

# Eastern Algarve Christmas Guided Walking Holiday

**Tour Style:** European Centre Based  
**Destination:** Portugal  
**Trip code:** EALXL  
2 & 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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Uncover the area's rich heritage on walks to pretty fishing harbours and tiny unspoilt villages. Discover the rich birdlife of the salt pans and the Ria Formosa. Not to mention year round sunshine, which makes this beautiful area of Portugal perfect for gentle guided walks over Christmas. Spain is only 40km away. We also have Guided Walking Holidays for Christmas and New Year to help you get extra warmth this coming festive season!

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- A full programme of guided walks with 2 options every walking day
- All transport to and from walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leaders
- "With flight" holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms Half Board – continental breakfast and evening meal

## HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

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- Explore the charming and historic town of Tavira
- Discover the graveyard of anchors at Paia do Barril, a tribute to the former fishing fleet of the area
- Ride the water taxi to Sant Luzia, and discover its dedication to fishing and family run restaurants
- Experience the Tuna Village museum
- Enjoy easier walking between tiny villages and along salt pans

## TRIP SUITABILITY

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This is a level 2 and level 3 graded Activity, Easier walks: 5 to 7 miles (8 to 11km) generally through gently undulating scenery. Up to 700 feet (210m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 8 to 10 miles (13 to 16km) with some short but steep ascents. Up to 1,200 feet (360m) of ascent in a day.



## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel Vila Gale Tavira. Unpack and settle in.

### Day 2: Estoi Palace And Roman Ruins

The day starts with a visit to the ruins of a once luxurious Roman villa at Milreu. One of the most important remains at the Roman presence in the Algarve, and now classified as a national monument. After spending some time at the museum, we walk through the old town of Estoi before walking in the foothills at the Serra do Caldeirã. We also visit the Rococo Palácio of Estói. The French inspired palace and gardens was built at the end of the 19th Century for a local aristocrat of the Carvalhal family. Bought by Faro City Council in 1987. It is now a Pousada - state owned hotel.

### Option 1 - Estói And Milreu

**Distance:** 6½ miles (10½km)

**Total ascent:** 850 feet (260m)

**In summary:** Initially we walk through almond orchards and an old plant nursery before walking to an old quarry. We then head over the saddle and down to the Rio Seco, which we follow back to Estói.

**Highlight:** The ruins at Milreu are considered the most important Roman presence in the Algarve.

### Option 2 - Milreu And Cerro Do Malhão

**Distance:** 8½ miles (13½km)

**Total ascent:** 1,200 feet (360m)

**In summary:** After spending time exploring the ruins at Milreu we head for the summit of Guilhim, which affords us spectacular panoramic views. We descend on quiet tracks and minor roads to Estói, where we'll have time to explore the town, the Palácio and its gardens.

**Highlight:** The Palácio de Estói is a rococo masterpiece, with gardens to match.

## Day 3: Mata Nacional De Conceicao (Tavira National Forest)

Today we walk in the Mata Nacional de Conceição (Tavira National Forest).

### Option 1 - Around The National Forest

**Distance:** 6½ miles (10½km)

**Total ascent:** 500 feet (150m)

**In summary:** Our walk today threads in and out of the Mata Nacional de Conceição - the Tavira National Forest. We'll walk on good tracks, through lush woodland and farmland.

**Highlight:** The walk finishes at the Quinta da Colina estate where we'll be greeted by some welcome local refreshments.

### Option 2 - The Forest And Beyond

**Distance:** 9½ miles (15km)

**Total ascent:** 700 feet (210m)

**In summary:** The harder walk explores the area surrounding the forest, visiting tiny hamlets and walking through farmland before heading into the forest, and joining the other party at Quinta da Colina for refreshments.

**Highlight:** Watch out for the stands of cork trees; cork from the Algarve is considered the finest in the world!

## Day 4: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. Some options for your free day may include:

**Day trip to Faro and the Ria Formosa:** Explore the old city of Faro, the district capital of the Algarve and visit the cathedral, Gothic and Baroque in style. In the afternoon, depart from the Porto Nova; this gate is also known as Portas do Mar (Doors of the Sea) because it's one of the sites where you can depart on a boat trip to the

islands of the Ria Formosa Nature Park. You'll be dazzled by this wonderful landscape with numerous small islands, marshes and barrier islands that separate this coastal lagoon from the sea.

