

Important general information

Taxi: 919882277

Local man. Very reliable. Speaks very good English. If you're staying at Boavista Resort, give him the address and say you're opposite the lake on Avenida dos Lagos. If you're staying at Quinta Melody, give him the address and ask him to ring the bell.

An alternative taxi which is cheaper if you're going away from Lagos is the local main firm: (282) 764481. Often their English is poor, but they are very reliable.

Directory enquires in English: 760 50 60 70

Code if calling UK from Portugal: 00 44 and delete the '0' off the code.
Code if calling Portugal from UK: 00 351

999 equivalent: 112 (medical and police); 117 for fire.

Chemist/farmacia: Tel: 289789866. Rua 25 de Abril, 12 - Praia da Luz 8600
There is a pharmacy in Lagos but parking there is atrocious. Far easier to go the one in Praia Da Luz: Head for mercado and the new shopping centre and you will find it there (signposted)

Supermarkets.

There are a number close by, the nearest being Intermarche. Just turn left out of the Resort apartment or, if staying at Quinta Melody, go down to the main road and turn right, , carry on to the outskirts of town and you'll see a sign on the left for it. Open until 10 pm most evenings and Sunday mornings. This supermarket is walkable from Quinta Melody (about 5 minutes), and about 20 minutes' walk from Boavista Resort apartment.

There is also a reasonable (but smaller) supermarket in Praia da Luz (follow signs for the Mercado and you will find it) and hypermarkets (Continente and Carrefour) at Portimao (just follow the signs to Portimao and you will see signposted)

Shopping

Branded and local goods and markets are available in Lagos, Portimao and most of the villages/towns in the area.

There are good mall type shopping centres in Portimao and the main shopping 'mecca' is at Guia, about half an hour away towards Faro.

About Lagos and the area

Lagos History

The Romans gave the name of "*Lacobriga*" to the town but its natural river port would indicate very much earlier occupation. It was captured from the Moors in 1189 but it was not until 1249 that it was finally claimed by *Dom Afonso III* and integrated into the kingdom of the Algarve. This historic town has played an important part in the story of discovery and conquering the rest of the world. It was from this very harbor that *Vasco da Gama* sailed in 1499 on his historic and epic discovery voyage. It was the capital of the Algarve from 1578 until 1756 and there remain several ancient buildings to testify to its historic glory. From its port maritime expeditions were embarked to discover the world at the orders of *Prince Henry the Navigator*. Also, the armada of 800 vessels led by the ill-fated heir to the throne *Dom Sebastião* embarked from Lagos in 1578 to capture the town of Ceuta in Morocco.

Lagos Description

Essentially now an important tourist town there are still many architectural signs of its ancient past, even a building dating originally back to around 1445 and is recorded as being Europe's first building used as a slave-market. The walls of the town are in most parts remaining after areas of restoration. Attached to the famous 17th century "gold" church of *Santo António* there is a small museum of regional items, some of which are quite odd! There are several interesting statues erected to the famous past figures that are associated with the history of this town. None more controversial that the sculpture of *Dom Sebastião* standing in the main square in front of the Town Hall. A more recently erected statue commemorates the Algarve's only Saint, *São Gonçalo de Lagos* who was born in 1360 and died in 1422 in *Torres Vedras*. Pope *Pio VI* raised him to Sainthood in 1778. The town's more recently constructed Marina presents a lovely picture and this harbor is the first sight a visitor has of *Lagos*. Besides the boats that find it convenient as a permanent mooring it is usually full of yachts passing through, to and from the Mediterranean. The municipal council has constructed a modern Cultural Centre in which various exhibitions and culturally related events are held during the year. In the Marina different boat tours and deep sea-fishing outings can be booked.

Nearby Locations

Near to *Lagos* is a small beach village of *Burgau*. Across the river from *Lagos* is *Meia Praia*, a very long sandy beach sheltered from the north by a gentle slope dotted with comfortable villas. The once upon a time fishing village of *Praia da Luz* is now devoted to the quieter side of the tourist trade and residents from colder climates. Nearby the coastal village of *Salerna* there are some small Roman ruin proving the existence of its past life. *Vila do Bispo* to the west of *Lagos* is a very small administrative town for the *Sagres* area that is the most south-west corner of Europe! The village of *Sagres* is a must for every visitor to the Algarve. It presents a very impressive dramatic sight of towering sheer cliffs being beaten by the weight of the vast Atlantic Ocean. It is from here that *Prince Henry* planned his epic shattering voyages. *Cape Santo Vicente* is the name given to this promontory

Things to do

Eating out

There are a plethora of restaurants in Lagos and the surrounding area – below are just a few of the ones we would recommend (or not as stated) to help you on your way:

Bem Bom. (351) 912 229 3623

Within walking distance of Boavista Resort apartment (about 10 minutes – turn left out of the apartment and keep walking down that road until you see on the left) and Quinta Melody (about two minutes, just turn left out of the villa, go down to the main road, turn right and you will see on the left).

