

Cycling Safaris

Portugal - The Best of the Algarve

Self guided 2017

150 km | 7 nights / 8 days – Eastern Algarve to Silves

162 km | 7 nights / 8 days – From Silves to Western Algarve



Many clients have now had a very enjoyable cycling holiday along the Algarve coastal cycle path the 'Ecovia do Litoral'. However, we felt that there was also a lot to offer inland including some great scenery and traditional Algarvean places to visit.

The best of the Algarve tours provide up to 2 weeks of cycle touring, each week with a rest day roughly halfway through the week. You can choose to ride week 1 Eastern Algarve to Silves, or week 2 Silves and western Algarve tour, or both weeks consecutively.

The cycling is mainly on quiet tarmac roads and occasionally dirt tracks and there are options available each day to extend your cycling if you wish. Each night you stay in good quality hotels in interesting towns with plenty of choice so you can get a well earned evening meal.

TOUR ITINERARY WEEK 1 - Eastern Algarve to Silves

Day 1 Arrival

If you are arriving at Faro airport to start with then we will collect you from the airport and take you to your first nights hotel in Vila Real de San Antonio. We will collect your bicycles and all associated equipment on the way to Vila Real.

Vila Real is an interesting old town on the banks of the Guadiana river which forms the border between Spain and Portugal. The town is full of character and not particularly touristy, but there are plenty of bars and restaurants. Depending upon your arrival time, you may be able to catch the ferry across the Guadiana and try a short bike ride around Ayamonte and its surrounding coastline, just to give you a brief taste of Spain before heading west across the Algarve region of Portugal.

Vila Real de San Antonio Hotel: Your hotel is a modern hotel right in the centre of town so everything is right on your doorstep. The hotel provides en-suite accommodation, air conditioning, bar and swimming pool and breakfast is included.

Day 2 Vila Real de San Antonio to Tavira 28km approx

Your first day of cycling is a gentle run along the Ecovia do Litoral to Tavira, a ride of approximately 28km. Along the way you will pass through the coastal resorts of Monte Gordo and Altura as well as passing by the interesting old coastal town of Cacela Velha, definitely worth a visit if only to try out one of the many cafés and restaurants that are located there. You should be able to arrive in Tavira with plenty of time to have a good look around this lovely old town, a major coastal town since as long ago as Roman times.

Tavira Hotel: Your hotel is located close to the river in the centre of Tavira, so it is well located for exploration of the town by bike or on foot. The hotel provides bed and breakfast accommodation with clean, modern rooms and en suite facilities.

Day 3 Tavira to Olhão 26km approx

Another gentle day cycling along the mostly flat Ecovia do Litoral, which should enable you to arrive in Olhão in good time for more sight seeing. There are cafes and restaurants along the way and the route also passes through the charming old fishing village of Fuseta. If you arrive in Olhão early enough, you may like to take a ferry or water taxi over to one of the islands Armona, Culatra or Farol for an afternoon on the beach or dinner in one of the fine seafood restaurants located on the islands.

Olhão Hotel: The traditional style hotel is in the centre of Olhão with basic but clean facilities. There is also a lovely roof terrace with great views over to the islands. The hotel provides accommodation only, but there are many cafés and restaurants in the immediate vicinity for a great evening meal and also breakfast.

Day 4 Olhão to Loulé 30km approx

Today's ride of around 30 km heads inland away from the Ecovia do Litoral. By-passing the regional capital Faro and passing by the famous Roman remains at Estoi, you head up into the hills and through quiet villages to reach the lovely old town of Loulé. Loulé is an explorer's haven with its narrow cobbled streets leading off the central Avenida, tiny shops and hidden away bars and restaurants, well worth a couple of hours walk upon arrival.

Loulé Hotel: A short walk from the centre of Loulé and close to many bars and great restaurants, this hotel features rooms with air conditioning, satellite TV and bars, breakfast room, roof terrace swimming pool and also a laundry service.

