm of the Alentejo, the hidden Portugal, where you can escape the everyday routine and break free from the fixed patterns of life at home. Come alive to a different rhythm.

Succumb to the Alentejo's warm embrace. Enjoy the unique nature of one of Europe's least densely populated regions, with its vast landscapes stretching to the horizon. Marvel at the sumptuous unspoilt scenery, its rich history and relaxed way of life.

Explore the white-washed villages, the Renaissance palaces, the wild surf and the peaceful, hidden coves along the endless sandy ribbon of the spectacular coast. Stroll through thousands of years of history, from Neolithic monuments to Roman temples and UNESCO heritage castles.

Get up close and personal to this fascinating region – walking, cycling, riding, take to the water or take to the skies in a hot air balloon. Bask in this unhurried, stress-free region of sunny days and sunny smiles.

Raise a glass to this gastronomic temple of authentic flavour, untouched by flighty fads and fashion. Soak up the colour and passion of a traditional festival and step through the doorway of a heritage-grade hotel of real character to immerse yourself in the warmest of welcomes.

This is where life's simple pleasures become desirable luxuries.

This is a place to come alive.





FASCINATING NATURE



ALENTEJO

ALENTEJO
COME ALIVE TO THE MAGICAL NATURE.

**Surrender to the rhythms
of the natural world.**

This epic, unspoilt landscape, under-populated
and carpeted with multi-coloured wild flowers in spring,
is a haven for wildlife.

Rare and delicate flora and fauna thrive here,
safe from the crowds and industry's pollution.

Enjoy the wild open spaces, the different terrains,
the soothing silence and the colours of nature.





VALE DO GUADIANA

Explore the protected Natural Parks and disconnect from modern life in their remote, wild beauty.

The Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana, in the south, is home to rare plants, and one of Europe's most diverse range of birds and mammals, including the Iberian lynx.



CORK

An iconic feature of the Alentejo plains, cork is the bark of the cork oak and is harvested by hand every nine years.

With myriad uses from the practical to the fashionable, cork is an ancient, natural product with useful properties for the modern world: light, waterproof, compressible, elastic, insulating, biodegradable, renewable and recyclable.



SADO ESTUARY

The Sado estuary near Troia is home to one of Europe's last surviving communities of river dolphins.

Organised dolphin-watching cruises allow you to get up close and see these friendly creatures.

DARK SKY RESERVE

With no light pollution, the Alqueva district around Monsaraz enjoys UNESCO World Heritage status for its Dark Sky Reserve – one of the few in the world.

Many hotels have binoculars and telescopes for you to borrow and marvel at the swathes of infinite stars lighting up the night sky.



BIRD WATCHING

With so many different habitats, often protected at national level, there is a huge variety of birdlife, attracting birdwatchers from across the world.

The Reserva Natural das Lagoas de Santo André e da Sancha and the Paul do Boquilobo Nature Reserve in Golegã are famous for their wetlands, while the rare Bonelli eagle finds its home in the Parque Natural da Serra de São Mamede mountains.





ALENTEJO

ALENTEJO
COME ALIVE TO THE THRILLING ACTIVITIES.

Get out there and get active.

The Alentejo is on the map for those seeking fantastic activities for all levels.

On two wheels or two legs, even on horseback, you can follow trails linking hilltop villages with olive groves, cork forests and nature reserves.

A chance to see the real Alentejo.





WALKING

With well-marked trails of varying length, easy going to moderate terrain and a never-ending supply of spectacular scenery, this is prime walking country.

The Serras de Aire and Candeeiros Natural Park near Santarém, in Ribatejo, offers wonderful craggy walking and gorgeous caves and grottoes.

The Rota Vicentina is a network of 450 km of walking and hiking trails, justifiably recognised as one of Europe's great walking trails by the European Ramblers Association.

CYCLING

Little traffic, good roads and gently undulating terrain ensures the Alentejo is increasingly popular among cyclists of all levels.

Keen cyclists can find rewarding challenges (often in groups), while others prefer to potter along the sleepy lanes and enjoy the passing scenery.





WATER SPORTS

Head to the inland beaches at Mértola, Odemira, Mourão, Reguengos, Amieira, among others, for some of Portugal's best water sports, including canoeing, sailing, rowing, water skiing, windsurfing, jet skiing and swimming.

You can even take a motor boat for a lazy afternoon or a few days exploration on the Alqueva reservoir.



SURF

The Alentejo coast has undeniable appeal and for surfers it is a paradise, regarded as one of Europe's top spots.

