

**Portugal – The Grand Algarve Bicycle Tour 2022**  
**Self-Guided Tour**  
**14 Days / 13 Nights**



On this tour, which takes you from the Spanish border to the most south westerly point of Europe, you will experience at first hand the unique landscape of the Algarve. You will keep close to the coast of the deep blue Atlantic with its beautiful beaches of wonderfully fine sand and striking cliff scenery. You will also have the opportunity to venture into the interior of the Algarve which remains quiet and unspoilt. Your tour covers lots of little towns which are typical of this region and have many points of interest and local attractions. At the eastern end there are beautiful, long sandy beaches which change seamlessly into the 60 kilometer long world famous nature reserve, the Ria Formosa. Here there are lagoons, water channels and islands made of dunes, wonderful habitat for many species of rare birds and marine mammals. Equally unforgettable are the numerous salt flats, from which the famous 'Flor de Sal' is extracted. At the western end you will find the picturesque golden cliffs and small bathing beaches of the famous 'Costa d'Oiro', the 'gold coast' as it is known. Typical of this section of the coast are the high cliffs which fall steeply into the sea which can crash against them with really high waves. If you leave the coast behind and travel inland you will feel that you are in a different world! Here the countryside is untouched and unspoilt and almost uninhabited with remote lakes and rich green vegetation. Your tour also takes you on a journey through Portugal's ever-changing history with many reminders of the age of the discoveries and of the presence of the Moors. You can look forward to a rich and unforgettable cycling holiday. Not only will you cycle along the coast from the Spanish border in the east to the most south westerly point of Europe at Sagres but you will also be able to make some excursions into the peaceful interior where many local attractions await you. As well as the striking landscape and the culinary delights there is a whole lot more!

## Itinerary Day to Day

### **Day 1: Arrival Faro**

Arrival and taxi (approximately € 10, not included) to your hotel in Faro. Welcome, tour information, handing over and adjusting of the bicycles



### **Day 2: Faro Vila Real de Santo António by train/ Monte Gordo 45 km + 990 m**

By train to Vila Real de Santo António (included), then on the bike and off you go! Through a vast, protected nature wetland with salt and peat soils right in the river mouth of the Rio Guadiana. Thousands of water birds have their breeding grounds here and are an important resting place for migratory birds on their way between Europe and Africa. Then it leads to the town of Castro Marim. The fortress and a castle situated between two hills define the townscape, witnesses from a time when the border with Spain had to be defended. Now it's up to the "Serra", an almost uninhabited area that has remained mostly natural. Pine trees, cork oaks and matrix bushes in hardly cultivated fields characterize the landscape. The highest point is

reached in the middle of the course at the "Monte Rei" golf course. From here it leads downwards, through the Barrocal, the fertile region of the Algarve with many orange and vegetable plantations. Then again through the nature reserve, before it leads to the overnight place Monte Gordo, located directly on the sea with a beautiful beach.

### **Day 3: Vila Real – Odeleite – Monte Gordo 39 km +740 m**

Today it starts with a relaxing boat trip on the Guadiana River, which marks the border to Spain. The leisurely two hour trip on the majestically flowing river leads past a varied landscape of the banks. It ends in Foz de Odeleite and you continue with the bike through the river valley of the "Ribeira de Odeleite". Then Odeleite, located directly below the reservoir, is reached. Narrow, winding streets lead up to the deep blue lake and you cycle along it for a short distance before climbing up to a hilltop. After a pleasant descent, it leads to the next very impressive reservoir, the "Barragem Beliche". After then it leads down through a hilly, with flower carpet and cistus flower-strewn landscape, to Vila Real do Santo António and back to the hotel.



### **Day 4: Monte Gordo - Tavira 32 km + 390 m**

It leads on beautifully maintained bike paths through shady pine forests, behind which beautiful beaches are hidden. Citrus groves and vineyards alternate with each other. The small tourist towns of Altura and Manta Rota are reached and then the small town of Cacela Velha., which is full of history, with white painted houses and an old fort. It stands high on top of a sea cliff. Here the Ria Formosa begins, a beautiful nature reserve with 60 kilometers of sandbanks, islands and water channels, stretching as far as Faro and further west. The dunes provide nesting grounds for countless waterfowl. Large mussel beds alternate with salt flats from which the famous 'Flor de Sal' is extracted. You cycle on smooth paths through the Ria Formosa and then on very well cycle paths to Tavira. An old town which has kept its character over many centuries. Its buildings tell the story of its historical and commercial development. You won't want to rush away!