At lunchtimes this is very popular with local Portuguese workers so book. Book in high season also as is getting increasingly popular with tourists and local people.

Super place, cheap good food (Portuguese) and cheap good wine (try the Casal Garcia if you're a white wine drinker for less than 5 euros a bottle).

Boavista Resort Club house restaurant. 282 000 111.

Truly wonderful food to be had here. Sometimes this is very busy others not – best to book and check as sometimes you could be the only people there, others very noisy. Staff are wonderful whichever way. Open to non golfers during the day and in the evening.

Papagaio, Espiche. 282 789 423.

This one you must try – and as in next village only five minutes away (look on the map for Espiche). Park up in main area and walk up through to the village - restaurant is signposted. Variety of meats brought to the table and you cook them yourself on a stone grill. Absolutely stunning, very cheap, restaurant. Limited selection for non meat eaters though.

Florestal Restaurante. 282 687 204. Barao de S. Joa, Near Luz.

Call before going as opening hours can be strange.

About 20 minutes' drive from apartment (left out of development from main entrance). Check on map in drawer for location. Set in the forest with great mountain views from terrace. We haven't eaten here but have heard very good reports. International food.

Do Cais. 282 792 037. Centro Comercial, Marina de Lagos.

Super, super restaurant on marina quay. Fantastic food and very busy so advise to book. We always go here for celebration meals.

O Henrique. 282 763 563. Rua 25 de April, no 75, 8600-763 Lagos.

Excellent meal had here.

Don Sebastiao Restaurant. 282 762 795/282 769 142/282 780 480. Rua 25 de April, 20-22.

Upmarket restaurant. Excellent food. Specialises in fish. Best to book.

Marigil. 282 639 274. Apartado 15, Raposeira.

Very very popular – and closed on Saturdays. Portuguse restaurant. Cataplana a speciality.

Estrela do Mar. 282 769 250. Located on top of fish market in Lagos.

Highly recommended by most, but we have never had a good meal or service here.

Campimar. 282 762 957

Down on the beach at Praia do Porto de Mos so walkable from Quinta Melody. Very nice food. Stunning foods.

Beach bar, Burgau. 282 697 553.

Go down to sea front, turn right and walk along beach. Brilliant place with waves coming right up to the restaurant. Open as a snackbar every day. Restaurant and bar closed Mondays. You'll find Burgau on the map in the drawer.

Restaurante Fonterario, Espiche. 282 789 953.

In the next village along from Boavista (see directions for Adeaga Papagaio). Less than a five minute drive. We haven't eaten here (only because have not been able to get in) so do book – it has a great reputation for food.

Meu Limao Tapas & Wine Bar. 282 767946. Rua Silva Lopes 40/42 Lagos.

Super tapas bar/restaurant – the prawns in coconut cream are to die for!

These are just a selection of restaurants that we know about. Visit www.lagos.me.uk or www.virtualltourist.com/travel/Europe/Portugal/Algarve/Lagos for others.

O Alberto, 8600 Lagos, Largo Convento, Sr da Gloria 27 (next to GNR). 351 282 769 387

Lovely place, Shrimps, tuna fish, cockles, cataplana. Open kitchen.

Navegador, Rua da Barroca, 1-3 Lagos. 351 282 767 162

Super sea view. Super river/sea view.

Out and About

Bus routes

The bus station at Lagos is the hub for both local, regional and national routes. Visit <http://www.eva-bus.com/uk/index.htm> for an overview of services and timetables. There are regular local routes along the coast from Lagos/Praia da Luz to Faro in the East and St Vincent in the west or, indeed, further afield up country to Lisbon and other major cities.

Trains. (351) 213 185 990 (English spoken)

The nearest station is Lagos (just travel into Lagos and follow the 'train' or 'estacao' or GNR signs). . The Algarve and surrounding regions are very accessible by train. There is an international call centre where English is spoken: 351 213 185 990, open from 7am to 11 pm.

Sport and fun activities

Golf.

If you're staying at Boavista Resort apartment, you'll know all about the golf. If at Quinta Melody, if you fancy a round then you won't be disappointed with this 18 hole championship golf course (handicaps required) on your doorstep (well, 800 metres away!)

Green fees offer the best value on the Algarve (see table below), the course condition, greens and views are superb and the 19th hole very welcoming. Club hire and buggy hire available from the golf pro shop located just inside the main entrance to the resort (N125 end).

