

MEDIA INFORMATION PACK, 2015



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The Algarve is the southernmost region in Portugal framed by a 200km coastline. The Algarve is best known for its promise of 300 days of sun, beautiful beaches, food, outdoor activities and award winning golf courses. However there is more to the Algarve than first meets the eye.

All year round the region's beaches, nature reserves, picturesque villages, golf courses, castles and fortresses can be enjoyed in all their splendour. Day or night, visitors to the region can do almost everything. History, culture and the popular local cuisine are readily available all year round.



Access to the Algarve from the UK

The capital of the Algarve is Faro which is also the location of the nearest airport (FAO)

- Faro Airport is **2 ½ hours from London (LHR) & (LGW)** and is served by 26 UK airports.
- There are a number of different airlines that travel to Faro with direct flights throughout the year.
- UK and Irish airports account for the top ten most popular flight routes, with London Gatwick sending the most passengers, followed by Manchester, Dublin, East-Midlands and Bristol.

NEW Routes 2015

- Barcelona: Vueling (June to September) 2 flights per week
- Madrid: Air Nostrum (June to September) 3 flights per week
- Aberdeen: Thomson (May to October) one flight per week



Weather in the Algarve

- 300 days or more of sunshine
- Winter months range from 10-18° C
- Summer climate can be at a high of 32° C.



Latest News and Updates from the Algarve

1. Algarve Spa Week 17th – 25th October 2015

www.facebook.com/algarvespa?fref=ts

Visitors can make the most of the region's 300 days of sunshine while indulging in revitalising programmes. With massages, thalassotherapy, reflexology and lymphatic drainage all on offer, visitors will be spoilt for choice. This Autumn the Algarve's annual spa week will take place in the region offering visitors discounts and special offers on a wide variety of treatments from various renowned wellbeing resorts.

2. Algarve named as Europe's Leading Beach Destination at World Travel Awards 2015

The Portuguese region of the Algarve is known for its 300 days of sunshine, turquoise seas and golden sands and now the region's beauty and offering has been officially recognised by the World Travel Awards 2015, winning the title of Europe's Leading Beach Destination. The prestigious World Travel Awards looks to reward and celebrate excellence across the tourism market and provides winners with a hallmark of quality they can proudly share with the tourism market. The winners of the 22nd World Travel Awards were voted for by travel agents and high-end consumers, making each accolade a title to be very proud of.

3. New Opening in February 2015: Casa Modesta

www.casamodesta.pt

Project Casa Modesta is a new project opening in the region which will focus on bringing back old traditions and providing an authentic escape for those looking for a retreat back to their roots. The whole project is based on a profound respect for traditions and nature, the overall aim is to rescue lost authenticity in the region. The project filters out urban influences and is designed as a country house / cottage, the design evokes a temple anchored to the Algarve's popular architecture.

Casa Modesta also offers a vast choice of innovative ideas, trying to portray the day of an Algarvian person and focusing on the local way of acting and thinking. The activities contribute to the concept of sustainable rural tourism by promoting local activities and traditions. The project's wellness concept is based on low impact physical exercise such as Yoga and Pilates, in groups or individually but all taking place in their own grounds. The vegetable garden with native products, offers visitors the chance to get hands on with the planting, pruning and harvesting of the product which will all be prepared and consumed in the gastronomy workshops taking place there. Workshops at the Casa Modesta include bread baking, corn harvesting, pottery, medicinal herbs and many more.

4. Hotel Jupiter: Located in Praia da Rocha, the four-star property is closed for refurbishment and is due to reopen at the end of March. There are 183 rooms and suites and five conference rooms hosting up to 300. Renovations are being carried out to all the hotel rooms, to include new furniture and décor.

5. Pestana Group will start the construction of a new hotel in Alvor. It will be named "Pestana South Beach and will be a 4* with 76 rooms. Opening August 2015.

6. Sheraton Algarve Hotel: Located in Albufeira, the Starwood Hotels property commenced the first stage of a phased renovation process in November, which will incorporate guest rooms, public areas, conference facilities and food and beverage venues. The venue is expected to reopen in June. Alongside this, an extension is being added to the property, providing seventy-eight new luxury suites, along with a new Italian restaurant,

a state-of-the-art health spa and underground parking facilities, with completion scheduled for June 2016.

7. Algarve golf courses triumph in Golfers 2015 reader's choice travel awards.



To win the 'Best Value' prize demonstrates how highly UK golfers rate the Algarve – not only for the quality of the destination but for the great value they get when they visit.

In 2015 visiting UK golfers will receive even greater value as the British Pound has strengthened almost 10% against the Euro in the past 12 months so budgets will go that bit further. To win three times out of the last four years is particularly pleasing and The Algarve will be striving to ensure that they retain the trophy next year.

8. Onyria Group to open boutique hotel in the Algarve in April 2016: The Onyria Group will open a boutique hotel in Onyria, in April next year. It will be called Onyria Palmares Beach House Hotel and will have 18 rooms and two suites, all overlooking the sea and a few minutes' walk from Meia Praia.

9. International Hotel Group Will Open 'Viceroy Algarve' at Quinta Da Ombria, Portugal in 2017



Upon completion, this luxury destination property will offer distinguished jetsetters and thrill-seekers an exclusive coastal enclave in one of Europe's most seductive locations.

Boasting 147 stylishly-curated hotel guestrooms in addition to 99 Viceroy-branded residential units available as apartments, villas and townhouses, Viceroy Algarve will reflect the vision of world-renowned architectural design firm WATG.

The property will offer easy access to the region's exquisite beaches and will feature seven innovative dining venues ranging from casual to elegant from world class chefs, two expansive outdoor swimming pools, an 18 hole golf course and designated golf clubhouse, an exclusive spa with ten treatment rooms and reflexology path, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, children's centre with various indoor and outdoor play areas, a library lounge, and over 6,000 square feet of cross-functional event and meeting space. Complete with top-tier amenities, the resort will bring an unparalleled travel experience to Europe.

