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HELPFUL HINTS

**FOR YOUR TRIP
PORTUGAL**

PLANNING AHEAD

Visas and Passports

All U.S. Citizens traveling in Europe must have a valid passport *good for the duration of their visit*. If you do not have a passport, apply for one at your local passport office, clerk of the federal state court, or designated post office. Allow several weeks for the government to process your application. *You do not need a visa for Spain and Portugal.*

Your passport will be inspected in your home city airport and again in Europe upon your arrival.

As a safety measure, we would suggest that you photocopy the front pages of your passport, your traveler's check agreement (with check numbers), airline tickets and everything you will be carrying in your wallet. Leave one copy at home and carry one copy separate from your passport. This will be of immense help to you if your documents are lost or stolen. It is also a good idea to have two extra copies of your passport pictures made for use in case your passport must be replaced because of loss.

GOLF EQUIPMENT

Golf Bag

Take a small Sunday bag in case you have to carry or pull your own bag. We would also recommend you do not leave your golf bag unattended at any time, either at the golf course or in your car, as even in Spain and Portugal things can be stolen.

Caddies

Caddies are a rare commodity in Portugal, therefore it is more likely to have a trolley, if buggies are not available. Where a caddy has been reserved, they are independent from the course and are paid directly. The fee ranges from 30.00€ to 40.00€ euros, the amount of tip is at your discretion. Pull trolleys are approximately 3.00€ euros or 4.00€ euros for an electric one.

Golf Balls

Bring enough for the trip, unless money is no object, as you will pay premium for golf balls in Spain and Portugal.

Pencils & Wooden Tees

Courses overseas do not provide pencils, so bring 3 or 4 of your own. The tees in Europe are much shorter than ours, and sometimes plastic, so bring your own.

Band-Aids & Sun Block

You should also bring Band-Aids for blisters and sun block to prevent an uncomfortable burn.

Towel

Ball washers are very uncommon overseas, so bring a small towel for your clubs and golf balls.

Rain Suit and Umbrella

Although you will be traveling during the dry season, there is always the possibility of rain. The umbrella can also come in handy in case of hot sun.

Golf Shoes

Two pairs should be plenty. Make sure they are well broken in before you travel. New shoes that cause blisters could be a disaster, as you are walking each day. **Soft spikes** are used at all courses.

WHAT TO TAKE

Two words say it best **TRAVEL LIGHT**. You will enjoy your vacation more with a suitcase which isn't too heavy.

Travel Documents

Don't forget to take your **AIRLINE TICKETS AND PASSPORT!!** Always be sure to check your airline tickets as soon as you receive them to be sure that they are accurate and complete. **DO NOT** pack your airline tickets or passport in your suitcase and **DO NOT** carry your airline tickets around with you. It is a good idea to use the hotel safe for valuables, there will be a safe in your room for which some hotels will charge a small fee.

Money

We suggest that you do not take large amounts of cash, but instead take a widely recognized brand of traveler's checks and a well known credit card. Be sure to make a list of your credit card and check numbers and keep it in a place separate from your wallet, purse or passport.

Clothing

Pack lightly, since it will simplify your travel. Laundry and dry cleaning is very expensive, so drip dry clothes might come in handy.

Acceptable attire for golf courses in Europe is equivalent to many places in the US. T-shirts must have collar and sleeves, golf shoes should have **SOFT SPIKES** and Bermuda shorts are allowed. Strictly no denim.

Packing Suggestions

For the men: Sports Coat (Jackets can be required for dinner in some hotels). Two or three pairs of slacks, light weight sports jacket, two sweaters – one for golf and one multipurpose, dark shoes and a pair of walking shoes, eight golf shirts (unless you want to do laundry), dress shirts and ties.

For the ladies: dress code for dinner at hotels can be described as smart. Slacks are acceptable attire. Walking shoes are essential, as is a light weight raincoat or jacket (just in case!).

Appliance Converters

You should ensure that all electrical appliances, such as shavers and hairdryers, can be used on European voltage, which is 220. Some hotels will supply adapters upon request, although we recommend that you carry one.

Hotel Extras

Try to pay your extras (laundry, bar, bill etc) the evening before departure. You will have much more time to check your bill. Some hotels can't accommodate this, but try to do it wherever you can.

GENERAL 'NEED TO KNOW'

Baggage Allowance

Your international baggage allowance is two pieces checked, of which a golf bag counts as one, plus one carry-on. These pieces should not exceed 107 linear inches, ie. length plus height, and should, if possible, be restricted to less than 44 lbs per bag. The airlines require that your full name and address is on the outside of your bag. It is also a good idea to put your name and address somewhere on the inside of your bag.

We suggest you bring a golf bag, one suitcase and one carry-on flight bag. Use your flight bag for toiletries and last minute articles because, when leaving hotels in the morning, the luggage is often called for before toilet articles can be packed. It can be useful to pack an extra shirt and change of underwear in your flight bag in the unexpected event that for some reason your suitcase is misrouted.

A golf bag should be contained in a secured bag rather than a hard carry case (hard carry cases can be a problem in terms of the space in a rental car or mini bus). It is much safer for your golf equipment if you put a belt (canvas, plastic or leather) around the middle of the golf bag to keep the handle in its proper position. Bag covers are easily torn and clubs damaged when the bag handlers can't find the grip and carry (or toss) the bag by the cover. We would recommend that you lock the zipper on the bag cover.

