

## FISHERMEN'S TRAIL: Porto Covo » Vila Nova de Milfontes

This is the beaches section, where you will walk along the vast sand dunes area of Ilha do Pessegueiro, Aivados and Malhão beaches and discover small deserted coves that will surprise you. It is a tiring walking day though, given its extension and the constant sandy terrain.

The diversity of beaches you will find just on this section is absolutely fantastic! Beaches like Aivados with pebbles shaped by the constant rough and tumble of the waves. Beaches like Faquir or Farol where lace-like sandstone dunes seem to slide down into the ocean. Sandy beaches like Malhão gently and constantly changing. Beaches such as Milfontes, (Thousand Fountains), with either rivers, small streams or tiny fresh water springs fed from the hilly interior through a network of underground channels. These beaches are interspersed by ancient, dark erosion-resistant rocks that make up the cliffs and tiny islands (locally called “palheirões”) that one comes across from time to time.

The sand dunes' biodiversity and plant life is remarkable and reaches its peak between March and June, with a vast array of amazing colours, aromas and shapes. These plants are true masters of adaptation in this hostile environment and have to put up with poor quality soil, a dry season that can last over six months and a constant buffeting by the strong, salty winds, and you will see that the most obvious adaptation is their shape. Pines, Rosemary and Rockrose are bent nearly horizontal and thus better adapted to these harsh conditions. Some of these plant species are endemic to this coast and cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 20 km

Approximate duration: 7 h

Accumulated climb: 167 m

Accumulated descent: 149 m

Difficulty level: Difficult

Max. / min. altitude: 51 m / 1 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Porto Covo: from the market square head towards the fishing harbour.

Vila Nova de Milfontes: at the tourist office in the village, going down Rua Custódio Brás Pacheco towards the river.

### Important Warning

Unmarked path: Between the beaches of Queimado and Malhão, the path is not fully signposted. Follow the broad sand track that skirts the extensive succession of dunes, of the beaches of Aivados, Galé

and Malhão, following the instructions that you find on the signs. Alternatively, and only at low tide, you can walk along the beach.

### A long and tiring section!

Covering 20 km and with a sandy path, this section is long and tiring, especially if you are going to start your journey through Porto Covo. Prepare yourself well and bring at least 1.5 L of water.

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 3.5, on the beach of Ilha do Pessegueiro; at km 6.5, making a detour of 1.8 km to Ribeira da Azenha; at km 16, at the fishing harbour of Canal.

#### Shorten this section

Finish this walk at Canal (fishing harbour) and get a taxi to Milfontes, saving the last 3 km.

### Description of route

The route begins at the Largo Marquês de Pombal, in the village of Porto Covo, towards the fishing harbour. After crossing the river, walk along the cliffs to the beach of Ilha do Pessegueiro, where you will have to cross the beach till the Fort. Passing through Barranco do Queimado will take you a little way back into the interior and from this point until Alturas do Norte the path follows along a wide track that skirts the extensive chain of dunes of the beaches of Malhão and Aivados. If it is low tide and the sea is calm you can continue along the waters' edge to the end of the beaches.

The landscape changes and the beaches give way to towering cliffs that from this point to Cape St. Vincent give this wild coast its personality. Up to Porto das Barcas, or Canal you will walk through a remarkable landscape that represents the largest succession of consolidated dunes in Portugal and which includes a huge variety of rare botanical species endemic to the Southwest. From here, Vila Nova de Milfontes is just 2.5 km away, along a wide path between enclosures and buildings, some of which are still under construction, until you reach the Avenida Marginal along the waterfront. Go as far as Barbacã, next to the Castle, also known as Forte de Milfontes and enjoy the views over the river and the sea.



### **Rota Vicentina General Rules and Recommendations:**

- Walk only along the marked trails
- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. The circulation of vehicles on the dunes is prohibited. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Fishermen's Trail: Maximum of 20 people per group; Only for walkers
- Respect private property; close gates and fences
- Respect Nature. Do not collect or disturb animals, plants or rocks
- Do not leave trash or traces of your presence
- Trails with no toilet, carry a bag and keep the trail clean
- Be cautious with cattle, although gentle, they do not like strangers approaching their calves
- Keep your dog on a leash and clean up after it
- Do not camp or light fires outside designated areas
- Fishermen's Trail: Unstable cliffs, danger of falling; Not recommended for people with vertigo or fear of heights
- Be kind to local people, clarifying about the trail signals and the ongoing pedestrian activity
- Always carry water, food and sunscreen.

### **Rules and Recommendations - Fishermen's Trail:**

- Maximum of 20 people per group; Only for walkers
- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. The circulation of vehicles on the dunes is prohibited
- Trail with some degree of difficulty and not recommended for people with vertigo or fear of heights.
- The cliffs are systems in constant process of erosion. Walking along it, necessarily represents danger of falling.
- The signs follow selected trails. Follow and respect them in order to lessen the impact of your presence.
- Several bird species nest on the cliffs. Do not disturb them.
- The vegetation you will see on the cliffs comprises rare, endemic and invasive species. Do not collect samples.
- You will notice rock formations and important archaeological traces. Do not collect samples.
- There are very few support services along the trails. Bring water and food supplies with you.
- It is forbidden to camp along the entire Fisherman's Trail. Look for authorized camping grounds.
- Do not light fires.
- Do not litter. Help us out by picking up any litter you may find on the way.

### **SOS**

Emergency: 112

Forest Fires: 117

Environment: 808 200 520

**For further information** on accommodation, restaurants and nature/cultural activities, please contact the closest Tourism Office or go to [www.rotavicentina.com](http://www.rotavicentina.com)

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## FISHERMEN'S TRAIL: Vila Nova de Milfontes » Almogrove

This is a day to purify your soul thanks to the overwhelming views over Vila Nova de Milfontes and the Mira river that meets the ocean here. It is a short and accessible hiking day so that you may enjoy the area to its fullest extent.

Crossing the bridge over the river in Vila Nova de Milfontes provides stunning views of the river's mouth, the small town beside it and the natural vegetation that covers the local hillsides. This vegetation is important as it attracts many different species of birds and small mammals. At low tide, enjoy the view of the marshes on the river bends, partially submerged and covered with reeds, important in their own way also as breeding grounds for several species of fish. Between March and October you'll be able to see many swifts as Alpine, Pallid and Common Swift all nest along this coast. Their breeding season starts as soon as they arrive and their acrobatics as they constantly search for enough food for their chicks is one of the wonders of the area. They spend over 90% of their life on the wing and have extreme difficulty in becoming airborne should they land anywhere but on a cliff or high building.

There are stretches along this part of the coast where native vegetation displays all its diversity and other areas where it has been destroyed and wiped out by a most aggressive exotic plant – the Acacia. This invasive plant is quite capable of reducing the sand dunes' biodiversity almost to zero. At times intensive farming stretches right down to the ocean, but you can also enjoy other less invasive traces of human presence such as local, non-commercial, fishing or small Stone-age quarries amongst the dunes, a reminder that Man has been shaping this coastline since time immemorial.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 15 km

Approximate duration: 5 h

Accumulated climb: 88 m

Accumulated descent: 116 m

Difficulty level: Somewhat difficult

Max. / min. altitude: 53 m / 0 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Vila Nova de Milfontes: at the tourist office, following the Rua Custódio Brás Pacheco towards the main road.

Almogrove: at the roundabout, heading along Rua do Chafariz to the wash-houses. Further on you will find sign posts to join the path to the left.

### Important Warning

Between Vila Nova de Milfontes and beach of Furnas, the path initially goes along Rua Custódio Brás

Pacheco. Be careful and always walk on the pavement. From the roundabout on the main road to the road bridge (500 m), and from the end of the bridge to the wooden gate that gives access to Vila Formosa (500 m), the path goes along the verge of the road. Walk with the utmost caution, as far over as possible on the right hand verge (N-S) and if walking with children be vigilant. Remember to close the gate so that the cattle cannot get out of the property.