10. VILA VITA Parc unveils new Penthouse Suites

As part of the latest renovation of the Main Building, VILA VITA Parc has recently unveiled two exquisite Penthouse Suites commanding the top floor of the Main Building, with balconies offering breath taking views over the manicured gardens and the Atlantic Ocean.

The two 105 sq. mts. suites are decorated in an elegant and fresh contemporary style, each with a distinctive palette of Atlantic blue or coral red. Each suite features hardwood floors, high ceilings, an airy lounge with "Pillopipe" sofas by designer Paula Navone and a cosy fireplace. It also boasts a separate dining area for 6 guests and is complemented by an elegant bedroom with sumptuous luxury furniture, and a large bathroom with a mosaic-tiled wall, bathtub and steam shower.

The suites also offer a fully equipped kitchen with a service entrance for the personal butler, as well as a guest toilet. Plus, a magnificent balcony with daybeds and al-fresco dining, offering the ideal private spot under the sun. Furthermore, both suites feature state-of-the-art technology which includes 65' interactive TV system and can be expanded with an additional connecting Deluxe room.



11. Vila Joya Restaurant Ranked No.22 on the World's 50 Best Restaurants List

The Vila Joya Restaurant in the Algarve has been ranked No.22 on the World's 50 Best Restaurant list, moving up fifteen spots since 2013. The restaurant is located at the Vila Joya Luxury Spa and Beach Resort on the Algarve. The executive chef Dieter Koschina, is originally from Austria and has worked at many leading establishments in Vienna and Germany before moving to Portugal over 20 years ago. Dieter Koschina combines northern European cooking techniques with Portuguese produce to create his famous original and delicious dishes.

12. Opening of the "Discovery Museum" - Lagos November 2014

<http://www.museuceradescobrimentos.com/>

The first wax museum which portrays the epic voyage of several navigators which set sail from the Algarve to discover the world opened in November 2014. The museum located in the marina of Lagos displays 16 scenes comprising of 22 wax characters built to scale. The project is targeted at visitors to the area as well as local schools and public.

13. Algarve resorts receive 2014 certificate of excellence from TripAdvisor

Vila Vita Parc Resort & Spa, Vilalara Thalassa Resort, The Lake Spa Resort, D. José Beach Hotel, Oceanico's Amendoeira Golf Resort and Holiday Inn Indian Restaurant Raj, announced that they have received the 2014 TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence award. The accolade, which honours hospitality excellence, is given only to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding traveller reviews on TripAdvisor, and is extended to qualifying businesses worldwide.

14. The Algarve receives 'European Golf Destination of the year 2014' from The International Association of Golf Tour Operators.



The world-class holiday region of the Algarve has scooped the prestigious title of International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) European Golf Destination of the Year 2014 - the pinnacle of golf tourism awards.

With six courses in the recently released prestigious Golf World Top 100 Courses in Continental Europe, the Algarve continues to provide a heady mix of world-class layouts and value for money.

15. New ATA Members:

Espiche Golf, Lagos: Located outside the beautiful town of Lagos, just minutes from the ocean in the picturesque and authentic Western Algarve, Espiche is a new ecologically-friendly golf course where nature abounds. This stunning resort offers the chance to play 18 holes across superb rolling terrain that blends seamlessly into the Algarve landscape. The resort offers beautiful villas situated in an ecological reserve with unspoilt views of the Monchique Mountains and local vineyards.

Monte Rei, Tavira: Situated within the beautiful Serra do Caldeirão mountains the Monte Rei offers up some of the best views in the Eastern Algarve. Designed by Jack Nicklaus this championship golf course stretches across 1,000 acres of stunning Algarve countryside. With remarkable attention to detail on all of the 18 holes Nicklaus has created a golfing haven. After a round of golf guests can enjoy the superb ocean and mountain views from the iconic Clubhouse with award-winning head Chef Jaime Perez's Signature Fine Dining. Beautiful villas are available for short term rentals suitable for family holidays and business trips alike.

16. Vilamoura Marina wins award for “Best International Marina 2015”

The prize of "Best International Marina 2015" has been awarded to Vilamoura Marina by The Yacht Harbour Association. The prestigious award is exclusively voted for by the owners of vessels which, in the year 2014, visited the Marinas classified with 5 anchors. Vilamoura Marina has held 5 anchors for many years; an outstanding achievement considering it is Portugal's oldest and largest marina.

17. Vila Vita Parc voted 2015 Best International Resort:

For the second time the Spanish edition of Condé Nast Traveler magazine has named VILA VITA Parc in the Algarve as the Best International Resort in the World 2015. Of the properties short-listed for the honour, VILA VITA Parc also achieved the distinction of being the only resort from Europe to be included amongst outstanding international resorts. Being a highly regarded international publication the award is certain to entice more visitors to the Algarve this year.

18. Jet2holidays award Dom Pedro Golf & Dom Pedro Marina hotels with “Quality Award”:

This award aims to recognize the quality of facilities and service offered by hotels. The award is the result of customer reviews from Jet2Holidays, in which the quality of facilities and services at Dom Pedro Golf & Dom Pedro Marina was highly rated.

19. Algarve awarded with 85 Blue Flag Beaches:

The official list of beaches and marinas distinguished with the Blue Flag in 2015 selected by The Blue Flag Association of Europe (ABAE) features 85 of the Algarve's beaches. With 3 more flags than last year, joining four marinas: Albufeira, Lagos, Portimão and Vilamoura, this makes the Algarve the most awarded region in Portugal.

20. VILA VITA Parc refurbishment complete:

As of May 2015 VILA VITA Parc have concluded the refurbishment works in the Residence building after an extensive 6 month renovation, which included refurbishment of 24 Residence Rooms and 3 Suites, and of the 2-Michelin starred Ocean restaurant. The Residence enjoys a prime cliff top location and Moorish architecture providing the ideal backdrop for this exclusive adult retreat with a luxurious and romantic atmosphere.

