# Walking the Eastern Algarve



| Trip style: | Destination: | Walking Grade | Carbon Footprint: |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guided Walking Holidays | Portugal | 4 & 5 | 748kg CO2 |

## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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 YOU'LL LOVE

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

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A choice of two walks a day with experienced local leaders

- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights at the 4-star AP Maria Nova Lounge Hotel
- 7 breakfasts, 5 packed lunches, & 7 dinners
- Welcome drink on arrival & selected drinks with dinner
- All transport to and from walks
- Return flights from the UK with baggage and transfers'

## ITINERARY - ITINERARY

### 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 - Livamento to Tavira

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

T**otal 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 scentic 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.

## DAILY WALK OPTIONS




**Gentle walking grade 4**

The most active Gentle grade, with longer walks, some ascent, and possible steps, stiles, or off-path uneven ground. Typically, 6-7 miles (10-12km) with around 1,000ft (300m) of ascent.




**Moderate walking grade 5**

Some walking experience needed. Full day walks which may include some short but steep ascents and descents throughout the day, and varied terrain. Regular stops. Typically, 8-9 miles (13-15km) with around 1,300ft (400m) of ascent.

## ACCOMMODATION

### AP Maria Nova Lounge Hotel – Eastern Algarve

The 4-star AP Maria Nova Lounge Hotel is a smart, contemporary property in a superb central location in Tavira. Stylish and adults only, it's an excellent base for exploring the Eastern Algarve, combining comfort, character and easy access to local amenities. The hotel has a modern, arty feel throughout, with quirky design touches and newly refurbished rooms that are bright and welcoming. Tavira's narrow streets, shops and pavement cafés are all within a short walk, making it easy to soak up the town's relaxed atmosphere. At the same time, it provides a calm and comfortable place to unwind after a day out walking.

## FOOD & DRINK

Food and drink

### Restaurant & Bars

**Balsa by Quinta de São Sebastião**
Breakfast and dinner are served buffet-style at Balsa, offering a wide variety of traditional Portuguese and international dishes.

**Rooftop Nomad Restaurant & Bar***
Situated at the top of the hotel, the Rooftop Nomad Restaurant & Bar enjoys fantastic **360° panoramic views** over Tavira. It's a great spot to enjoy a drink at sunset or sample light tapas dishes.

**Pool Bar***
The Pool Bar serves drinks and light meals throughout the day, allowing you to relax by the pool without having to move far for refreshments.

On walking days, pack lunches are included and are provided by the hotel, making it easy to enjoy your day out on the trails without any extra planning.

The hotel can accommodate vegetarian and vegan diets; however, choice may be limited. Please ensure any dietary requirements are advised at the time of booking your holiday.

## ROOMS

Room

The hotel's standard land-view rooms are modern and well equipped, providing a comfortable space to relax after a day's walking. Rooms are approximately 17 m² and feature twin beds, a balcony and a private bathroom with a shower.

**Room facilities include:**

- Air-conditioning
- Balcony
- Wi-Fi
- Television
- Telephone
- Safety deposit box
- Small fridge
- Kettle

## ABOUT YOUR STAY

### Facilities

- Outdoor swimming pools (large and small)
- Poolside bar between the outdoor pools
- Indoor swimming pool
- Spa and gym

### Location

The AP Maria Nova Lounge Hotel is located in the centre of Tavira, close to the banks of the Gilão River and within easy reach of bars, restaurants and shops. Tavira Island beach is around 4 km away and can be reached by a short ferry ride from nearby, taking approximately 10 minutes. The beach is unspoilt and particularly beautiful.

*Items marked with an asterisk incur extra charges, payable locally.

## VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

### Vaccinations & health information

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 or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

## PASSPORTS & VISAS

### Passport & Visa information

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

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

### Packing list

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)
- Swimcap (compulsory in Itialian resorts)
- 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)

## JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

### With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email 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)

### Without flights

If you are booking on a land-only basis, you can join the group transfer at an additional cost. To do so, your arrival and departure times must be in line with the scheduled group flight timings. Guests travelling at different times will need to arrange their own transfers. Please contact us before booking to discuss the available options and costs.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### 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

## 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.

### Holiday Tips for Eastern Algarve Guided Walking

**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

## TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

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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