When crossing the property between the gate and the beach of Furnas, take care with the livestock, avoid sudden movements and stay away. Although docile they don't like strangers approaching their offspring.

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 4, in beach of Furnas.

#### Go along the river!

During the busiest months, take advantage of the regular passenger services between Milfontes and Furnas and start or finish your day of walking by taking a boat along the river.

### Description of route

Go along Rua Custódio Brás Pacheco as far as the roundabout on the EN390/393 (main road) and head south, crossing the road bridge over the river, where you will be able to see the Mira and its imposing river mouth, which perfectly characterises the beauty of Milfontes. After about 500 m along the asphalt, turn right, passing through a wooden gate opening on to a narrow trail which goes through farmland and pasture, down to the fluvial beach of Furnas. Milfontes can now be seen on the southern shore of the Mira, as you proceed along the track to the end of the beach.

Walking along a wide track, you will skirt a totally protected reserve where an endemic species in danger of extinction, only existing in this part of the globe, can be found - the *Plantago Almogravensis*. Respect the signs and only walk on the designated trails. The unexpected sight of large agricultural fields that extend almost to the sea, gives way to a forest of acacia trees through which you will cross, passing by two wooden bridges. After passing an uninhabited house, return to the shore line, after passing another bridge on your right and proceed along the beach of Brejo Largo and a succession of small coves to Foz dos Ouriços, where the path deviates inwards, towards the village of Almogrove.



### **Rota Vicentina General Rules and Recommendations:**

- Walk only along the marked trails
- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. The circulation of vehicles on the dunes is prohibited. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Fishermen's Trail: Maximum of 20 people per group; Only for walkers
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- There are very few support services along the trails. Bring water and food supplies with you.
- It is forbidden to camp along the entire Fisherman's Trail. Look for authorized camping grounds.
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## FISHERMEN'S TRAIL: **Almograve » Zambujeira do Mar**

Small fishing harbours, reddish sand dunes, the scent of pine tree forests and the sight, seen nowhere else in the world, of storks nesting on the cliffs make this walk a true balm for your senses.

The high cliffs you will see during this part of the journey, despite being exposed to the constant salty ocean winds, are the nesting site for over twenty species of bird! These include Jackdaw, Shag, Common Kestrel, "pure" Rock Dove, White Stork, Peregrine Falcon and Black Redstart. It is worthwhile taking the time to stop and watch these birds especially during spring, around the Cape Sardão area. The Rock Doves are especially interesting as they are the original species from which all the feral pigeons in the world descend.

If you look carefully along this coastal stretch it is easy to see past climate change written in the rocks. The sandstone was formed when the sea was at least 100 m, (330 ft), lower than at present, with the beach over 60 km further west. Prehistoric settlements have been found here with remains of colder climate animals and shellfish, clear signs of a colder, drier past, but it is equally possible to find signs of times when the climate here was warmer, wetter and more tropical, displayed by impressive reddish tones in the sand and sandstone, resulting from the accumulation of iron oxides.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 22 km

Approximate duration: 7 h

Accumulated climb: 203 m

Accumulated descent: 193 m

Difficulty level: Somewhat difficult

Max. / min. altitude: 90 m / 4 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Almograve: at the roundabout, towards the beach of Foz dos Ouriços along the track to the ETAR (water treatment plant)

Zambujeira do Mar: at the chapel of Nossa Senhora do Mar, in the direction of the beach of Nossa Senhora and the fishing harbour of Entrada da Barca.

### Important Warning

Between Entrada do Pau and Ponta da Carraca the trail deviates inland entering an area of pine forest in order to avoid a strip of coastline with a high degree of erosion. As a matter of security and environmental preservation, be aware and observe this divergence. We rely on your consideration!

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 9.5, you pass through the village of Cavaleiro; at km 18, in the fishing harbour of Entrada da Barca there are two restaurants.

#### Shorten this section

From Almograve, take a taxi to the fishing harbour of Lapa das Pombas (3.5 km) and from Zambujeira to the fishing harbour of Entrada da Barca (4 km).

#### Cyclable part

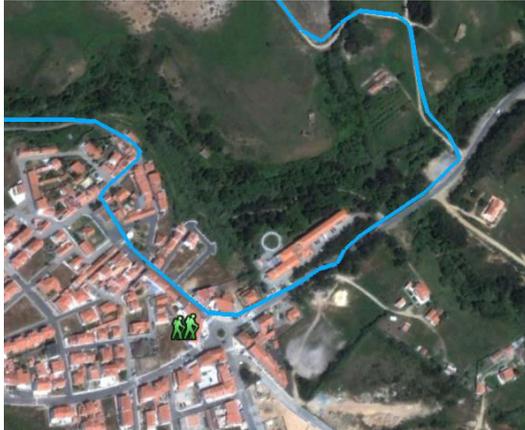
The only part of the Fishermen's Trail that can be done with a bicycle in the Aleteio, it's between the Cabo Sardão's lighthouse and the fishing harbour of Entrada da Barca. The access to the fishing harbour is through a steep and narrow trail, which means you'll have to carry the bike on your back. As an alternative make the detour heading to Touril till you come across the road. Turn right, towards Entrada da Barca. From here till Zambujeira, is also cyclable.

### Description of route

The route starts on the footpath you've seen on the previous day from the other side of the ravine. Pass by the Church and turn right to join the path that goes to Foz dos Ouriços. When you reach the car park for the beach of Almograve, head towards the small natural fishing harbour of Lapa das Pombas, where you could, as an alternative, start this section. From here on in the trail follows the cliffs, over a landscape of craggy rocks and red sand, set against an impressive backdrop with the lighthouse of Cape Sardão in the distance. Before reaching Cavaleiro you will have to skirt a sensitive area with a high degree of erosion. Enjoy the bright yellow of the dunes that appear through the pine forest. Go through the village of Cavaleiro and take the opportunity for a break.

By the lighthouse notice the various stork nests which adorn the coastline, in a peculiar and unique situation in the world. From now on, until the fishing harbour of Entrada da Barca, 3 km from Zambujeira do Mar, a well-defined path, suitable for cycling, goes along the shore, bypassing small beaches and inaccessible coves, on a truly amazing part of the coast. The descent to the small fishing harbour requires some caution given the slope of the track. From here to Zambujeira do Mar, follow the pedestrian path parallel to the road, visiting the various viewpoints, until reaching the beach of Nossa Senhora where the trail resumes in the proximity of the sea.