21. Finnish foundation agrees €10M investment in 4-star rural hotel, nature centre and meditation space

The Arto Carpus Castle Foundation (ACCF) has signed a deal to invest €10M in a new rural 4-star, 36 bedroom hotel. The 'Houses of Benémola' will be built in the Algarve parishes of Union Querença, Tôr and Benafim and is to feature a centre for Research of Nature and Culture of the Algarve Region and a meditation space for all religions and philosophies.

22. Group Pestana opens luxury hotel in the Autodromo do Algarve

The first phase of Pestana's 5-star hotel in the Autodromo do Algarve has been completed, providing on-site accommodation for those visiting or attending events at the circuit. 75 of the 198 rooms, all the communal spaces, meeting rooms, indoor pool, outdoor pool and the spa are now open, with the rest of the luxury hotel expected to be fully finished in the second half of 2015. The Algarve motorpark has also been chosen to host the McLaren World Presentation next October.

23. Vila monte Farmhouse opens following €5 million refurbishment

Vila Monte Farm House has opened its doors following a €5 million investment, €4.3 million of this was utilised on construction, decoration and equipment. This is the third unit from Discover Hotel

Management (DHM) who also renovated Green Beach Boutique Hotel and Furnas Boutique Hotel. Vila Monte offers a unique experience through its farm house concept and will help to promote the Algarve's wonderful local experiences.

24. Portugal's regional train company is set to extend its tourist ticket scheme to the Algarve

Cambios de Portugal has announced it will be extending its tourist ticket to Oporto and across the Algarve, following the schemes success in Lisbon. Tourists can now purchase tickets for unlimited travel, for two or three days, between Vila Real de Santo António and Lagos. Tickets start at €20.90 for adults and €15.90 for children.

25. Aquashow invests 1.5 million in new attraction

Aquashow Park Hotel which is one of the Algarve's biggest waterparks has unveiled its latest attraction, Europe's highest free fall waterslides. The latest addition to the park saw Aquashow invest €1.5m in two new exhilarating slides, 32m high and 129m long. This investment is part of Aquashow's dedication to creating a family friendly park that provides exclusive attractions and reinforces the Algarve's appeal to tourists.

26. Tertúlia Algarvia, the Algarve Tourism Board, and the Algarve Promotion Bureau launch the Cataplana Project

One of the most famous culinary symbols of the Algarve is the Cataplana, a pan that is used to cook some of the region's best dishes. To help tourists and cooking enthusiasts discover some of the wonderful recipes that the Cataplana is used for, the Algarve Tourism Board, Algarve Promotion Bureau and Tertúlia Algarvia have launched a new website - Cataplana Algarvia project. This provides visitors with Cataplana recipes and videos with eight renowned chefs, along with details of the project's cooking experiences which start from €29.50. For further information visit: <http://cataplanaalgarvia.pt/index.php/en/experimentar>

27. New 'spa' opens in Castro Marim, providing a water experience close to that of the Dead Sea

The Salina of Barquinha opened in June, providing a naturally mineral-rich, outdoor water-spa to those visiting the Algarve. The new spa / therapy centre in Castro Marim was set up by Água Mãe, a local salt producer and adds to the Algarve's wellness-tourism offering. The waters at Salina of Barquinha have high-levels of mineral salts, magnesium, potassium, iodine and iron, offering an experience similar to that of the Dead Sea. The salt is an excellent natural exfoliant, cleansing the skin without irritating, while the clay moisturises and absorbs impurities. Other naturopathy treatments are available to book before arrival at the spa.

28. Pestana Group expands portfolio with new hotel opening in Alvor

August saw the opening of the new 4-star hotel, The Pestana Alvor South Beach in the Algarve. The Pestana Hotel Group have invested eight million euros into the new hotel which features 79 apartments (57 of these are suites), three outdoor pools, a restaurant and a bar. The group upgraded an existing building to make the most of the location, creating a contemporary hotel that provides direct access to the beach.

29. Faro Airport set to undergo €32.8 million improvements

Faro Airport opened in 1965 and has since then played an important part in southern Portugal's economic development. With the airport now serving approximately 6 million passengers per year it has been decided that the Algarve needs, and will have, an improved airport. Work will begin next October and will see the €32.8m project create more operating and public areas, increase operating security, expand retail segments and modernise the terminal. The work is set to complete in March 2017.

30. The Algarve scoops Highly-Commended in the prestigious Family Traveller Awards

This year's Family Traveller Awards saw the Algarve pick up the prestigious accolade of 'Highly-Commended' in the 'Best Short-Haul Destination for Families' category. The winners were chosen by a panel of family-travel experts, including Jane Anderson (Family Traveller Editor), Jane Knight (Travel Editor of The Times) and Sue Ward-Davies (Travel and Lifestyle Editor of Elle magazine). 26,000 readers also cast their vote in these special awards demonstrating the importance of family travel destinations.

31. Vila Joya continues refurbishments into 2016

At the beginning of 2015, Vila Joya underwent extensive refurbishments and structural alterations, these will be enhanced at the start of 2016 with brilliant results expected upon reopening. Modifications to the Vila's pool, laundry facilities and heating systems have all been made to help lower the environmental impact of the complex. A new suite with a rustic, nature feel and a gymnasium have been built and all interior areas have benefited from cosmetic improvements. Vila Joya has also invested in fibre optic broadband which is now available throughout the complex, ensuring guests remain connected to the world while they disconnect from stress.

ALGARVE: On & Off Land Activities

Golf courses and beaches are images that spring to mind when thinking of the Algarve, however this region offers travellers much more than just sun, sea and sand. The Algarve offers travellers a variety of outdoor activities; whether it is on-land or off-land, there is an activity suitable for everyone.



The Algarve is **home to over a 100 beaches**; 85 of which are blue flag beaches.

The coast line stretches out over 200 km and offers visitors: coves, cliffs, caves, rocky beaches and sand beaches.