If you're looking to play a mixture of courses below are the details of most with the green fees (correct end 2006):

Green Fees in the Algarve			Green fee	Green fee	Buggy hire
Course			low	high	
Parque de Floresta	www.parquedafloresta.com	(351) 28269 00 54	€ 70.00	n/a	€ 40.00
	golf.reception@boavistagolf.com	(351) 282 000 111			
BOAVISTA			€50.00	€70.00	€36.00
after 25% discount*			€37.50	€52.50	€27.00
Palmares	www.palmaresgolf.com	(351) 282 790 500	€ 59.00	€ 89.00	€ 44.00
Penina Championship	www.lemeridien-penina.com	(351) 282420223/24	€ 77.00	€ 110.00	€ 46.00
Penina Resort			€ 38.00	€ 50.00	€ 46.00
Alto Golf	golf@altoclub.com	(351) 282 460 870	€ 45.00	€ 60.00	€ 35.00
Golf de Morgado	playgolf@golfedomorgado.com	(351) 282 402 150	€ 60.00	€ 80.00	€ 38.00
Vale de Pinta	info@pestanagolf.com	(351) 282340900	€ 60.00	€ 90.00	€ 40.00
Gramacho	info@pestanagolf.com	(351) 282340900	€ 60.00	€ 90.00	€ 40.00
Vale do Milho	valedemilhogolf@mail.telepac.pt	(351) 282358502	€ 34.00	€ 34.00	n/a
Herdade dos Salgados Golf	geral@salgadosgolf.com	(351) 298 58 30 30	€ 34.00	€ 67.50	€ 40.00
Pine Cliffs	sheraton_algarve@sheraton.com	(351) 289500113	€ 75.00	€ 75.00	n/a
The Old Course	www.vilamouragolf.com	(351) 289 310 349	€ 120.00	€ 120.00	€ 45.00
Pinhal Golf Course	www.vilamouragolf.com	(351) 289 310 349	€ 80.00	€ 80.00	€ 45.00
Laguna Golf Course	reservas@vilamouragolf.com	(351) 289 310 349	€ 75.00	€ 75.00	€ 45.00
Millennium Golf Course	reservas@vilamouragolf.com	(351) 289 310 349	€ 90.00	€ 90.00	€ 45.00
Victoria Clube de Golfe	reservas@vilamouragolf.com	(351) 289 310 349	€ 150.00	€ 150.00	€ 60.00
Vila Sol	golf@vilasol.pt	(351) 289 300 522 (351) 289 353535	€ 100.00	€ 100.00	€ 40.00
Vale do Lobo - Ocean Golf Course	golf@vdl.pt	(351) 289 353535 ext.3465	€ 140.00	€ 140.00	€ 60.00
Vale do Lobo - Royal Golf Course	golf@vdl.pt	(351) 289 353535 ext.3465	€ 155.00	€ 155.00	€ 60.00
Quinta do Lago Sul	reservas@quintadolagogolf.com	(351) 289390 705/6	€ 150.00	€ 150.00	€ 47.50
Quinta do Lago Norte	reservas@quintadolagogolf.com	(351) 289390 705/6	€ 150.00	€ 150.00	€ 47.50
Pinheiros Altos	golf@pinheirosaltos.pt	(351) 289 35 99 10	€ 120.00	n/a	n/a
Benamor	reservas@golftbenamor.com	(351) 281 320 880	€ 75.00	€ 75.00	€ 40.00
Castro Marim	info@castromarimgolfe.com	(351) 281 510 330	€ 58.00	€ 58.00	€ 35.00

Note: Guests at Boavista have free use of the tennis courts, football pitch, golfing practice areas (except driving range for which a fee is payable and the children's play areas).

General sports activities. 91 458 9226 / 96 162 4587. www.osmoslagos.com

There is a sports activity company based in Lagos that can organise a whole host of activities for you during your stay from diving to riding to jeep safaris. We have not used them but we have had them recommended.

Armacao de Pera Water Sports Centre

Located at Armacao de Pera (see map) this is a well equipped water sports centre at the Algarve's largest beach

Carveiro Clube de Tennis: 351 282 357 847

The Carvoeiro Club has ten tennis courts, five of which are floodlit, as well as a fitness centre that includes aerobic classes, exercise bikes and saunas.

Praia da Rocha Bowling Alley. 351 282 483 812

For American style bowling, visit praia da rocha bowling alley.

Lagos Water sports centre

Travel down to Meia Praia beach (just the other side of Lagos – it's well posted) where you'll find wind surfing, body boarding, surfing, water skiing, banana boating and ring-o-rings.

Luz Bay Water Sports Centre

The Luz Bay Water Sports Centre includes scuba diving, wind surfing, fishing, sailing and snorkelling. The centre also offers lessons.

