

Portugal: Lisbon, Évora & the Algarve

Bike Vacation + Air Package

Shhhhh. The Eastern Algarve and Alentejo's high plains are Portugal's best kept secrets—for now. This is the Europe of yesteryear: charming, simple, authentic. Let us inspire you with fresh seafood, deliciously affordable wines, and savory Mediterranean cuisine with refreshing stops for gelato. Discover alabaster villages splashed with blazing blue and get lost in their maze of cobbled walkways and cozy cafés. The route meanders through ancient cork forests, vineyards, and olive groves, along beaches and quiet roads made for cycling. Embark on a river cruise bordering the Spanish Andalucia, pause for a bountiful picnic, and become inspired by rich history. There's nowhere like two-wheeling in Portugal.

Cultural Highlights

Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Évora and the Chapel of the Bones

Discover the charm of hilltop Monsaraz

Cycle past acres of cork and olive trees

Step back in time during your stay in the ancient town of Mértola

Follow the Guadiana River by bike and by boat

Relax at an elegant retreat in the scenic Algarve

Savor Portugal's traditional cuisine and wines

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of rolling terrain and moderate-to-challenging hills. Our VBT support van is always available for those who need assistance. Ideal for energetic beginners and experienced cyclists.

Tour Duration: 10 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 11 - 37

Average Cycling Time: 00:30 - 03:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Mar 62°/46°, Apr 64°/48°, May 70°/52°, Sep 81°/60°, Oct 71°/55°, Nov 62°/49°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Mar 1.6, Apr 2.3, May 2.0, Sep 1.2, Oct 2.7, Nov 3.0

DAY 1: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Lisbon, Portugal

Depart from home and travel to Portugal. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary and airline tickets.

DAY 2: Arrive in Lisbon

Upon arrival at Lisbon's International Airport, proceed through immigration; claim your luggage and clear customs. If your luggage is delayed, fill in a PIR form before leaving the customs area; VBT representatives are not allowed into the customs area. Make certain that your VBT luggage tags are affixed to your bag so your VBT representative can identify you. After exiting customs, enter the arrival hall and look for your VBT representative holding a VBT sign. Transfer to your Lisbon hotel in the city center. Transfer time is approximately 30-45 minutes, depending on traffic.

VBT provides you with City Information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do in Lisbon.

Hotel: Pousada de Lisboa

Alternate Hotel: Fontecruz Lisboa Autograph Collection

DAY 3: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Évora

Please have your luggage outside your room by 8:15 a.m. Make sure you have your VBT luggage tags on your bags. After breakfast, meet your VBT Representative in the lobby of your hotel at 9:00 a.m. Please be dressed in your riding attire.

Your VBT Representative will escort you by shuttle (approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes) to join your VBT Trip Leaders. You will depart Lisbon via the expansive Vasco de Gama Bridge, the longest bridge in Europe, spanning the mighty Tagus River. Heading east, you will arrive on the scenic plains of the Alentejo region, known for its stunning vistas and abundant cork and olive groves. You will meet your VBT Trip Leaders for a bike-fitting and safety session. Afterwards, get to know your fellow travelers over lunch before departing on a warm-up ride amidst this scenic region of rustic farmland and gentle hills to your hotel outside of the historic medieval town of Évora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Your accommodation for the next two nights is in the Convento do Espinheiro, a Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa. The 15th-century convent is listed as a national monument for the many important noble figures

who have met here throughout the centuries to shape Portugal's history.

This evening, join the hotel's sommelier in the Convent's wine cellar to sample some of the region's wines before enjoying a sumptuous welcome dinner in the hotel's historic dining room.

Hotel: Convento do Espinheiro, a Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 10 miles (16.8km)

DAY 4: Historic Villages of Redondo and Monsaraz / Walking tour of Évora

After breakfast, shuttle from your hotel to the white-washed town of Redondo, home to a 500-year-old Portuguese pottery tradition. From here you will begin cycling across the plains of Alentejo, following scenic country roads bordered by cork forests. Our destination looms in the distance: hilltop Monsaraz, one of Portugal's oldest settlements, and its imposing castle. Enthusiastic riders may enjoy the climb into town; the VBT van will be available to shuttle you from Aldeia de Venda to Monsaraz if you need assistance or would like more time to explore Monsaraz.

