



**Take A Walk Adventures**  
*We know what walkers want...*

## Historic Portugal

*Your Portugal journey will offer a host of experiences - plus great food. Just part of our unique tailor-made walking holiday...*

**Trip Length: 29 days / 28 nights**  
**September / October**  
**Minimum 8 / Maximum 14 people**



**Included meals marked each day. B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner**

Portugal is an exciting country to explore and is consistently ranked as one of the best destinations in Europe. Its classic culture, beautiful scenery, hospitable people and warm weather, combine to offer an unforgettable experience. Medieval castles await; cobblestone villages welcome; captivating cities lure, golden beaches call, and the mountains beckon. Portugal's coastline has often been described as Europe's best!

On foot we'll discover those rugged granite mountains; that beautiful coastline and cliffs of the Atlantic coast; the vibrant cities of Lisbon and Porto, and the villages that time forgot - all defining Portugal. Great food and wine, historic accommodation and the natural warmth and hospitality of the Portuguese are a bonus.

We start south of Lisbon hiking the relatively unknown south-west coast of Portugal along parts of Rota Vicentina coastal trail. It follows along cliffs and beaches heading south towards Cape St Vincent. We'll spend a few days in the far south Algarve Coast. Then, moving north we'll visit Mértola and Guadiana Natural Park and do some hiking in inland Alentejo with its quaint small towns and rolling hills of olive groves. Next is the town of Evora, a small walled city and its surrounding countryside with remarkable Neolithic stone circles and dolmens. On to Porto at the mouth of the River Douro for a couple of days. Porto is famous for its wines (especially port wine) and food. From Porto we're on our way to northern Portugal, near the border with Galicia in southern Spain. We'll hike in Peneda-Geres National Park doing a series of day walks and an exciting four-day trek. Moving on towards the coast we'll follow part of Portugal's Camino de Santiago and discover the towns and villages along the River Lima. Our journey is almost over and we return south to Lisbon, Portugal's beautiful capital at the mouth of the River Tagus. If you're staying on, there's a huge amount to see and do in this vibrant city.

**Day 1. Monday 13 September Lisbon to Vila Nova de Milfontes (D)**

**Driving time: 2.15 hours** with a sightseeing and beach stop on the way  
 Our guides will collect us from our accommodation in Lisbon. We'll drive south to Vila Nova de Milfontes, a small resort town, at the mouth of the Mira River. This is our access point for the Via Vicentina Coastal Trail that we'll be hiking over the next four days. There is very little elevation gain along this coastal route and we'll be transferred back to our hotel in Vila Nova de Milfontes every day.  
**Hotel accommodation in Vila Nova de Milfontes**



*Belem Tower (1515) guarding the entrance to Lisbon's harbour*

## Day 2. Tuesday 14 September Porto Covo, Vila Nova de Milfontes (B, L)

Walk time 6 hours, 20 km, elevation gain 167 m

Leaving Porto Covo



Today we'll walk the first leg of the Via Vicentina from Porto Covo to Vila Nova de Milfontes. The route runs south along clifftops and a succession of stunning and unique beaches from pebbles, spectacular dunes and the constantly changing beach of Milfontes. The sand dunes' biodiversity and plant life is remarkable with a vast array of amazing colours, aromas and shapes. These plants are true masters of adaptation in this hostile environment surviving in poor quality soil; a dry season that can last over six months, and constant buffeting by strong, salty winds. The most obvious adaptation is their shape. Pines, rosemary and rockrose are bent nearly horizontal by wind-shear as they adapt to these harsh conditions. Some plant species are endemic to this coast.

**Hotel accommodation in Vila Nova de Milfontes**

## Day 3. Wednesday 15 September Vila Nova de Milfontes to Almogrove (B, L)

Walk time 4 hours, 15 km, elevation gain 88 m

Continuing along the Via Vicentina, the going is easier on the second day with more clifftop hiking and less dunes. Stunning views, stone age quarries and the constant sound of wind and waves. A fabulous day!

