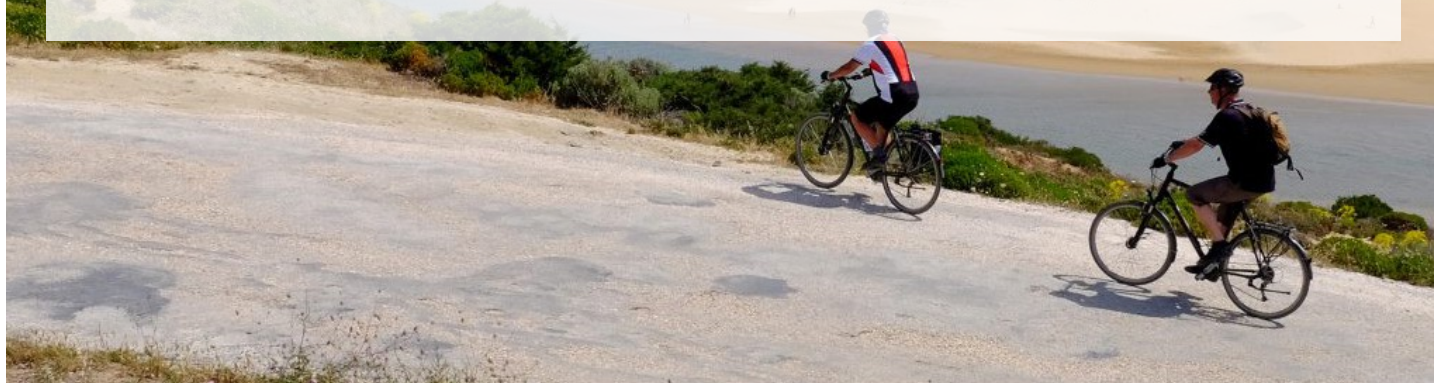


EXPLORE!

Cycle Portugal - Lisbon to Algarve

8 days

Portugal - Trip code CAL



Cycle Portugal - Lisbon to Algarve

On this cycling adventure we journey south from Lisbon, through wild coastal landscapes to the remote south-westerly corner of Europe. From the cobbled streets of Lisbon we follow the Caparica coast to the rolling hills of Arrabida Natural Park. Further south we cycle through the Costa Vicentina - Europe's largest coastal natural park - through an unspoiled coastline of white-washed fishing villages, pristine coves and superb beaches. Never far from the Atlantic Ocean, there are plenty of chances to have a swim or sample the seafood.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Lisbon** - Explore Portugal's lively and charming capital
- ★ **Sintra** - Discover the remarkable palaces and estates of the 'Garden of Lisbon'
- ★ **Ride the Vicentine Coast Natural Park** - Cycle the entire length of this wild and unspoilt corner of Europe
- ★ **Beautiful beaches and sunsets** - Different perspectives of the Atlantic Coast on our journey from Lisbon to Sagres
- ★ **Food and drink** - refuel and reward yourself with great local cuisine; fresh fish and seafood and Alentejo wines
- ★ **Cabo Sao Vicente** - Reach the most south-westerly point of continental Europe
- ★ **Sagres** - An historically important harbour town, surrounded by a spectacular coastline
- ★ **Aljezur** - Explore the old village and enjoy the views from the ruins of the medieval castle

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

CYCLING GRADE:**Moderate**

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Lisbon; evening orientation walk

Arriving in Lisbon, we settle into our hotel and after an initial briefing with our Explore Leader, there will be the opportunity to head out for a short walk to see more. Resting on seven hills overlooking the estuary of the River Tagus, Lisbon became the capital of Portugal after its conquest from the Moors in 1147. As Portugal built a global empire Lisbon became the hub of international trade and the heart of this maritime Golden Age of discovery, reflected in the monumental architecture. A devastating earthquake and resulting tsunami almost totally destroyed the capital in 1755 and therefore Lisbon appears as a carefully planned 18th century city.



Accommodation: Residencial Alcobia (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Morning visit to Sintra by train. Free afternoon in Lisbon

Today we take a train ride (40 mins) from Lisbon's Rossio Station to hill-top Sintra - the 'Garden of Lisbon' - where royalty and the aristocracy built elegant palaces, estates and gardens, each trying to outdo the other. The cooler, humid micro-climate here allows for lush vegetation to grow, which is not the case for the surroundings and nearby capital. We will explore the area on foot (approx. 3km) and you may wish to visit King Ferdinand II's colourful Pena Palace. There should be time for a picnic lunch in the gardens before we return to Lisbon in the afternoon. The rest of the day is left free to stay longer in Sintra or discover more of Lisbon, perhaps even riding an old-fashioned tram to see the contrasting and characterful neighbourhoods. In the evening you have the option to attend a fado performance - the melancholic melodies of the people of Lisbon or Lisboaetas.

No cycling today.



Accommodation: Residencial Alcobia (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Ferry across the Tagus and coastal cycling to Cape Espichel

Today we leave the capital behind and strike south on our journey. After breakfast there will be some time to ensure all are happy with our bikes and to make any minor adjustments. We then begin the first cycling section of the holiday from Lisbon south and ride directly from the hotel through downtown Lisbon and onto Belem district, derived from the Portuguese word for Bethlehem, where we cross the Tagus by ferry. Our route then takes us along the Coast Caparica, sometimes parallel to the sea and other times inland, passing Albufeira Lake until we reach the lighthouse on Cape Espichel where the ride ends. From here we take taxis a short distance to our hotel in Sesimbra. Once a small fishing village, Sesimbra is now a pleasant beach town with great seafood restaurants and an old Moorish fort overlooking the sands. Around 20% of the route today is on a good unpaved surface, 80% paved. The Tour Leader will cycle with the group today and tomorrow while the support vehicle transports the luggage.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 59 kilometres (total 550 metres accumulated ascent and 430 metres descent).