Top 5 Beaches:

- D. Ana beach, Lagos
- Praia da Marinha, Lagoa
- Praia da Falésia, Albufeira.
- Meia Praia, Lagos
- Tavira Island, Tavira

Trip Advisor recognises the beauty of the Algarve coastline with Praia Dona Ana, in Lagos awarded the No.1 beach in Portugal for 2015. Praia Dona Ana and Praia da Falésia are also acknowledged on Trip Advisors Top 25 Best European Beaches for 2015, occupying the 20th and 21st spaces, respectively.

All of the Algarve's Blue Flag beaches are family-friendly, providing safe waters and clean sands for visitors to enjoy. The calm waters of the east coast beaches of Barril, Tavira, Manta Rota and Altura are perfect for families and are manned by lifeguards while the vast sandy beaches of the central coastline are also popular including Rocha Baixinha, Vale do Lobo, Garrão, Ancão and Quinta do Lago. Beaches found along the Algarve's west coast number some of the most scenic and alluring in the country and offer fantastic surfing opportunities. Martinhal beach is also particularly renowned, for being perfect for families.

OFF LAND WATER ACTIVITIES



The clear blue waters of the Algarve are ideal for **water sports** where thrill-seekers can find plenty to keep them busy;

- Kite Surfing
- Scuba Diving
- Surfing
- Jet Skiing

The Algarve is home to some of Europe's best surf spots which are ideal for surfers of all ages and suitable for everyone from beginners to the professionals. Some of the best spots can be found on the Vicentina Coast on the western Algarve. The summer is ideal for beginners with small to medium waves for any level, whereas the winter attracts the experienced surfer and professional competitions.



The Algarve – a world class diving destination - Ocean Revival Project: The Ocean Revival project is an authentic and freely accessible dive site of artificial reefs. The project is non-profit and was created to help promote underwater tourism. This project began in 2007 and consists of 4 historical decommissioned navy warships which have been sunk to the ocean bed. Set just off the Algarve's Portimão coastline divers can enjoy safe calm waters, as they swim through Portuguese history (www.oceanrevival.org/en/).

The Ocean Revival project is situated off the coastal town of Portimao in southern Portugal. More precisely along the east side of the artificial reefs of Alvor, the bathymetric of 26 to 32 meters, with a minimum clearance of

15 meters. The reef is one mile from the anchorage of Portimão, 3.3 miles from the port and 2 miles from the coast opposite to Prainha. A carefully selected location for the following reasons:

- Very good diving conditions
- Good sea conditions over 300 days a year
- Still waters, safe for diving
- Water temperature between 14 ° and 22 ° C
- Excellent accesses and infrastructure
- A maximum of 3 hours flight from major European cities (Faro airport is only 40 minutes by motorway)
- Tour packages at attractive prices
- Wide range of accommodation
- Huge range of tourist and leisure activities (beaches, water sports, boating, golf, bird-watching, tennis, motor sports, entertainment).

There are also other interesting extensions to the project:

- An Exhibition Centre on land, where the history of the sunken fleet is documented with drawings, photos and films of the ships, the chronology of his career and documents about its historical context.
- A hyperbaric chamber, located in Portimão, at the service of the local community and available to any and unlikely emergency dive.
- Other routes underwater, including the identification, cataloging and dissemination of other dive sites, demarcated and protected, allowing divers to safely explore the many sights of the region.

Ria Formosa Tours www.passeios-ria-formosa.com

In the Algarve's famous Ria Formosa, lives the largest seahorse community in the world. This is a unique opportunity to be able to watch them in their natural habitat, using snorkelling equipment. Dolphins can also be observed from the tour boats which provide a comfortable and safe way to see everything this majestic natural wonder offers. If all the excitement is a bit too much, tours can be combined with a massage aboard the boat.

LAND BASED ACTIVITIES

There are many activities that travellers can enjoy while staying on the Algarve. There are a variety of ways travellers can discover new landscapes, local villages and nature in the Algarve.

Country walks, bicycle rides and horse riding allow visitors to explore the natural riches of the unspoilt Algarve landscape. All over the region extensive areas of coastline, hills and fertile plains invite tourists to discover the great outdoors. From weekend strollers and occasional rambles to seasoned hikers, the Algarve's footpaths, trails and cliffs provide breath taking scenery sheltering interesting species of plants and wildlife.

1. Walking in the Algarve

Via Algarviana - www.vialgarviana.org



Via Algarviana is a long-distance pedestrian path running from **Alcoutim, in the Eastern Algarve** all the way across the region to the western tip at **Cape St. Vincent, near Sagres** and crossing the Costa Vicentina Natural Park. The path has its origins in an old religious trail followed by pilgrims heading for the Sagres promontory, where the relics of St. Vincent were found.

The 300km path is divided into 14 sections, with five new connections and 12 additional trajectories, each beginning and ending in places that offer lodging and refreshment. Everything has been planned so that hikers can adapt their journey to their own pace, or just choose the sections that interest them most.

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Websites www.algarvepromotion.pt | www.visitalgarve.pt

Vicentina Route - www.rotavicentina.com/en/

In spring 2012, the Algarve launched the Vicentina Route along the rugged western coast of the region. The route runs from Santiago do Cacém in the Alentejo to Sagres in the Algarve and is integrated into the extensive European GR11 route part of the GR footpath network of paths, tracks and trails which will connect Sagres to St. Petersburg. 70% of the land in the Algarve is protected and the new route is part of a tourism initiative to promote areas of the Algarve beyond its popular coastline.

Eco Via: Eco Via is a cycling route that runs along the Algarve coast stretching across 12 counties, with a distance of 214 kilometers from Cape St. Vincent (Vila do Bispo) to Vila Real de Santo António.

Ameixial's Walking Festival: Held in April, this is a 3 day festival consisting of more than 10 hiking tours, a trail running event, workshops, nature and culture field trips, food tasting, handicrafts and music. Admission is free.

Limite Zero www.limitezero.com/en/: If walking doesn't fill you with adrenaline why not try the worlds only cross boarder zip line. A unique experience which takes you across the Portuguese boarder into Spain along a 720 meter long zip line.