Customs

Check at the airport your duty free allowances for Europe. On your return you can bring up to \$400 worth of duty and tax free purchases. Purchases up to \$1,000 over your exemption will be assessed at a flat rate of 10%. Also unsolicited gifts with a limit of \$50 may be sent, duty free, to the U.S. – no more than one to the same address, and none to your home address.

Travellers entering Portugal may bring in a series of personal items (such as personal jewelry, still and movie cameras, musical instruments, portable video and sound equipment, athletic gear, etc) without having to pay customs charges.

For certain articles, such as cigarettes, cigars, perfume, wines and liquor, maximum limits have been established, with customs duties leviable on amounts exceeding these limits.

Customs (cont...)

There is no limit to the amount of euros tourists may bring into Portugal. Also permitted is the entry of cheques or vouchers issued against foreign accounts in convertible euros, as are traveler's cheques, with no limits. Likewise, there is no limit on the amount of foreign currency which may be brought into Portugal, whether in the form of banknotes or coin, always provided that same is legal tender.

Check In

You should check in for your international flight at least 2 hours before departure.

Departures (Escorted Tours)

We have to depart from hotels, airports, clubs **ON TIME**. For example, if departure is set for 9.00 am, please be on the bus ready to drive out at 9.00 am, and not in your room ready to come down at that time. It is vital we all make sure we get off on time.

Notices (Escorted Tours)

Information that we have to get to you will be written out on a sheet and put in your hotel key box, so make it a rule to check with the concierge for any messages. We will also go over the event of the day, a review of the golf course etc, during our motor coach transfer to the course.

Value Added Tax

VAT is a sales tax which is levied at a uniform rate of 7% on most goods and services a visitor buys. Some larger stores participate in a VAT refund scheme. When buying something, ask if the store operates this scheme. If a participant, you will get a form to fill out listing your goods and costs, you keep a copy of this with the address of the store on the form. After going through customs on your return you will post this back to the store, ie. before leaving Europe.

Please note: you should pack all VAT refund items in one bag in case customs asks to see them. The customs official at the airport will sign your form, then you post it back to the appropriate stores.

Further details can be obtained from leaflet 701/1/85.

Tipping

Tipping is a longstanding tradition in Portugal. While practically all establishments currently include a surcharge for service it is still common to leave something of a tip. This custom, common in bars and restaurants, has extended to hotel porters and taxi drivers, though in none of these cases is it obligatory nor will anyone recriminate a client for not tipping. It is customary to leave a tip in the room for the chambermaid.

INTERNATIONAL ACCESS

Airports

Lisboa, Porto, Faro, Funchal (Island of Madeira); the Islands of São Miguel, Terceira and Faial (The Azores)

Trains

Lisboa/Paris (The Sud Express); Lisboa/Madrid (Lusitânia); Porto/Vigo.

Principal International Roads

From Vigo: E1/A55-A3; From Badajoz: E90/NV-A6; From Huelva: N431-IP1, N125

COUNTRY ACCESS

Principal Road

N-S: A1/IP1, A2/IP1, A3/IP1, IP2, IP3; W-E: A4/IP5, IP6, A6/IP7, IP8

Trains

There are express trains between Lisboa and Porto, with a stop in Coimbra (Alfas) and regional trains (Intercidades and Inter-regional) that connect different parts of the country. There are special tickets available for tourists.

Coaches

A country-wide net, including an express network.

HOW TO GET AROUND

Urban Transport

The principal cities have a complete network of transport systems. In Lisboa you can use buses, the subway, trams or travel on its various lifts. In Lisboa and Porto there are tourist passes available from the information kiosks of Carris (Lisboa) or STCP (Porto), open on working days from 8 am to 8 pm.

Taxis

They are beige, with a luminous identification sign on the roof. If this is on, it means the taxi is occupied. Between 10 pm and 6 am there is an extra tariff of 20%. It is advisable to ask for a receipt. Baggage transported in the boot has a fixed rate. All taxis have a price table in two languages.

Car Rental

With or without a driver, in all principal cities and international airports. Obligatory conditions: show an identity card (E.U. citizens) or a valid passport (other nationalities), green card, aged over 21. Insurance obligatory.

Driving

In Portugal we drive on the right. Seatbelts are obligatory as is a helmet for moped or motorbike riders. The maximum level of alcohol is 0.5g/1. Maximum speeds: cities and built up areas: 50 km/h; main roads: 90 km/h; motorways: 120 km/h. Insurance is obligatory. Most petrol stations are open between 8 am and midnight, and some are open 24 hours a day. Service stations open on working days from 8 am to 7 pm. In the big cities, motorways and dual-carriageways have service stations open 24 hours a day.

REGIONAL ACCESS

Principal Roads

EN125; IP1 (Via do Infante)

Trains

Connection Algarve-Lisboa between Barreiro and Vila Real de Santo António, with a fork in Tunes for Lagos.

ELECTRICITY

The current is 220 volts AC, with a continental round pin plug. It's always recommended to carry a travel adaptor.

CLIMATE

Coast and islands: average winter temperatures, 12°C; in summers, 21°C. Interior and mountains: in winter, 5°C; in summer 25°C.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

1st January, 25th April, Holy Friday, 1st May, Corpus Christi (movable), 10th June, 15th August, 5th October, 1st November, 1st, 8th and 25th December.