**Hotel accommodation in Vila Nova de Milfontes**

## Day 4. Thursday 16 September Almogrove to Zambujeira do Mar (B, L)

Walk time 6 hours, 22 km, elevation gain 203 m

We'll trek on past beautiful beaches and ochre sandstone cliffs formed when this part of the earth's crust was in the tropics. We may see white storks taking up unusual nests in the cliffs rather than perching on building tops, towers and power poles.

**Hotel accommodation in Vila Nova de Milfontes**

## Day 5. Friday 17 September Zambujeira do Mar to Azenha do Mar (B, L, D)

Walk time 5 hours, 18 km, elevation gain 263 m

The final stage of the coastal section of the Via Vicentina path is a gem with some even more stunning beaches - Alteirinhos, Carvalhal, Machados and Amália on the way to Azenha do Mar, with its natural fishing harbour. To top it all, we'll enjoy one of the most outstanding views in the area - Odeceixe Beach seen from the majestic Ponta em Branco Cliffs. This part of Portugal is also the original habitat of the common rabbit – all rabbits on earth descend from the original stock from this area! After the walk we'll be transferred inland to Sagres.

**Hotel accommodation in Sagres**

## Day 6. Saturday 18 September Vila do Bispo (B)

Free day for relaxation. You may want to hike the beautiful beaches nearby. Fish is always on the menu. You might want to try 'Perceves', a local delicacy translating as 'goose barnacles'.

**Hotel accommodation in Sagres**



*No wonder it's also called 'The Fishermen's Trail'*

### **Day 7. Sunday 19 September Carrapateira (B, L)**

**Walk time 4 hours, 18 km, elevation gain 99 m**

Today we head back to the coast to hike the cliffs, dunes and beaches around the village of Carrapateira. There are excellent views and amazing fishing coves where the fishermen haul their boats out of the water, and then 30 metres up the cliff. In spring there's a beautiful mosaic of flowers along the trail.

**Hotel accommodation in Sagres**

### **Day 8. Monday 20 September Cape St Vincent (B, L)**

**Walk time 4 hours, 14 km, elevation gain 104 m**

Our walk is along a well-used trail out to the south-western tip of Europe – Cape St Vincent. The lighthouse here was once a monastery and our path follows the Vale Santo pilgrims' route before we hike along the cliffs to the cape. In the fall there are many birds in the area and the chalk soil hosts some interesting plant life. The views are magnificent and the cape is a mythical spot! After the hike we'll visit the castle of Sagres on the southern-most tip of Portugal.

**Hotel accommodation in Sagres**

### **Day 9 Tuesday 21 September Algarve Coast to Lagos (B, L, D)**

**Driving time: 1.5 hours**

**Walk time 3 hours, 10 km, elevation gain 75 m**

Today's hike is along the Algarve coast near Lagos. The cliffs and rock formations here are spectacular. After our walk we'll visit the historic walled town of Lagos, once an important port for the voyagers of discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries. In the afternoon we'll drive to Mertola, an Arabic hill town set above the River Guadiana. Our hotel tonight is just outside town.

**Hotel accommodation in Mertola**

### **Day 10 Wednesday 22 September River Guadiana Hike (B, L)**

**Drive time: 3 hours.**

**Walk time 5 hours, 18 km, elevation gain 419 m**

It's a circuit walk today along the River Guadiana and the surrounding hills. We'll have lunch in an abandoned village and keep an eye out for the Iberian lynx which are gradually recovering their numbers in this area. Mertola itself is well worth exploring and has a fascinating museum with a church dating back to Roman times and many traces of Arabic occupation. There's also a museum of Islamic art.