With Monsaraz's ideal hilltop location and endless vistas of the Alentejo and neighboring Spain, it has been occupied by various civilizations since pre-historic times. After the town's Roman occupation, the Visigoths, Arabs, Mozarabs, Jews, and Christians settled here as well. As you explore its narrow warrens and admire its white-washed, red-roofed houses, you can marvel at the remarkable view of the Alqueva Dam and the second-largest artificial lake in Europe. Enjoy lunch at a local café before shuttling back to your hotel.

Later, you will venture into Évora for a visit to the São Francisco and its eerie Chapel of Bones, constructed by 16th-century Franciscan monks. Your local guide will then take you on a walking tour of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Évora, wandering atmospheric alleyways past old patrician mansions and white-washed houses with bright yellow trim. Enjoy dinner on your own in Évora this evening.

Hotel: Convento do Espinheiro, a Luxury Collection Hotel & Spa

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 23 miles (36.5 km)

DAY 5: Baixo Alentejo Region / Mértola

After breakfast, shuttle south to the small town of Castro Verde and other small villages for the start of your rides in the lower Alentejo region. Today's rides introduce you to the arid landscapes of the Campo Branco, or White Plains territory. As you cycle, you may pass shepherds grazing their herds on wide-open spaces. For lunch, we will stop at a typical Portuguese rural café for a farm-fresh meal with warm, welcoming hosts. After, shuttle or ride to the remarkable fortified hilltop town of Mértola and your hotel.

After settling into your accommodations, join a local guide for a fascinating exploration of Mértola. This town's history dates back to the Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans. The most important remnant from the 500-year Moorish occupation is the medieval mosque, the only mosque to have survived the period in Portugal. Today it is Mértola's main church, though it boasts many of its original Moorish features. This evening dine at your leisure in one of the town's restaurants.

Hotel: Hotel Museu

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 13 or 27 miles (21.1 or 45 km)

DAY 6: Parque Natural do Vale do Guadiana / Guadiana River Cruise

This morning begin your ride cycling from your hotel. If you prefer a shorter option, you may shuttle 15 minutes to the starting point of today's ride. Enjoy your morning cycling through the Guadiana Valley Natural Park, one of 30 areas in Portugal officially protected by the government. You will wind your way through small towns of well-preserved traditional architecture and coast to the banks of the Guadiana River. The river's small port village of Pomarão was specially constructed for the nearby mining operations. Here you may straddle the Portugal / Spain border with a foot in each country and half your body in Spain's later time zone! Savor lunch in a riverside café overlooking the marina. Then embark a privately chartered boat for a relaxing afternoon on the River Guadiana. Your cruise delivers you right to our hotel dock in Mértola. Those seeking a longer ride and challenging option after lunch may forfeit the boat excursion and cycle back to the hotel.

This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel overlooking the Guadiana River.

Hotel: Hotel Museu

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 10, 15 or 26 miles (15.9, 24.5 or 44.1 km)

DAY 7: Transfer to the Algarve / Guadiana River loop ride

After breakfast, shuttle southward to the Algarve and the banks of the Guadiana River. The Guadiana is the fourth longest river on the Iberian Peninsula and serves as the natural border between Spain's Andalucía region and Portugal's Alentejo and Algarve regions. Today's lovely ride traces the scenic banks on the Portugal side while providing distant views across the river towards Spain. Those looking for more mileage today may extend their morning ride. At the end of your ride, savor a tasty picnic lunch served by your Trip Leaders.

After, we shuttle (approximately 1 hour) to our lovely accommodations in the Algarve, the Vila Monte Farm House, and settle in to one of breezy, elegant suites. Enjoy an authentic Algarvian countryside experience, removed from the bustle of coastal resorts and embraced by a distinctly Portuguese beauty and tranquility.