Day 5 Rest Day

An opportunity to relax and explore the fascinating old town of Loulé or relax by the rooftop swimming pool at the hotel, right in the centre of town. If you are still feeling energetic, then you may choose to cycle down to the coast where some of the finest beaches in the Algarve can be found.

Day 6 Loulé to Alte 34km approx

A more challenging day in the rolling hills to the north of Loulé, but well worth the effort for the tremendous scenery. Taking the gentle hill up out of Loulé, you head towards the tiny hill-top village of Querença, a great coffee stop and a place to take in the splendid views. Heading north and west with a choice of great routes, your final destination for the day is the lovely hillside village of Alte. Famous for its white painted houses and fresh water springs, the year-round presence of water in the river adds a certain unique charm to the village.

Alte Hotel: The hotel is located a short walk from the village centre and offers wonderful and relaxed accommodation. The rooms are air conditioned and modern and there are excellent facilities including a pool

Day 7 Alte to Silves

32km approx

A cycle ride to remember with some great views all along the way, but views usually mean hills and this is no exception today. There is a lovely ride along a dirt track road alongside the Barragem do Funcho, and then gently cruising down the valley to your destination for the day in the lovely historic town of Silves. It is well worth planning to get here in good time as there is plenty of opportunity for exploration of the castle and also the town itself. Tomorrow will be your departure day or you can continue on with the tour.

Silves Hotel: The hotel in Silves is a short walk across the Rio Arade from the town and offers splendid views of the town and of course the castle at the heart of the town. The hotel provides good quality and relaxed accommodation and there is also an outdoor swimming pool.

2017 SELF GUIDED TOUR PRICE

PRICING FOR WEEK (Eastern Algarve to Silves)

Prices for January, February, March, November & December €750 per person sharing	Price for July €920 per person sharing
Prices for April, May & October €780 per person sharing	Price for August €1020 per person sharing
Price for June €830 per person sharing	Price for September €880 per person sharing

TOUR ITINERARY WEEK 2 - From Silves to Western Algarve

Day 1 Arrival at Silves Hotel

The hotel in Silves is a short walk across the Rio Arade from the town and offers splendid views of the town and of course the Castle at the heart of the town. The hotel provides good quality and relaxed accommodation and there is also an outdoor swimming pool.

Day 2 Silves to Praia da Rocha

22km approx

A great track alongside the Rio Arade gets you on your way from Silves and then up and over the hills to Estombar, before arriving in Ferragudo, a quaint little fishing village which is on the Ecovia do Litoral route. Following the Ecovia route again takes you over the new bridge into Portimao, and then along the waterfront down to Praia da Rocha.

Praia da Rocha Hotel: This hotel takes prime position by the old fort overlooking the mouth of the Rio Arade and the beautiful and renowned beach. The hotel offers character accommodation with splendid rooms each en suite. The hotel is on the doorstep of the seafront where many bars and restaurants are located and the hotel is also renowned for providing cycling clients with a hearty breakfast before their next days riding.

Day 3 Praia do Rocha to Lagos**30 km approx**

Back on the Ecovia do Litoral for most of today's ride, a longer journey, but flatter than previous days in the hills, taking you through the popular coastal resort of Alvor and along the beach towards Lagos.

Lagos Hotel: Situated alongside the river overlooking the Marina, the hotel offers splendid accommodation within walking distance of the town centre.

Day 4 Lagos to Sagres**40 km inc Cape St Vincent option**

This is quite a challenging days cycling as there are a few hills as the terrain changes as you approach the rugged cliff lined coastline around Sagres and Cape St Vincent. The route is all along the Ecovia do Litoral and passes through some great scenery and quaint little coastal villages. Once you arrive in Sagres, you have the option of checking into your hotel and then cycling the 6 extra kilometres to the edge of Europe, Cape St Vincent. This is well worth it to say that you have done it and there are some splendid views of the cliffs. You can probably even buy a celebratory beer at one of the mobile snack bars (depends upon the time of year) before returning to the comfort of your hotel by the old fort in Sagres.

