

# Cycling Safaris

## Portugal (Lisbon) 2018

### Guided Tour

**Guide in support van | approx. 235 km | 7 nights / 8 days**

Portugal, like its neighbour Spain is a land of wonderful contrasts. Considered a Mediterranean country - mostly for its way of life and passion for the marine environment, it's truly distinct and surprisingly global - on account of its historic ties with Asia, India, Africa and South America. Once at the forefront of navigation and world discovery, Portugal remains an intriguing place where history, landscape, gastronomy and a humble, soft-spoken culture welcomes visitors to its sun swept corners.

This week of diverse cycling takes us through the heart of Portugal's best kept secrets. From breathtaking coastlines, rural landscapes to enchanting hilltop palaces. We observe Manueline architecture, verdant National Parks and visit century old vineyards and farmsteads - hearing tales of chivalry & Templar Knights. Of course opportunities to sample Portugal's tasty local dishes, its superb wines and delicious pastries are part of the experience! For music and art aficionados, Portugal's unique Sado comes rich in musical storytelling and ceramic, classic paintings and architecture add to the cultural richness of the nation.



Join us on this unique exploration by bicycle of Portugal's hidden gems. Daily rides of 40-60 km have been carefully chosen to ensure our rides are on quieter back roads and at a level beginner to intermediate riders can both enjoy.

Our tour concentrates on the natural and historical attractions surrounding the central heart of Portugal - Lisbon, Estremadura and the Alentejo. In these regions we find great treasures such as the Sintra National Forest, the surf swept coasts of Europe's most westerly point, the Arrabida Park Highlands and fantastic wines, the fishing communities of the Alentejo and of course, the vibrancy of Lisbon itself - a city more European than Europe itself! Divided by the Rio Tejo, we explore both sides of Portugal's most important river - dividing our rides between both.

The week consists of 5 riding days and a rest day at the verdant medieval town of Sintra - where opulent palaces adorn a majestic forest rising up from the nearby coastline. Each riding day offers completely different scenery - blending sun swept coastal roads between coves with forested parklands, enchanting rural villages and long stretches of peaceful, flat countryside.

## TOUR ITINERARY

### **DAY 1 Sunday Arrival Day Lisbon**

Group meets 7pm at Hotel in Lisbon's central- Orientation with Trip Leader and Dinner. If you arrive to Lisbon earlier, you may wish to visit the Sao Jorge Castle, the Gulbenkian Museum and wander the streets of the Bairro Alto. Welcome Dinner included.

### **DAY 2 Monday Lisbon Interpretive tour and Estoril / Cascais coastal town 25 km easy gradient**

Starting with a morning guided tour of Lisbon on bike that includes a cycle to Belem (*where Vasco de Gama set sail from*), followed by a short van transfer (30 minutes) onto *Cascais* - a beautiful coastal town west of Lisbon. This afternoon you can also stroll the seafront promenade with great pubs & shopping right from the hotel.

### **DAY 3 Tuesday Cascais, Cabo da Roca and the Parque Natural of Sintra 55 km hilly**

Today we ride the stunning coastal route between *Cascais* and *Ericeira*, taking in a number of sun swept coastal villages and enjoying the vast flora and bird life of this historic part of Estremadura. A highlight is a visit to *Cabo da Roca*, continental Europe's most westerly point.

### **DAY 4 Wednesday Ericeira to Sintra 45 km moderate**

Estremadura's rural inland settlements and medieval townships. A scenic spin through the region's pasturelands and agricultural landscapes arriving to *Sintra*, a virtual fairytale kingdom and once home to generations of Portuguese Royalty seeking solitude in this verdant mountain hideaway. The *Mafra National Palace* is a worthy visit on today's ride. In Sintra, we have a 2 night stay offering plenty of time to explore the palaces, Moorish fortress and boutique shops and cafes of this lovely area. Accommodation in a heritage style mansion (Dinner included).

### **DAY 5 Thursday FREE DAY Sintra**

Today you have the option of exploring many of *Sintra's* natural and cultural wonders such as the forested paths leading to a Moorish Fortress and of course, *La Pena Palace* - an extraordinary site. This fairytale village is adorned with medieval treasures, tidy boutique shops, tea houses and eateries built into stone walls and laden with sweeping, colorful flora. Alternatively, you can relax around the hotel pool or self explore on bike as there are many riding options including the *Montserrat Monastery* or the coastline itself.