**Tavira:** Spend the day in and around Tavira and/or go to the beach. The beach in Tavira is a 'sandspit' beach, separated from the mainland by the sea and has to be reached by a ferry boat or water taxi. The ferry runs seasonally from Quatro Águas about 1.5km out of Tavira - follow the signs for Ilha de Tavira. An alternative is to use the little tourist "train" which runs every hour. The circular trip lasts for approximately 40 minutes, taking you into the old town of Tavira and out along roads bordering the salt marshes.

Local information website: For information on Tavira please visit [www.visitalgarve.pt](http://www.visitalgarve.pt)

## Day 5: Along The Coast To Tavira

Our introductory walks explore the area around Tavira.

### Option 1 - Pedras El-Rei To Tavira

**Distance:** 6½ miles (10½km)

**Total ascent:** minimal

**In summary:** Our walk starts from the resort village of Pedras El-Rei, crosses the lagoon and heads along the vast expanse of Barril Beach. We then take a water taxi back to Santa Luzia, before turning inland to return to the hotel.

**Highlight:** The display of anchors on Barril Beach is a spectacular reminder of the tuna fishing industry that once dominated the area.

### Option 2 - Livramento To Tavira

**Distance:** 10 miles (16km)

**Total ascent:** minimal

**In summary:** This walk starts a little further along the coast at a village called Livramento. The early parts of the walk explore the lagoons and salt pans of the Ria Formosa before reaching Pedras El-Rei and tracing the route of the easier party.

**Highlight:** The Ria Formosa is a nature park that forms an important habitat for aquatic birds - this walk provides great opportunities for birdwatchers.

## Day 6: Vila Real De Santo Antonio And The Coast

Today we have the services of a local interest guide who will join us on the coach from the hotel. Initially, we visit the whitewashed village where time has stood still at Caceia Velha. It has cliff top views over the Ria Formosa and the modern resorts to the east. Both groups finish in city of Vila Real de Santo Antonio on the Gardiana River, which forms the border with Spain. Built in 1773 by the Marquês de Pombal, it was based on the urban criteria used for the re-construction of Lisbon following the 1755 earthquake and was built on the site of a small fishing village and largely completed within 5 months. We will see remnants of the sardine and tuna fishing industry, which was once its main economic activity, before embarking on a short tour of the city.

### Option 1 - Sertão

**Distance:** 6½ miles (10½km)

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**Total ascent:** minimal

**In summary:** We walk along the coast from Altura to the small fishing village of Sertão, before entering the Mata Nacional das Dunas Litorais before ending the day in Vila Real de Santo António.

**Highlight:** The village of Cacela Velha, with its traditional whitewashed cottages has the feeling of a bygone age.

## Option 2 - Vila Nova De Cacelato

**Distance:** 10 miles (16km)

**Total ascent:** minimal

**In summary:** After a tour of Cacela Velha we walk a stretch of the Eco Via long distance cycle route through quiet hamlets and farmland. We're joined in the afternoon by the local guide as we follow the footsteps of the other party to Vila Real de Santo António.

**Highlight:** The fascinating history of Vila Real de Santo António brought to life by our local guide.

## Day 7: The Guadiana River

Today's walks begin to the north and east of Tavira on the Guadiana river, the border with Spain. They finish in Alcoutim for refreshments before our return to Tavira.

### Option 1 - Towards The Guadiana River

**Distance:** 5 miles (8km)

**Total ascent:** 500 feet (150m)

**In summary:** Starting from the hamlet of Balurco Baixo we walk on well-defined tracks towards the Guadiana River and the border with Spain. We follow the river from above, returning to our start point through vineyards and orchards.

**Highlight:** This stretch of the river is a protected habitat, and there should be plenty of opportunities to spot wildlife.

### Option 2 - Ladeiras Do Pontal

**Distance:** 8 miles (13km)

**Total ascent:** 900 feet (270m)

**In summary:** This walk starts from Balurco Baixo too, descending to the banks of the Guadiana river. After following the course for a short distance, we then ascend to Miradouro do Pontal for stunning views of the river, before linking with the route of the other party to return to the starting point.