Luz Beach Water Sports for children. (351) 919553476 or (351) 919760773

A favourite with children is the Beach Hut Water Sports School on Luz beach. For around £35 per day, you can leave a child (8-16 years old) here to participate in all the activities including windsurfing, sailing, parasailing, water-skiing, kayaking and banana rides. Food is provided at a barbeque. Book early to ensure a place as numbers are limited for safety reasons.

Luz Sea Sports Centre. (351) 282 789 538

This is a licensed diving school where equipment can be hired and tuition is offered at all levels.

Luz Bay Club. (351) 282 789 640

This club offers tennis, squash, sauna and a Turkish bath at reasonable rates (£7 for an adult for use of most facilities in peak season and £4 for a child).

Luz Ocean Club Water Sports. (351) 282 771 000

The club runs a full 'Into the Blue programme' which includes, sailing, water-skiing and wind surfing.

Burgau Spots Centre. (351) 282 697 350

Burgau Sports Centre offers squash, a heated swimming pool, tennis and aerobics during the night and at night there are barbeques, live music and dancing. The centre also runs children's sports mornings and has a good snack bar.

Lagos Tennis club. (351) 282 764 297

Based in the marina-Sold urbanisation, this club has three tennis courts, changing rooms, shop and equipment hire. There is also professional coaching on site. Open 9 am – 9 pm weekdays and 1pm-3pm on Sundays. Book 24 hours in advance

Lagos fishing. (351) 282 761 820

Espadarte do Sul offers complete fishing trips including coastal trips, snorkelling and big game fishing. All leave from Lagos harbour.

Quinta do Lago Water Sports Centre. (351) 289 394 929

Catering for all water babies of any age, the centre offers a range of both lake and beach water sports. Windsurfing, canoeing, kayaking and rowing are available on the lake or try a mini course in sailing, windsurfing or water skiing.

Beach side water sports range from the chilling to the relaxing. Parasailing, water skiing and jet skiing as well as pedalo. Family beach activities are also on offer as is a power boat tour along the coastline.

Ferragudo Water Sports.

The cliffs and rocks of nearby Algar Seco provide the backdrop for the snorkeler. Wind surfing (full courses or board rental), catamaran sailing and water skiing are available at the Praia Grande Wind Surf school (the location of the world championships) where summer barbeques with live music are held.

Boat and fishing trips from Lagos Marina

There is no shortage of tour operators along the promenade facing the marina. Visitors can opt for a professional operator or take an informal trip with a local fisherman. Not to be missed is the two hour trip to the grottoes beneath Ponta da Piedade or take a longer coastal cruise or a one day big fish voyage into open seas.

There are also trips on traditional schooners with drinks, picnics and stops for swimming and snorkelling. Other options include five hour bay cruises and a full day sail to Sagres with a minibus tour of the Cape Saint Vincent. Finally, for that special tour take the glass bottomed aqua bus and watch the local underwater world of seahorses, octopuses and mermaids.

Algarve Microlight Centre. (351) 282 762 906

This British microlight training school, adjacent to Lagos and just 1km from Meia Praia beach was set up to take advantage of the most stable weather regions of Europe.

The centre is run by Gerry Breen whose long and illustrious aviation career includes being a stunt pilot and as pilot trainer for a James Bond film and ace aviator Karen Steven.

Training includes weightshift and three axis microlights as well as aerobatics in an Acrosport biplane.

Horse riding

There are a number of riding opportunities close to Lagos – whether that be beach riding, forest or mountain treks or even to try the activity for the first time. Local contacts include:

Quinta Martins Riding Centre - *Almancil*

Areiro
8100 Loulé
Tel.: +351 289395529
E-mail: mdickinson@sapo.pt
Website: <http://www.algarveriding.com/>

Centro Hípico Vale de Ferro - *PORTIMÃO*

Mexilhoeira Grande
8500 Portimão
Tel.: +351 282 968444
Fax: + 351 282 968443
E-mail: valedoferro@iol.pt
Website: <http://www.algarvehorseholidays.com/>

Tiffany's Riding Centre - LAGOS

Vale Grifo, 1677-E Almádena,
8600-102 LUZ LGS,
Lagos
Tel.: +351 282 697395
Fax: +351 282 697395
E-mail
Website: <http://valegrifo.com/tiffanysriding/index.htm>

Quinta Paraiso Alto - LAGOS

Fronteira- Bensafrim
8600 Lagos
Tel.: +351 282 687596
Fax: +351 282 687507

Bicycle hire:

Mountain biking; 351 918 502 663 (Jim) 351 916 137 082 (Toby).
www.themountainbikeadventure.com. enquiries@themountainbikeadventure.com. Rua Eça De
Quieroz, N28, Torralinha, Lagos, 8600-588

Hire or half or full day trips. Comprehensive list of trails for novices and experts.