2. Golf in the Algarve



The Algarve has some of the world's best golf courses with many courses designed by some of golf's most famous names. However, the high standard isn't only down to the designer with all courses having immaculate fairways and smooth greens, paired together with the fantastic surrounding scenery, golfers will be in golfing paradise in the Algarve.

The Algarve remains a popular choice for UK golfers and the region continues to invest in golf tourism with the development of new golf resorts and courses. The Algarve Promotion Bureau was delighted with *Golf World's* ratings which support the region's reputation as a top golfing destination.

The first of two new members to the ATA is Espiche Golf, Lagos: Located outside the beautiful town of Lagos, just minutes from the ocean in the picturesque and authentic Western Algarve, Espiche is an ecologically-friendly golf course where nature abounds. This stunning resort offers the chance to play 18 holes across superb rolling terrain that blends seamlessly into the Algarve landscape. The resort offers beautiful villas situated in an ecological reserve with unspoilt views of the Monchique Mountains and local vineyards.

The second new ATA member is Monte Rei, Tavira: Situated within the beautiful Serra do Caldeirão mountains the Monte Rei offers up some of the best views in the Eastern Algarve. Designed by Jack Nicklaus this championship golf course stretches across 1,000 acres of stunning Algarve countryside. With remarkable attention to detail on all of the 18 holes Nicklaus has created a golfing haven. After a round of golf guests can enjoy the superb ocean and mountain views from the iconic Clubhouse with award-winning head Chef Jaime Perez's Signature Fine Dining. Beautiful villas are available for short term rentals suitable for family holidays and business trips alike.

Quinta De Lago, New Look North Course: Quinta Do Lago's North Course has been revamped to design a golfing experience that is playable and fun for golfers of all abilities. The par-72 6,776 yard course has new greens, tees, bunkers, irrigation, drainage systems and cart paths with four sets of tees on each hole to accommodate players of all levels. The aesthetics of the golf course have also been greatly improved through the introduction of a cool season rough grass and the select planting of native grasses and specimen trees to help the environment. Set amongst 2,000 acres of the picturesque Rio Formosa Natural Park the golf course is located just 15 minutes from Faro airport. The resort has two other 18 holes course – South and Laranjal as well as extensive leisure facilities, including tennis, cycling and water sports.

Holes	Golf Course Name	Webpage
18	Álamos Golf Course	www.nauthotels.com
18	Benamor Golf Course	www.benamorgolf.com
18	Boavista Golf Course	www.boavistagolf.com
18+9	Castro Marim Golf Course	www.castromarimgolfe.com
18	Espiche Golf Course	www.espiche-golf.com
18	Morgado Golf Course	www.nauthotels.com
18	Monte Rei Golf and Country Club	www.monte-rei.com
18+9	Oceânico Faldo Golf Course	www.oceanicogolf.com
18	Oceânico O'Connor Golf Course	www.oceanicogolf.com
18	Oceânico Laguna Golf Course	www.oceanicogolf.com
18	Oceânico Old Course	
18	Oceânico Millennium Golf Course	
18	Oceânico Pinhal Golf Course	
18	Oceânico Victoria Golf Course	
18+9	Onyria Palmares Golf Course	www.onyriapalmares.com
18+9	Penina Championship Golf Course	www.penina.com
9+9	Penina Academy Golf Course	
9	Penina Resort Golf Course	
18	Pestana Alto Golf	www.pestanagolf.com
18	Pestana Gramacho Golf Course	
18	Pestana Silves Golf Course	
18	Pestana Vale da Pinta Golf Course	
18+9	Pestana Vila Sol Golf Course	www.pestanagolf.com
9	Pine Cliffs	www.luxurycollection.com/golfalgarve
18	Quinta do Lago South Golf Course	www.quintadolagogolf.com
18	Quinta do Lago North Golf Course	
18	Quinta do Lago Laranjal Golf Course	
18	Quinta do Vale Golf Resort	www.quintadovale.com
18	San Lorenzo Golf Course	www.sanlorenzogolfcourse.com
18	Salgados Golf Course	www.nauthotels.com
18	Vale do Lobo Ocean Golf Course	www.valedolobo.com
18	Vale do Lobo Royal Golf Course	

Please contact Lemongrass Marketing for Golf Media Pack for further details.

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 Websites www.algarvepromotion.pt | www.visitalgarve.pt



3. Nature and Bird Watching in the Algarve



The Algarve has become a popular tourist spot for nature enthusiasts and attracts visitors from all around the world. It has some beautiful wildlife and stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean to offer which will delight nature enthusiasts.

The Algarve is home to an abundance of wildlife, flora and fauna. There is a range of fun ways for nature enthusiasts to observe the wildlife that inhabits the Algarve from mountain biking to hiking tours.

The **Ria Formosa Nature Park** is home to a variety of species, situated between the beach of Ancão and the beach of Manta Rota just off the coast from Faro and is Portugal's largest protected coastal zone. **Ria Formosa Nature Park** is ideal for hiking and boating. It is comprised of sand dunes, marsh lands, lagoons and fresh water lakes. Its diverse group of inhabitants includes birds, fish, mammals and amphibians. The park is famous for its bird watching, with many birds resting and feeding here during the winter months. One of the most popular species of bird that you can spot here is the Flamingo.

Costa Vicentina Natural Park extends along the rugged western coast and is characterised by its unexplored countryside. The main attraction to this area is the natural beauty of its beaches and dramatic cliffs. An abundance of wildlife can be found in the Costa Vicentina Natural Park on the Algarve's secret west coast, where the stunning coastline framing the Atlantic Ocean offers a breathtaking backdrop.

The Wetlands of Sapal de Castro Marim - A natural habitat for a great number of animals, the Sapal de Castro Marim shelters some 153 different species throughout the year. These include flamingos, storks, pied avocets, dunlins, sand plovers and redshanks. An invaluable environmental heritage, it is an outstanding site that provides shelter and breeding conditions for many species of molluscs, fish, reptiles, amphibians and crustaceans. In the surrounding drier and higher ground, birds predominate, particularly passerines and birds of prey.

