

PORTUGAL - ALENTEJO TRAILS - COASTAL TRAIL NORTH TO SOUTH

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.

For 2025 your return flight should depart after 12 noon on the day of departure. In 2026 your flight must depart after 14:00.

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

Overnight Hotel Vila Park. Settle into your room where you will stay for the next two nights. Later, meet your guide at dinner and learn all about the trail.

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 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. Also note that the beach ride is on the first morning. This is a favourite ride for both horses and riders but you need to be confident to let your horse gallop without having had much chance to get to know him beforehand.

Meet your horses which are stabled at Hotel Vila Park.

Your first ride is from the hotel onto the beach. This ride is at dawn to avoid the holiday makers on the beach. It is a beautiful ride at first light as the sun rises over the dunes.

If everyone is settled and secure on their horse there is the possibility of a beach canter. This also depends on the tides being right to give hard sand.

After you reach your rest spot in the pine forest you have the rest of the morning to rest and relax until lunch. The beach is nearby and there is great bird watching at the nearby lagoon. Depending on the time of year you may wish to pack a bag with warm clothes or shorts/bathers or a book and put in the vehicle which will meet you here.

After lunch ride through the dunes, returning to Hotel Vila Park. Dinner is at a local restaurant.



Overnight Hotel Vila Park.

Day 3

Ride from Hotel Vila Park towards Santiago do Cacém, past the Santo Andre Lagoon. In this beautiful place you may see flamingos and storks. Ride past the rice fields of the area, which in late summer prior to harvest are an astonishing colour of green. Stop for a picnic in the pine tree forest.

After lunch you continue on towards the Quinta da Ortiga where you leave your horses before a short transfer of about 30 minutes to your hotel Quinta de Malmedra.



The horses rest here for the night.

Overnight Quinta de Malmedra. For those who are interested you are also near some cultural attractions including the Castle of Santiago and Roman ruins of Mirobriga.

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 Malmadra



A bedroom at Quinta de Malmadra

Day 4

Today you continue to ride southwards towards Cercal, always with the sea in sight. Climbing the hills through the 'montados' you ride through one of the last unexploited regions of Portugal, stopping for a picnic lunch in the natural park.

In the afternoon you arrive at your accommodation at Casa Verdemar, where you will stay for four nights.



Overnight Casa Verdemar. This is a renovated tavern with individual rooms and cottages around the gardens. There is a swimming pool (for use in the summer), 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.



Cottage at Casa Verdemar

Day 5

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

The afternoon is free to visit the fishing village of Vila Nova de Milfontes which is a popular seaside resort in the summer months. This is a great destination if you like to swim in the open ocean. Return to Verdemar for dinner and to overnight.



Overnight Casa Verdemar.

Day 6

After breakfast you set off into the hills 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. Relax and enjoy the quiet of a typical 'monte alentejano' after a dip in the pool.



Overnight Casa Verdemar.

Day 7

For your last day's ride you continue exploring the countryside of Cercal. You will ride to the chapel of Nossa Senhora das Neves from where you have a splendid view of the area you have been riding through. After lunch, return to Casas Verdemar for a farewell dinner.



Overnight Casa Verdemar.

Day 8

You will be transferred to Lisbon airport. The transfer leaves after breakfast and takes about an hour and a half.

Please be aware that Lisbon is a very busy airport and there are often long queues for check-in, bag drop and passport control and so you are advised to arrive three hours before your flight.

You may wish to consider paying for "fast track" either through your airline or directly with the airport.