Motorent.. 351 282 769 716. Rua Victor Costa Silva, Edifício Vasco da Gama, Loja - 8 / B
8600-764 Lagos

Aluguer moto Ida. 351 282 761 863. Rua José Afonso, Lote 23, Loja C, 8600 Lagos

Dolphin Seafaris. (351) 282 799 209. Mobile: (351) 919 359. www.dolphinseafaris.com

Dolphin Watching is one of the most exhilarating experiences that any of us will have in our life time. The dolphin's relationship with man has been documented throughout our history with many civilizations telling stories of how this magnificent creature has come to our aid in times of trouble; protecting us from sharks or even guiding us through dangerous seas. Sadly, most people only ever get to see the dolphin in captivity but Dolphin Seafaris have been providing tourists to the Algarve, the opportunity to see the dolphin in its natural environment, since the year 2000.

We operate from Marina de Portimao and Marina de Lagos via two touristic RIBS; one of which is the most powerful operating in Europe today. The boats use turbo diesel inboard engines which mean a money back guaranteed "no sea sickness" ride. The RIBS (rigid inflatable boats) are the same as those used by both coast guards and Greenpeace and conform to the highest of safety standards.

In high season, Dolphin Seafaris operate 7 boat trips a day between 8am and 8pm in search of dolphins and other forms of Algarvian sea life such as whales, sharks and even orcas. Each safari lasts around 1 and a half hours and offers a spectacular sea view of the world famous Algarvian coast line as well as the deeper offshore waters where the dolphins are to be found.

Slide and Splash. www.slidesplash.com

Slide & Splash was inaugurated in June 1986 and is situated in Lagoa. It is considered to be the biggest of its kind in the country, and one of the biggest and the best in Europe.

Presently it covers an area of 6.5 hectares and aims to offer its clients best fun altogether with highest security standards, public health and comfort, respecting the legal decree No. 65/97 of March, 31st and in addition No. 5/97 of March, 31 st, which regulate the activities of water fun parks in Portugal.

Slide & Splash offers 25,000 square meters of lawn where you can have a rest, play games or enjoy sunbathing.

For water fun Slide & Splash offers various types of slides, from very easy ones up to the exciting ones like Kamikaze, torrents, the Black Hole, which is the only one of its kind in Portugal and the prominent attraction for most of our visitors.

We have got a jacuzzi, a pool for children with an area of 1,500 square meters, where kids from 5 to 10 years will find lots of toys. Apart from that, there is a swimming pool with an area of 1,600 square meters - one of the biggest in the country.

Slide & Splash has two self-service-restaurants at your disposal, furthermore pizzerias, an icecream-parlour and several kiosks where you will be able to find any kind of snack.

Bom Dia Sailing. (351) 282 769. www.bomdia.info

BOM DIA Actividades Maritima Lda., has been operating from Lagos for the past 20 years using two traditional Portuguese Sailing Ships. The multilingual crews are highly trained and are there to make your trip a happy holiday memory. The use of these two Sailing Ships (equipped with

toilets, bar and kitchen), is based on their strength, stability, and environmentally friendly use of wind power (sails). BBQ and coastal cruises and dolphin watching.

Zebra Jeep Safari. (351) 289 583 300. (351) 965 040 225. www.zebra safari.com.

Algarve Wild and Romantic - In convoy we leave the touristy coast in the direction to the unknown. High green mountains, aggressive, but with breathtaking views and large fields full of almond trees, cork oaks and many others. This makes the contrast with peaceful valleys crossed by nice and clean rivers, where little old villages are nicely spread around. Large fruit fields and farms with sheep cows and horses guarantee to a hard working population a great way of life. In peace and without stress. This area with rich heritage in history, old battles, unknown heroes, created along the centuries plenty of traditions and tales well preserved by the local inhabitants. Handicraft, alambiques, natural jams, monuments, agriculture and gastronomy are more than enough reasons for you to be part of this great adventure.

Lunch is included in the price and consists of: Vegetable soup, grilled chicken, potatoes, salad, fruit of the season, red or white wine, water or juices.

Airboost - Kite Surfing – Algarve. www.airboost.com

The Algarve region in Portugal benefits from all year round constant winds and is becoming an increasingly popular destination for kitesurfers of all levels. Airboost kite school offers a varied range of courses for the absolute beginner to the advanced kitesurfer looking to learn and perfect advanced manouevres.

All airboost courses are run by experienced IKO instructors to IKO standards.