The Classified Sites of Fonte da Benémola and Rocha da Pena - Fonte da Benémola and Rocha da Pena are protected nature conservation areas which support ecosystems of great ecological interest. The 390 hectares which make up the Fonte da Benémola area, located between Querença and Tôr, preserve a diverse range of plant life not commonly found in the rest of the Algarve, as well as exclusive and diverse species of animal life which can best be seen by walking along the banks of the Menalva Stream.

The Alvor Estuary, nestled between Portimão and Lagos, is the most important wetland area in Western Algarve. A lagoon complex, it covers 1400 hectares of marsh and dunes, which makes the area an excellent place for bird watching.

Located and integrated within the Costa Vicentina Protected Landscape Area on the Vale Barão Stream near Vila do Bispo is the **Paul de Budens** marshland. This is a 134-hectare former rice paddy field which now is sanctuary to otters, tortoises, black terns and garganey ducks. Between September and October, you can watch thousands of birds migrating southwards.

The Leixão da Gaivota, located at the mouth of the Arade River, is one of the most important sites along the Algarvian coast for bird nesting. It is an islet near the coast, chosen as a nesting ground by white herons, black-winged stilts, European shags and purple herons.

Serras de Monchique Espinhaço de Cão and Caldeirão - The **Serra do Caldeirão** is the main Algarvian range extending from the banks of the Odelouca Stream to the rugged plateaux in the North-Eastern Algarve. Acting as a gigantic amphitheatre, the *Monchique*, *Espinhaço de Cão* and *Caldeirão* hills form a protective barrier for the lowlands of the coastal region, providing shelter from the cold northern winds. The breeze from the Atlantic also contributes to the unique vegetation of the area. **Monchique** is like a garden with breathtaking scenery and unique plant life within the Algarvian landscape.

South-West Alentejo and Costa Vicentina Natural Park - This nature park is the longest stretch of protected coastline in Portugal, covering an area of 76,000 hectares, around 80 km of which, located between the *Odeceixe beach* and the fishing village of *Burgau*, are part of the Algarvian coastal region.

4. Spa and Wellbeing



If lying on the beach isn't your cup of tea, the Algarve has alternative options to help you restore your energy and relax. There are over **40 spas** in the Algarve to choose from, thus it will not be difficult for one to find the right one to take away the stresses and strains of everyday life.

The Algarve region's tranquil surroundings complement the harmony of the atmosphere in its many Spas. Visitors are offered special attention including medical consultations with specialist technicians such as: hydrotherapists, beauticians, make-up artists, masseurs, nutritionists and personalised programmes are developed in which treatments are adapted to suit the needs of each individual. Just a few of the many treatments / experiences you can enjoy across the Algarve's range of wellbeing resorts and spas;

- Thalassotherapy (Sea water therapy)
- Therapeutic massage
- Sports massage
- Manual lymphatic
- Drainage and hot stone massage
- Reflexology
- Yoga
- Tai-chi
- Reiki

Please contact Lemongrass Marketing for Spa and Wellbeing media pack.

5. Gastronomy highlights in the Algarve



The Algarve boasts a wealth of gastronomic highlights including fine seafood. Drawing on fresh catch including cockles, clams, oysters and squid, local maritime delights are sure to excite every visitor's palate on the Algarve. Festivals such as the Festival do Marisco in Olhão celebrate traditional delicacies including varied shellfish some of which finds their way into the celebrated "cataplana". It is a local favourite made of mussels, clams, chorizo, bacon, garlic, onions and olive oil. When on the Algarve visitors are also recommended to try some of the regions famous fish stew "Caldeirada".

In the summer fig and orange trees are ready to be harvested and fill the air with a delicate sweet scent. In September it is time for the traditional almond crop. Unskinned, they wait to dry in the sun on roof terraces. When autumn is in full swing, the chestnuts are ripe. Locals enjoy them most at the traditional magustos festivals with new wine and watered grape brandy.

The Algarve boasts the most Michelin Star restaurants in the whole of Portugal. The following restaurants have been honoured with Michelin Stars:

- **Ocean Vila Parc - Porches** ★★ Michelin Stars
Executive Chef: Hans Neuner was named Portugal's chef of the year in 2009 & 2012.
- **Vila Joya at Hotel Vila Joya - Albufeira** ★★ Michelin Stars
Chef: Dieter Koschina
Ranked 22 World's Best 50 Restaurants 2014 by www.theworlds50best.com
- **Henrique Leis - Loulé** ★ Michelin Stars for 15 consecutive years
Chef Henrique Leis
- **Willies Restaurant - Vilamoura** ★ Michelin Star
Michelin Stars have been awarded to both the Chef and restaurant

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Websites www.algarvepromotion.pt | www.visitalgarve.pt

Enjoy fish and meat house specialties, or the famous homemade seafood ravioli.

For authentic Algarve cuisine, the following restaurants cannot be missed whilst in the Algarve:

- **Churrasqueira Ramires-** Guia - Best barbeque chicken piri piri in all of Portugal
- **Tertúlia Algarvia-** Faro - Great restaurant for traditional dishes; this restaurant also offers workshops on Portuguese gastronomy.
- **Paixa-** Vale do Lobo - Gourmet tapas bar in fine dining surroundings
- **Estaminé-** Faro - One of the most picturesque restaurant locations in the Algarve, located on Ria Formosa Park on a stretch of white sand dunes here you can enjoy fine quality fish and shellfish

Due to its geographical location and countryside, the mild climate all year round ensures the grapes ripen sun-kissed to produce high quality wines all throughout the Algarve region. Some of the most sought after varieties include the following: Vida Nova grown in Albufeira, Balsa of Tavira, Alvor Vinho Regional Algarve and Tapada da Torre from Portimão. The traditional Aguardente de Medronho brandy (traditional fruit brandy) and various types of liqueurs complement the long list of aromatic liquid delights from the Algarve.