LOCAL HOLIDAYS

Albufeira 07/20; Alcoutim – second Friday in November; Aljezur – 08/29; Castro Marim – 06/24; Faro – 09/07; Lagoa – 09/08; Lagos – 10/27; Loulé – Asantion Thursday (Dia da Espiga); Monchique – Asantion Thursday (Dia da Espiga); Olhão – 07/16; Portimão – 12/11; São Brás de Alportel – 06/01; Silves – 09/03; Tavira – 07/24; Vila do Bispo – 01/22; Vila Real de Santo António – 05/13.

LOCAL TIME

On the continent and the island of Madeira, Portugal follows GMT. In the Islands of the Azores an hour earlier.

OPENING HOURS

Banks

From Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 3 pm. Shut on holidays and Sundays.

Shops

Working days: from 9 am to 1 pm and from 3 pm to 7 pm. On Saturdays, most shut at 1 pm. In the shopping malls of the big cities, you will find the shops normally open on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays as well between 10 am and 11 pm.

A new shopping centre opened in 2001 in the centre of Faro, The Algarve Forum, which houses top international designers to local merchandise.

Museums

National: 10 am to 6 pm; Tuesdays until 2 pm, Holy Friday, Easter Sunday, the 1st May and the 25 December. Regional and private museums normally close for lunch and have different closing days. National palaces close on Wednesday.

CREDIT CARDS AND ATM CASHPOINTS

Most establishments accept credit cards: Visa, Amex, Eurocard, Euro-cheque, Diners Club and Mastercard. Cashpoints (ATM) are in great quantity throughout the country and can be identified by an MB sign.

EMERGENCIES

Call 112 at any time and at any place. In case of an accident on a motorway, use the closest SOS phone (orange in colour).

TELEPHONE

All over Portugal, there are crediphones where phone cards can be used. These can be bought in post offices and newsagents. At post offices, calls can be paid for at the end of the conversation, which is a most convenient way to call home. To phone abroad, dial 00 then the country code and city/local code.

Please note that telephone calls from your hotel room are charged at a higher rate than normal and can be expensive. Please check charges before calling especially long distance. Local calls in Europe are NOT free. Most of the US long distance carriers now have 0-800 numbers in Europe that connect directly to a US operator. You can then charge the call to your phone or credit card. *To get the 0-800 number contact your service prior to departure.* This is the most cost effective way to call home.

CHEMISTS

From 9 am to 1 pm, then 3 pm to 7pm from Monday to Friday. Saturdays: from 9 am to 1 pm. There are 24 hour chemists.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency is the Euro. Some banks have automatic exchange machines. Reception in most hotels will change money although charge higher commission rates. Travelers cheques and Eurocheques are accepted by all Portuguese banks and exchange bureaus. Visa, Amex, Eurocard, Diner Club and Master Card are the most useful credit cards.

GUIDES & INTERPRETERS

Contact your SGH Golf representative for assistance.

BEACHES

They are numerous and many in their splendour along the coastline, with changing characteristics depending on whether they are on the Barlavento section of the coast or the Sotevento caves and coves wind changing. Be careful not to swim in areas where there are flags warning not to. Red flags mean total prohibition to swim and yellow flags mean you should be very careful. Green flags mean there is no danger at all.

GOLF

Golf is the most popular participation sport among visitors to the Algarve. The game can be played all-year-round and most of the Algarve's 20 courses, including some of the finest in Europe, are open to any player with a handicap certificate.

RIDING

There are many riding centres with Lusitano horses for adults and ponies for children. Those who have been in a saddle for a while may want to take a few lessons before riding out over sand dunes or on trails through pine forests.

TENNIS

Tennis is another very popular, year-round sport and there are a great many courts which can be hired at hourly rates, some of which offer coaching.

GAME-FISHING

Game-fishing boats are based in Vilamoura and Portimao. Blue sharks are the normal quarry, but record catches of the very much rarer blue and black marlin have been made by boats out of Vilamoura.

SIGHTSEEING BOAT TRIPS

These show the best side of the Algarvian coastline. The town most scenic sections of the south coast are between Armadao de Pera and the mouth of the river Arade at Ferragudo, and from Lagos around the Ponte da Piedade headland. Day and half-day trips depart from Portimao and Lagos. Shorter trips operate from these two harbors and any number of beaches.

RIVER CRUISES

River cruises from Vila Real de St. Antonio penetrate far up the Guadiana that separates the Algarve from Spain. The much shorter river cruises from the quayside at Portimao go up on the high tide as far as Silves.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

| Months | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Max | 60 | 61 | 63 | 67 | 71 | 77 |
| Min | 46 | 47 | 50 | 53 | 54 | 51 |

| Months | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Max | 83 | 83 | 78 | 72 | 66 | 61 |
| Min | 64 | 65 | 63 | 58 | 52 | 47 |

SIGHTSEEING INFORMATION

THE ALGARVE

Stretching along the whole southern coast, from Cabo de São Vicente to Vila Real de Santo António, the Algarve is the most famous of all Portuguese tourist resorts.

Washed in the south and west by the Atlantic, protected from the north by mountain ranges that temper the strong winds, this region of calm, warm water has a mild climate with average temperatures around 24°C/75°F in summer and 15°C/58°F in winter. The sun shines brilliantly almost all year round giving the region its characteristic light. More than 150km of beaches caressed by the warm winds from North Africa have secured the Algarve's role as a year – round holiday destination.

The climate is mild and mellow and so is the character of the land and its people. Spring, with its profusion of wildflowers, comes very early. Summers are long; winters are short. The Atlantic that laps the southern shore of this most southwesterly corner of Europe is nearly always calm. The air is free of pollution and light breezes prevent even the hottest midsummer days from becoming oppressive. The Algarvean lifestyle is easy-going, fatalistic and unfettered by concern for time. The predominant influences in this unique and remarkable beautiful region are as much Mediterranean as Atlantic, and as much North African as Southern European.