Aqualand. www.aqualand.pt/algarve

Aqualand Algarve (The Big One) is located in the central area of the Algarve, near the town of Alcantarilha (Armação de Pera), 15 Km from Albufeira. The park has water attractions for all tastes, some totally unique in the country, such as the Banzai, which give moments of joy, fun, adventure and relaxation.

Get ready to discover the attraction that makes Aqualand Algarve a unique water park in Portugal. Try to surf on your board after descending a nearly vertical drop of 23 meters and gaining a dizzy speed. The sort of ride you would tell your friends about. Do you dare?

About the area

Portimao

History

It traces its origins back to a small trading port of the Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians. Some historians have indicated that the place was originally the famous Portus Hannibalis named by the famous Roman general, Hannibal Barca. During the following Moorish occupation they renamed the place "Burj Munt". Located at the mouth of the River Arade it provides a natural harbour and has at times been known in its past as a home for smugglers and pirates. The river also provides the sea access to the up-river ancient city of Silves which was once the capital of the Algarve during the Moorish occupation. At this time the place was named Porcimunt but later in 1504 it was recognized as a town and granted the name "Vila Nova de Portimão" and became part of the possessions of the Castelo Branco family until the 17th Century. Much later it was commonly renamed as Portimão and was extensively developed in the 19th century to become one of the most important centres on the Algarve of the fishing and canning industry until the early 1980s when the recession drove the remaining factories out of business.

Description

The town with some 35,000 inhabitants is essentially commercially orientated and was the main shopping town of the whole Algarve during the 1970s and 1980s. The town's church that is the last attractive building surviving in the town dates from 1476 but it underwent many alterations as from 1717 onwards. The town council appears to have adopted a policy of demolishing architecturally interesting buildings in favour of modernization. Happily, it also has a very active cultural department and there are always different forms of events happening throughout the year. The Municipal Museum is housed in an old sardine canning factory and here regular exhibitions are held that cover art, history, and general culture, all of a local and national content. A boat Marina was recently opened adjoining Praia da Rocha and this adds the fascinating sight of the many boats at anchor and a further choice of bars and restaurants in which to pass the evening. When approaching the town from the direction of Faro there is a choice of two bridges to cross. The old one runs along past the harbour but we would recommend take the new bridge. It is so well balanced in design that it can be seriously considered among the most pleasing bridges to the eye built in Portugal in the 19th Century. On the river front near the square with the cafés many different boat tours and deep sea-fishing outings can be booked.

Nearby locations

In the Portimão area is Armação de Pera with a small 18th Century fortress and a popular location for tourists with its long sandy beach. The beach village of Alvor is another popular tourist location. Still maintaining its village character with its 16th Century Parish Church its narrow streets teem with life in the tourist season. The village of Carvoeiro is a small charming beach location that is now surrounded by comfortable self-catering villas. The tourist trade happily not yet overpowers the small delightful fishing village of Ferragudo, lying just across the river from Portimão. Slightly inland is Lagoa a small administrative town. Praia de Rocha and Praia de Vau are seriously devoted to offering tourist accommodation with the added attractions of good beaches and active nightlife. The inland city of Silves and its truly interesting historical background is worth a visit. Included in the many true stories are the battles between the Moors, the Crusaders, and the Portuguese. Unfortunately, the city was for the most part destroyed by the earthquake of 1755. The Moorish occupiers considered the city at the turn of the 11th Century as the centre of all true culture in the Iberian Peninsula.

Near to the town of Portimão are several sites of interest such as the Caves of Estombar, the mosaic floor of the Roman villa at Figueira, and at Alcalar the recently well restored burial tombs from the Dolmen period

(around 3.500 BC). Here, evidence of quite a large settlement of the 4th and 5th millennium BC which is undergoing investigation.

Sagres

History

This small town is close to the most south western point of Europe known as Cape St. Vincent. The legend of the martyr Saint Vincent is that his relics were mysteriously transported by ravens from the Holy Land to the Cape and subsequently guarded by them. In 1173 the ravens reputedly then moved the relics to Lisbon where they remain to this day. However, it is much more likely that they were moved to Lisbon upon the orders of Dom Afonso Henriques. Several naval engagements took place off the Cape; Admiral Tourville defeated Sir George Rooke in 1693; Admiral Rodney defeated the Spanish in 1780; Admiral Jervis with Nelson defeated the Spanish fleet in 1797. As Sagres is located on the south side of the Cape its natural protection from the western winds and rough seas lent itself to the building by Prince Henry the Navigator (Dom Afonso Henrique), of a fort in which to house his school devoted to navigation and exploration but he lived mainly in nearby Lagos. He is also reputed to have created a shipbuilding yard in the small natural harbour.