Accommodation: Pension Residencial Nautico (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Cycle through Arrabida Natural Park to Setubal

Today we ride to Setubal passing the rolling hills of the Serra da Arrabida. The stunning coastal scenery is somewhat greener than the south and contrasts the deep blue Atlantic with the greens of the pine-forested hills. Along the way we pass little bays and beaches and will make time for a refreshing dip. Finally we reach our hotel in the thriving port town of Setubal where you can take a walk through the pedestrianised old town and even up to the hilltop fortress for panoramic views. Another opportunity to try wonderful fresh seafood with local wines. Around 10% of the route today is on a good unpaved surface.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (total 730 metres accumulated ascent and 720 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Arangues (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Into the Alentejo region and cycle to Vila Nova de Milfontes

We start the day with a bus ride (1.5hrs) south into the region of Alentejo (literally the land 'beyond' the River Tagus). The second cycling section of the holiday starts in the little coastal town of Sines from where we head south to Vila Nova de Milfontes. Shortly after starting we enter the protected lands of the Vicentine Coast Natural Park - Europe's largest coastal natural park. The remainder of the trip is within this huge park as we cycle south until Sagres, mostly on inland routes but always returning occasionally to the stunning coastline of rugged cliffs and miles of unspoilt beaches constantly pounded by the Atlantic Ocean. Relax in the unhurried town of Vila Nova and take a stroll down to the harbour and explore the old quarter. Around 35% of the route today is on a good unpaved surface. From today and for the remaining three days cycling, the Tour Leader will drive the support vehicle, accompanying the ride wherever necessary or possible, providing clear instructions throughout the ride so you can navigate and cycle individually or as a group.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 27 kilometres (total 220 metres accumulated ascent and 230 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Milfontes Beach (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Continue cycling down the Vicentine Coast to historic Aljezur village

Today is our longest ride as we continue south on another ride past wild coastlines and white-washed fishing villages. The final part of our ride is in the Algarve region, whose name dates back to Moorish time mean simply 'the west' in Arabic. We see the 'untouched' Algarve on the Atlantic Coast, far removed from the golf courses and beach resorts further east. Today's cycle ride ends in in the charming historical village of Aljezur. We recommend a stroll around its compact and well-preserved old quarter and, time permitting; you can choose to visit the ruins of the medieval castle with great views over the surrounding area. Around 15% of the route today is on a good unpaved surface.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 66 kilometres (total 650 metres accumulated ascent and descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Vicentina (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Cycle past great wild beaches to Cape Sao Vicente lighthouse

Our final ride passes some of the greatest wild beaches on the west coast on our route to the lighthouse at Cabo Sao Vicente - the most south-westerly point of continental Europe. Our final destination is the historically important port town of Sagres. It was here

that Prince Henry the Navigator founded his navigation school during the 'Age of the Discoveries' and the Fortaleza de Sagres castle, rebuilt in the 18th century. Modern day Sagres is a small tranquil town with a picturesque harbour and several nearby beaches. Within a short walking distance of our hotel is a choice of local restaurants and bars to celebrate the end of our ride. Around 15% of the route today is on a good unpaved surface.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 61 kilometres (total 760 metres accumulated ascent and 730 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Navigator (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

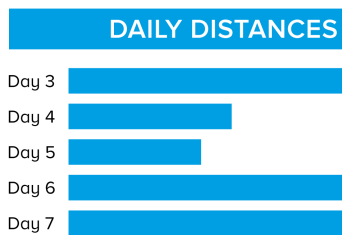
DAY 8 - Trip ends at Faro Airport

Our trip ends this morning at Faro airport, just one hour and twenty minutes by bus from Sagres.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information



General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 248 km over five days (an average of 50 km per day). We generally cycle on quiet tarmac roads, cycle paths and off-road routes in good condition. The cycle rides are not accompanied by a cycle guide, except on days 3 and 4 when the Tour Leader will cycle with the group. On the other days the Tour Leader drives the support vehicle, accompanying the ride wherever necessary or possible, and provides clear instructions throughout the ride so you can cycle individually or as a group. Each day a support vehicle carries the luggage from point to point. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

27 gear Stevens Galant or similar hybrid bikes.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 27 gear Stevens Galant hybrid or similar make and model and will be the correct frame size for your height. A pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet and water bottle.

Cycling grade

Moderate



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Ferry
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle
guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Portugal

Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a trip to Portugal - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The northern high plains has both extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. The islands have very different weather patterns due to their positioning and can have sudden rain falls throughout the year so waterproofs are recommended even in the summer.

Time difference to GMT

0

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Portuguese

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Lisbon: Sintra train ticket - 5 Euros, Fado show with dinner - 35 Euros, San Jeronimo Monastery 10 Euros
Sintra: Palacio da Pena 14 Euros, Moorish castle 8 Euros
Sagres: Public Beaches: Mareta Beach, Beleeira Beach, Martinhal Beach (transport not included)

Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require. Be prepared for wind from the Atlantic in general and some colder days on the bike on departures in April, May and October.

General: Pack essentially for mild or hot weather depending on the time of the year.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn.

Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

Portugal

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£15

Beer price

£2.00 - 3.00 depending on your location, well touristed areas are usually slightly more expensive.

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Cash-point machines are available in all major towns. Bankcards with the Cirrus logo are accepted.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be exchanged in all major towns but are not recommended due to the high rate of commission.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Ferry, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Portugal: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the

UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom. [Read more information about what travel insurance is required.](#)

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Portugal

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