The Algarve is a compact, well-defined and historically ancient province, quite distinct from the rest of Portugal. The coastal belt, where most Algarveans live, is fringed with sand-spit islands, lagoons, drifted dunes, spectacular headlands, cozy coves and vast open beaches. From the coast the land slopes gently up through vineyards, orchards of oranges and lemons, almonds and avocados, to ranges of rolling hills which separate it from the wide-open plains of neighboring Portuguese province of Alentejo. The placid Gadiana River forms the border with the Spanish province of Andalusia.

One of the most appealing aspects of life in the Algarve is that it seems to be locked in a paradoxical time warp. As international airlines strain to shuttle visitors in and out of Faro airport according to strict schedules, Algarveans feel no compulsion to be punctual, no reason to rush. Nothing is more important than conversations with friends over small cups of coffee. Some of Europe's most sophisticated residential and holiday developments with their manicured golf courses and first-class restaurants are viewed without envy by ordinary folks who like to sit outside the front doors of their humble town houses grilling sardines on mini makeshift barbecues.

The Algarve's healthy climate is nicely complemented by wholesome, locally caught and homegrown food. In particular, there is a wonderful wide range of seafood, including all sorts of clams, prawns and lobster, and delicious fresh fish such as swordfish, tuna, sea bass and sea beam. Eating out in restaurant is all the more delightful because Portuguese wines are so good and reasonably priced.

THE ALGARVE (cont...)

Clarity of light and brilliance of color are startling features of the Algarve. The coastline is made up of various shades of gold set in a translucent turquoise sea. The vast vault of sky is usually vivid blue. Town and village houses as well as country cottages are dazzlingly whitewashed.

Inhabited since pre-historic times and settled successively by the Phoenicians and Greeks, it was the Romans who have left us with the most enduring signs of an important human presence predating the Arab conquest. It is most clearly in evidence at archeological sites in Cerro da Vila in Vilamoura, Milreu in Estói (on the Faro to São Brás de Alportel road) and Quinta da Abicada in Portimão.

Golf is one of the principal attractions of tourism in the Algarve there are twenty courses and more in the planning, many of them located in excellent hotel complexes, regularly hold national and international level competitions, the most famous being the Algarve Open of Portugal, which is held annually in March. Here you can count on the participation of world famous golfers. Due to the great climate and lack of rainfall, golfers from around the world choose the Algarve's courses throughout the year.

On holiday every moment is to be taken advantage of, and the Algarve does not let you forget it. With the sunset in the streets, which during the day are alive with dynamic business where you can find interesting artisan and souvenir shops, a new ambiance sets in and the magic scene of the Algarvian nights begins. Bars and discos for all tastes emerge at night with their seductive lights and contagious music, because in the Algarve the night lasts until well after sunrise and the fun is unlimited.

Those feeling lucky can take a chance at one of the regions three casinos – the Hotel Algarve casino or the casinos in Vilamoura and Monte Gordo.

For those who prefer something calmer, you can opt for one of the innumerable restaurants, some right next to the beach, and why not round off the evening with a moonlit stroll by the sea.

The Fish and seafood are the height of the region's gastronomy – in particular the famous “caldeirada” (fish stew), “arroz delingueirão” (razor clam rice), “carapaus alimados” (skinless mackerel), “feijoada de buzinas” (whelks with beans), “cataplana” (hearty casserole) is, no doubt, it's biggest symbol, joining in majesty meat and seafood.

CARVOEIRO

The village of Carveiro stands in a steep valley leading down to the sandy cove of Praia de Carveiro. Old houses and narrow streets of Carveiro climb up the valley sides from what has now become a popular resort village. The beach of Praia de Carveiro is a bay of pure golden sand between rocky cliffs. It is unspoilt by high-rise buildings and from the top of the cliff are the remains of the walls of the fort Nossa Senhora de Concicao from where one has a great view.

The coast is high and rocky, with little beaches sheltered between cliffs from Sagres Point to Lagos. **Albufeira** sees a transition to cliffs of golden or rosy sandstone that reach a peak at Falésia Beach.

ALBUFEIRA

The Arabs rightly named Albufeira Castle of the Sea, Al-Bhuera, while centuries before the Romans called it Ballum. When Albufeira was visited in the XVI century by King Sebastian the Desired, it boasted a fort and walls of defence against the English and French corsairs, then the scourge of the Algarve coast. The harbour walls offer a panorama of the white houses tumbling down the cliff to the sea.

Albufeira began as a small fishing village huddled in a narrow valley. To aid access to the sandy beach where fishermen hauled their boats above the waves a passage was cut through the rocks to steps down to the sand. The passage and the village square remain but the village has grown.

The early growth of Albufeira was east along the coast to include the once separate communities of Oura and Olhas de Agua. Today the tourist centre of this most popular of resorts has moved out of the old village to The Strip, an Avenida of bars, restaurants and clubs from the apartment complexes of Montechoro down to the beach.

There are also many places to be explored, such as the caves and tunnels under the cliffs.

From **Vilamoura** onwards appear extensive sandy beaches that stretch to the mouth of the Guadiana, intersected by the Ria Formosa, a natural park extending between Ancão (Loulé) and Manta Rota (Vila Real de Santo António).