**Almogrove**



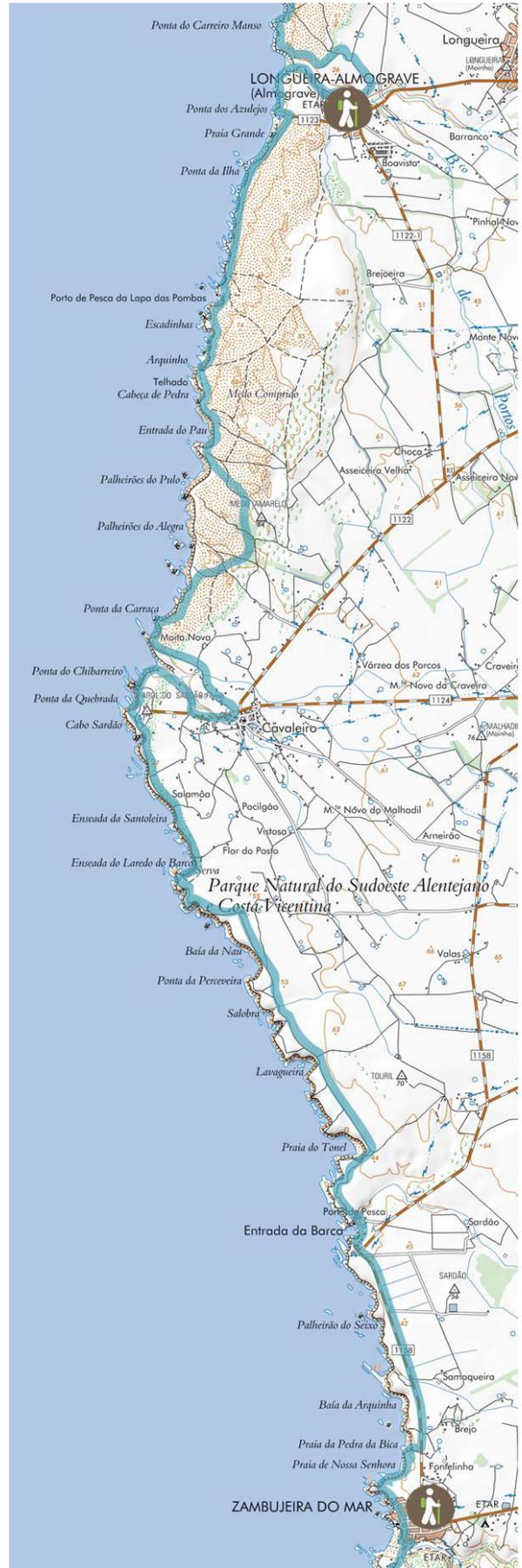
**Zambujeira do Mar**



**Topographic Profile**



**Cartography IGEOE:**  
1:25 000 - 552, 560  
1:50 000 - 45-3



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Forest Fires: 117

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## FISHERMEN'S TRAIL: Zambujeira do Mar » Odeceixe

You will be passing the beaches of Alteirinhos, Carvalhal, Machados and Amália on the way to Azenha do Mar, where you will find a natural fishing harbour. To top it all enjoy one of the most outstanding views in the entire territory: Odeceixe beach seen from the majestic Ponta em Branco.

Along this stretch of coast it is interesting to take a close look at the cliffs; note how the sedimentary rocks that were laid down horizontally over aeons have been folded and pushed out of all recognition so that what was once horizontal is now in some cases vertical. Now imagine the forces necessary! More recently was the formation of lithified sand tubes which can be seen a bit all over the trail.

On this section you will also find abundant signs of the presence of mammals, especially carnivores living among the dunes. It is hard to spot the animals themselves given that for the most part they are nocturnal, remaining in their burrows during daylight and only coming out to hunt at dark. But you will come across their droppings, footprints, burrows or maybe even the remains of their night's hunting. These carnivorous mammals include Egyptian Mongoose (locally known as "Escalabardo"), Weasel, Beech Marten (also known as "Papalvo"), Badger, Genet and Otter. Rabbits are other mammals that build their burrows in the most stable of the sand dunes. These Rabbits are the original stock of all Rabbits worldwide, and incredibly important here, being the preferred prey of most carnivores.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 18 km

Approximate duration: 7 h

Accumulated climb: 263 m

Accumulated descent: 283 m

Difficulty level: Somewhat difficult

Max. / min. altitude: 74 m / 1 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Zambujeira do Mar: at the chapel of Nossa Senhora do Mar, towards the beach of the village.

Odeceixe: in the village square, heading to the north side of Odeceixe beach, passing the bridge over the river and following the road down to the beach.

### Important Warning

In the Lombo do Asno area, south of the beach of Alteirinhos, the trail makes a small detour inland to circumvent a sensitive area. As a matter of security and environmental preservation, be aware and observe this divergence. We rely on your consideration!

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 6.5, the detour of 2 km to the village of Brejão is sign posted. At km 9.5 you'll go through the village of Azenha do Mar.

#### Shorten this section

Between the village of Odeceixe and the north end of the beach the trail goes along a road (4 km). Take a taxi and shorten this section.

### Description of route

The start is next to the beautiful chapel of Nossa Senhora do Mar, over the famous beach of Zambujeira. Go down to the beach and take the trail that climbs the cliffs to the beach of Alteirinhos, continuing south. Before the beach of Carvalhal, the route goes inland through pine forests and acacias to reach the beach along the ridge of the ravine. Take the trail that emerges at the back of the beach bar and continue until you glimpse the beach of Machados. Inhale, this is the Alentejo coast and the scenery worthy of a paradise.

After Amália beach, so named because it is precisely here that the diva of Fado, Amália Rodrigues, had her beach house, you will reach the village of Azenha do Mar, where we recommend that you take a break and have a snack. Cross the wooden bridge and head in the direction of Ponta em Branco, through scenery rich in dune vegetation and particularly surprising during the spring. With superb views over the sea, this part of the route culminates with your arrival at Ponta em Branco, so named for the colour of the sediments that form its summit. After descending to the beach, take the paved road parallel to the river, until you reach the national road, arriving at the village of Odeceixe.

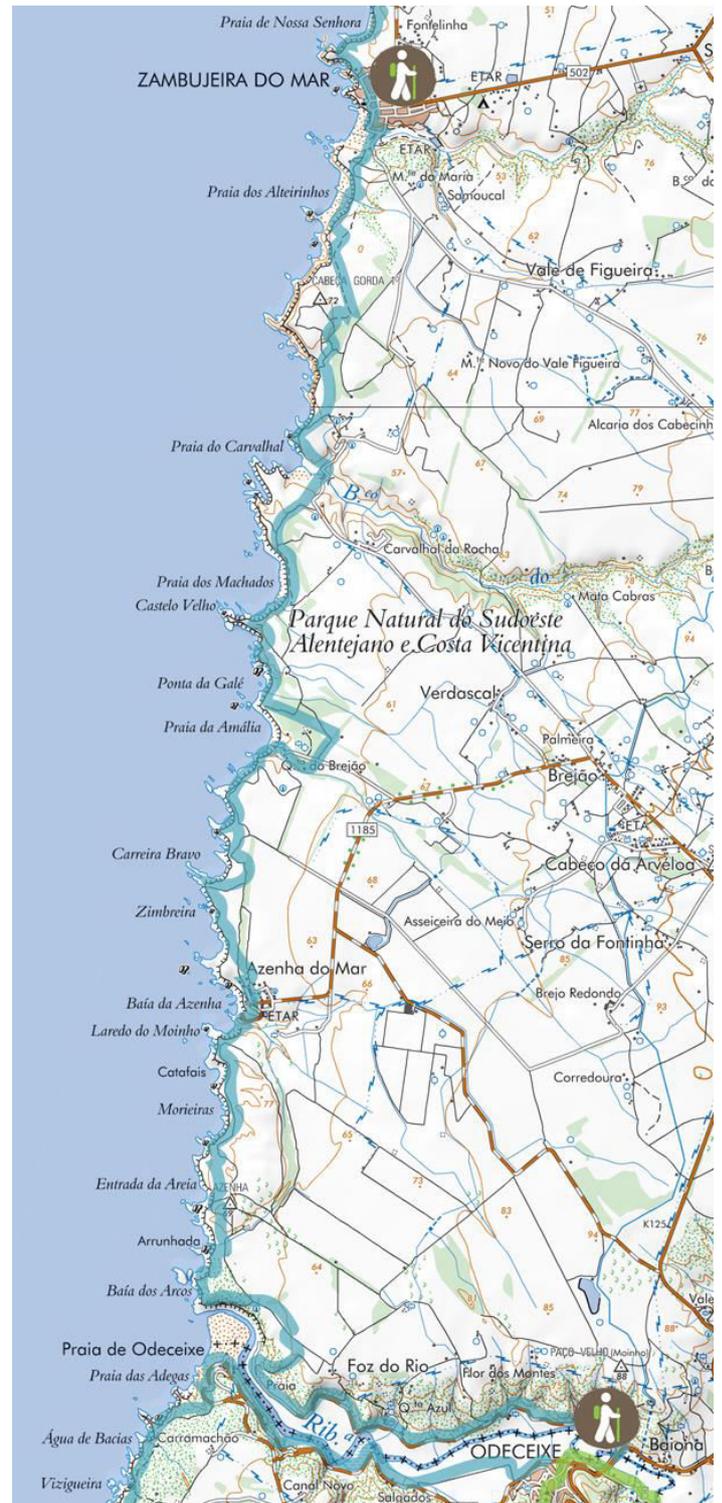
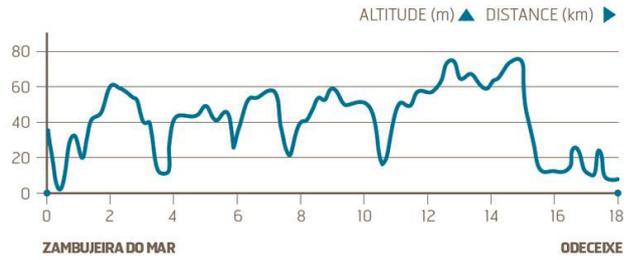
**Zambujeira do Mar**



**Odeceixe**



**Topographic Profile**



**Cartography IGEOE:**  
1:25 000 - 560, 568  
1:50 000 - 45-3, 49-4

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## HISTORICAL WAY: Odeceixe » Aljezur

Today you will be walking along Mira's watering channel, fed by the waters of Santa Clara's dam. You can see for miles around you, with the mountains to the east and the ocean to the west. You'll have a choice between two complementary circuits that will take you to the coastal cliffs and allow you to get to know Odeceixe and Amoreira beaches.