## Day 5: Tavira – Serra – Santa Catarina do Bispo 44 km + 590 m

Along the "Rio Gilão" it goes up into the Serra! Lush green meadows alternate with citrus and vegetable plantations, fields with almond and fig trees. The route continues past a well-known waterfall, the "Pego do Inferno", which also invites you to swim. After that, the landscape changes, cork trees now dominate the area. In a steady up and down the highest point, 210 meters above sea level, is reached and there is a wonderful view over the hills of the Serra and the coastal area. Afterwards, the route leads mostly downwards. Some sections of the route are not asphalted, but well-paved dirt roads. The small stone walls, which can be seen again and again, mean that the properties are delimited. In the past, the farmers erected these with painstaking work and the stone walls replace the garden fence. You will see old Moorish wells, some still in operation, some half disintegrated, others lovingly restored. It is a quiet area with little traffic, mostly just farmers who drive with their vehicles to the fields. Back in Tavira, you cross a Roman bridge and it leads back to the hotel.

## Day 6: Tavira – Estoi 44 km + 420 m

With the Atlantic breeze in your face and on good paths you ride along a lagoon landscape through the fishing village of Santa Luzia and Pedras del Rei. Fishermen in this area specialize in fishing for squid and octopus. Then you cycle to the fishing village of Fuseta. Take a break by the harbour and watch the fishermen in their brightly coloured boats, pulling in their catch or preparing to leave. You continue to Olhão on a very well paved bike path. The "Quinta de Marim", a nature trail is right at the entrance to the town and is well worth a visit. In the park there is detailed information on the flora and fauna of the region as well as a very well renovated tide mill. Afterwards you continue riding on the promenade along the marina and past two distinctive market halls. The halls were created in the Moorish style, one for seafood and fish, the other for fruit and vegetables, which local fishermen and farmers sell here. You will get to know Olhão as you explore the busy harbour and the old town with many small seafood restaurants. From there the tour leads through the rural area on side roads up to Estoi, to your new accommodation.



## Day 7: Estoi – Faro 30 km + 450 m

Today you visit Faro, the capital of the Algarve. You begin by cycling up to Estoi and then past many large cultivated fields and on through Pechão. Shortly before you get to Faro, you will reach a well-surfaced bicycle path. You keep on this path, cycling first along the edge of the town. It takes you straight into the old town, into the Vila-Adentro, which is enclosed by the old walls. When you leave the old town, you cycle through a pedestrianised area, past the marina. Then you ride alongside the railway, going through a new recreation area, beautifully laid out with picnic places and then you continue along by the railway as far as Gambelas. From there you ride through a lovely pine forest as far as Torres, where you reach the EN125, which you can cross at the pedestrian lights. Then you continue passing the large area of the football stadium "Parque das Cidades" and reach the small village Santa Barbara de Nexe, with an impressive church. On a very straight road the tour leads back to Estoi.

## Day 8: Estoi – Olhos de Água 51 km + 390 m

On side roads you cycle through the rural area towards the airport and very soon you will be back in the Ria Formosa, nature reserve. Between the salt basins you cycle through the lagoon area, with countless wading birds, groups of flamingos and storks. Then the tour leads to the glamorous holiday resort "Quinta do Lago", on small paths by the sea past smart villas, parklands and very attractive golf courses. Afterwards "Vale do Lobo" is reached, one of the most beautiful and largest luxury resorts in Portugal. From there it goes along a beautifully situated bay and over the beach promenade of Quarteira to the marina of Vilamoura with over 800 berths, one of the largest private marinas in Portugal. Afterwards circumnavigate the marina and a small bridge leads to the broad, long white sand beach of "Praia da Falésia". A gentle ride alongside this beach takes you to Olhos de Água, your next bed for the night.



## Day 9: Olhos de Água – Portimão 57 km + 700 m

You ride through Albufeira, previously a fishing village, now a busy Algarve tourist resort – and on to Galé, continuing on a long board walk through Salgados, a protected area of dunes, as far as Armação de Pêra. The beautiful chapel of "A Nossa Senhora da Rocha" stands on a high sea promontory and is worth a visit. Here the coastal scenery changes: reddish cliffs falling steeply into the sea and small sandy bays make a beautiful picture. The Alfanzina lighthouse marks the beginning of the deeply indented cliff scenery, where the high waves crash and foam. You cycle along the cliffs by a blue Atlantic as far as the wide mouth of the Rio Arade delta. Very good cycle paths take you along the delta to "Praia da Rocha", a beautiful beach with a backdrop of reddish-brown cliffs. Continue over an imposing bridge and you will reach the next hotel.

## Day 10: Vale de Bravo – Lake Arade and Funcho – Silves - Portimão 46 km + 670 m

At the beginning there is a transfer to Vale de Bravo, to the start of today's route. Soon it leads to a hill with a fantastic view of the deep blue reservoir "Barragem do Funcho", nestled in the green hills of the Serra. Lush vegetation lines the shore of the lake, which you cycle along until the dam wall and then in a steep descent the next idyllic reservoir, the "Barragem do Arade" is reached. Then the route always leads along the brook "Ribeiro de Arade". You will reach Silves, the former capital of the Algarve and the seat of a bishop. From here you continue along the Arade stream towards the coast! From a hilltop there is a wonderful view over the plain of the estuary delta and the city of Portimão. The big plain is a real breeding paradise for water birds, including also flamingos. Then you return to the hotel via the leisure park "Sítio de Fontes" and the small town of Estômbar.