Long, empty stretches of fine sand, unpredictable waves and pounding surf make beaches like Zambujeira do Mar and São Torpes, ever popular with surfers and bodyboarders alike.



GOLF

The Atlantic breeze, the lush greens and enticing gastronomy make a tantalising combination for golfers of all levels.

The coastal dunes, the pine woods and majestic surroundings create an unbeatable environment.



BEACH LIFE



ALENTEJO

COME ALIVE WITH THE BEACH LIFE.

Hot spots with hot sand and hot sun.

For some, the lure of the sea and miles of soft sand is the prerequisite for a memorable holiday.

The Alentejo coast offers a range of beaches and sheltered bays, each with its own character, many of which are Blue Flag accredited, pristine and lapped by the Atlantic waves.

ALENTEJO 





HIT THE BEACH

Beach life is irresistible on holiday – maybe as part of a twin-centre stay.

Relax with a good book, take a dip, go fishing or even dolphin-watching.

Alternatively, the inland beaches beside rivers and lakes provide an opportunity to cool off and relax at the water's edge.

The Troia-Melides peninsula with its shimmering sands and turquoise waters offers sophisticated resorts and hotels, with seafront villas, designer boutiques, golf courses and the celebrity hotspots of glamorous Comporta.



SECRET COVES AND HIDDEN BAYS

Away from the sweeping sands of the resorts, explore the glorious, secluded coves along the craggy coast.

Discover Almogrove beach's natural pools, the peaceful waters of Praia do Farol, the protected dunes at Praia da Amoreira and the remains of a Roman port on the island of Pessegueiro.



IDYLLIC RIVER BEACHES

The Alentejo's slow moving rivers are ideal for gentle canoeing, with river beaches ideal for stop-offs and photo opportunities.

On the Alamal river beach, the river reflects the surrounding hills with the castle of Belver rising dramatically in the background.

SHIMMERING LAKES

Large lakes and reservoirs offer beaches and the chance to sail or windsurf.

Lake Alqueva (at 250 sq km, the largest artificial lake in Europe) has its own marina with comfortable live-aboard boats perfect for exploring the vast shoreline and infinite creeks.





COLOURFUL HISTORY



ALENTEJO

ALENTEJO

COME ALIVE TO THE FASCINATING HISTORY.

Discover the unique arc of history.

Discover the antidote to the 21st century where the traditional is celebrated and the modern embraced.

The Alentejo is an idyllic region with thousands of years of history.

Thousands of mysterious standing stones are scattered across the region, along with the iconic hilltop forts and stunning monasteries and convents.



ÉVORA

Just 130 km from Lisbon, Évora is an unmissable highlight with a uniquely rich history during which Neolithic man, Phoenicians, Romans and Moors have all played their part.

Évora is so precious that the entire town has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



CROMELEQUE DOS ALMENDRES

Just outside Évora, the Cromeleque dos Almendres is a formation of 95 standing stones, remote and incredibly atmospheric at sunset.

Pre-dating Stonehenge,
it was only discovered in the 1960s.



ELVAS FORTRESS

Overlooking the ancient hilltop town, the distinctive star-shaped fort at Elvas (UNESCO World Heritage Site) is one of the finest examples of military defence of its kind.

Built as a defence from the Spanish, it remains impressive to this day.



MONSARAZ

One of the jewels of the Alentejo, the fortified hilltop village of Monsaraz has seen an eventful history, courtesy of the Moors and Knights Templar.

Narrow cobble streets and white-washed houses lead to a castle with commanding wraparound views across the Alentejan plains.



HISTORY AT EVERY TURN

There are so many treasures to be seen: beautifully simple white churches, lavishly ornate cathedrals, rich decorative frescoes and ceramic tiles, venerable monasteries, charming convents...

And don't forget the stunning 18th-century Falcoaria Real (Royal Falconry) at Salvaterra de Magos in Ribatejo, where the ancient art has UNESCO recognition.



ALENTEJO

ALENTEJO

COME ALIVE TO THE SUBLIME GASTRONOMY.

Savour the flavours that will linger long.

The Alentejo has a unique heritage of an authentic regional cuisine based on rich and robust flavours and the freshest of ingredients.

Whether *haute-cuisine* or simple fare, everything depends on the staples: the olives, aromatic herbs, tangy cheeses, wonderful breads, creamy Carolino rice from the Ribatejo, smoked meats, Atlantic fish and celebrated hams.





DECISIONS, DECISIONS...