**Highlight:** Finish the day with a well-earned drink in the border town of Alcoutim.

## Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

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## ACCOMMODATION

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### Hotel Vila Galé Tavira - Eastern Algarve

The 4-star Vila Gale Tavira is a stylish hotel in a fantastic location. Bedrooms are decorated in a contemporary Arabian style to reflect the Moorish history of the area. There is a large outdoor pool, wellness centre with an indoor pool, sauna and a range of treatments available. The large dining room serves an extensive buffet with a range of international and traditional Portuguese dishes. A short walk through the narrow alleyways of the town will take you to the centre of Tavira's shops and sidewalk cafes.

#### Accommodation Info

#### Rooms

The hotel has 268 en-suite bedrooms, which are simply decorated with a distinctive Arabian theme to reflect Tavira's rich and fascinating history.

All rooms have either a balcony or terrace, with either views of the central area and the swimming pool (extra surcharge) or overlooking the attractive rooftops of Tavira or over the salt pans.

There is air conditioning which can be adjusted, flat screen TV, direct dial telephone, hairdryer, shaving point, complimentary toiletries, and a safe deposit box (extra charge).

There is 24 hour room service and a laundry service available (extra charge)

#### Facilities

Hotel Vila Galé has an attractive outdoor pool (unheated) in an area landscaped with attractive shrubs and potted palms. There are loungers and seating where you can have a snack or drink ordered from the nearby bar. In the large bar area there are more comfortable seats.

The hotel has a shop that stocks English newspapers, basic toiletries, some Tavira souvenirs and beach accessories. Wi-Fi is free throughout.

The Health Club, open from 10am until 8pm, is free to our guests and includes a tepidarium with indoor pool (naturally lit), Turkish bath, Jacuzzi, gym and some treatment rooms (extra charge for any treatments booked).

#### Food & Drink

Our holidays at Tavira are Half Board with continental breakfast and a 3-course evening meal.

#### Breakfast

There is an extensive selection for breakfast from a self-select buffet, including breads, pastries and cakes, cold meat and cheese, fruit, English cooked breakfast, teas and coffee.

#### Lunch (Payable Locally)

This can be bought locally from the variety of local shops/supermarkets or try visiting the daily covered market across the road from the hotel which offers a wide range of fresh and local produce from the region.

#### Evening Meal

The three course buffet includes soup, tapas, salads, four or five hot main dishes including vegetarian options

as well as a separate salad bar and side dishes served with a selection of vegetables. Every night there is a chef grilling meat. The hotel holds some themed evenings which extends to their menus. Vila Galé has its own wine estate and you can order these wines with your evening meal. They can also be purchased to take home.

## Your Evenings

In Europe, our walking holidays continue into the evening. Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer whilst listening to your leaders outlining the next day's walks. One evening there's the option to visit a Fado Museum to see an explanatory film which introduces the 12-string Portuguese guitar, before experiencing the emotion of the "Fado".

## TRAVEL DETAILS

### THE HASSLE FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' and choose between Gatwick and Manchester flights to Faro airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 45 minutes to the Hotel Vila Galé Tavira.

### THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However, below are some suggestions to help you reach your destination:

- We can book you a seat on the **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from Faro airport. This is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights\* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £16.50
- Why not let us book you a **private taxi transfer** at a cost of £71 per single taxi journey?

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

\* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

### What To Bring

#### Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include

spares).

- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

## Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

## Useful Information

**Language:** Portuguese

**Currency:** Euro

**Changing money:** There are several ATM machines in Tavira where you can obtain money.

**Electricity:** 220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

**Tap water:** Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

**Telephone code:** If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial a Portuguese number 00351

## HOW TO BOOK

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When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

## PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.



**NON-MEMBER FEE**

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit [hfholidays.co.uk/membership](http://hfholidays.co.uk/membership) for details.

**BACS PAYMENTS**

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

**MANAGE MY BOOKINGS**

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

**YOUR FINAL BALANCE**

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit [hfholidays.co.uk/insurance](http://hfholidays.co.uk/insurance)

**PEACE OF MIND****ATOL:**

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website [atol.org.uk](http://atol.org.uk)

**MEMBER OF ABTOT:**

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

**TRIP NOTE VALIDITY**

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the

team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

## PRICE GUARANTEE

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We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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