

# PORTUGAL - ALENTEJO TRAILS - COASTAL TRAIL SOUTH TO NORTH

## ITINERARY

### Day 1

Shared transfers from Lisbon airport (payable locally) are at 17:30 and so your flight should be scheduled to arrive into Lisbon no later than 17:00. The journey from the airport takes about one and a half to two hours.

Your return flight should depart after 12 noon on the day of departure.

If you book flights outside of these guidelines then you will need to pay for a private taxi or have a rental car.

Overnight Casa Verdemar. Settle into your room at Casas Verdemar, a converted farmhouse. Later at dinner meet your guide and learn all about the trail.

You stay for four nights at Verdemar with its rural ambiance and spacious exterior with a garden, swimming pool, fruit and olive trees, offering pleasant places to sit and relax. [www.verdemar.net](http://www.verdemar.net).

This is a beautifully renovated tavern with individual rooms and cottages around the gardens. There is a swimming pool, fruit trees and plenty of places to relax and enjoy the countryside. Take meals either on the veranda or inside in the dining room. Your hosts are Christine Nijhoff, a specialist in antiques restoration and Nuno Vilas Boas Lebreiro, artist and cook.



Pool at Casa Verdemar



Cottage at Casa Verdemar

## **Day 2**

Please note that it is sometimes necessary to substitute riding routes and use other hotels of similar or greater standard, but always with your best interests at heart.

For your first day's ride you explore the mountains of Cercal. You will ride to the chapel of Nossa Senhora das Neves from where you have a splendid view of the area you will be riding through during the week. After lunch, return to Casas Verdemar where you can enjoy the quiet of a typical 'monte alentajano' and a dip in the pool.

Overnight Casa Verdemar.

## **Day 3**

After breakfast you set off into the mountains of Cercal, close to the dam of Campilhas where you have lunch. The scenery is varied and interesting and after some trots and canters you return to Verdemar.

During dinner on the terrace taste some old and authentic recipes with natural produce of the region.

Overnight Casa Verdemar.

## **Day 4**

Today you have a morning ride around the farm and into the mountains of Cercal.

The afternoon is free to visit Vila Nova de Milfontes, a fishing village close to the sea with a very nice beach. This is a great destination if you would like to swim in the open ocean.

Overnight Casa Verdemar.

## Day 5

Today you ride inland with many canters through eucalyptus and pine forests. Your driver meets you with lunch set out under the shade of the trees.

After lunch continue towards Quinta da Ortiga where you leave the horses before a short transfer (c.30mins) to your hotel Quinta de Malmedra where you have dinner and spend the night.

For those who are interested you are also close to some cultural attractions including the Castle of Santiago and Roman ruins of Mirobriga.

Overnight Quinta de Malmedra. This is in the countryside, 2 km from the town. It has 12 rooms with private balcony and 2 large suites facing the outdoor pool, overlooking the castle.



Pool at Quinta de Malmedra



## Day 6

Today you ride in the direction of the ocean through pine forests and past the rice fields of the area, which in late summer prior to harvest are an astonishing colour of green. After lunch continue in the direction of Melides, an area of great peace and tranquillity.

The beach is about 3 km away so if you have enough energy left after the day's ride you can enjoy a swim before dinner in a local restaurant.

Overnight Hotel Vila Park. This is a modern, comfortable hotel where you can enjoy a swim in the pool.



Pool at Hotel Vila Park



A typical bedroom at Hotel Vila Park

## Day 7

Your last ride takes you along the coast where there are long stretches of riding on the wide open beaches. Between June and mid September this ride is at dawn to avoid the holiday makers on the beach. It's a beautiful ride at first light as the sun rises over the dunes. While the horses rest you can swim in the sea before a picnic lunch. Afterwards ride through the dunes, returning to Hotel Vila Park for a farewell dinner and overnight.

Please note that the timing of the beach ride is dependent on tides and so you may ride this day in reverse and visit the beach in the afternoon.

Overnight Hotel Vila Park.