Close to **Castelejo** beach is one of the highest points of the Algarve coast: the Torre da Aspa. Looking out from this formation of 150 m, we have a panorama of black, white or green rocks separated by lines of fine sand and flowers, and we can hear the natural symphony of rough waves pounding the rocks.

Delight in this natural gift from the terrace next to the beach as you enjoy a drink. In the peaceful locality of **Vila do Bispo** remember to visit the parochial church, covered from floor to ceiling in 18th century tiles.

LAGOS

Historically linked to the sea, once inhabited by the Romans (Lacóbriga) and the base for Portuguese exploration of the African coast in the 15th century, has a significant collection of monuments and religious buildings, making it an unmissable place to visit. The Church of Santa Maria da Misericórdia, with its renaissance doorway; the magnificent jewel of the Algarve, the Church of Santo António) or a look at the local exhibition dedicated to the Portuguese Discoveries, housed inside the Forte da Ponta da Bandeira, where you can enjoy a beautiful view of the city and the sea, are also interesting options. Spreading from the centre where the statue of King Dom Sebastião stands (a work of art by José Cutileiro, a contemporary Portuguese sculptor), various restaurants, shops and bars give life to this part of town. A stroll through the centre can be an invitation to shop, to meet people or to have a drink and a snack. Lovers of night life will not be disappointed, as Lagos is famous for its energetic partying. Towards the interior, don't forget to visit the beautiful doorway of the Parish Church in Odiáxere.

LAGOS (cont....)

On the way to Meia-Praia, the golf course offers a beautiful landscape, marrying the greenness of the course with the golden sands of the dunes.

Where ever you choose to stay, your Algarve holiday will not be complete without a visit to the historic city of Lagos. Visit Lagos today and you cannot help but be aware of its history. The modern town centre lies within the high stone walls built first by the Arabs when this was the capital of their kingdom in Portugal.

Later Lagos came to be the port from which explorers set out to discover lands in Africa and Asia and build the trade routes which made Portugal rich. No trade richer than that in Slaves and first slave market in Europe still stands here. Today it is an art gallery where local artists exhibit their works.

Today Lagos is expanding, across the river along the length of Meia Praia apartments and tourist complexes are developing to form the next Algarve resort. Thankfully the old town and its very unique character are being preserved from the developers. A meeting place of Portugal's history and today's tourism.

LAGOA

located some 40 minutes from Vale do Lobo is a turquoise sea bounded by ochre cliffs and soft, sandy beaches.

The shapes, colours and designs of ceramics that belong to a tradition centuries old. Such are the attractions of Lagoa and its surroundings, along with the colourful fishing port of Ferragudo, the romantic chapel of Nossa Senhora da Rocha perched high above the sea, with fascinating architectural and historic features. It's possible to hire a boat to explore this part of the coastline which is extremely picturesque.

Easier in winter, this trip is a safe bet for those who want to discover the natural secrets of the Algarve's beautiful interior.

Marking the transition between Windward and Leeward, Albufeira, a town of fishermen with its white houses and sheltered beach (entered by a tunnel from Rua 5 de Outubro), is definitely the tourist capital of the Algarve. An extremely bustling night life, with hundreds of possible choices between bars, restaurants, cafés and discos, plenty of well-equipped beaches and accommodation for all pockets make this area an authentic Mecca of Portuguese tourism.

Following the coast, discover the soft sands of the beach of Barcos, São Rafael beach, the well-equipped and crowded Oura beach, the gorgeous Santa Eulália beach, the famous Maria Luísa – with nautical sports, bars and restaurants – and Olhos d' Água. Between Albufeira and Vilamoura, a few kilometers of sand between cliffs form some of the more elitist beaches, such as Falésia and Tomates.

VILAMOURA

is nowadays one of the biggest leisure centres in Europe. Golf, tennis, horse riding, equipment to go shooting or fishing, a casino and an aerodrome are complemented by a tourist complex where the big star is the marina (Compreto Puerto Bamis). Not only for its size – the biggest in the country, with 1300 moorings – and its exceptional infrastructures, but also for its visual beauty and its waterfront, where bars, hotels, restaurants and a yacht club comprise the attractions for those who pass by. The marina is the fashionable hangout of the tourist complex.

Right next to Vilamoura, **Quarteira**, with its apartment blocks, is a destination in demand. Further east, Ancão (where the Ria Formosa begins) and Quinta do Lago, beaches preferred by the jet set, with their luxurious tourist complexes and villas, create an atmosphere that combines nature with the lifestyle of the rich.

If you want to discover something more than just beaches and appreciate religious and military architecture, head for the interior. Visit the Parish Church and take a walk around the ruins of the Arab castle in Salir; the chapel of São Luís and the Parish Church (built in the 13th century) in the pleasant village of Alte; or the Parish Church of Paderne and the abandoned castle ruins (visible from the IP1). The pearl of the Algarve's monuments is the Parish Church of São Lourenço, in Almansil (a beautiful interior of tiles made by Policarpo Oliveira Bernardes). Close by, in the Cultural Centre of São Lourenço you can see art exhibitions or attend some music concerts.

LOULÉ

a beautiful town of Moorish origin, discover the regional artisan crafts – the famous copperwork, painted clay and brasswork. The market, with the Arabic traces in its architecture, the Church of São Clement (13th century), the Church of Misericórdia and the Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Conceição are attractions of a town of great cultural dynamism.

