

# Walking the Western Algarve Coastal Trails

**Tour Style:** European walking holidays

**Destination:** Portugal

**Trip code:** AGLCL

2 & 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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Stretching from Silves to the Atlantic seaboard, the Western Algarve is perfect for walkers keen to navigate dramatic cliffs, secluded coves, and unspoilt beaches. Highlights include exploring the pine, oak, and eucalyptus forests around the Serra de Monchique, taking in Atlantic Ocean views on the Seven Hanging Valleys trail, and spending time in historic towns and villages where Phoenician, Carthaginian, Roman, and Moorish conquerors have all left their mark.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Full programme of guided walks led by local HF Holidays Leaders
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- A 4-star seafront hotel in Sagres
- Guaranteed partial sea view rooms
- Half-board (breakfast and evening meal)
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)

- Air-conditioned transport
- Return flights from the UK including hold baggage and airport transfers

## HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

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- Discovering this wild and western coast on foot
- Exploring charming fishing villages
- Visiting Cape St Vincent, Europe's most south-westerly point
- Heading for the hills of the Serra de Monchique
- Walking the famous Seven Hanging Valleys Trail
- Staying in the charming coastal town of Sagres

## TRIP SUITABILITY

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This is a level 2 and level 3 graded Activity, Easier walks: 4 to 7 miles (6½ to 11km) sometimes on rough and rocky paths. Up to 700 feet (210m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 6 to 11 miles (9½ to 17½km) sometimes on rough and rocky paths. Up to 1,300 feet (390m) of ascent in a day.

## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: ARRIVAL DAY

Arrive at your hotel in Sagres. Unpack and settle in.

### Day 2: ALVOR ESTUARY

The Alvor estuary has helped life thrive on the western Algarve for centuries. Not only do the village's fishermen net clams and oysters here, but countless species of bird gather to do the same. Evidence of this tidal lagoon's importance throughout the ages can be found at Abicada – the remarkable ruins of a Roman villa that archaeologists believe once belonged to a wealthy seafood merchant.

#### Option 1 - Mexilhoeira Grande

**Distance:** 4.75miles (7.64km)

**Ascent:** 131ft (40m)

Our easier walk begins in the village of Mexilhoeira Grande. We'll set off on a circular route that starts from the train station and follows a track by the railway line. Passing by the salt pans and trickling waters of the Odiáxere stream on the right, we'll walk through toad marshland – a prime spot for catching sight of Alvor's birds of prey.

#### Option 2 - Mexilhoeira Grande To Alvor

**Distance:** 8.23 miles (13.26km)

**Ascent:** 308ft (94m)

The harder walk will start in Figueira and journey south along the estuary. We'll pass the Roman ruins at Abicada and head east to follow a path rich in wildlife. There'll be time to explore the coast and find the Fishermen's Cave before arriving in Alvor where we'll walk along waterfront paths to discover the unique habitats that have formed where the lagoon meets the sea.

## Day 3: SAGRES

The soaring sea cliffs of Sagres provide views over some of the Algarve's most dramatic scenery. Europe's most south-westerly point is Cape St Vincent, a wild, windswept headland of jagged cliffs that rise to 70 metres above the crashing waves. Perched atop the churning waters of the Atlantic Ocean, Fort Sagres tells the tale of Portugal's maritime history while Cape St Vincent Lighthouse helps ships avoid disaster by throwing out a beam visible from 60 miles – it's with one of Europe's brightest lighthouses.

### Option 1 - The History Of The Empire: Sagres To Beliche Fortress

**Distance:** 6.44miles (10.38km)

**Ascent:** 493ft (181m)

This walk begins when we cross the beautiful city of Sagres to visit the Fort Sagres. Built to protect the town from coastal invasion, this 15 century fort sits on a blustery outcrop that has had religious significance since Neolithic times. Ships often sheltered here waiting for calmer seas before rounding Cape St Vincent to avoid being smashed against the coastal rocks. We'll then walk west along the coast, following clifftop paths used by local fishermen for centuries. After exploring beaches, coves, and small bays, we end our walk at the Beliche Fortress.

### Option 2 - The History Of The Empire: Sagres To Telheiro Beach

**Distance:** 10.04 miles (16.17km)

**Ascent:** 807ft (246m)

Our harder option follows the same route as option 1 but continues beyond Beliche Fortress to Cape St Vincent. From here, we will head north along the coastal path until we arrive at Telheiro's Beach. Along the way, we will have the opportunity to look over the Seagulls Rock.

## Day 4: MONCHIQUE MOUNTAIN RANGE

A panoramic landscape of sea and mountains scattered with small, whitewashed villages, the Monchique Mountains are almost made for trekking. This igneous rock massif of low mountains is famous for its diverse indigenous wildlife and features two of the Algarve's tallest peaks - Foia and Picota at 997 and 773 metres respectively.

### Option 1 - Monchique Mountain Range: Alferce Castle Ruins

**Distance:** 5.68 miles (9.15km)

**Ascent:** 1614ft (492m)

After an hour's drive, we'll arrive to Alferce and begin our walk. Heading north, we'll get great views over the Demo Valley and the Monchique range, as well as small glimpses of the sea and the distant Odelouca and Arade dams. After a long, zigzagging descent, the path arrives at the junction of Barranco do Demo. Crossing the stream, we'll begin a steady ascent that leads to the archaeological site of Cerro do Castelode Alferce - an Islamic fortification which was probably erected in the 9th century AD.