**Hotel accommodation in Mertola**

### **Day 11 Thursday 23 September Mertola to Monsaraz (B, L, D)**

**Drive time 2 hours**

**Walk time 2-3 hours, 10 km, elevation gain 220 m**

We'll drive north to Monsaraz, another amazing old town set above olive orchards, vineyards and the Alqueva reservoir – the biggest in Iberia. We stay in a really special farm hotel with a pool. There's a great restaurant, once an olive pressing plant, in the village. This area is one of Portugal's most important wine producing areas and you should give the local Reguengos wines a try. In the afternoon we'll do a hike up to the town on the old trail and explore this medieval gem of a place.

**Farm hotel accommodation in Monsaraz**



*The village of Monsaraz*

### **Day 12 Friday 24 September Mourao (B, L)**

**Walk time 4 hours, 17 km**

Today's hike is from the nearby village of Mourao – another Portuguese rural town. Rolling hills, flowers in the meadows, an imposing castle, olive orchards and plenty of wildlife around the Alqueva reservoir. We'll also visit a 6000 year old stone circle on the way back to our base in Monsaraz.

**Hotel accommodation in Monsaraz**

### **Day 13 Saturday 25 September Monsaraz to Evora (B, L)**

**Walk time 4 hours, 18 km, elevation gain 57 m**

**Drive time 1 hour**

Another beautiful hike today following the 16 century Agua de Prata (Silver Water) aqueduct from its source into the centre of the city. On the way to Évora we'll have a few stops in some old Moorish hill towns. Evora is a fascinating walled city with a Roman temple, magnificent cathedral complete with catacombs full of bones, a buzzing main square and medieval streets with some great shops and restaurants. Near the town are some of Europe's most impressive stone circles and menhirs.

**Hotel accommodation in Evora**

### **Day 14 Sunday 26 September Evora (B)**

Today we'll explore Evora starting with an early morning excursion to the Cromlech (stone circle) of Almendres. This is one of the oldest (7000 years) and biggest stone circle complexes in Europe and is an astounding place – unmissable!

**Hotel accommodation in Evora**

### **Day 15 Monday 27 September Evora to Porto (B)**

**Drive time 3.5 hours**

On the way to Porto we'll stop in Coimbra – a medieval city with Portugal's oldest university. Porto, Portugal's second city is a thriving port at the mouth of the Douro River and is famous for its port wine cellars, the old Ribeiro district and the river itself. It has a friendly buzzing atmosphere and plenty to see between river excursions, great museums and wonderful areas of town with a really special feel. We'll be here two days to give you a chance to explore the city.

For an idea of what to do see <http://portoportugalguide.com/porto-guide/porto-in-2-days-itinerary>

**Hotel accommodation in Porto**



*Just cruisin' up the Douro River, Porto*

### Day 16 Tuesday 28 September Porto (B)

Porto is ours to enjoy for a full day. The options are yours! You could take a river cruise, go to a port wine tasting, or even catch a train up to the World Heritage listed, beautifully terraced wine growing region of the Douro Valley. If 'Tips for Tours' are running that would be another good half-day option.

**Hotel accommodation in Porto**

### Day 17 Wednesday 29 September Porto to Campo de Geres (B, L, D)

**Drive time 1.5 hours**

After breakfast we'll head to the town of Campo de Geres in the Peneda-Geres National Park, a wild region of mountains, rivers and lakes in Portugal's north, along the Spanish border. We'll have a stop near Braga to visit the Mamoia de Lamas Menhir (more Neolithic rocks). Once in Campo de Geres we'll enjoy walking around town or in the surrounding hills. This mountain village is a great base for our first hikes in the national park. The Geres Peneda region is one of granite mountains, lakes and rivers and traditional villages unchanged for centuries.