From 1419 until 1460 he devoted his time and the revenues of the Order of Christ into this project. Money was spent liberally in building the vessels known as the "Caravela" which was in time to prove so suitable for exploration. In 1427 Diogo da Silva first discovered the Azores Islands. Until 1434 no sailor was known to have sailed further south than the Cape Bojador on the west side of Africa. In this same year, Gil Eanes from Lagos, conquered the Cape but it was not until 1488 that Bartolomeu Dias succeeded in rounding the Cape of Good Hope. A home of the Prince was likely to have been at the nearby Cape St. Vincent close to the ruins of a 16th Century Monastery. Unfortunately, the famous English captain and sometimes pirate, Francis Drake has recorded in his logbook that his men completely sacked this house in 159

Description

There is very little left from an historical point of view as the only items left from his original building is the small chapel of *Nossa Senhora da Graça* and reputedly the giant pebble wind compass, *Rosa dos Ventos*. The present walls surrounding the area are the remains of a 17th Century fort. At the nearby *Cape St Vincent* is an impressive lighthouse that can normally be visited. This lighthouse has provided the guiding beam that safely directs the hundreds of ships that pass the Cape every year from the inevitable destruction that would otherwise occur. The surrounding cliffs present a very dramatic sight with their impressive towering sheer height and at most times being beaten by the strength of the vast Atlantic Ocean.

The local restaurants are renowned for their fish and its variety and freshness and it is common to see the local fishermen wedged in dramatic perches on the cliff face with the thundering sea many scores of feet below. Unfortunately, every year the lives of some of these enthusiastic fishermen are taken, usually by falling. It is interesting to note that the area of *Sagres* enjoys its own mini-climate. There is very little vegetation, the ground being mainly rock with barely any soil, but in the area to the north of the town 25 different varieties of wild orchids have been found.

Nearby locations

The nearest town is *Vila do Bispo* that acts as the administrative centre for the area and also houses a few good fish restaurants. In the 8th Century about one kilometre to the southwest of this town was the seat of a religious Order known as the *Igreja de Corvo*. Founded by Christians from Valencia seeking refuge from the persecution of the Spanish ruler *Abderramão I*, all visual traces have been removed in the course of time. However, in the immediate vicinity are over 250 "megaliths" and other signs of ancient civilization dating back thousands of years.

The area was recorded by the Moors as being very rich and providing hospitality to all travellers regardless of their faith. From *Sagres* the traveller can either go north or back to the east. Along the south coast just to the east is the superb open beach of *Martinhal* that is popular with windsurfers. Further east are the small and unspoilt beaches of *Ingrina* and *Zavial*, whilst further on is the more developed beach of *Salema*. Just to the east of *Vila do Bispo* near the small village of *Raposeira* is the modest 13th Century Chapel of *Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe*, reputed to have been used often by *Dom Afonso Henrique* in his religious devotion.

The beaches immediately to the north of the Cape are more exposed to the winds and rollers of the Atlantic with quite dangerous offshore currents. Further to the north of *Vila do Bispo* is the open sandy beach of *Bordeira*. About two-thirds of the journey north to this beach is a turning left to the small village of *Pedralva*. The village is now nearly completely unoccupied but it shows to the traveller a picture of what the Algarve looked like prior to the invasion of tourism and how life was once very demanding

Alvor

History

It is believed the Carthaginians founded Alvor and its history is interesting. It is said by some that it was really the site of "Portus Hannibalis". The Romans gave it the name *Ipses* and it was considered an important port and was allowed to issue its own money. Its importance is confirmed by the ruins of a wealthy Roman villa located slightly inland from the present village. In the time of the Moors, who first occupied the area in 716, they gave it the name of "Albur" and the village passed through both the Portuguese and Moors hands several times until 1250 when the Christians conquered it for the final time. King Dom João II, who is regarded in history as an outstanding Portuguese king, is recorded as dying in within the town walls from a prolonged illness in 1495. Most of the original village and its castle was destroyed in the earthquakes of 1532 and 1755.

Description

Although this ancient coastal village is now a very popular holiday location the enclosed narrow streets have kept development to a minimum. Many of these streets now boast bars with live music and different types of restaurants, however leading off from these there are still memories of the older fishing village. In the area are a number of holiday resorts from which the tourists enjoy visiting it and its attractions. The village is well located facing a natural lagoon opening onto the sea. There is a choice of a long open sandy beach or a number of small coves tucked under the cliffs. The originally 16th Century Parish Church was rebuilt after the earthquake of 1755 and still has a prime example in its main doorway of the great craftsmanship of the Manueline era of architecture. It was the only building that more or less survived from the earthquake.