Sagres Hotel: This modern boutique style hotel offers splendid accommodation in which to celebrate the end of your cycling journey. Top quality individually designed boutique bedrooms with air conditioning; LCD TV and mini bar are available. There is also a tropical garden overlooking the beach in case you feel like a bit more sunbathing. If not, relax in the Italian style coffee shop on site or try a pizza in the on site restaurant.

Day 5 Rest Day in Sagres

An opportunity to relax on some fine beaches, try your hand at surfing or wind surfing or simply explore the old fortress at Sagres! You may also want to cycle to the southern most tip of Portugal and Europe at Cape St Vincent!

Day 6 Sagres to Aljezur**35k approx**

This is a good days riding heading North up the unspoilt western coast line of Portugal to your overnight stay in Aljezur!

Aljezure Hotel: A comfortable modern aparthotel not far from the centre of Aljezur, offering easy access to the town's bars and restaurants.

Day 7 Aljezur to Monchique**35km approx**

A challenging ride today in that it is mostly up hill to the lovely old town of Monchique high up in the hills.

Monchique Hotel: Here you will stay in an old Granite built Inn overlooking the town of Monchique. This Inn provides memorable accommodation in a unique atmosphere with great views over the nearby town and surrounding countryside.

Day 8 Departure

After breakfast we will transfer you to the airport.

2017 SELF GUIDED TOUR PRICE

PRICING FOR WEEK (From Silves to Western Algarve)

Prices for January, February, November & December €820 per person sharing	Price for June €960 per person sharing
Prices for March €850 per person sharing	Price for July €1,060 per person sharing
Prices for April & October €900 per person sharing	Price for August €1,120 per person sharing
Price for May €910 per person sharing	Price for September €1,030 per person sharing

The above prices are based on 2 people sharing a room/luggage transfer.
Prices for single occupancy and solo tour supplement on request.

You can start this tour any day of the week.

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation on a B&B basis in good quality hotels
- Maps and route details
- Cycle hire
- Luggage transfers
- Route assistance where necessary (phone helpline)
- Airport pick up from Faro Airport on first day of week one and transfer to airport at end of tour

If your group consists of more than two people you will be entitled to a discount as the cost for the luggage transfer will decrease.

If you have a large group that prefers to have the services of a dedicated guide and/or a support vehicle, which can be provided as well. Please don't hesitate to contact us for a quote.

WHAT TO BRING

Here is a checklist of items we suggest to take with you:

- Cycling clothing: 2 jerseys, 2 padded shorts, waterproof jacket, gloves.
- If you decide to take cycling shoes please bring your own spd pedals as our bikes are fitted with standard pedals
- Cycling helmet (these cannot be hired)
- Sunglasses, sunhat, high protection sun cream, after sun cream.
- Swimming costume (essential for those afternoon dips!)
- Casual evening dressing

TRAVEL INFORMATION

It is best for you to arrive and depart in Faro Airport. Please let us know your flight details and we will arrange a transfer on arrival for you.

BACK UP SERVICE

As this is a self led trip you do not have the back-up of a guide and support van. Our aim is to allow you feel like an independent traveller, free to cycle each day at your own pace while at the same time having the security of knowing that your luggage will be waiting for you in your next accommodation.

If you experience small problems with the bike (e.g., a puncture) you will have a spare tube, pump and tyre lever. You also have access to a 24 hour helpline.

BIKE INFO



SCOTT SUB Comfort 20 features comfortable geometry intended for everyday use. With a Shimano 21 Speed transmission, Brakes: Promax TX 123 and a custom Racktime carrier, this bike has it all with regards to trekking around.

The advantage of this self guided cycling safari is that you can enjoy each day's cycle at your own pace. To get the most out of your holiday we would recommend that you do take a few practice rides before this tour.