

Cycling Safaris



Lisbon to Algarve (Lagos)

Day 1 – Saturday September 23rd - Arrive in Lisbon

Direct flight from Dublin (Aer Lingus 07.00am and Ryanair 06.45am) to Lisbon airport

The airport is a mere 6km from the city centre, so the transfer is quick and easy giving a chance to explore this wonderful city from our centrally located hotel.

Day 2 – Sunday September 24th - Lisbon to Setubal (101km/960m or 118km/1340m)

The day begins with an obligatory photograph at the famous waterfront plaza of Praça do Comércio. It is a short cycle along the coast to the pretty Belem Tower. Here you will take a short ferry across the Rio Tajo.

It is not far to the National Park at Arriba Fóssil da Costa da Caparica (the Rich Cape) a prehistoric beach landscape near Terras da Costa, that consist of intricately carved cliffs and erosional deposits, intersected by ravines and cliff tops covered in vegetation. For the more ambitious cyclists an option would be to head to the most Westerly point of this peninsula, the Santuario de Nossa Senhora do Cabo Espichel sitting atop spectacular cliffs in this wild and remote area. Sesimbra, a picturesque fishing town set in a sheltered bay, was founded on the hilltop around the Moorish castle that Dom Afonso Henriques (the first King of Portugal) captured in 1165. This is an ideal place to stop and enjoy lunch

The undoubted highlight of the day is the afternoon cycle through the Parque Natural da Arrábida. This coastal natural park with chalk cliffs, caves and a mountain range offers a wonderful scenic ride.

Our destination is Setubal with lovely squares in the pedestrianised old town and a hilltop fortress with views over the estuary. The fish reeled the Romans to Setúbal in 412, so it's no surprise that seafood here is delicious.



Day 3 – Monday September 25th - Setubal to Evora (130km/850m or 137km/1020m)

Today the cycle crosses into the Alentejo, Portugal's largest region, covering a third of the country. This will see a contrast in the landscape as dry, golden plains, rolling hillsides and lime-green vines interspersed with traditional whitewashed villages demand our attention.

The terrain is gentle enough as this part of Alentejo is fairly flat with roads lined with Cork trees. One of Portugal's most beautifully preserved medieval towns, Évora is an enchanting place to delve into the past. Inside the 14th-century walls, Évora's narrow, winding lanes lead to striking architectural works: an elaborate medieval cathedral and cloisters; the cinematic columns of the Templo Romano (near the intriguing Roman baths); and a picturesque town square, once the site of some rather gruesome episodes courtesy of the Inquisition. Aside from its historic and aesthetic virtues, Évora is also a lively university town, and its many attractive restaurants serve up hearty Alentejan cuisine.

A nice extra option is to ride the extra 3.1km to the prehistoric site and lookout at Alto de São Bento on the edge of Evora. The average climb is just 4.8% but the last ramp is a challenging 21% for 200-250m!



Day 4 – Tuesday September 26th - Evora to Santiago do Cacem (115km / 720m)

This is the easiest day of the ride as the terrain is flat leaving Evora. The landscape resembles the African plains with high wild grasses interspersed with low slung trees.

One of the first stops of the day is Alcáçovas, important for the treaty between Portugal and Spain that established the colonial era. After Grandola the landscape becomes more hilly and the scenery is more dramatic as the road winds its way through the rock.

Sao Francisco is a typical Alentejan village marked by its magnificent chimneys. Santiago do Cacem in addition to Roman ruins has an historic centre dominated by a castle on a hillside that offers superb views. Our hotel with its own pool is centrally located, giving a chance to explore this interesting town.



Day 5 - Weds September 27th - Santiago do Cacem to Monchique (118km / 1160m or 133km/1580m)

Leaving Cacem the cycle heads for the coastal region where you will encounter remote beaches and peaceful countryside. A small detour will bring you to the cliffs at Cabo Sardao where storks nest high above the Atlantic Ocean. This is part of the Parque Natural do Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina, Portugals least developed region. This wraps around the Algarve's cliffy coastline along the Atlantic Ocean and into the Alentejo, covering a stretch of over 120km of lush greenery and wild fauna tucked amidst steep coastal landscapes.

The stunning scenery doesn't just end here though, as the route veers inland and the cycle begins to climb gently through the forest towards the Serra de Monchique mountain range, offering superb views of the surrounding countryside (and sheltering the rider from the Atlantic winds). The region has a local liquer known as Medronho which may make the optional ride a safer bet.

Optional climb: Foia

This is the highest point in the Algarve at 902m and gives spectacular views in every direction including as far away as the Serra da Arrabida, near Lisbon!



Day 6 - Thursday September 28th - Monchique to Lagos (103km/1070m or 130km/1270m)

The last day will see the cycle go back to the coast and is perhaps the most dramatic, beginning with a spectacular road in the Serra de Monchique mountain region before heading to the coast. There is plenty of downhill to be enjoyed moving away from the Serra as the day loses much more height than it gains.

Soon we will pick up the fine beaches that make this region so special. There is an end of the world feeling to this part of Portugal. An extra option to cycle to the truly remote and windswept Farol Cabo de São Vicente, the most westerly point and previously considered the end of the known world will enhance this feeling.

Lying along the bank of the Rio Bensafirim, with 16th-century walls enclosing the old town's pretty, cobbled lanes and picturesque piazzas and churches, Lagos is a great and lively destination to finish our cycle and celebrate our achievement.



Day 7 – Friday September 29th - Departure

Transfer from Lagos to Faro airport – approx 1hour and 15 minutes away to connect with Aer Lingus 13.25 Flight to Dublin (alternate Ryanair @12.50).

Price: 1415 euro per person sharing (based on 16+)

- 6 x accommodation in minimum 3 star hotels (many/most 4 star)
- 6 x dinners
- 5 x Lunch
- Snacks on route
- 2 x Cycling Guides (3 if 24+ cyclists)
- Support vehicle carrying luggage with Bike Mechanic
- Transfer from Lagos to Faro
- Careful Transportation of bikes to Start and back from Finish
- Fully Researched cycle routes
- Insurance for bike transportation
- Bottle of Mineral Water each Day