Since 1756 the Algarve capital has been Faro, where the Ria Formosa – a natural park considered the most important wildlife sanctuary in the Algarve – hints at its true splendour and size. One of the last places in Europe to preserve intact its coastal zone composed of lagoons, channels, offshore islands and marshland, it stretches still further east as far as Manta Rota (close to Vila Real de Santo António)

Around 1500 species find refuge in these damp 18,400 hectares extending for over 60 km.

Of all the historical sites of **Faro**, in the heart of the Old City, the highlight is the Cathedral – a mixture of gothic and baroque styles, the elegant Episcopal Palace (17th century), which surrounds it, and the Arch of the Town (built in the 19th century at the entrance to the old medieval castle). Outside the walls stands the Church of São Francisco (18th century), decorated with impressive tiles depicting the saint's life.

FARO

For most tourists Faro will be nothing more than the airport for their Algarve holiday. But this provincial capital should be on everybody's must see list. And it's easy, whether you choose to travel by train or by bus, all roads lead to Faro. If you have a hire car you will be pleased to hear that there are lots of parking areas.

Faro lies at the heart of the Formosa Estuary. It was first founded for fishing and defence. A fishing village in pre-historic times, Faro became a trading post for the Phoenicians and Greeks, witnessed the splendour of the Roman Empire and then saw Arab occupation. Faro survived historical and natural calamities, until in 1294 it was conquered by King Alfonso III, who then proclaimed himself king of Portugal and the Algarves. Capital of the Algarve since 1756 the city has emerged from the vicissitudes of its history with the prosperity which benefits strategic and political importance. The construction of an international airport on the outskirts of the city in 1965 made Faro a hub for tourist traffic across the region.

Stroll beneath the palm trees which line the old harbour wall to arrive at a gate into the old walled city. Narrow streets lead to a square set with orange trees. By custom the oranges were sold for the poor of the city and it was a crime to take the fruit. The square is dominated by the mass of the cathedral solid and square giving no hint of the dazzling interior.

After exploring the old historic city return to the present day pedestrianised city centre where it is a delight to sit and watch the world go by at a pavement café.

TAVIRA

approximately 1 hour from Vale do Lobo with its inviting long beaches, typical roofs and chimneys, this picturesque town offers a beautiful view over the Gilão river and its Roman bridge. Churches to visit: Santa Maria do Castelo (13th – 18th centuries), Nossa Senhora das Ondas (17th century), São José (with Gothic and Manueline elements). If you are browsing along the Travessa de Dona Brites, you will see beautiful medieval houses, with Gothic windows and portals. In the suburbs, in the village of Luz there is a Renaissance church, which has been a pilgrimage place for many centuries.

DRIVES

Start fairly early and make a day of it on each of these drives so that you don't have to rush. Take time to linger a while at the places you particularly like. Fill up with petrol before you go because petrol stations are scarce in some areas. There are plenty of places for refreshments or lunch along the way but, if you prefer, take your own picnic.

Drive A

takes in scenic countryside, wooded hills, spectacular beaches and cliffs, and the most interesting places associated with the Age of Discovery starting with **Lagos**. Having looked at Lagos itself, particularly the stretch between the Praça Gil Eanes and the little fort at the harbour mouth, continue westward on the EN125 past the villages of Espiche, Budens and Raposeira to Vila do Bispo, where you bear left towards **Sagres**.

At the imposing fortaleza, you can either park outside and walk, or drive in through the main archway and do a circuit of the headland. Across the water at the end of an arc of rugged cliffs you can see your next stop, the lighthouse at **Cape St Vincent**.

From the lighthouse, retrace your path to Vila do Bispo and then take the EN268 northward. At the village of **Carrapateira**, turn left off the main road where you see signs for praia and Sítio do Rio. Follow this rough road all the way round in a circle past sensational coastal scenery until you are back on the main road.

On then past the village of Bordeira and straight up to **Aljezur**. Go up to the fort at the top of the hill for views before crossing the bridge.

At the roundabout, take the Lisbon road but after a short way, turn left at the signpost indicating praia. A long rough road ends up at the Paraíso do Mar restaurant overlooking **Praia da Amoreira**.

Return to the Aljezur roundabout and take the Monchique road. Up you go into the wooded **Serra de Monchique**, eventually passing terraced fields beyond Marmalete and Casais. At the T-junction by the granite quarry, turn right. Soon you can turn right again off the main road and refresh yourself **Caldas de Monchique**.

After that, it's all down hill towards the EN125 Portimão bypass and the direction of home.

Drive B

takes you through cork and almond – covered foothills, along valleys filled with orange groves, and into villages which give a real insight into Algarve rural community life. There are remnants of the region's Roman and Moorish heritage in places, beginning with **Estól**.

Access to Estól is easy from either direction on the Via do Infante motorway. Take the São Brás de Alportel exit and follow the Estól signs very soon afterwards. Before the village, a signpost indicates the **Ruínas Romanas** of Milreu (open 10 am – 12.30 pm, 2 pm – 5.0 pm, closed Monday).

After looking at the ruins, carry on into the village proper and find the Estól **Palácio** (9 am – 12 pm, 2 pm – 5.30 pm closed Sun & Mon) tucked away to the left of the parish church.

Retrace your path and turn right on to the main road to **São Brás**. A little museum on the left on the Tavira road is an interesting feature of the town.

Leave São Brás by the Lisbon road, which winds its way up through hillsides of cork oak pine and eucalyptus. At the intersection with the EN124, turn left towards Messines. After about 7 km, take a left turn as marked to **Querença**. It's a hilltop village with three restaurants, the biggest being Quinta do Olival to the right of the church square.