Quinta dos Vales (www.quintadosvales.eu/arte) uniquely combines wine and art side by side and visitors can explore the grounds and its sculptures whilst tasting a selection of premium wines.

6. Cultural Heritage

When visiting the Algarve, visitors notice the little towns with their traditional architecture of white houses with distinct chimneys influenced by Moorish heritage and picturesque mills and windmills. Being traditionally seafaring people, in the Algarve the marinas and naval traditions still play a role in the coastal towns. Inland, traditional agriculture shapes the beautiful landscape. Locals keep the arts and crafts alive. Weaving, doll making, lace work, and pottery are still common sights and produce memorable souvenirs for visitors to take home to their loved ones.

Cork production has also become a popular tourist interest. Items such as bottle corks, handles for fishing rods, feathers for shuttlecocks, purses and shoes, cladding for construction, and thermal and acoustic insulation are made using cork in Portugal. The **Cork Route** from Serra do Caldeirão shows the process from the oak groves, to the extraction of the cork to the industrial transformation for end use. The route itself has also come to contribute to the protection and marketing of this product, of which Portugal is the number one producer in the world.

The rich cultural heritage becomes evident in the number of churches and chapels, castles and museums which are witnesses of Roman, Arab and further historic influences. Some of the most important to visit include the Milreu Ruins in proximity of Faro, Cerro da Vila, an archaeological site in Vilamoura and the Castelo de Silves (Silves Castle) which brings history to life.

Visitors to the region can take part in traditional regional activities with Proactivetur (www.proactivetur.pt/en/index.php). Taking part in the grape harvest, birdwatching, learning traditional fig, almond and carob bean recipes and getting hands on in potter workshops are all combined by Proactivetur who work in close collaboration with the local communities.

7. Kart Racing

The Algarve boasts one of the largest circuits in Europe, allowing three tracks to run simultaneously. As part of a large complex which includes a fast lane and an off-road circuit, it is approved by FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile). www.autodromodoalgarve.com/

Algarve Highlights – Must visit attractions



The Algarve region is a delight to visit all year round with golden sandy beaches on the coast offering a haven for sun seekers whilst the sleepy hillside villages further inland offer peace and tranquillity for those looking to get away from the stresses and strains of everyday life. The region is packed full of culture and history just waiting to be explored.

Vila Real de Santo António is 53 miles (85km) east of Faro is neatly designed on a geometric grid system. Radiating out from the central square, the Praca Marquês de Pombal with its dramatic paved radial mosaic floor and central obelisk is edged with orange trees. The town is on the west bank of the River Guadiana which is the river that divides the Algarve from Spain. Visitors can take river tours inland along the Guadiana River from Vila Real de Santo António.

Tavira, situated in the Eastern Algarve on the edge of the Ria Formosa Nature Park, is a must-see for visitors to this area of the Algarve. This pretty town is abundant with historic churches and fine mansions as well as a plethora of excellent restaurants where you can sample delicious local seafood.

Olhão, a major port town and the largest fishing port in the Algarve, is full of character with Moorish-style houses which are an influence from the commercial links with Africa. The town has two market halls offering a huge variety of fresh fish and sea food straight from the sea and the vast array of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables. There are regular ferry sailings to other islands from Olhão. Departure times change seasonally (and even weekly) so check locally at ticket office especially for the last return ferry.

The coastal city of **Faro** is the region's capital. Faro stands out as an important commercial, artistic and cultural centre. Often simply passed through by visitors as a gateway, the city in fact offers fascinating architecture as part of the region's rich history.

Faro Beach is the first of a stretch of 'barrier islands' separated from the main land by the Ria Formosa which has footpath access. If you have the energy to walk to the far end in the heat of August you will pass by many kite surfers, jet skiers, & patrons of the school of water sports, to get to a vast area of gloriously deserted beach. A bus runs regularly from Faro bus station to this island all year round. Faro Island isn't officially an island but is actually joined to the mainland by a narrow road that leads to a small number of parking areas. The island has cafés, restaurants, & some hotels/B&Bs. There is also a very popular trendy bar with music & wonderful views over the beach & sea. This island, like the other 5, is very popular with locals & Portuguese holidaymakers down from Lisbon & the north.

For visitors that are keen to see a traditional Algarvian settlement the delightful village of **Alte** offers just that with whitewashed houses featuring lattice work, handcrafted chimneys and narrow, cobbled streets nestling in the foothills of the Serra do Caldeirão. The church is at the centre of the village, and there are numerous little cafes in the surrounding area, to relax at and soak up the tranquillity of Alte.

Portugal's Southwestern coast is steeped in maritime history. The town of **Sagres** with its renowned navigation school and Sagres Fort, is famous for its mariner's compass and gorgeous sea views. The town is also located in the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentine Coast National Park which is home to a wide range of local flora and fauna.

Benagil is a small Portuguese village on the Atlantic Ocean in the concelho of **Lagoa** and the Freguesia of Carvoeiro (Lagoa). Benagil's sea caves is one of many caves along Lagoa's coastline but certainly the most stunning attracting hundreds of visitors each summer. Benagil caves were considered on the World's "Top 10 Coolest Caves" published by the American Huffington Post and appeared on a list of the "50 Most Breath Taking Places to Visit Before You Die" by Singaporean website The Smart Local. A number of boat trips to visit the caves are offered by local companies based at Benagil beach.

Resorts including **Albufeira, Armação de Pêra, Vilamoura** and **Praia da Rocha**, are among the Algarve's main holiday destinations. Offering an excellent selection of accommodation, beaches, marinas, entertainment and a variety of nightlife ranging from cabaret shows at casinos to lively discos and quaint, welcoming bars, it is no surprise that the Algarve has visitors coming back year after year.

Lagos, rich in medieval heritage, nestled in the Bay of Meia Praia, historically was a starting point of many naval expeditions in the past and still boasts a beautiful marina today.

A ten minute drive away from Lagos is The Portimão Motorpark. The race track was developed as part of an innovative global project, and has a race track, go-kart track, off-road park, hotel, apartment complex (Vista do Falcão Residences), technology park and sports complex all in one space and can hold over 10,000 spectators.