This walk through the coastal upland crosses farmland growing sweet potatoes, maize, peanuts and tomatoes, interspersed with areas of pine and eucalyptus trees. Close to the villages and houses or "montes" there are smallholdings and orchards of olives, lemons, oranges, loquats and figs. Many birds live happily amongst the human population in these areas. The birdsong that stands out in the spring is that of the bee-eaters and cuckoos. Water is abundant, carried by the channels from the Santa Clara Reservoir (until recently the largest Portuguese Reservoir). The floodplain of the river Mira, which accompanies much of this route, comprises much of the Portuguese South-West coastal upland from Vila Nova de Milfontes to Rogil.

Herds of cows or sheep can be encountered along this route. Herdsmen are often accompanied by their faithful dogs, with whom they establish an interesting but complex form of communication. It is amazing how the sheepdogs understand a language comprising of short whistles and discrete gestures, herding the cattle so efficiently. At the end of this section, the water continues to dominate the landscape, this time in the beautiful valley of the Amoreira river, whose riparian vegetation gradually changes as it wends towards the sea. Finally, in the lee of the sea breeze, Aljezur emerges, overlooking the valley, its soil made fertile whenever the river is swollen.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 18 km

Approximate duration: 6 h

Accumulated climb: 123 m

Accumulated descent: 108 m

Difficulty level: Easy

Max. / min. altitude: 112 m / 0 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Odeceixe: after the bridge on the river Seixe, entering the village and climbing towards the Windmill.

Aljezur: at the market of Aljezur, heading towards the Museum, where you must turn right and go down the street Dr. Viriato França, leaving town.

### Important Warnings

Between Odeceixe and Rogil, the route follows along the irrigation channel, where you can find some banks obstructed by vegetation. Be careful and watch where you are walking, following the markers which will guide you to where you need to cross to the other bank to continue on your way.

If you are doing this route by mountain bike, at the exit of the town of Odeceixe, choose to climb up to the windmill along Rua 25 de Abril, as the route goes up some steps. By the irrigation channel be careful, the trail is narrow and requires skill and balance on the part of the rider, in order to avoid a fall.

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

Around km 5, making a detour of about 600 meters from the irrigation channel, you arrive at Maria Vinagre; at km 9 you'll cross Rogil village.

#### Extend this section with the Fishermen's Trail

Between Odeceixe and Aljezur there are two complementary circuits of the Fishermen's Trail available: Odeceixe Beach and Amoreira Beach. Choose between doing both or just one of them and make this section longer, getting close to the coast and cliffs. Odeceixe - Aljezur: 23 km (with the Odeceixe Beach or the Amoreira Beach circuit); 28 km (with two circuits).

### Description of route

Cross the town of Odeceixe climbing the staircase that passes near the church until you get near the windmill, where you can stop to catch your breath and absorb the panoramic view. Continue up the hill until it crosses the irrigation channel of Mira. As far as Rogil, this section always follows along the verges of the irrigation channel, passing through the hamlet of João Roupeiro, where there is a connection with the Fishermen's Trail, and close by Maria Vinagre. From Rogil, the route continues for some time along the channel, accompanied by agricultural and grazing land. Take advantage of the Fishermen's Trail and extend this section by doing the Amoreira Beach Circuit, beginning about 3 km after the village of Rogil.

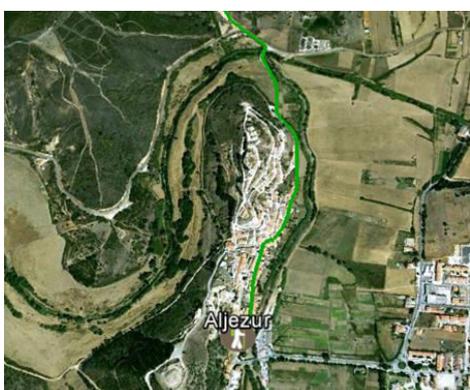
When the landscape changes giving way to scrubland with strong presence of cistus, it is confirmation that you are increasingly close to the shore, and you will be able to catch a glimpse of the houses at Espartal, looking down over the impressive river valley of Aljezur. After passing in front of the campsite, turn right to join a long descent that crosses the road to Amoreira beach. Cross the bridge and continue along the main road till the Museum, from where you descend to the town centre. If you still have energy left, explore the village, go up to the Castle and bring Aljezur in your memory, by walking the "Historic-Cultural and Environmental Circuit of Aljezur", which goes around the village for about 5.5 km.



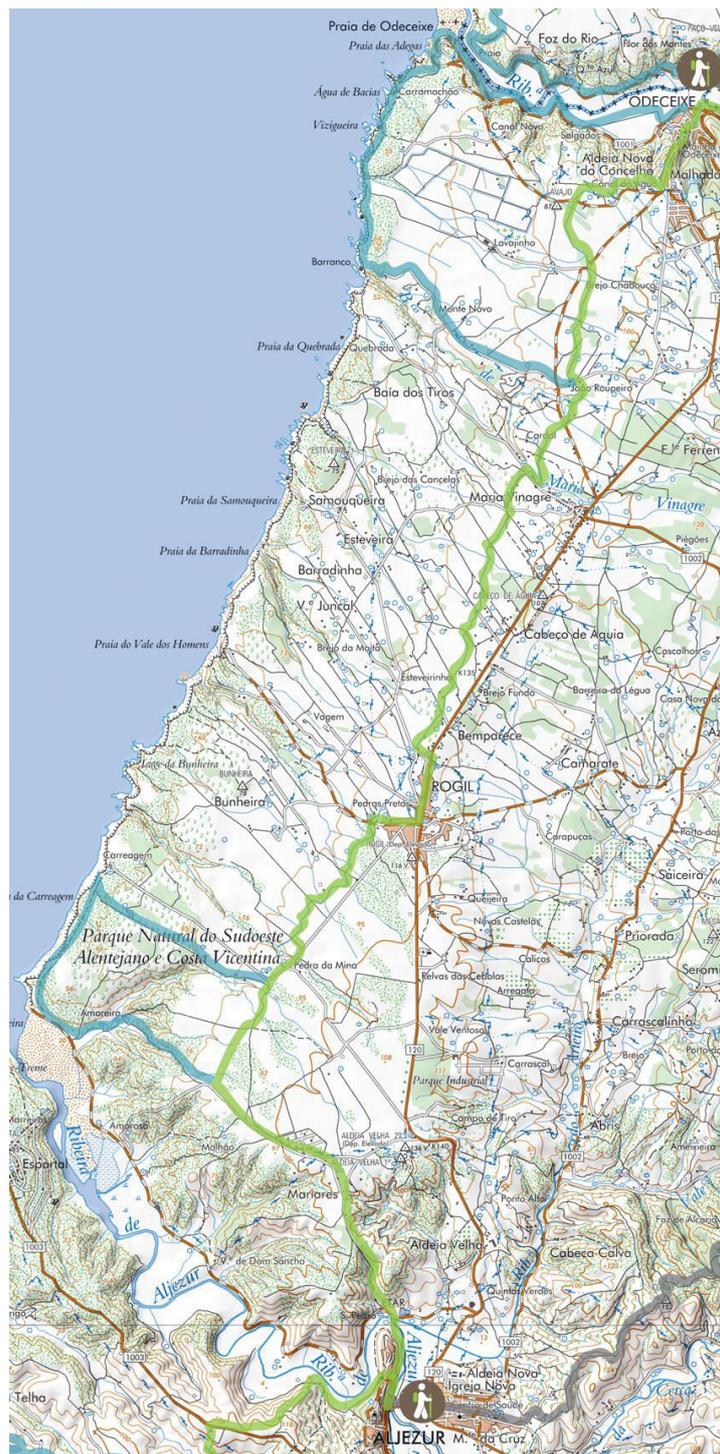
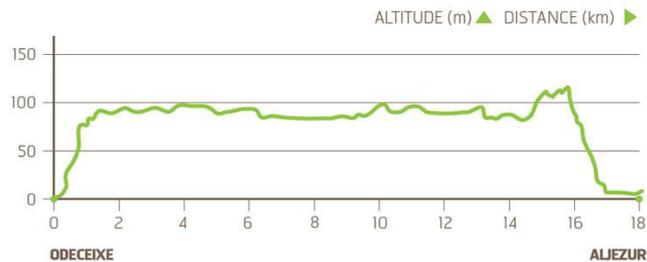
**Odeceixe**