### **DAY 6 Friday Palmela, Parque Natural of Arrabida and the Vineyards of Setubal 50 km moderate**

Today we transfer to the wonderful highlands of the *Arrabida Park* and ride through the woodlands of Setubal, passing traditional windmills and visiting (optional) a wonderful family run vineyard - *tasting their wines and homemade cheese* before continuing over the highlands - bringing us into Setubal, a thriving city set on the *Rio Sado* - home to the country's most abundant wildlife (bird) sanctuary. Riding distance approximately 50 km - undulating with optional scenic but challenging headland ascent add on! (Dinner included)

### **DAY 7 Saturday Troia Peninsula, the cork forests and Santiago do Cacem 59 km flat, easy terrain**

Starting with a 20 minute ferry crossing over the *Rio Sado*, today's ride visits long dune stretches, rice paddies, remote beaches and forested back roads. *Troia Peninsula* has some of Portugal's most remote coastline (*great for dolphin and whale watching*). We continue south, following cork forests to the historic Moorish town of *Santiago do Cacem*, a colorful sleepy Alentejo village in woodlands where little has changed in centuries. Tonight your trip leader bids farewell to the group.

## **DAY 8 Sunday Santiago do Cacem - Lisbon**

This morning after breakfast, a private group transfer returns us to Lisbon (1 hour 30 min). Normally the transfer brings us direct to the Lisbon Airport but a central drop off can be arranged, too.

The tour begins and ends in Lisbon, with some transfers in the form of mini bus, public bus and train required bypassing areas of high traffic volume. These are included in your tour package. Total distance is approximately 220 km over 5 days riding. Overall grade Easy to Moderate.

### **2018 TOUR PRICE**

€1,340 per person sharing  
€1,490 for single occupancy

*(if you are travelling on your own we will endeavour to find a room mate for you)*

Optional: Sea view increment (2 locations): supplement of €50 per person

### **2018 TOUR DATES**

June 10  
September 2  
October 28

*Note:* Any other dates are available for any group over 6 pax at the normal published price.

### **WHAT TO BRING**

- Comfortable cycling clothing – shorts, shoes, gloves etc
- A set of light waterproof clothing suitable for riding
- Hat, sunglasses and bathing suit
- OPTIONAL – personal cycle helmet and gel seat (helmets are provided at no extra cost)

### **WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES**

- 7 nights accommodation with breakfast
- 3 dinners
- 21 Speed Hybrid Bikes (carry bag and rear support rack on all bikes)
- Guide in support van (for bigger groups there will also be a guide cycling with the group)
- Daily baggage transfer
- Daily riding notes & map
- Helmet hire
- Gel seat pads, toe clip option on request
- Transfers needed

E-bike available for €100 (on request only)

## General details:

- ❖ You ride, we look after all other logistics and provide back up support too - including shuttles, repairs, and the extra push too!
- ❖ Our routes are "unguided" in the sense that you are free to ride at your own pace. We provide the route information and have a daily support vehicle on the road but otherwise enjoy the freedom!
- ❖ Groups vary from a minimum of 4 to a max of 16. Larger tour groups can be accommodated to.
- ❖ You need only carry water, snacks and route information. We look after the baggage shuttles.
- ❖ Worried about over-exerting yourself? No need, we have alternative routing days and even "ride along" moments in our comfortable 'sag wagon'.

## ACCOMMODATION

Below are brief descriptions of the lodgings for your riding holiday week. Should anyone wish to contact you while riding, you will find the contact details:

<u>DAY:</u>	<u>HOTEL NAME: LOCATION:</u>	<u>TELEPHONE:</u>
<b>Sunday:</b>	<b>Hotel Clarion Suites 4 stars or similar Lisbon</b>	<b>(351) 210 046 100</b>
<b>Monday:</b>	<b>Hotel Bahia Beachside 3 stars Cascais</b>	<b>(351) 214 831 033</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b>	<b>Hotel Villa Gal Beachside 4 stars Ericeira</b>	<b>(351) 261 869 900</b>
<b>Wed &amp; Thu:</b>	<b>Hotel Sintra Jardin (Heritage class) Sintra</b>	<b>(351) 219 230 728</b>
<b>Friday:</b>	<b>Hotel Solaris 3 stars Setubal</b>	<b>(351) 265 541 770</b>
<b>Saturday:</b>	<b>Hotel Dom Nuno 3 stars Santiago do Cacem</b>	<b>(351) 269 823 325</b>

