

Castles and Wine



HIGHLIGHTS

- Accommodation at castles, palaces and farmhouses – sleep in luxury!
- Beautiful rolling landscape with vineyards, olive groves, cork oaks and grazing land
- Wine tasting and very good Alentejo wine
- Impressive heritage
- Évora historical centre, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage Site
- Mediaeval villages
- Fantastic gastronomy

DESCRIPTION

This is a tour where there is a **true combination of cycling and discovery**, and you can be sure to leave Portugal with a much richer knowledge of our region!

Along our cycling days we will visit **castles, churches, artisans, wine producers** and **typical family owned cafés**. The landscape changes from olive groves to vineyards and cork oaks, from granite to schist and to marble.

We start in the small village of Alvito, very famous for its **manueline architecture**, and from there cycle to Évora, impressive city classified by UNESCO as **World Heritage Site**. In Évora we explore the **megalithic monuments**. We continue to **Monsaraz**, the **lovely white castled** village with a panoramic view over the **biggest artificial lake of Europe**, and cycle through **Terena** and its impressive sanctuary. The tour then goes to **Vila Viçosa**, where we visit the famous **Ducal Palace**, and finishes in **Estremoz**, the city of the «**white gold**» (marble).

The days are **relaxing and easy**. We do between 35 and 50km. Roads are mostly undulating. This means that we rarely have big climbs, but go slightly up and down several times. We mix some dirt roads with asphalt, but most of the tour is on asphalt. The dirt road connexions give the tour a special link to nature.

DETAILED PROGRAMME

1st day

Early arrival to airport
Transfer to Alvito
6 pm - Welcome drink and first briefing
or, if late arrival, meeting for dinner at 8 pm

Dinner at regional restaurant or at the Pousada, on option B.

For accommodation we recommend **Residential Varanda (option A)**

<http://avaranda-hospedaria.planetaclix.pt/>

OR Pousada do Alvito, built in the castle (option B)

http://www.pousadas.pt/historicalhotels/EN/pousadas/Portugal/Alentejo/CastelodeAlvito/home/PousadaCastelodeAlvito_Home.htm

2nd day Hamlet's route

Cycling from Alvito to Évora.

We start by riding through Alvito, famous for its several buildings with **manueline architecture**. We pass through several **tiny lovely hamlets, where life goes by at the slow Alentejo speed**, and then ride to the village of Viana do Alentejo, famous for its **pottery**, the **majestic castle with a mother church** inside and the impressive Church of Senhora de Aires. The local «tasca» (**typical café**) is totally **genuine** and the atmosphere very serene. We then ride to Évora, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage Site.

Base kms: 40; Total ascent: 400 mts

Optional extra kms to ride until Évora: 20 kms; Extra ascent: 240 mts

Terrain: Undulating roads. Some dirt roads.

Level: Easy

Transfer: from Aguiar to Évora, in the end

Dinner at regional restaurant or at the farm

For accommodation we recommend Hotel Mar de Ar Muralhas, in Évora, a **4 star hotel** with swimming pool

www.mardearhotels.com/muralhas

OR Monte do Serrado de Baixo, **rural hotel**, with swimming pool, for small groups.

www.montedoserradodebaixo.com/

3rd day Megalithic route

Cycling around Évora. Today we visit some of the most important **megalithic monuments** of the region. The landscape is lovely, with a lot of **holm oak and cork trees**. We will learn about the **cork extraction** and about the people that **inhabited the region more than 5000 years ago**.

We will visit the **Dolmen of Zambugeiro** – biggest in Europe, the **Cromlech of Almendres**, and the **roman ruins of Tourega**. In the afternoon we cycle in the city of Évora and discover the **amazing history** of this beautiful city. We visit the surreal bone's chapel and the impressive cathedral, originally from the 13th century.

We finish with a wine tasting in the Évora Wine tour shop.

Base kms: 45 kms, if you sleep in Évora; **Total ascent:** 500 mts

Base kms: 45 kms, if you slept at the rural hotel, with a transfer in the beginning of day. **Terrain:** Flat terrain, some dirt roads.

Level: Easy+

Dinner not included

Accommodation in same hotel

4th day The valley of river Degebe

Cycling from Évora to Reguengos de Monsaraz.

We ride between olive groves to reach the small and traditional village of Nossa Sr^a de Machede. We stop at a local café for a drink, visit the **leather factory** and an **olive mill** (when in season). We pass the **Castle of Valongo** and visit a **cheese factory** in Aldeias de Montoito.

Arriving to Reguengos de Monsaraz we still have plenty of time for some wine tasting in a **gorgeous winery** where they still have a room with the **old clay pots** to keep the wine.

Base Kms: 50 (if you slept in Évora) or 57 kms (if you slept at our farm); **Total ascent:** 500 mts

Terrain: Undulating roads

Level: Easy+

Dinner not included

For accommodation we recommend www.casadoalentejo.net, a nice and simple pensão (option A),

OR www.hotelprovincia.com, a charming 4 stars hotel with swimming pool (option B)

5th day

Conquest of the Castle of Monsaraz

Cycling from Reguengos to Monsaraz.

