

# Walking the Eastern Algarve

**Tour Style:** Guided Walking Holidays

**Destination:** Portugal

**Trip code:** EALCL-7

2 & 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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Spanning a vast space between Olhão to Vila Real de Santo António and the Spanish border, the crowd-free Eastern Algarve is characterised by rolling countryside, vineyards, lagoons, white-washed villages, and the salt pans of Ria Formosa Natural Park. Admire the 13th century Moorish castle as you stroll the cobbled streets of Tavira and learn about the history of Vila Real de Santo António – the Algarve fishing town on the banks of the Guadiana River, which marks Portugal's border with Spain.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Return flights from London Gatwick, including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- A choice of 2 guided walks per day with local leaders (on walking days)
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' accommodation in Tavira
- 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners
- All in-destination transport

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## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Spotting wildlife at Ria Formosa Nature Park
- Spending time on the beautiful beaches of Tavira
- Follow the Ecovia trail, passing orange groves and salt pans
- Exploring villages in the foothills of Serra do Caldeirão
- Enjoying coastal walks with Atlantic Ocean views

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## 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.

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## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel in Tavira. Unpack and settle in.

### Day 2: Along The Coast To Tavira

#### Option 1 - Pedras D'el Rei To Tavira

**Distance:** 5.5 miles (9km)

**Total ascent:** 30m

Our first full day explores Ria Formosa Nature Park – one of the most important wetland areas in Southern Portugal. Stretching for over 60km along the Algarve coast, this magnificent estuary is a magnet for hundreds of bird species migrating from Northern Europe to Africa plus a host of rare reptiles. This walk trails the golden sands of Ilha de Tavira – a stunning offshore island cherished for its wildlife-watching opportunities. After catching the ferry to Quatro Águas, we'll admire the snow-coloured salt pans as we make our way back to Tavira.

#### Option 2 - Livramento To Tavira

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

**Total ascent:** 50m

Option 2 follows the same route as option 1 but lengthens things by starting in the inland village of Livramento. This is a walk to explore the Ria in all its glory following the park's network of paths that snake between salt marshes, lagoons, and tidal flats towards the Ilha de Tavira.

### Day 3: Montes Serranos Trail

#### Option 1 - Casa Baixas Circular Walk

**Distance:** 5.5 miles(9km)

**Total ascent:** 220m

This popular trail passes through the traditional villages that typify Tavira's countryside. Along the way, we'll enjoy far-reaching views over the Serra do Caldeirão – a gently undulating mountain range that forms the border between the Algarve and Alentejo regions. Keep your eyes peeled for sightings of the impressive Bonelli's Eagle flying overhead. With a wingspan of up to 180cm, it's one of the largest birds of prey on the Iberian Peninsula.

## Option 2 - Casa Baixas To Cacopo Linear Walk

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

**Total ascent:** 300m

Today's longer route enjoys all the same highlights as option 1 but continues to the town of Cachopo. Alongside honey, wool, and cheese, this mountain hamlet is famous for its handmade copper cooking pots and traditional schist granaries. Dating from the 12th and 13th centuries, these structures are made from local slate and blend seamlessly into the sun-kissed landscape. Equally visit-worthy is the Santo Estevão Mother Church in Cachopo a whitewashed chapel that has been a place of pilgrimage since the 1500s.

## Day 4: Fuseta & Olhao

### Option 1 - Fuseta To Quinta De Marim

**Distance:** 5.5 miles (9km)

**Total ascent:** 30 m

Our walk today follows the Ecovia, a Path that extends from the east to the west of the Algarve, alongside the Ria Formosa, orange groves and saltpans. This is an area renowned for its rich birdlife, sea salt quality and tranquillity.

### Option 2 - Fuseta To Olhao

**Distance:** 7.5 miles (12km)

**Total ascent:** 30m

This walk follows the same trail as option 1, before lengthening the route to arrive in Olhão, with its historic narrowed streets, cubist houses, street art murals and one of the oldest, most famous markets in the Algarve.

## 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:

### Tavira

Spend the day in and around the town of Tavira or relax on the beaches of Tavira Island – an 11km stretch of golden sand washed by the Atlantic Ocean. Separated from the mainland by a water channel, this paradise isle can be reached by ferry boat or water taxi. The ferry runs seasonally from Quatro Águas just under a mile from the centre of Tavira. Alternatively, you can use the tourist train which runs every hour. The circular trip lasts approximately 40 minutes taking you into the old town of Tavira and out along roads that border the salt marshes.

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

### Option 1 - Altura To Vila Real De Santo António

**Distance:** 6.5 miles (10.5km)

**Total ascent:** 10m

Our walks today explore the wonderful sandy beaches and charming fishing villages between Tavira and the Guadiana River – the watery border between Portugal and Spain. Option 1 begins in the coastal resort of Altura and continues through Monte Gordo to the town of Vila Real de Santo António perched on the banks of the Guadiana. On arrival, there's free time to explore the upmarket marina area, take in the views from Faro del Vila Real de Santo António lighthouse, or stop for lunch in one of the many fine restaurants.

### Option 2 - Cacela Vehla To Vila Real De Santo António

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

**Total ascent:** 10m

Option 2 begins in the stunning coastal town of Cacela Vehla. Located within Ria Formosa Nature Park, this seaside beauty spot is most famous for its impressive sea-facing fortress which offers excellent views overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. After leaving Cacela behind, this route visits the picturesque seaside village of Manta Rota before rejoining the same path as option 1.

## Day 7: The Guadiana River

### Option 1 - Laranjeiras Circular Route

**Distance:** 5.5 miles (9km)

**Total ascent:** 245m

This walk takes us along the course of the Guadiana River from the charming waterfront resort of Laranjeiras to Guerreiros do Rio before circling back via the scenic hilltop town of Corte das Donas. Along the way, there'll be the chance to visit the Roman ruins at Montinho das Laranjeiras and learn about life in the borderlands between Portugal and Spain in the River Museum.

### Option 2 - Pontal View Point

**Distance:** 8.5 miles (14km)

**Total ascent:** 255m

The longer walk on our final day ticks off several incredible highlights. We'll hike up to Miradouro do Pontal to gaze out across the Guadiana River into southern Spain, explore the ruins of a once mighty Moorish castle, and follow sections of an old smuggling route once used to transport illicit goods into Spain.

## 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.

#### 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)

#### About Your Stay

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

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### Address

Hotel Vila Galé  
Rua 4 de Outubro  
8800 – 362 Tavira

Tel: [00351 281 329 900](tel:00351281329900)

## 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.

\*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 (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

## Vaccinations & Health

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) or [www.traveldoctor.co.uk](http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk). If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

## Passports & Visas

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

### Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport

(often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long. We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

## Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.

British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

## 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

## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

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

## Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

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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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