**Aljezur**



**Topographic profile**



**Cartography IGEOE:**  
1:25 000 - 568, 576, 584  
1:50 000 - 49-4 e 49-3



### **Rota Vicentina General Rules and Recommendations:**

- Walk only along the marked trails
- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. The circulation of vehicles on the dunes is prohibited. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Fishermen's Trail: Maximum of 20 people per group; Only for walkers
- Respect private property; close gates and fences
- Respect the Nature. Do not collect or disturb animals, plants or rocks
- Do not leave trash or traces of your presence.
- Trails with no toilet, carry a bag and keep the trail clean.
- Be cautious with cattle, although gentle, they do not like strangers approaching their calves
- Keep your dog on a leash and clean up after it
- Do not camp or light fires outside designated areas
- Fishermen's Trail: Unstable cliffs, danger of falling; Not recommended for people with vertigo or fear of heights
- Be kind to local people, clarifying about the trail signals and the ongoing pedestrian activity
- Always carry water, food and sunscreen.

### **Rules and Recommendations - Historical Way:**

- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Do not light fires
- Several farms and cattle herds are protected by guard dogs. Proceed with caution.
- Be cautious with cattle, although gentle, they do not like strangers approaching their calves
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- In some parts of the trails you will have to cross paved roads. Be careful!
- There are very few support services along the trails. Bring water and food supplies with you.
- You will find several locations ideal for picnics. Do not, in any circumstances, leave trash behind.
- Be friendly with the locals, tell them why you're there and take the opportunity to share experiences.
- Do not litter. Help us out by picking up any litter you may find on the way

### **SOS**

Emergency: 112

Forest Fires: 117

Environment: 808 200 520

**For further information** on accommodation, restaurants and nature/cultural activities, please contact the closest Tourism Office or go to [www.rotavicentina.com](http://www.rotavicentina.com)

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## HISTORICAL WAY: Aljezur » Arrifana

This is a short day, but one that can be extended by going along the Fishermen's Trail towards Arrifana or continuing to the south, towards the villages of Bordeira and Carrapateira. You will cross scented valleys and small farms as you approach the coast, already guessing where the route will take you in the following days.

From the top of the legendary Castle of Aljezur, one of seven that are represented on the flag of Portugal, contemplate the fertile lowlands, where the famous and incomparable sweet potatoes of Aljezur are grown. The creeks wind along these fields with magnificent galleries of poplars, alders, ash trees, willows and tamarisks. Man has been living in harmony and with a respect for this nature, which is strongly marked by the effect of the seasons. As a result, we find an agricultural landscape rich in diversity, especially with regard to plants, insects, birds, amphibians and mammals. The butterflies are vying with the colourful flowers that explode in the spring.

The exit of the village allows you to admire the valley of the Aljezur river which extends to the Amoreira beach and to imagine what it would have been like in Aljezur in the 15th century, when the whole valley was navigable, forming the only safe haven of the rugged coastline between Vila Nova de Milfontes and Sagres. Here boats arrived from Lisbon, Flanders and Castile. Moving closer to the coast, you will cross the sierra with a predominance of eucalyptus trees, whose progressive plantation, due to the growing need for paper, has altered the character of the region's forest. The eucalyptus forests reduce biodiversity both above and below the ground. They consume great quantities of water, contribute to soil erosion and lead to the draining of mineral nutrients. When the sea appears on the horizon, in a landscape swept by salty winds, where hardly devolved undergrowth predominates, you can already foresee your arrival at the incomparable Bay of Arrifana.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 12 km

Approximate duration: 4 h

Accumulated climb: 224 m

Accumulated descent: 184 m

Difficulty level: Easy

Max. / min. altitude: 121 m / 2 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

**Aljezur:** by the market of Aljezur, heading towards the village Museum, where you must turn left. Go around the Church on the right side, and down to the dirt track, turning to the left. **Arrifana:** at the parking area on the top of the beach of Arrifana, heading along the road in the direction of Vale da Telha and Alejzur, until you enter on

the dirt track on your right.

### Important Warnings

At various times, throughout this section you will have to walk along and cross roads with some traffic. Proceed with the utmost caution and always on the left side of the road in order to be visible to traffic.

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 5, at the junction with the N 1003 road, making a detour of 600 meters to the right, heading to Vales. If you choose to go along the Ponta da Atalaia Circuit, as you reach the coast, turn right to Monte Clérigo.

#### Extend this section with the Fishermen's Trail

Take advantage of the Ponta da Atalaia Circuit to extend this section. In the direction north-south, at km 4, 1.5 km before crossing with the asphalted road, follow the Fishermen's Trail signs as far as Arrifana. Going south, start the walk in Arrifana following the Fishermen's Trail, and when this crosses the Historical Way continue towards Aljezur. In both directions, this route totals 18 km.

### Description of route

Climb up to the village Museum and go around the Church, descending towards the dirt track on the back of the village. If you haven't visited the castle yet, make a detour, you should not leave Aljezur without enjoying the views over the village and the lowlands. The route goes along Amoreira valley, passing an old reconstructed country house, from where it starts to go uphill till you meet the road to Monte Clérigo. The views over Amoreira beach and the village are quite inspiring. Walk along the road for 400 m and join the first turning on your left, going down before climbing again amid eucalyptus and cistus to reach a wider path. The Ponta da Atalaia Circuit of the Fishermen's Trail, which goes through Vale da Telha towards the sea, begins at this point. Turn left and continue until the crossing with the N 1003 road.

