



## ALENTEJO

Where the  
plains that  
extend as far  
as the eye can  
see...

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# MAIN CITIES AND DESTINATIONS

Alentejo. Where the plains that extend as far as the eye can see.

To the north, the pastures of the marshlands; in the vast interior, unending flatness, and fields of wheat waving in the wind; at the coast, wild, beautiful beaches waiting to be discovered.

The vastness of the landscape is dotted with cork oaks and olive trees that withstand time. Here and there, you find a walled town, such as Marvão or Monsaraz, or an ancient dolmen to recall the magic of the place. Around the hills, low, whitewashed houses stand on small knolls, castles evoke battles and conquests and the yards and gardens are witness to the Arab influences which shaped the people and nature.



In the Alentejo the power of the landmarks the time and cities like Elvas and Évora, listed as World Heritage by UNESCO, show the tenacity of the people.

But you must also explore the coast. The landscape here is hilly and rugged, with small sheltered coves between the cliffs, many of which are ideal for surfing. You will also breathe the scents of the countryside here, the aromatic herbs that season the fish, seafood and other regional fare to be accompanied by the region's excellent wines. From rivers and lakes, all washed down with a white wine from Bairrada. In the sierras, you can try the Dão red wines



**Gastronomy:** The Alentejo has always been a great wheat region, sprinkled with cork tree areas and large herds of pigs grazing on the plains. As such, bread pork and olive oil are the bases of one of the most delicious cuisines in Portugal, seasoned with herbs which bring the aromas of the fields to the table. Soup is a main dish, and may be cold when gaspacho, filled with bread in the *sopa de cação*, or salted codfish (*bacalhau*) or tomato or the *linguiça* stuffed sausage. Bread also forms part of the *migas* dumplings which accompany pork and lamb (*ensopado de borrego*) or the simple *açorda*.

**Suggested trips:** **Évora** - a book of Portuguese art history; walk through its narrow streets lined with white houses, discovering along the way the monuments and details that reveal its rich heritage. **Rota Vicentina** - drive along and you will be accompanied by the ocean between jagged cliffs and, at times, you will be presented with seemingly endless fields of wild flowers. **Enjoy Tróia** - boat trips in search of dolphins, beaches extending as far as the eye can see, restaurants with fresh fish and terraces on the sand... this is the simplest description of a vacation in Tróia, ideal for the whole family.

**Explore Portugal's preferred landmarks: The Cromeleque dos Almendres (Twin-Stone Circle and Menhir)** - set in the beautiful and sacred Alentejo landscape, this double stone circle is now considered one of the oldest in Europe. **The Elvas Castle** - with the largest bulwarked dry-ditch system in the world. **The Ducal Palace in Vila Viçosa** - the last residence of the Portuguese monarchy; the main façade is completely covered with local marble and takes Italian Renaissance architecture as its inspiration; the building has three floors and each one, from the ground floor to the last, corresponds to one of the classical orders: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian.