We will visit the famous **pottery village of S. Pedro do Corval**, where you can see the men working the clay, transforming it into beautiful pots and plates, and the ladies painting them with flowers. We have lunch by the lake, and here we will **taste the wines** of the famous Esporão winery. Then we conquer the gorgeous village of **Monsaraz**, built in a **castle on top of a hill**. From Monsaraz you'll take in the **beautiful view** over the lake of the **Alqueva Dam**, the biggest artificial lake of Europe.

Base Kms: 35 kms; **Total ascent:** 380 mts

Terrain: Flat roads, with one ascent to the castle

Level: Easy except for climb to Monsaraz

Dinner at regional restaurant

For accommodation we recommend <http://www.vilaplanicie.com/>, a charming hotel with swimming pool

6th day

The Sanctuary route

Cycling from Monsaraz to Vila Viçosa.

We leave the schist land and discover the **marble kingdom**.

We start by visiting the **impressive sanctuary** of Nossa Sr^a da Boa Nova and the **flowery village** of Terena. After we pass by the **moon like landscape** of the **marble quarries** of Bencatel area, from where the **«white gold»** was extracted to build gorgeous cities such as Estremoz and Borba. We arrive in Vila Viçosa, favourite resting place for many kings, who were followed by many noble people who built beautiful manor houses.

Base Kms: 50 kms; **Total ascent:** 680 mts

Terrain: Undulating, with some climbing.

Level: Medium

Dinner at regional restaurant

For accommodation we recommend the charming hotel Solar dos Mascarenhas, in Vila Viçosa, 3 stars, www.solardosmascarenhas.com, with swimming pool (option A)

OR Pousada D. João IV, built in a palace, with swimming pool

http://www.pousadas.pt/historicalhotels/PT/pousadas/Portugal/Alentejo/DJoaoIV/home/PousadaDJoaoIV_Home.htm



7th day
The marble route

Cycling from Vila Viçosa to Estemoz

We start by visiting the fabulous **Ducal Palace** of Vila Viçosa, and then follow to Borba. In Borba we will visit one of those typical local cafés, where the wine served is produced at the clay pots that decorate the space. It's the local «**hand made wine**». We visit a marble quarry and then follow to Gloria, where we visit an **artisan**. We visit the **Church of Nossa Sr^a dos Martires, a marble gothic church**. Arriving to Estremoz you'll be impressed by the beautiful architecture and the imposing tower of the castle where you will sleep!

Base Kms: 35 kms; **Total ascent:** 680 mts

Terrain: Undulating, with some climbing.

Level: Medium

Dinner at regional restaurant

For accommodation we recommend the Pousada Rainha St^a Isabel, built in a palace

http://www.pousadas.pt/historicalhotels/PT/pousadas/Portugal/Alentejo/RainhaSantaIsabel/home/PousadaRainhaSantaIsabel_Home.htm

8th day

Transfer to Lisbon airport

Tour runs with group from 4 to 20 people. Price given is for a minimum of 10.

On guided cycling tours you can expect **full service** from your guides. They will do their best to make your holiday an **unforgettable one**.

Our guides are all **Portuguese** and **know** our region very well. They are very **service minded** and most of them have been working with us for many years. They are cyclers themselves, and love to go cycling on their holidays, so **they know what you expect!**

Tours are accompanied by one or two cycling guides and a guide who takes the support car, prepares the picnics and transports your luggage.

Lunches are included and we'll be picnic type, with traditional foods from the area where you are cycling.

On **Dinners** arranged by TurAventur you can be sure you will try the best gastronomy as we will choose restaurants well known by us for its good traditional food. No «touristy» places included!

PRICE

Total price of tour per person: € 998

Total price for accommodation, sharing a double room, on hotels recommended by us (7 nights), option A: € 320

Total price for accommodation, sharing a double room on hotels recommended by us (7 nights), option B: € 390

Single supplement on hotels recommended by us (option A): € 250

Single supplement on hotels recommended by us (option B): € 305

Minimum number of participants: 10

Accommodation costs are priced separately and you have to pay them directly to suppliers. We do not sell accommodation.

Included in Turaventur price:

- rental of bikes for 6 days with front bag and back luggage carrier;
- transfer on private bus from Lisbon airport to Alvito and from Estremoz to Lisbon airport;
- support car to go along during the 6 cycling days;
- guide to cycle with the group (one or two, depending on number of participants);
- personal Accident Insurance for people;
- 6 picnic lunches per person with wine from the region where we are cycling;
- 5 dinners;
- entrance fee at bones chapel, in Évora;
- entrance fee at cathedral, in Évora;
- entrance fee at Ducal Palace, in Vila Viçosa;
- 2 Wine tasting;
- souvenir;
- VAT tax

Not included:

- insurance for bikes – it does not exist;
- travel Insurance - see terms&conditions;
- tour Cancellation Insurance – see terms&conditions;
- 2 dinners;
- accommodation;