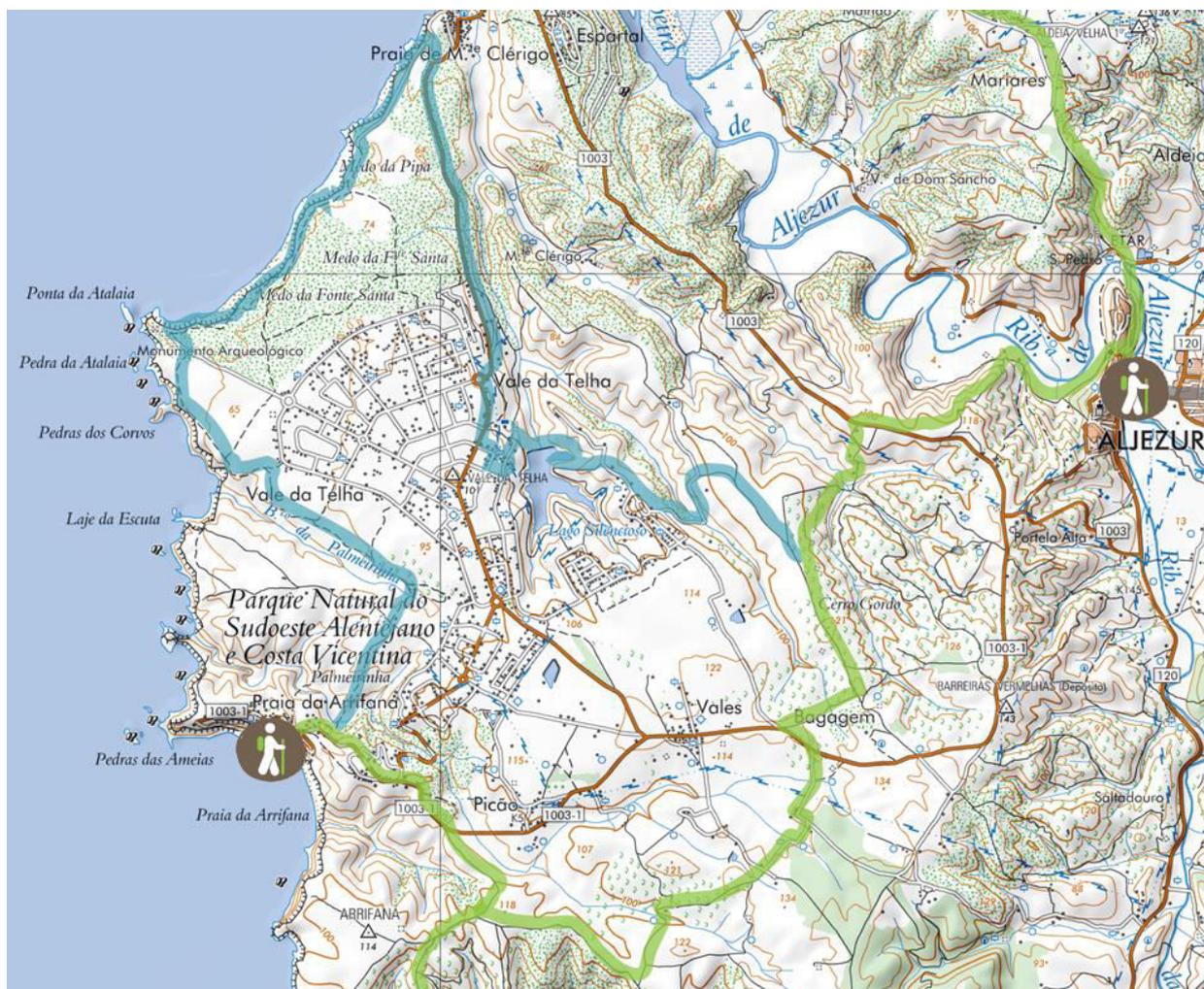
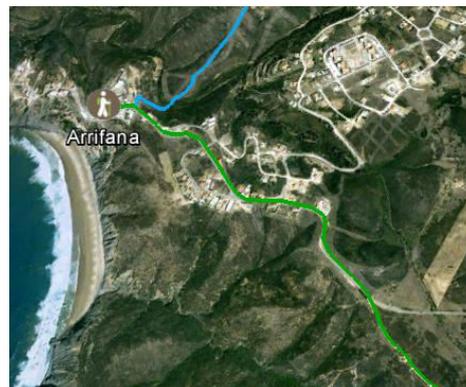
Once on the road, turn left again and go just 250 m, joining the first turn off on the right. After passing by some farms that are populated and other in ruins, the path starts to climb, through barely developed areas of scrubland and some pine woods. At the crossroads ahead follow the path on your right, enjoying the panoramic view over hills and valleys, and catch a glimpse of the beach of Arrifana. Continue downhill, you'll reach the road again and turn left. From this point you will walk along the side of the road until you come face to face with the incomparable bay of Arrifana. If you arrive early, continue for 1 km to the ruins of the fortress, from where you can truly appreciate the place at which you have just arrived.



**Aljezur**



**Arrifana**



**Topographic Profile**



**Cartography IGEOE:**

1:25 000 - 584, 583-A

1:50 000 - 49-3, 48-2



### **Rota Vicentina General Rules and Recommendations:**

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- Respect Nature. Do not collect or disturb animals, plants or rocks
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- Be cautious with cattle, although gentle, they do not like strangers approaching their calves
- Keep your dog on a leash and clean up after it
- Do not camp or light fires outside designated areas
- Fishermen's Trail: Unstable cliffs, danger of falling; Not recommended for people with vertigo or fear of heights
- Be kind to local people, clarifying about the trail signals and the ongoing pedestrian activity
- Always carry water, food and sunscreen.

### **Rules and Recommendations - Historical Way:**

- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Do not light fires
- Several farms and cattle herds are protected by guard dogs. Proceed with caution.
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### **SOS**

Emergency: 112

Forest Fires: 117

Environment: 808 200 520

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## HISTORICAL WAY: Arrifana » Carrapateira

Pedra da Agulha seen from Canal beach, Vale Figueira's vast sand stretch revealed during low tide and a succession of hills and valleys, confirm the most aggressive and inaccessible side of this coastal area. Upon arrival, a privileged view over Bordeira beach's sand dunes and the creek that meets the ocean here, in a setting that repeats itself over and over again and characterizes Vicentina Coast's beaches.

In this admirable section there is the constant and simultaneous presence of the hills and the sea, pristine nature and the unique presence of man. It's practically a step-by-step summary of what the Rota Vicentina has to offer: the power of the sea pouring over ancient cliffs or on quiet sandy beaches, undergrowths full of colour and aromas, an extraordinary biodiversity of fauna, tranquil woods of cork, wild olive and oak trees, meadows cultivated by man at his leisure, visited at night by boars and badgers, a spring which erupts in flowers and colourful insects, a fall that has mushrooms and edible wild plants, points of contemplation at sea level, at the top of the cliff, in the intimacy of the woods or on top of a hill. It is worth while taking a longer look at the Canal beach and the village of Bordeira.

The undergrowth which populates much of this section is rich in *cistus* and *lentiscus*, the fruit of which is a delicacy for seed eating birds. On the rocky beaches lashed by the sea it is common to find rocks, well rounded by constant erosion from waves and tides. These are pieces of dark rock from the cliffs, often decorated with white stripes of quartz, in geometric designs. Heading inland between spots of pine and eucalyptus on clay soils, cork oaks, strawberry trees and farmland where cattle graze, the presence of small holdings announce your arrival at a village. After passing the village of Bordeira, the view over the valley of the Bordeira river and the estuary where it joins the Carrapateira river highlights once again the beauty of the region.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 24 km

Approximate duration: 7 h

Accumulated climb: 413 m

Accumulated descent: 500 m

Difficulty level: Difficult

Max. / min. altitude: 162 m / 13 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

**Arrifana:** at the parking area on the top of the beach of Arrifana, heading along the road in the direction of Vale da Telha and Aljezur, until you enter on the dirt track on your right.

**Carrapateira:** In the village centre, heading along the road to Monte da Cunca, where you should join the path to the right.

### Important Warnings

You will need to take extra care on the descent to the beach of Canal. Take a walking stick.

This is a long section and one on which you will only be able to buy something almost at the very end. You should stock up in Arrifana and take water (1.5 L minimum) and sufficient provisions with you.

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 18.8, in the village of Bordeira.

#### Do not miss the Fishermen's Trail

Pontal da Carrapateira Circuit is a circular walk of 10 km with start and finish point at the village of Carrapateira. Stay another day in town and enjoy the beauty of the region, getting to know the place even better.

### Description of route

After the parking area on the top of the beach of Arrifana, follow the road towards Aljezur and after 1 km, take the dirt track on the right. Walk with the ocean on one side and mountains and valleys on the other, in an area of scrubland, until reaching the crossroad indicating Aljezur. Continue without changing direction and at the next crossroads take the left turning down to the beach, with a breathtaking view of the coast and the beach of Vale Figueiras. The final part of the descent is a footpath. Cross a small river and continue on the path that goes up the other side, leaving the beach behind. At the end of the climb you enter an area of eucalyptus trees and at the end of the long straight road, take the path on the right.

