

Treasures of the Alluring Alto Alentejo



Starting from the peaceful little village of Aldeia da Serra in the dreamy Serra da Ossa, this appealing circular, full day drive will take you through the most beautiful countryside of vineyards, cork forests and olive groves leading to the region's treasures from the stunning "marble" towns of Estremoz, Borba and Vila Vicosa to the colourful potteries at Sao Pedro do Corval and Redondo, to the wineries "adegas" in Reguengos and to the ancient hilltop settlement of Monsaraz and its megaliths nearby.

Discover dazzling white palaces, imposing churches, convents and castles, elegant plazas with orange trees, gleaming marble streets, fascinating museums and delicious local gastronomy and wines at the many excellent, family run restaurants.

Highlights

- ESTREMOZ- Authentic, provincial "marble" town with imposing C13th hilltop castle, gleaming white Royal Palace, gracious squares, plenty of arts and crafts and a fantastic Saturday market.
- BORBA – A "marble" town too – its simplicity is endearing in itself as are its antique shops and cabinetmakers not to mention its great red wines and wonderful restaurants serving regional food.
- VILA VICOSA – Its stunning C16th marble palace "Paco Ducal" built by the Dukes of Braganca and its fascinating castle with a beautifully tiled C15th church within its walls – home to Portugal's patron saint "Nossa Senhora Da Conceicao".
- SAO PEDRO DO CORVAL - just a small village, but one of Portugal's largest pottery centres. See the artisans at work and be tempted into buying their colourful ware.
- MONSARAZ – ancient, walled, hilltop village with spectacular views of the Alqueva reservoir. Explore the neolithic megaliths "Cromeleque do Xeres" and "Menhir de Bulhoa" nearby.
- REGUENGOS DE MONSARAZ – for its numerous wineries "adegas" in and near the town. One of them "Herdade do Esporao" with a gourmet restaurant should not be missed.
- REDONDO – A simple, friendly town with a 500 year old pottery tradition, some superb wineries and a colourful biennial Ruas Floridas festival when the streets are decorated with paper flowers. Visit the pottery museum and if you are lucky seek out (near the castle) Joao Mertola, now in his eighties, still skilfully hand painting his pots.

Where to Eat

You can eat really well almost anywhere, but Borba has the claim to fame gastronomy-wise. Try El Canhoto (Rua Terreiro das Servas 1). A small, atmospheric family run restaurant with delicious home cooked regional food. The roasted rabbit is exceptional. Portions are huge so ask for half portions.

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