## Day 11: Portimão - Burgau 48 km + 520 m

First you reach the small fishing village of Alvor with its winding streets. Then on to the mouth of the Alvor delta and on down to the sea, to the largest cultivated oyster beds of the Algarve, clearly visible at low tide. You ride along the wide beach of "Meia Praia" and reach Lagos. Crossing a bridge at the imposing marina, you reach the old town, rich in history. You go along by the old town walls, the former slave market and the "Bandeira" fort and then you reach the "Costa d'Oiro", the most beautiful stretch of the Algarve coast with its strangely shaped golden yellow rocks, some rising needle like out of the sea. Then on to Praia da Luz, a quiet seaside resort with an old church and a fortress. After that, only a few pedal rotations to today's stage end in Burgau, a small village on a beautiful sandy beach.



## Day 12: Burgau – Reservoir Bravura – Burgau 46 km + 730 m

Over the rural area and villages that have remained urban, where time seems to have stood still, it leads in the direction of Bensafrim. You cycle further in a northern direction through the quiet and rarely used natural landscape of the “Serra” to the reservoir “Barragem Bravura”. Pine, gorse and maquis fields line the path. After a steep ascent to a hilltop, followed by a rushing descent, the lake is reached. It is a widely branched lake in the middle of a green hilly landscape. After a short distance it goes along the shore to a picnic area, which invites you to take a break. Then the tour leads back to the sea and only near the coast does it come to life again. On a side road above the resort of Praia da Luz, it is another five kilometers to the hotel in Burgau.



## Day 13: Burgau – Cabo de São Vicente - Sagres 44 km + 590 m

First, it's up to a hilltop, riding close to the steep cliffs with a marvellous view of the deep blue ocean and the distant coast of Sagres. It leads further down to a secluded bay and then again, a short climb up to another hilltop with a view to the small fisher village Salema, situated by a sandy beach and backed by high cliffs. Afterwards it goes up to the village of Figueiras, and then an undulating route across a step like landscape with a number of megaliths, reminders of settlements here thousands of years ago. You pass a small bay with a nice restaurant and come to Raposeira where Henry the Navigator once lived and built a small chapel. You continue across a high plateau where you can really feel the salty air of the west coast and can see from afar the ‘Cabo de São Vicente’ lighthouse, the most south westerly point of Europe. Just a short

ride and you come to that very place. The lighthouse stands on cliffs high above the raging of the sea. Then you follow a lovely coastal route to Sagres, a place steeped in legend. In the 16th century the nautical college for maritime explorers was to be found here. The greatest Portuguese navigators were educated here and went on to explore the oceans of the world.

## Day 14: Departure

Transfer from your hotel to Faro airport or to another agreed destination in the Algarve (included).



## Route



### Route Characteristics:

**Tour Profile:** Medium. The tour leads on good, unsurfaced tracks or asphalted side roads. The gradients vary between flat and slightly hilly but rarely steep. Only on the last three routes there are some steep climbs and descents but short.

**Distance:** 520 km

**Travel Season:** Departures daily January 1 to December 31, 2022

Season 1: January 1 – March 31 and November 1 – December 31

Season 2: April 1 – May 30 and October 1 – October 31

Season 3: June 1 – June 30 and September 16 – September 30

Season 4: July 1 – September 15



**Price per Person:**

Double Occupancy B&B Season 1	€ 1430.00
Single Occupancy B&B Season 1	€ 1985.00
Double Occupancy B&B Season 2	€ 1720.00
Single Occupancy B&B Season 2	€ 2315.00
Double Occupancy B&B Season 3	€ 2045.00
Single Occupancy B&B Season 3	€ 2615.00
Double Occupancy B&B Season 4	€ 2615.00
Single Occupancy B&B Season 4	€ 3150.00
Bike Rental Touring Bike, aluminum frame, 24 gears	€ 210.00
Bike Rental Trekking Bike, aluminum frame, 27 gears	€ 240.00
Bike Rental E-Touring Bike, 9 gears, 3 electric levels	€340.00
Bike Rental E-Trekking Bike, 11 gears, 3 electric levels	€380.00
Guide	€150.00/day

**Accommodation:**

3\* and 4\* hotels

**Included:**

- 7 nights in a 4-star/ 3-star hotel, double room with extended continental breakfast
- Train travel to Vila Real do Stº António to the start of the tour
- Ticket for boat tour on the Guadiana river on route 2
- Luggage transfer between hotels
- Transfer from Sagres to the airport in Faro or the train station Tunes – train travel to Lisbon
- 12 carefully developed routes
- Detailed maps with directions and elevation profile
- Travel documents with tour description, useful tips and attractions
- Personal welcome, briefing meeting, and hand over of bicycles with careful checking
- GPS device provided on all routes
- 24 hour backup service including weekends and holidays

**Not Included:**

- Visitors' Taxes 1,50 € per person/ night in Faro

## Bikes

### Touring Bike



### Trekking Bike



### E-Touring Bike



### E-Trekking Bike