Go through the village of Monte Novo, turning left after a farm with enclosures and animals, climbing and descending until you cross the EN 268. Go straight on along a road, passing several houses and a junkyard until you are back on the dirt track. Continue until you come across the Bordeira river at the base of the valley and turn right, arriving at Bordeira by a path that runs parallel to the road. Once in the village, pass the Church, go up the cobbled path and at the exit continue another climb. At the top you can feel the ocean. The route follows the river of Aguçadeira, which you will have to cross twice. At the highest point - Cerro da Cunca, take in the panoramic view over the valley of Bordeira beach. The route descends, passing by Monte da Cunca and follows to the left, on the road, to Carrapateira.



**Arrifana**



**Topographic profile**



**Carrapateira**



**Cartography IGEOE:**  
1:25 000 - 583-A, 584, 593, 592  
1:50 000 - 48-2, 49-3



### **Rota Vicentina General Rules and Recommendations:**

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### **Rules and Recommendations - Historical Way:**

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### **SOS**

Emergency: 112

Forest Fires: 117

Environment: 808 200 520

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## HISTORICAL WAY: Carrapateira » Vila do Bispo

After magnificent views over Bordeira beach, the beauty of pristine valleys, where one can barely feel the human presence, the picturesque villages of Vilarinha and Pedralva, you will be ready to face the strong winds that are expected with the arrival in Vila do Bispo. A section where it is possible to experience the essence of the Vicentina Coast.

The beginning of this section treats us to scenery in which the mountain range spreads as far as the coast, ending up on the beach. Rocks, hillsides, streams or plains in deep valleys, are some of the features that make up the aesthetic landscape and constitute a mosaic of habitats with distinct ecological functions. En route to the interior, on the way to Vilarinha and Pedralva villages, along the riverbanks, there are tamarisk, willow, ash and Portuguese oaks. On the drier slopes, cork oak, maritime and stone pines, oleaster and olive trees. On the steepest slopes you can admire the natural vegetation, virtually untouched by man, with dense scrub under the cover of cork trees. In this undergrowth arbutus, white heather, scotch heather, *viburnum tinus*, *cistus*, *lentiscus*, wild asparagus, laurel and furze are in abundance.

Next to the wind farm, which you will pass after Pedralva, you can find some temporary ponds. They are perhaps the richest habitat in biodiversity in Sw Portugal, fundamental, for example, for the reproduction of most of our amphibians. They are free from predators of eggs and tadpoles precisely because they are temporary (they dry up in summer), so they are a safe place in which to lay eggs. From autumn to spring, in addition to thousands of tadpoles, the ponds are populated by birds, tortoises, mammals and plants. In April and May the flowers offer a palette of colours: blue forget-me-not, yellow narcissi, lilac hyacinths, purple orchids, white marigolds. In summer, this island of diversity goes into aestivation presenting a deserted and desolate aspect. When crossing the forest perimeter of Vila do Bispo, go quietly and use binoculars because wildlife sightings are likely, especially birds.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 22 km

Approximate duration: 6 h

Accumulated climb: 299 m

Accumulated descent: 206 m

Difficulty level: Easy

Max. / min. altitude: 144 m / 10 m

Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Carrapateira: at the main square, going up towards the Land and Sea Museum. Vila do Bispo: at the Church, in the direction of the soccer field.

### Important Warning

During the winter and periods of heavy rain

The path between the villages of Vilarinha and Pedralva, can get pretty waterlogged due to the increased flow of the Carrapateira and Sinceira rivers, that you'll have to

cross for six times. On these occasions, pay attention to the signs and choose the alternate path, avoiding the section in question. (Warning! - route unmarked).

### Suggestions

#### Refreshments along the way

At km 9.5, you'll pass the village of Pedralva.

#### Alternate Path

Coming from Carrapateira, when reaching the detour information board, take the path to the right. Cross the village till you reach the footpath behind the last house. 200 m ahead turn left and go up hill. At the top, walk for a bit to the right and go down again on the single track to your left, till you find the main trail. From Pedralva, when reaching the warning sign on the side of the road, go up the hill along the footpath on your left, and descend to Vilarinha. (follow the red arrows).

#### Do not miss the Fishermen's Trail

Pontal da Carrapateira Circuit is a circular walk of 10 km with start and finish point at the village of Carrapateira. Stay another day in town and enjoy the beauty of the region, getting to know the place even better.

### Description of route

Departing from Carrapateira, climb narrow and steep alleys towards the Land and Sea Museum, continuing your ascent until you find a geodesic mark. Look around and enjoy the stunning views over Bordeira beach, the village and the rounded hills that follow until disappearing into the sand. As you reach an old house by the trail, after descending to the bottom of the valley, turn right and go along a footpath till you join the main track, parallel to the river, arriving to the village of Vilarinha. Turn left, before entering the village itself, walking along the valley, close to Carrapateira and Sinceira rivers, that you'll have to cross for six times. During periods of heavy rain, you should choose the alternate path - see warning.

Go through the village of Pedralva, heading south through a valley, with vegetable gardens, some houses, orchards and grazing areas, climbing progressively until encountering the wind farm. Cross to the other side of the road and pass by the walled ruin descending along the path to your right, through a well-preserved valley flanked by arbutus trees and other local species. At the top of the climb turn left and proceed along a sandy path, surrounded now by pines or scrubland, crossing several wide dirt tracks, till you reach the national road, where you must walk for about 700 m. Enter the parallel track, on the right, getting a glimpse of the houses of the village and the sea on the south coast of the Algarve, arriving in Vila do Bispo.





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### **SOS**

Emergency: 112

Forest Fires: 117

Environment: 808 200 520

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## HISTORICAL WAY: Vila do Bispo » Cabo de S. Vicente

Today, you will be walking towards the south western tip of Europe. This is a magical place where one can almost hear the echoes of the voices of sailors and pilgrims. Monumental cliffs, outstanding views over the coastline and a privileged area to watch the natural phenomenon of autumn bird migration.

On this section the very high cliffs provide unique perspectives. Ornithologists and birdwatchers are attracted to Sagres by the autumnal migration of soaring birds and seabirds, which amount to more than 5000 individuals from more than 300 species. In fact, they may come across booted eagles, black kite, honey buzzards, short toed eagles, sparrow hawks, red kite, kestrels, fly catchers, Eleonora's Falcon, black storks and different species of vultures. The more rare imperial Eagle and Golden Eagle appear at times. In October, some seabirds can also be easily observed, such as the shearwater, gannet, skua, the common tern and sandwich tern.

The vegetation is still the protagonist on this trail along the top of the cliff. It crosses the Sagres Biogenetic Reserve, a sanctuary for botanists because of the rare chalk soil plants, and for species unique to the world or which were thought to be extinct but have reappeared. The undergrowth is dominated by gorse, *Erica*, thistles, *Lithodora lusitanica*, rosemary, thyme, violets and hyacinths. You are about to finish the Rota Vicentina, but before you'll pass an area called Vale Santo, which was for centuries part of the pilgrimage route of devotees of St. Vincent, whose journey finished in the monastery that existed, where now is located the lighthouse.

### Fact sheet

Distance: 14 km  
Approximate duration: 4 h  
Accumulated climb: 96 m  
Accumulated descent: 103 m  
Difficulty level: Somewhat difficult  
Max. / min. altitude: 152 m / 51 m  
Recommended season: September till June

### Where to start?

Vila do Bispo: next to the Church, heading towards the roundabout near the access road to the beaches of Castelejo and Cordama, where you must take the left road.

Cabo de S. Vicente: at the lighthouse of Cape St. Vincent, following the paved road until you find a directional sign post to the left, heading to Vale Santo.

### Important Warning

With the exception of the final part where you reach the lighthouse, you will not find any refreshment points along the way. You should carry water (1.5 L minimum) and sufficient supplies.