**Hotel accommodation in Campo de Geres**

### Day 18 Thursday 30 September Campo de Geres to Lobios, Spain (B, L)

**Walk time 7 hours, 24 km, ascent 450 m, descent 700 m**

We'll start from town and follow an amazing section of the Roman road that linked Braga in Portugal with Astorga in Spain. The route is also a branch of the Camino de Santiago. Beautiful scenery of hills and forest, Roman and Iron Age ruins and some quaint villages. We finish the hike at an old Roman spa (thermal waters) in Lobios. We're now in Spain! The Romans would have enjoyed a hot dip here after coming over the pass.

**Hotel accommodation in Campo de Geres**

### Day 19 Friday 1 October Campo de Geres to Pe de Cabril Peak. (B, L)

**Walk time 6.5 hours, 15 km, ascent / descent 782 m**

Today we'll take a circular route from our hotel to the granite peak of Pé de Cabril (1219m). We climb gradually across heather clad slopes on old shepherd trails to the peak enjoying amazing views over the national park. The rock formations are special and we should see birds of prey and herds of ancient cattle and pony breeds only found in this part of Portugal.

**Hotel accommodation in Campo de Geres**

### Day 20 Saturday 2 October Castro Laboreiro (B, D)

It's just a short transfer to our hotel in Castro Laboreiro, a beautiful granite village set high in the hills with a castle (castro) nearby. The Castro Laboreiro breed of dog is from this village and these big watchdogs are still used to guard local cattle from wolf attacks. Time to relax, explore the village, the castle and the surrounding countryside, or find a river pool to have a swim.

**Hotel accommodation in Castro Laboreiro**



*Alentejana cattle - endemic to this section of Portugal*

### Days 21 / 22 / 23 / 24 Peneda Geres National Park Trek

**Walk time 3.5 days, total length 81 km, total ascent / descent 2000 m**

This circular trek takes us around the best of the national park. High granite hills and rocky peaks, forests, rivers, lakes and stunning rural hamlets will be our companions. The scenery is perhaps the finest in northern Portugal and well worth the effort. We'll transfer to and from the hikes to our hotel base in Castro Laboreiro.

### Day 21 Sunday 3 October (Trek Day 1) Mezio Pass to Sistelo (B, L)

**Walk time 7 hours, 20 km, 650 m ascent, 750 m descent**

We'll climb gradually from the Mezio pass leaving the woodland behind to emerge onto the high, open land with granite outcrops. We follow a ridge above a deep valley and cross the valley before starting our descent on an ancient path to the village of Sistelo. Great views, a tough climb and some villages that time forgot. Sistelo has some wonderful espigeiros – curious stone granary houses particular to this area.

**Hotel accommodation in Castro Laboreiro**



*Stone Barns, typical of this area*

### **Day 22 Monday 4 October (Trek Day 2) Sístelo – Peneda (B, L)**

**Walk time 8 hours, 26 km, 1200 m ascent, 600m descent**

The wildest part of the trek starts with a long climb out of Sístelo up to the high pastures and open country that we traverse before crossing a steep valley and descending to our finishing point at the Peneda Sanctuary, a huge church in a tiny mountain village where the local people come on pilgrimage each year. Tough but well worth the effort!

**Hotel accommodation in Castro Laboreiro**

### **Day 23 Tuesday 5 October (Trek Day 3) Peneda – Cunhas (B, L)**

**Walk time 7 hours, 23 km, 100 m ascent, 400 m descent**

Today it's mostly downhill following tracks, so we'll be able to step it out! We follow the Lima River downstream from Peneda, passing picture-perfect mountain villages, traversing wild forests and idyllic mountain farmland. Finally we walk along the banks of a reservoir before traversing gentle pastureland to the tiny village of Cunhas.

**Hotel accommodation in Castro Laboreiro**

### **Day 24 Wednesday 6 October (Trek Day 4) Cunhas – Mezio Pass – Ponte da Barca (B, L, D)**

**Drive time 1 hour**

**Walk time 4 hours, 11.7 km, 380 m ascent**

It's mostly uphill today through farms and forest to the end of our trek. After the previous stages it will feel like a walk in the park! After completing this final stage we'll transfer down the beautiful Lima Valley to the small town of Ponte da Barca. The rest of the day is for you to relax and enjoy the town.