Events and Festivals in the Algarve

The Algarve plays host to a range of events throughout the year from food festivals and sports events to theatre performances and open-air concerts. Visitors to the region are spoilt for choice with activities and experiences on offer to suit every taste. The visitalgarve.pt website features full details on the annual [Algarve Events Calendar](#) and is updated regularly.

Visit: www.visitalgarve.pt/visitalgarve/vEN/NaoPerca/?categoria=0

Portuguese Style Smoked Sausage Festival	Each January Querença, a traditional inland village, plays host to the Portuguese Style Smoked Sausage Festival in honour of San Luis, protector of animals.	January
Loulé Carnival	The city of Loulé fills up with colour as visitors and locals gather to watch the vibrant parade. This procession of colourful floats with over-sized puppets, samba groups and lots of music is a huge festivity in the region.	February
Festival Al-Mutamid	The Al-Mutamid offers various musical events and concerts.	February
Monchique Traditional Sausage and Ham Fair	Visitors can learn about traditional methods of production and explore the fifty stalls to experience the true taste of traditional sausages made to age old recipes from 'carne de porco preto' (black pig).	March
Rally De Portugal	Vodafone Rally de Portugal	April
Flower Torches Festival	Decorated streets (decorated streets, flowers and flower torches) São Bras de Alportel	Easter Sunday
Sea Gastronomy festival	Typical dishes of the Algarve cuisine are presented with creativity, an alliance between traditional knowledge and innovation in the art of cooking.	May
Festival Internacional do Caracol	SNAILS festival in Castro Marim – to celebrate the Algarvian delicacy	May
Lagoa Jazz Festival	A jazz festival held in a natural outdoor amphitheatre.	June

World Superbike Championship 2015	Autodromo Portimão hosts the Portuguese round of this international superbike competition. A weekend pack full of exhilarating races.	June
Loule's Med Festival	World music originating from Morocco and various southern European countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal as well as other forms of art, including handicraft exhibitions, dance performances and street theatre will keep any visitor enthralled.	June
Oriental Dance Festival	Classes, workshop, performances, training ... everything related to Oriental Dance.	June
International Motorcycle Meeting	A meeting point for thousands of bikers who gather for a weekend with plenty of entertainment, making Faro the capital of two wheels.	July
Festival Al-Buhera	A festival consisting of arts and crafts, traditional foods, singers and musicians.	July
Mostra de Doce Conventual	Sweet Show - sweets made from recipes following the old monasteries traditions of the nuns. Made with almonds and eggs.	July
Festival Internacional De Jazz De Loule	International festival with numerous jazz artists performing. Food, beverages and other entertainment.	July
Arabian Days, Faro	An event that brings the world of flavours to taste, Arab culture and daily shows. Enjoy delicacies like caramelized nuts, baklava, couscous, tagines and kebabs.	July
Festival Da Ria Formosa	Faro's annual seafood festival – The venue is a park in the old town overlooking the Ria Formosa: the very source of the seafood on offer.	August
Festival do Marisco	This festival is held in the Jardim do Pescador Olhanense area in the town of Olhão. One of the most important gastronomic events in the Algarve calendar, the Festival do Marisco, is an opportunity for local fishermen to proudly display their catch on one of the hundreds of stalls that line the fishing port.	August
Sardine Festival, Portimão	This festival offers the chance to enjoy some tasty grilled sardines from the surrounding waters of Portimão.	August
Castro Marim and Silves return to the Middle Ages	During four days and nights the castles of Castro Marim and Silves once again plays host to kings and queens, knights in shining armour, jesters, buffoons, noblemen and ladies as the entire court takes part in a procession.	August
Festas Do Pescador	A Festival to celebrate fishing traditions. The fishermen's beach in Albufeira, with its fragrant sea breezes, is the setting for the festival. There are traditional spots to enjoy food and drink ("tasquinhas"), and musical entertainment with Portuguese folklore and popular music.	
Festival F, Faro	Music festival	September
FIA GT1 World championship, Portimão	An international championship for grand tourer cars held at Autódromo Internacional do Algarve, near the Portuguese town of Portimão.	September
Aljezur's Sweet Potato Festival	Considered to be the largest autumn food festival south of the Tagus River. The event is designed to promote and preserve traditional flavours and gastronomic skills, placing emphasis on a local and very special product of recognised quality.	Autumn
Feira de Santa Iria, Faro	Feira de Santa Iria is one of the oldest traditional fairs in the region. It is said that this fair goes back hundreds of years, as it is mentioned in a manuscript of 1596. The fair has a carnival feel with rides and attractions for the entire family: Ferris wheel, bumper cars, little boats and thrill rides. Local businesses and artisans provide information on services and sell hand-crafted products. Food products from across the region are available for dining, snacking or taking home.	

Feira Da Perdiz	Companies and industry associations, exhibitions, game species, dog contests, hunting demonstrations, falconry, crafts, regional food and some radical activities for the younger ones. Also musical entertainment.	October
Portugal Masters – Vilamoura (Loulé)	International golf tournament launched by the European Tour and the Institute of Tourism of Portugal and with the participation of some of the more reputed names of this sport.	October
Paderne Medieval Festival	The four day festival attracts a large crowds to Paderne over the New Year holiday with a historic parade, medieval market and food court, traditional games and entertainment as well as medieval music concerts.	December / January



For Further information on the Algarve visit:

- General tourism website: www.visitalgarve.pt
- Professionals tourism website: www.algarvepromotion.pt
- Golf tourism website: www.visitgolfalgarve.com
- MICE industry website: www.algarveconvention.pt

Image libraries:

- www.turismoalgarve.pt/galeria/galeria-algarve.html
- www.imagesofportugal.com/main.php/v/algarve
- www.algarvepromotion.pt

For further press information please contact Abi or Leanne at Lemongrass Marketing

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Further Press Packs are available for the following subjects

- Golf on the Algarve
- Spa and Wellbeing on the Algarve
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