### Suggestions

#### Finish this walk by the sea

Take advantage of the Telheiro Beach Circuit to fully enjoy the arrival to Cape St. Vincent. Between 'Ponta Ruiva' and 'Pedra das Gaivotas', this is the trail with the certification "Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe". The section maintains the distance of 14 km.

#### Strong wind

This is an area of strong winds. Choose to do this section in a north-south direction, the probability of having the wind on your back is much higher.

#### Cape St. Vincent - Sagres: 6 km

From the lighthouse to Sagres is 6 km. Save energies for an easy walk along the road. Alternatively hire a taxi.

### Description of route

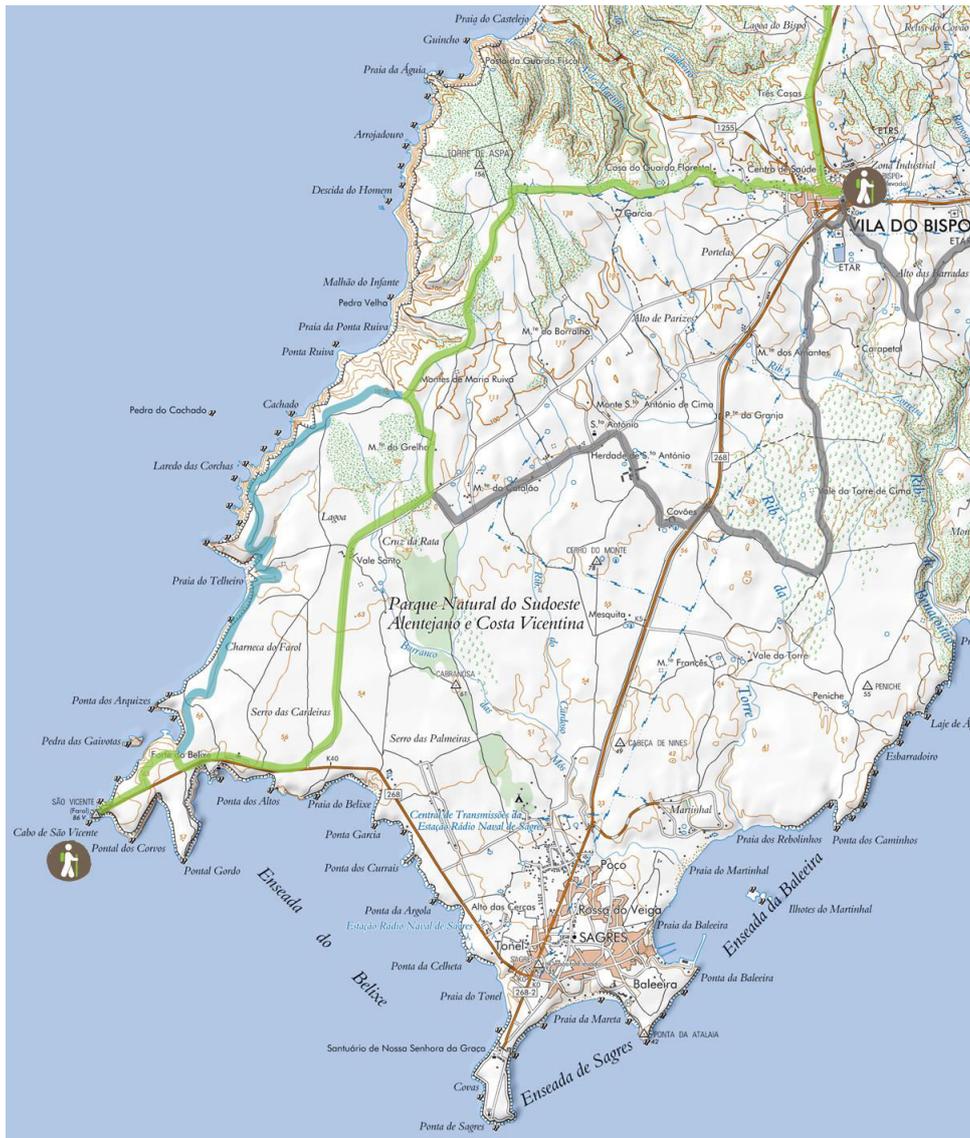
Next to the restaurant Eira do Mel, take the road on the left and head towards the park rangers house (Casa do Guarda), which you can spot if you take a little detour from the path. Continuing straight on, you will pass a transformer station just before the crossroad with a sign for "Torre de Aspa". The scrubland shows the influence of the strong winds, with shrubs being almost non-existent and a panorama dominated by ground cover plants. Turn left and head south. The path to the right goes to the view point of the Torre de Aspa. On this site a plant that was previously thought to be extinct locally has been found, the *Silene rothmaleri*, a species endemic to the far South-West of Portugal. The views over the beaches of Castelejo and Cordama are mandatory!

Only 1 km ahead, a detour invites hikers to visit the view point of Ponta Ruiva, and a little further on, you will come to the start point of Telheiro Beach Circuit, the last complementary circuit of the Fishermen's Trail, that you must follow for a harder, but unforgettable arrival to the Cape St. Vincent. Reaching a lower zone, where there is a predominance of pastures for cattle, you will be in the area called Vale Santo (the Holy Valley), which owes its name to the ancient tradition of pilgrims and devotees, who would finish or start their pilgrimage here. From this point the Rota Vicentina coincides with another long distance path, the Via Algarviana and follows along a tar road with some local viewpoints, to Cape St. Vincent, the magical and mythical place which signals the end of this journey along the most surprising coast in Europe.

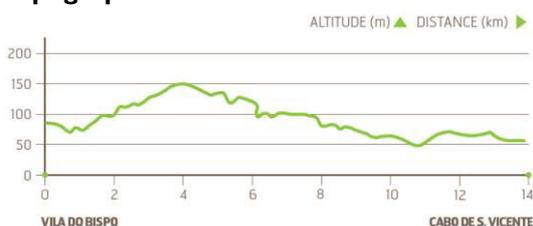
**Vila do Bispo**



**Cape St. Vincent**



**Topographic Profile**



**Cartography IGEOE:**

1:25 000 - 601, 609

1:50 000 - 51-1



### **Rota Vicentina General Rules and Recommendations:**

- Walk only along the marked trails
- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. The circulation of vehicles on the dunes is prohibited. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Fishermen's Trail: Maximum of 20 people per group; Only for walkers
- Respect private property; close gates and fences
- Respect the Nature. Do not collect or disturb animals, plants or rocks
- Do not leave trash or traces of your presence.
- Trails with no toilet, carry a bag and keep the trail clean.
- Be cautious with cattle, although gentle, they do not like strangers approaching their calves
- Keep your dog on a leash and clean up after it
- Do not camp or light fires outside designated areas
- Fishermen's Trail: Unstable cliffs, danger of falling; Not recommended for people with vertigo or fear of heights
- Be kind to local people, clarifying about the trail signals and the ongoing pedestrian activity
- Always carry water, food and sunscreen.

### **Rules and Recommendations - Historical Way:**

- The circulation of motor vehicles puts walkers at risk. Avoid doing the Historical Way on a motor cycle or in a jeep, look into other options
- Do not light fires
- Several farms and cattle herds are protected by guard dogs. Proceed with caution.
- Be cautious with cattle, although gentle, they do not like strangers approaching their calves
- These trails pass by private property. Respect it and do not forget to close gates and fences you will find on the way.
- In some parts of the trails you will have to cross paved roads. Be careful!
- There are very few support services along the trails. Bring water and food supplies with you.
- You will find several locations ideal for picnics. Do not, in any circumstances, leave trash behind.
- Be friendly with the locals, tell them why you're there and take the opportunity to share experiences.
- Do not litter. Help us out by picking up any litter you may find on the way

### **SOS**

Emergency: 112

Forest Fires: 117

Environment: 808 200 520

**For further information** on accommodation, restaurants and nature/cultural activities, please contact the closest Tourism Office or go to [www.rotavicentina.com](http://www.rotavicentina.com)

### **Help us**

For any situation related to the good working conditions of Rota Vicentina, please contact us:

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