*Please note – pending final group number and season of travel, on very rare occasions some hotels are subject to change. We will always replace a hotel with one of equal or better quality and location.*

**1<sup>st</sup> Night - HOTEL CLARION SUITES (4 STAR)** – A very comfortable and centrally located hotel in Lisbon. Here we find all modern conveniences and a number of superb attractions right out the door including the park of Marques de Pombel and 10 minutes walking to the Gulbenkian Museum and Gallery. There are frequent metro and bus connections only 2 minutes from the hotel (Free Wifi) <https://www.choicehotels.fr/en>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Night - HOTEL BAHIA CASCAIS (3 STAR Beach front)**- A superb location both in the center of Cascais and on the beach itself. The Bahia is in the heart of town with cafes, boutique shops and fisherman’s pubs right out the door. Enjoy the indoor heated pool and the outstanding views from the terraces of the hotel (Free Wifi). *Sea view rooms are available here for a small supplement.* <http://www.hotelbaia.com/en>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Night - HOTEL VILA GAL ERICEIRA (4 STAR Beach front)** – Ericeira’s premier hotel and with a seaside / town center location that’s hard to beat! Enjoy the pool and terraced areas while the Atlantic churns swell into the walls below. Visit the bar and lounge areas with incredible views or stroll around the old quarter right out the hotel door. (Free Wifi) <http://www.vilagale.co.uk/pages/hoteis/index.php?lang=2&hotel=10>

**4-5<sup>th</sup> Nights - HERITAGE HOTEL SINTRA JARDIM** (Heritage class / mansion & gardens) – Sintra has only a few old mansions style hotels with rambling gardens and pools. The Sintra Jardim is the top rural stay and it's located in a botanical paradise only minutes walking from the town center. Here we enjoy the large, traditional 'Quinta' design rooms or you can sit out in the shaded garden next to the pool, It really is a comfortable stay that offer insight into Sintra's once elegant times. (Free Wifi) <http://residencialsintra.blogspot.com.es>

**6<sup>th</sup> Night - HOTEL ALBERGUERIA SOLARIS, SETUBAL** (3 Star city center) – Setubal's classic 'azulejo' decorated city inn offers all modern conveniences and comfort. It has great access to all the sites of this historic town right out the door. Situated in a colourful barrio near the old quarter, where a multitude of Brazilian and Angolan immigrants set up homes decades ago, the Solaris is a welcome break after a big day in the Arrabida hillside and vineyards (Free Wifi) <http://www.solarishotel.com.pt/website/index2.php?s=1&lang=2>

**7<sup>th</sup> Night - HOTEL DOM NUNO, SANTIAGO DO CACEM (3 STAR)** - Santiago represents all that Portugal's Alentejo offers. A remote hilltop village feel with fantastic local dishes and wonderful wine. The setting is superb after one of the week's best rides through flat, forested, quiet roads. This hotel is modern and cozy with a pool to soak your legs and spacious rooms with great views of the village. (Free Wifi) <http://www.albdnuno.com/EN/main.htm>

## REST DAY OPTION

Sintra is an amazing place. Covered by forests and with a skyline dotted by palaces and exquisite mansions it really captures the imagination. We recommend a walk up to the *Moorish Fortress* followed by a visit into the *Peña Palace*. Here one can experience what it was like to be a Royal at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This can be done right out the door of our guest house.

Please see our list below for some ideas – *your trip leader will not be with the group on the rest day*, but will offer any suggestions beforehand and assist with any logistics required.