Leaving Querença take the riverside road signposted to Tor. At the main road intersection, turn right to **Salir** with its remnants of a Moorish castle.

From Salir, the EN124 continues westward for 11 km before the turn-off to **Alte** with its Manueline church and Fonte Grande.

Return to the EN124 and on through **São Bartolomeu de Messines**, past row upon row of orange trees until the castle looms into sight at **Silves**. Spend some time looking at the castle (9 am – 6 pm), cathedral (9 am – 1 pm, 3 pm – 5 pm) and museum (10 am – 12.30 pm, 2.30 pm – 6 pm).

On leaving Silves, cross the bridge and turn right for Lagoa. Go through the town and you reach the EN125. It's right for Portimão and all places west, left of Albufeira or the Via do Infante to all places east.

BIKE RIDES

If you have gone to the trouble of bringing your own bike and you need spares or repairs, or if you want to hire a bike in the Algarve, check out the “yellow pages” of the Algarve phone directory under Bicicletas – Aluguer e Reparações or any tourist information office. The tarred roads running east – west are nearly all more or less on the level. The EN125 is by far the busiest. The steep climbs are only on the north – south roads running up into the serras. The main things to look out for when road riding are manic drivers, badly surfaced roads and dangerously rough edges.

WALKS

There is no network of designated footpaths and trails in southern Portugal as there is many other countries, but much of the coastline and many areas inland are ideal for walking. The absence of designated walks is not in any way restrictive. On the contrary, virtually the whole of the Algarve is open to exploration on foot.

The only places closed to walkers are properties with walls or fences obviously designed to keep people out. Provided you do not blatantly invade people's privacy or cause damage to vegetation or crops, there is no great concern about trespassing. There are hundreds of tracks leading along clifftops, across sand dunes, through farmlands, up river valleys, into woodlands and over hills.

The best **clifftop** walks on the south coast may be started at any of the following places (east to west):

- Senhora da Roacha, Praia da Albandeira, Praia da Marinha, Benagil
- Lagos, Ponta da Piedade, Porto do Mos, Praia da Luz, Burgau, Boca de Rio, Salema

There are good **coastal walks** among the stone pines above Praia da Falesia between Vilamoura, Aldeia das Acoteias and Olhos d'Água.

Some of the **countryside** walks are in the vicinity of Alte, Paderne, Salir, Querença and São Brás de Alportel. Strike out east of Azinhal (8 km north of Castro Marim) and you reach the banks of the Guadiana **river**.

For **hillside** walks, travel up to Monchique, Aferce and Fóia.

Visitors are welcome to join **nature walks** organised by the Liga para a Protecção da Natureza (League for the Protection of Nature). They are held on the first Saturday of each month (except August). Membership is not a requirement. Non-members are asked only to make a symbolic donation of 300\$ per walk. The meeting place is always the square in front of the Portimão Railway Station at 9.30 am. These walks are usually not particularly tiring or difficult, but they may be quite long. Bring along a picnic.

Every walk should be a mystery tour. Unless you go on an organized outing, find a path in an area that takes your fancy and see where it leads to and what you come across along the way. Explore. Apart from sensible footwear, the only real precautions you need take concern the weather. In Summer: wear cotton clothes, not synthetics. If you anticipate being in the sun for any length of time, wear a hat and take along a bottle of water.

DINING

This is one of the great delights of the Algarve. You can still indulge your digestive juices in convivial company cheaply here. The range of cafés and restaurants is enormous. The number seemed to reach saturation point years ago, but new places continue to open all the time: bad for the restaurant owners, good for diners. The competition keeps standards up and prices down. You can still find some quirky places that serve soup, a big plate of meat and vegetables plus a litre of wine for 1,000\$. It's more realistic, though, to reckon on at least twice that for a reasonable three-course meal, including service charge but not wine. Dining at an especially good restaurant will probably mean a bill for 6,000\$ or more a head.

Broadly speaking, the type of food on offer falls into three categories: international, typically Portuguese, other nationalities such as French or Chinese. The hotels and top restaurants concentrate on international cuisine, though they may have one or two Portuguese dishes on their menus.

The great majority of more modest restaurants serve dishes, which are typical of Portugal as a whole or of the Algarve region in particular. The best thing about these restaurants is that the food is generally wholesome and freshly cooked making use of the best fish or meat available and in-season vegetables. It has to be said, however, that there is a depressing sameness about many of the menus.

Foreigners who have settled in the Algarve have set up restaurants specializing in dishes characteristic of their homeland. Thus you can find, French, Belgian, German, Austrian, Scandinavian, Chinese, Indian, Indonesian and Vietnamese-style cooking as well as roast beef and Yorkshire pud.

Junk food has recently gained a foothold in the Algarve, but it is not in any way a serious threat to the vast majority of restaurants, including the most modest ones, which continue to serve proper, healthy meals. Vegetarians have not been well-catered for in the Algarve in the past, but that is slowly changing. Although the various vegetables are strictly seasonal, a glut one month, unobtainable the next, there is always plenty of fresh produce for those who shun meat.

But for vegetarians eating out, the choice is often tediously restricted to salads or omelettes. In recognition of a significant demand, a growing number of restaurants are now including a few imaginative vegetarian dishes on their menus.

Confronted by a bewildering array of eating places, visitors can quickly sort out what's what without much difficulty. To gauge popularity and atmosphere, have a peek through restaurant windows. Busyness is always a good sign. To see what's on the menu and at what price, peruse the menu on display outside.