On the menu today? How about Barrancos ham or Portalegre smoked sausages, perhaps accompanied by sheep's milk cheese from Nisa or Serpa. Roasted peppers, sweet and vibrant, may come your way, not to mention octopus salad and *caldeiradas* fish stew from Odemira, on the coast.

Finally some *queijadas* cheesecake tarts from Serpa, or a slice of irresistible *sericaia* with Elvas plums.



FOOD FESTIVALS

The Alentejans like to party and celebrate, and gastronomy festivals are common, usually involving traditional music and dancing too.

The Feira da Doçaria Conventual of Portalegre, the Santarém National Festival of Gastronomy and the Carolino Rice Festival in Benavente are notable.



OLIVE OIL

The Alentejo produces 90% of all Portuguese olives.

Since Roman times, the region has produced some of the finest olive oil. The soil, the climate and ancient traditions all play a part in creating a unique flavour, so try a tasting and see how the oil is extracted, and get to know a variety of types and grades to learn about this bedrock of Alentejan cuisine.



CLASSICS WITH A TWIST

The Alentejo cuisine is rooted in the past, for a good reason.

Traditional restaurants take superb local ingredients and deploy imaginative, often simple cooking techniques – always with a big emphasis on flavour and authenticity.

Modern chefs reinterpret the traditional, giving new twists to the classics.



FROM THE FARM TO THE TABLE

The Alentejo has a vibrant Farm-to-Table movement.

Follow some of the signposted routes: the market in Estremoz, the *toucinho* pastries from Arraiolos, the ubiquitous bread-based *migas gatas* soup, buy saffron in Alter do Chão, sample baked custard *tigeladas* in Ponte de Sor, perhaps fish soup in Mértola, *pinhoadas* from Alcácer do Sal, the special black pig ham and a coffee in Campo Maior, the “coffee capital” of the region.



*WORLD
CLASS WINE*



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COME ALIVE TO THE WORLD CLASS WINE.

A heady fragrance in the swirl of a glass.

Alentejo wines are increasingly highly regarded on the world stage, accounting for nearly 50% of Portuguese wine.

Modern wineries rub shoulders with traditional producers to create truly sensational wines and allow visitors an insight into some of the world's finest wines.





WHERE WINE IS A WAY OF LIFE

Many hotels, particularly smaller boutique hotels and *herdades* or farmsteads, have their own wineries.

It's a real pleasure to drink wine from grapes grown just a few metres from your bedroom window.

Why not plan a visit during the Festival of Vine and Wine in Borba during November – a nine day extravaganza, showcasing local music and plenty of gastronomic treats too, or to Vitifrades, an event dedicated to Vinho de Talha?



CHARACTERFUL WINES

Portugal has one of the largest number of indigenous grape varieties in the world, many cultivated in the Alentejo.

This ensures really characterful wines.

Antão Vaz, Arinto and Roupeiro produce wonderful fresh whites, while Alfrocheiro, Aragonês, Trincadeira, Alicante Bouchet and Castelão yield rich, fruity reds.



WINES TO SAVOUR

Alentejo white wines are generally light, aromatic and dry (the Antão Vaz is worth seeking out) – just what you want on a long, hot day.

Reds can be deep in colour, with intense *bouquet* and firm tannins, or lighter in style, fruitier and more quaffable – perfect for a lazy picnic *al fresco*.

ARCHITECT DESIGNED WINERIES

State of the art architect-designed wineries rise from the vast landscapes like spaceships.

These produce world-class wines and usually offer informative tastings and tours – maybe even treading grapes yourself!

A great experience for wine buffs and enthusiastic amateurs alike.



WINE ROUTES

Several wine routes have been created, running through the main wine producing districts of Portalegre, Borba, Redondo, Terras do Sado, Reguengos de Monsaraz, Vidigueira, Moura, Évora and Granja-Amareleja.

It's an ideal way to bring the Alentejo wines to life, with vineyards, tastings, museums and wonderful scenery along the way.





CHARACTER ACCOMMODATION



ALENTEJO

ALENTEJO

COME ALIVE IN THE CHARACTER ACCOMMODATION.

Relax in your home from home.

There is accommodation for everyone in the Alentejo.

Ancient *pousadas*, relaxed family-run hotels
or modern campsites.

You'll enjoy easy charm and natural hospitality
where you stay, and always a warm welcome,
unique style and great value.





HISTORIC ACCOMMODATION

Heritage-grade hotels set within ancient monasteries and palaces need little introduction.

These stunningly situated, dramatically re-imagined hotels are steeped in Portugal's past. Wherever you stay, you are guaranteed a unique experience and a real sense of history.