**Hotel accommodation in Ponte da Barca**

### **Day 25 Thursday 7 October Ponte da Barca (B, L)**

**Walk time 5 hours, 23 km.**

Today we'll hike a beautiful stage of the Portuguese Coastal Camino de Santiago to the fishing village of Ancora. We'll go mostly along the coast as the official route further inland follows lots of roads. The beaches, cliffs and scenery are brilliant and quite gentle after the rugged hills of the previous week. From Ancora we'll visit Viana do Castelo, a lovely port town on the coast, and one of the most beautiful cities in the north of Portugal. Its involvement in the Portuguese Discoveries and later on, cod fishing demonstrate its traditional connection to the sea. It has some great beaches and traditional squares and streets.

**Hotel accommodation in Ponte da Barca**

### **Day 26 Friday 8 October Ponte de Barca to Lisbon (B, L)**

**Drive time 4 hours**

After breakfast we leave Ponte da Barca and drive south to Lisbon. We'll stop half way to see the colourful beach town of Porto Novo and Aveiro town. Lisbon is a captivating city at the mouth of the River Tagus. There are some great museums (Richard, our guide's favourite is the tile museum), churches, the winding and hilly streets of Alfama, and the Fado music bars. The Belem district down by the Tagus River is really special and you can catch a tram there from the centre and walk back along the river waterfront. Best of all is the atmosphere – very laid back, friendly and very Portuguese!

We stay in the Alfama district of the capital which is the oldest part of the city. Most of the rest of the city was rebuilt in the 18 century after being destroyed by the 1755 earthquake.

**Hotel accommodation in Lisbon**

### **Day 27 Saturday 9 October Lisbon (B)**

You have the option of doing a morning guided tour of the city with a local guide. The extra cost is about € 25 per person. This tour will give you an insight and understanding of Portugal's capital.

**Hotel accommodation in Lisbon**

### **Day 28 Sunday 10 October Lisbon (B, D)**

Sightseeing in Lisbon or day trip to Sintra which has many trails, a fantasy palace and great beaches nearby. In the evening we'll have our last dinner together at a restaurant near our hotel.

**Hotel accommodation in Lisbon**

### **Day 29 Monday 11 October End of the Trip (B)**

We say farewell after an amazing trip through Portugal! Hope you managed to sample some of those tasty Portuguese tarts, port wine and enjoyed the ride...



*World Heritage listed terraced wine-growing region of the Duoro Valley, accessible from Porto*

## What's Included in Portugal

- Local European guides
- All vehicle transport in air-conditioned mini buses
- All hotel accommodation as listed on a twin share basis
- Meals as listed (**B,L,D**)
- National park entry fees and permits

## What's Not Included in Portugal

- International flights from your departure country to Lisbon, and Lisbon to your ongoing destination
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure days
- Any accommodation prior to or after the tour dates
- Requested single supplement cost
- All personal trekking equipment including backpacks and trekking poles
- Meals other than those listed
- Trail snacks
- Personal bottled water
- Cost of optional activities; eg Porto and Lisbon excursions days 16 and 27
- Compulsory travel and accident insurance
- Cash for extra expenses, personal alcohol, tips for guides and other services.

## Other General Information

- ATMs are readily available in cities, towns and villages in Portugal
- Your place on this trip will be confirmed upon receipt of your booking form and \$500 deposit
- A detailed gear list will be available to those booking on the trip
- Please note, this is a recce trip and minor changes may be made along the way due to factors such as weather conditions, road or park closures, or permits being unavailable. This is left to the discretion of our on-the-ground guides and **Take A Walk** leaders.
- This itinerary is a living document. Please ensure you download the latest version before confirming your travel plans and leaving for the trip.

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*Let's have fun in Portugal 2020...*