### **REST DAY ACTIVITY OPTIONS** *(Self guided in the Sintra Region)*

- *Hiking throughout the Sintra National Forest (30 min to full day)*
- *Visits to nearly a dozen palaces and mansions (Quintas) of Sintra*
- *Hop on a train or bus to a nearby rural area or head up to Fatima!*
- *Bird watching and nature spotting in the forest*
- *Cycle the Sintra Forest routes or ride down to the coast (approximately 25 km one way - your bike is available to you on the rest day)*
- *Relax at the hotel utilizing the gardens and pool area*
- *Have a lazy lunch in Sintra watching the world go by from one of the many medieval era taverns.*



### **BH (Spanish Made) Hybrid Touring Series**

<http://bhbikes-us.com/>

21 speed Shimano components, aluminium male/female frame options, front suspension, rear support rack, (not shown) water bottle and front carry bag

We use a number of bicycle models to suit your needs. Most of our bikes are 'hybrids'. These bikes are designed for road touring and are also suitable for light trail riding and dirt/gravel roads. Many of our hybrid bikes have light front suspension, a wide range of gears (21 *speed minimum*), comfortable saddles, aluminium frames and quality 'Shimano' components.

At times we can also provide lightweight mountain bikes. Generally all bicycles have a rear pannier rack and a small soft bag on the handlebars (*big enough to carry a poncho / rain coat and a light snack*). All bikes also have a water bottle holder and a single water bottle. There's no need for extra baggage on your bike as the support van is always within 30 minutes of the riders and makes plenty of sweeps during the day (*on guided tour programs only*)

**Please let us know in advance if you require any of our FREE EXTRAS** – otherwise *they will not be included* with the bikes:

- \* Toe clips (*indicate with or without strap models*)
- \* Gel seat pad

### **Fitness and Pre-Trip Preparation**

The general rule on active holidays is to enjoy yourself. Sure there is physical exertion involved but you wouldn't have chosen a bike tour if you weren't aware of this fact! On the other hand, a bit of mental and physical preparation could help you enjoy your week even more. We suggest that you put in some riding time in the weeks building up to your holiday – even on a stationary bike. Try to get out for some hours on the weekends on varied terrain and if possible on hills, not that any of our excursions are overly strenuous - it's simply a good idea to put in a few miles beforehand!

### **Total Distance**

225 km (over 5 days riding, if rest day is taken)

### **Level Rating:**

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| Day 1 | Easy to Moderate (mostly flat urban riding in Lisbon)               |
| Day 2 | Moderate to Advanced moments (Long ascent of coastal headland)      |
| Day 3 | Moderate at times (mostly rolling / occasional longer climb)        |
| Day 4 | Moderate to Advanced moments (one long ascent of coastal pass)      |
| Day 5 | Easy (mostly flat, coastal ride and forested stretches in parkland) |

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### Personal Money

Outside of the meals not included in your holiday price, you may wish to have some Euros for other purposes. This could include visits to taverns for tapas and beverages or extra drinks during/after dinner, local souvenirs, and the bus/train journey on the rest day and any sites you may visit.

Exchanging money between your currency and the Euro is easy. Some options are:

- *To buy or bring Euros from your bank at home*
- *Use your normal bankcard here in Portuguese bank machines (good rates of exchange and low charges)*
- *Buy Euros from banks and moneychangers here in Portugal (poorer rates of exchange)*
- *Pay with your credit card (used everywhere)*  
*(Important note – travellers cheques are now hardly used in Portugal)*

### Telephoning and Internet in Portugal

Credit Cards may be used for International calls or a Portuguese Phone Card can be purchased for a certain value. INTERNET wifi (wireless) is frequently available in hotels and cafes throughout the region. Most hotels have wifi connections as well – almost always in the reception but not always in rooms.

### Flights

We encourage our guests to arrange their flights / arrivals to and from Lisbon. Lisbon is an international airport that serves all of Europe and many regular flights into North America.

### Transport Connections to Lisbon (pre tour)

Airport transfers to Lisbon are frequent and easy. Taxis are relatively inexpensive from the airport to the hotel or city center. Expect to pay minimum 12-15€ taxi fare or slightly more if travelling at night. There is a very efficient and rapid airport shuttle bus to the city center – costing about 2-3€ person for the one way trip.

### Airports

Lisbon Portela International Airport (LIS)

### Train

There are connections from the rest of Europe by train into Lisbon however most people fly direct into the country. For onward travel and other visits around Portugal, train is a perfectly valid option. There is a decent Metro UNDERGROUND train system connecting you to all Lisbon's main attractions. Alternatively the age old tram cars still function on the steep streets of Lisbon and make for a great way to experience the city!

### Bus:

Bus connections throughout Portugal are very good and inexpensive. Connecting to the Algarve in the south or Porto in the north are two common travel extensions in Portugal.