### Option 2 - The Algarvian Way: Monchique To Alferce Castle Ruins

**Distance:** 9.75miles (15.70km)

**Ascent:** 2191ft (668m)

Today's harder option will begin with an hour's drive to Monchique. Heading downhill through a magnificent

cork oak forest, we'll cross a large section of the Monchique Mountains using centuries-old dirt paths. Passing many a charming village we'll eventually arrive in Alferce, and follow the same route as option one until we reach the archaeological site of Cerro do Castelo de Alferce.

## Day 5: 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. Options include:

### Lagos:

This historic town is easily accessible by bus. Take a stroll through the warren of cobbled streets in its old town to see ancient Roman and Moorish walls or head to the waterfront to explore the pretty harbour. Lagos was once the capital of the Algarve and has a rich seafaring past. One of the area's heroes is Henry the Navigator whose expeditions to explore Africa in the 15th century departed from Lagos harbour. The building that housed Europe's first slave market – the Mercado dos Escravos – is still standing and is now home to a museum that details the cruel realities of the slave trade.

### Boat trips from Sagres:

Whether you want to see the dramatic sea caves at Benagil, relax on a coastal cruise or search for local wildlife on a dolphin watching trip, there are a variety of ways to discover the Algarve coast by boat from Sagres.

## Day 6: VICENTINE COAST

Wedged between the Atlantic and the Monchique Mountains, the Vicentine Coast has stunning landscapes, and lots of flora and fauna but very few people. Vicentina Natural Park is the longest stretch of protected coastline in Portugal and is sprinkled with pristine beaches framed by glorious schist and limestone cliffs.

### Option 1 - Coastline Pathways: Amoreira Beach To Arrifana

**Distance:** 5.54miles (9.08km)

**Ascent:** 682ft (208m)

Our short option begins at Amoreira Beach. Walking south of the Aljezur stream, we'll follow the Fishermen's Trail – a coastal path used by locals to access the beaches and fishing grounds. Sculpted by wind, sea, and sun, the natural landscape is a sight to behold here. Towards the end of our walk, we'll pass the ruins of Arrifana Fortress, before reaching the picturesque seaside village of Arrifana.

### Option 2 - Historic Pathways: Alzejur To Arrifana

**Distance:** 10.44miles

**Ascent:** 1142ft (348m)

Today's longer walk will start in Alzejur and make a steady ascent to the castle for a panoramic view over the estuary of the Alzejur River. We'll enjoy some time in the town of Alzejur before heading west along the stream and arriving at the coast, following the path to reach Arrifana's beach.

## Day 7: HANGING VALLEYS TRAIL

Named for the seven watercourses that have shaped the coastal cliffs into spectacular formations, the Seven Hanging Valleys Trail is one of the Algarve's most magnificent hikes.

## Option 1 - Six Hanging Valleys: Centeanes To Marinha Grande Beach

**Distance:** 7.34miles (11.88km)

**Ascent:** 1066ft (325m)

This option takes us to Centeanes where we'll start our trail through these undulating valleys. The path is not technically difficult, however, there are a few places where the terrain is slippery. The coastal trail passes the Alfanzina Lighthouse and rises above Carvalho Beach. Along the way, there are many gorgeous lookout points where we'll see limestone stacks and natural arches around the beaches like Benagil and Corredoura. We follow the same route back until we arrive at Centeanes Beach.

## Option 2 - Seven Hanging Valleys: Carvoeiro Cliff To Marinha Grande Beach

**Distance:** 8.96miles (14.42km)

**Ascent:** 1201ft (366m)

Today's longer option will start a few kilometres before Centeanes by the Carvoeiro Cliffs and provides the opportunity to visit the Algar Seco rocks and the seventh valley of Vale Covo. Then, we'll head east until we reach Centeanes Beach where we'll follow the same path as the first group.

## Day 8: DEPARTURE DAY

Return to the airport for your flight home. We hope to see you again soon.

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Memmo Baleeira Hotel, Sagres - Western Algarve

With an enviable seafront location, the 4-star Meemo Baleeira Hotel is ideal for those that love the Portuguese coast. All rooms come with partial sea views and stylish décor, and you'll be just a three-minute walk from the beach and Baleeira harbour. The elegant restaurant serves a menu of Mediterranean classics, many cooked in its traditional wood fired oven. Other facilities include an outdoor pool with comfortable sun loungers, plus a bar and terrace area, perfect for alfresco drinks on warm evenings.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports\* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk)

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

### Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flights' and you'll have 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:

#### Shared group transfer

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You can still purchase a seat on our group airport transfer, but you must arrive in destination prior to the main group. It is your responsibility to book flights which allow enough time to meet our shared transfer.

Please note, all flight times are subject to change. If your arrival and/or departure time changes and no longer fits our group transfer, we will be unable to delay departure for you. Should this occur, we will refund you the cost of the transfer and you can either make your own way to the accommodation or we can book a private taxi transfer (at your expense). HF Holidays cannot be held responsible for your onward travel if you are unable to meet the transfer coach.

### Private taxi transfer

Depending on your destination, we may be able to arrange a private taxi transfer for you. Please call us up to 5 weeks in advance to enquire about availability and costs for this option on 0203-974-8865.

\*Subject to availability

## Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

### Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

### Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

### Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

## Useful Information

**Language:** Portuguese

**Currency:** Euro

**Changing money:** There are ATM machines in Sagres, with the Caixa de Credito Agricola bank just a five minute walk away from the hotel.

**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

## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

## 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.

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