HOTELS OF REAL CHARM

Prefer a more personal style? Choose a small, boutique hotel of real charm and character – perhaps an old manor house with individually designed rooms, its own winery, top notch restaurant, swimming pool, stables and spa.



HERDADES

Herdades are the epitome of Alentejan hospitality: relaxed, family-run farmsteads with an emphasis on the personal touch.

Working estates, many have their own boutique winery on site, with vineyards all around.



MODERN CAMPSITES

Throughout the region there are modern, well-equipped campsites with comfortable rental accommodation and spacious pitches for motorhomes, caravans and tents.

In attractive locations and with excellent facilities, these are a perfect solution for many.



BEACH LOVERS

Beach lovers will enjoy the seaside location of resorts along the sandy coast.

Modern, village-style studio apartments with miles of soft sand on the doorstep offer convenience and facilities on hand for all the family.

The holiday lifestyle does not get easier than this!



*CULTURAL
HERITAGE*



ALENTEJO

ALENTEJO

COME ALIVE TO THE VIBRANT CULTURE.

Join the party and get involved.

This is a region of passion, fiercely proud and protective of its own cultural heritage.

Museums and galleries are numerous, eager to impart knowledge to the curious visitor.

Traditions are stoutly upheld here, little excuse is required for exuberant celebration, religious or otherwise, and the creative arts are revered.





MUSIC FESTIVALS

In the Alentejo there is always a festival somewhere, based around religion, food, wine or music – preferably all four!

In July, the World Music Festival is held in the grounds of Sines castle, 160 km from Lisbon, and don't miss the Festival Internacional de Música de Marvão, held amidst stunning surroundings in the ancient walled town. In the Ribatejo, look out for the talismanic Campino herdsmen, the guardians of the rural traditions, leading the music and dancing the fandango.



MARBLE ROUTE

Follow the Marble Route around Estremoz to see stunning church façades, historic buildings and pavements, and get an impression of the wealth that once flowed into the region.

The Fresco Route takes in Portel, Vidigueira, Alvito, Cuba and others, all boasting beautiful ornate artworks from as far back as the 15th century.



CANTE ALENTEJANO

The Cante Alentejano is an ancient form of two-part choral singing, characterised by distinctive melodies, lyrics and vocal styles and performed without instrumentation.

Recognised by UNESCO Intangible World Heritage, it is an extraordinary spectacle.



ANCIENT CRAFTS

Ancient crafts are still practised to this day with intricately designed carpets a speciality. In Arraiolos these are woven by hand using 13th-century traditions dating from Moorish times.

Entire villages specialise in production of different crafts: woven blankets from Mértola and Monsaraz, leatherwork, painted furniture and pottery from São Pedro do Corval and Redondo, and figurines from Estremoz.

For over two thousand years the unique ancestral cow bells, or *chocalhos*, have been part of the way of life. Simple, functional and distinctive. Now protected by UNESCO World Heritage, they make wonderful souvenirs!



SOOTHING WELLNESS



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ALENTEJO
COME ALIVE WITH SOOTHING WELLNESS.

Succumb, relax, unwind.

The Alentejo may be perhaps one of Europe's most tranquil, relaxed regions.

What better way to complement the sublime gastronomy, charming accommodation and serene landscape than with a seriously self-indulgent pampering session?

The thermal baths of Cabeço de Vide, north of Elvas, have their origins in Caesar's time, and are still an oasis of restorative tranquillity.





PAMPERING TREATMENTS

Surrender to another level of relaxation and wellbeing with the fabulous hotel spas of the Alentejo.

Let any aches and stresses melt away and indulge in a range of treatments and therapies that will soothe even the most jaded traveller.

There is a sophisticated range of pampering and healing services on offer.

Therapies for all kinds of conditions and ailments, massages, body and facial treatments, hot stone or marble treatments, body wraps and more.

VINOTHERAPY

Fine wine may be one of the Alentejo's greatest treasures, but it also has other benefits.

Vinotherapy is seeing increased popularity.

Grape seed scrubs, barrel baths of grape marc, merlot wraps, fresh grape massages (aka "Pulp Friction") are all on the menu.



LUXURY SPAS

Many hotels and resorts have their own luxury spas, sometimes themed, with a comprehensive range of treatments and activity programmes.

Whether set in a contemporary or historic environment, you'll find something perfect for your needs.

RELAX AND UNWIND

Whether you plan some serious activities or just a mooch around the city walls, find time to relax.

Treat yourself to some well-deserved pampering – the perfect way to de-stress on a romantic long weekend getaway, or as part of a longer “refresh and renew” stay.





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