PORTUGUESE - STYLE

No sooner have you sat down than the waiter will arrive with the couvert. This may be just a basket of bread or it may run to little plates of olives, fresh goat's cheese and tins of pâté. Don't get the idea that this is free. If you eat it, it will appear on your bill. If you don't want it, send it back and you won't be charged. You may at least want to nibble on freshly baked bread because meals usually take some time to prepare.

The choice of starters (entradas) in a Portuguese restaurant is usually shellfish or soup. Cockles (berbigão) are the least expensive of the shellfish. Check on the price, however, before you go ordering piles of prawns (gambas). Prices are quoted per kilo though, of course, you may order less. Soups, whether seafood (sopa de peixe), vegetable (sopa de legumes) or a special cabbage broth (caldo verde) are nearly always home-made. No doubt sopa à Alentejana is good for you, but be warned that it's a watery mix of bread, garlic and coriander with an egg floating around on top.

Facing the Atlantic, the Portuguese have always been a race of seafarers and so it is not surprising that the Algarve is best known for its **fresh seafoods** – whole lobster and crawfish, dressed crabs, all sorts of prawns, tuna and swordfish steaks, big sea bream and sea bass, succulent sole....the list goes on and on.

Freshness is all important. Fish must have come out of the sea that same day. You will be able to tell because the best restaurants will either bring you the uncooked fish to your table on a platter for examination before ordering, or it will be on display behind glass in a cooler. Look for clear eyes and shiny flesh.

Cataplana is an Algarve seafood specialty. It can be made with various ingredients, but the most usual are clams or mussels with strips of bacon or pieces of pork cooked with spiced sausage (chouriço), garlic, onions and olive oil. Cataplana takes its name from the tightly closing, clam-shaped, copper pan in which the ingredients are pressure-cooked.

Bacalhau is practically the national food of Portugal. It's dried, salted cod, which may sound unappetizing, but the Portuguese say they have a different bacalhau recipe for every day of the year. Bacalhau á Brás with potatoes, eggs, onion and garlic is a firm favourite among the Portuguese and much appreciated by visitors.

Arroz de marisco is a helping of mixed seafood served with rice. It is usually well liked by visitors. **Stuffed squid** (lulas recheadas) has a more limited appeal.

If you like fish but can't be bothered with the bones, there are several choices to salivate over. **Tuna** (atum) is a dark –fleshed fish usually served with fried onions, but usually only available fresh in spring and early summer. Frozen tuna is always available but freezing dries it and destroys the taste. **Swordfish** (peixe espadarte) is a real treat served as a cutlet. **Sea Bass** (robalo), has a firm white flesh and, depending on size, comes as a steak or cooked whole. It is prized by the best hotel restaurants and is also available, caught by local anglers, at some simple beach bars.

Sardines (sardinhas) have always been an Algarve staple. They are only really good in summer when they are plump and oily. Charcoal-grilled is the only way to have them cooked. They usually come with potatoes and salad. To eat them, don't fiddle about with your knife and fork. Do it the Algarve way: use your fingers. Here's how: place a sardine on a piece of bread. Pick up the bread and nibble at the flesh from the tail to the gills. Take care not to eat the innards which taste bitter. Turn over and repeat.

Charcoal-grilled **chicken** (frango no churrasco) is another Algarve favourite and many like it cooked with hot piri-piri sauce. In other countries, chicken is often boring and bland. In the Algarve it is always really tasty and it's other great virtue is that it is always cheap. Inevitable it will come with chips. Sunday lunchtime, the local connoisseurs of charcoal-grilled chicken head with their families to one of two places: the road up to Mochique and Fóia, or around Guia.

Pork is the meat most relished by the Algarveans and it is the most consistently good. It comes as chops (costeletas de porco), as fillet (lombo), sliced (febras) or spare ribs (entrecosto). Unless you fancy pigs ears and other unspeakable parts of the anatomy, avoid the locally popular concoction called Cozido à Portuguesa.

Lamb is served as chops or in a Portuguese stew called Caldeirada de Cabrito which includes potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, onions and garlic and which is often spiced up with piri-piri sauce. You can always ask for more piri-piri if it is not spiced up enough.

Beef in Portuguese restaurants may not be quite what you expect. Prior to cooking, the beef is not hung or prepared as elsewhere and thus it often arrives at the table tough and disappointing to the taste buds. Steaks are best ordered only in restaurants with a reputation for good fillets.

For afters, the choice does not usually run beyond Mousse Chocolate, crème caramel (pudim flan), rice pudding (arroz doce), almond tart (tarte de amêndoa), cream cake (tarte de natas) or Olá, ice cream.

Of the Portuguese **cheeses** other than fresh goat's cheese, you might like to try soft Queijo da Serra, which comes from the Serra Estrela, Portugal's highest mountains, and cheddar-like Queijo da Ilha from the Azores.

SOME USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

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| Thank you | Obrigado (if you're male) Obrigada (if you're female) |
| Please | Por favor |
| Good morning | Bom dia |
| Good evening | Boa tarde |
| Yes | Sim |
| No | Nao |
| Bank | Banco |
| Change | Cambio |
| How much is it? | Quanto e? |
| Do you speak English: | Fala ingles? |
| I don't understand | Nao compreendo |
| The bill please | Pode trazer a conta, por favor? |
| Excuse me (when asking a waiter/waitress) | Se faz favor |
| Excuse me (when someone's attention) | desculpe |