Enjoy delicious regional Algarve cuisine made with the freshest of ingredients during your dinner here this evening.

Hotel: Vila Monte Farm House

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 14 or 27 miles (22.2 or 44.4 km)

DAY 8: Loop ride from hotel to Cacela-a-Velha / Farewell Dinner

After a sumptuous breakfast, enjoy a leisurely reel through the surrounding Algarve countryside with vistas of the sea in the distance. Our destination is the lovely whitewashed village of Cacela-a-Velha, perched on top of a hill with a view to the easternmost lagoon of the Formosa River. The village is home to the Fortaleza de Cacela located on the site of the original castle constructed during the Muslim period. Spend time exploring the village before enjoying lunch at one of the lively cafés. Alternately, you may have the hotel pack a picnic for you so as to enjoy lunch on the beach. In the afternoon cycle back or shuttle to your resort for an afternoon at leisure, taking advantage of the property's pools or spa.

This evening, join your fellow travelers and Trip Leaders to reminisce about your Portuguese adventures during a fireside farewell reception, followed by a delightful dinner with local wines.

Hotel: Vila Monte Farm House

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 20 or 40 miles (33 or 66.4 km)

DAY 9: VBT Bicycle Vacation ends / Transfer to Cascais / Begin optional Post-trip Extension

Our morning journey to Cascais will take approximately 4 hours arriving to your Cascais hotel at approximately 1:00 p.m. You will have the remainder of the afternoon and evening to explore the seaside town of Cascais. You will spend tonight at the Cidadela Cascais Pousada & Art District overlooking the marina and Atlantic Ocean or the alternate hotel Grande Real Villa Italia. The city is a pleasure to explore by foot. You will receive City Information in your Final Travel Booklet, with recommendations for transportation options, cafés, museums and restaurants.

. Air Package Hotel: Cidadela Cascais Pousada & Art District

Alternate Hotel: Grande Real Villa Italia

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10: Depart for home

After breakfast,* transfer to the Lisbon International airport (approximately 45-60 minutes) for your departing flight.** Please note: Ensure that you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated time.

* Please note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the Front Desk to verify the times that breakfast is served.

** Please note: VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Convento do Espinheiro Hotel & Spa (Days: 3,4)

The Convento do Espinheiro, Historic Hotel & Spa is steeped in history, it is listed as one of Portugal's

national monuments for the many significant noble figures who met here to shape the history and character of the nation. The 15th-century convent has been restored to offer all the amenities of a modern resort, including air conditioning, amidst a peaceful and inspiring atmosphere. During your stay, sample one of its five restaurants and bars, the indoor or outdoor pool, and health club. Enjoy a meditative stroll in the almost 20 acres of gardens, or a contemplative visit to its onsite historic church. The wine cellar features some of the region's preferred wines.

Hotel Museu (Days: 5,6)

A standout property in Mértola, the Hotel Museu—a literal “museum hotel”—rests on a foundation that dates back to Roman times, as guests can see from a glance through the glass floor of the lobby. Onsite exhibits showcase additional artifacts from the Roman and Moorish period. Tucked between the historic center of Mértola and the banks of the Guadiana River, the hotel offers splendid riverside vistas. Air-conditioned rooms are simple yet boast all the amenities of a typical 3-star hotel, and more. Enjoy dinner on the scenic hotel terrace overlooking the river.

Vila Monte Farm House (Days: 7,8)

Your hosts at the Vila Monte Farm House invite you to settle in to Portugal's picturesque seaside haven. At this unique and authentic resort, buildings are fashioned after the typical architecture of the Algarve with chimneys, terraces, and whitewashed stairways. Guests who are joining us on the post extension can indulge in the property's Junior Suites and Superior Suites, set among orange trees and offering all the amenities of an elegant retreat. The air-conditioned Farm House restaurant serves regional delicacies made from the freshest ingredients from local markets or from the resort's own gardens. Relax in one of the swimming pools or treat yourself to a massage in the gardens. The resort's Guest Assistants are on hand to help you customize your stay, whether you simply want to relax or explore more with several available optional excursions.