Monchique

History

The town of *Monchique* is with a few exceptions happily little changed by the 20th Century invasion of tourism. It lies in the saddle created by the two high hills, *Foia* and *Picota*, the former reaching to 902 metres above sea level. As with "mountain" people the world over the 10,000 inhabitants of this town have retained its rustic atmosphere with steep cobbled streets and small dark doorways housing various artisan trades. There is a very neglected 17th~Century Franciscan monastery which overlooks the town from which a visitor enjoys a panoramic view over the beautiful countryside. The 16th Century Parish Church has excellent examples of Manueline craftsmanship around its doorway. The surrounding area flourishes on the production of cattle, pigs, cork and wood. Another important local product is the popular "*medronho*", which is the name of a strong schnapps style of drink made from distilling the fruit from arbutus bushes. *Foia* and its sister mountain of *Picota* are excellent locations from which to see dramatic views of the coastal plain to the south and to the western Atlantic coast.

Description

Between *Monchique* and the town of *Portimão* is the village of *Caldas de Monchique* that was developed in Roman times as a Spa. Here a visitor can try the curing elements of the sulphur smelling hot spring water that emerges at a constant temperature of 32°C. There are two further hot spring sites, one of which is to the south of *Picota* hidden in a valley. Its name is *Fonte Santa* and it is rumoured to have special healing properties. Some people make annual visits and in its history some centuries ago it has been recorded as being visited by both the King of Portugal and the King of Italy. The two nearby villages of *Alferce* and *Casaís* are both typical un-spoilt locations reflecting the spirit of rural mountain life. The village of *Marmelete* is to the west and located on the road that connects to the many sandy beaches on the western Atlantic coast. The small rural town of *Aljezur* with its hilltop 12th Century castle and its 14th Century parish church is further west on this same road

Algarve beaches

PRAIA ILHA DE TAVIRA

To some this is the jewel in the crown of the eastern side of Faro. It is also often locally referred to as Praia das Cascas. A few minutes boat trip will take visitors from the jetty of Tavira located just outside the town across to this attractive sandy bar. For visitors with naturist inclinations there is an area reserved especially for their needs which is about one kilometer walk to the west end of this beach.

PRAIA DO BARRIL

This beach is really an extension of the above beach known as Praia Ilha de Tavira. However, this section is easily reached from the tourist villages of Santa Luzia and Pedras del Rey. From the later village a small train takes the visitor across the intervening water to the sandy island bar in a slow journey which reminds everyone that they are definitely on holiday!

PRAIA DA ARMONA

The three Islands of Armona, Culatra and Farol act as a barrier to the sea and on the inland side there are the extensive lagoons forming the nature reserve of Ria Formosa. Reaching these beaches can only be done by Ferryboat which leaves from the fishing port of Olhão. The journeys can take some 30 minutes and leave at about 15 minute intervals during the day – in season each ferry with the destination to one of the three islands. As you can imagine once you arrive at the chosen Island you are going to find yourself as one of the limited number of human visitors.

PRAIA DA ILHA DE FARO

This beach is a long narrow sandy bar that is accessed by a road traversing a lagoon just south of the Faro airport. Being near to the principal town of the Algarve it is usually very busy and there are many water sports facilities and plenty of restaurants.

PRAIA DE GARRÃO

This beach fronts the chic area of the holiday resorts known as Quinta do Lago and Vale do Lobo. This beach can now be easily reached by road and one area popular for its beach restaurants is a section known as “Julias” – a local lady and a character who opened the first beach place at the time when access was either by horse or by a very sandy road through the pine trees.

PRAIA DA FALÉSIA

This beach takes its name from the fascinating gouged red cliffs that form a backdrop to the endless stretch of sand. As these cliffs are not very tall it makes access convenient whilst acting as a suitable barrier to any winds from the north during the out-of-season. This beach is to be found west of Vilamoura before reaching Olhos de Água.

PRAIA DA GALÉ

Another long sandy stretch but as there are no cliffs it has many points of easy access by road. This

beach is located to the west of Albufeira and runs round the Bay of Armação de Pera to the town.

PRAIA DA ROCHA

This is probably the oldest and best know beach in the Algarve. It is located just south of the main town of Portimão and was originally much shorter in width and with a lot more charm. This beach in the past has been seriously enlarged with the sand that was pumped out during the dredging of the Portimão Harbor and at the same time meeting the needs of the many visiting tourists to this area.

PRAIA DE ALVOR

The beach is located and accessed from the old popular fishing village of Alvor. It stretches just over two kilometers from the village to the west in the direction of Lagos. This beach acts as a sand bar creating an interior lagoon which acts as a form of port for Alvor. Some twenty years ago a tourist could walk at low tide by beach all the way to Lagos by wading across a small sea the then shallow outlet from the lagoon.

MEIA PRAIA

This beach forms the other half of the previous walk from Alvor to Lagos. It takes its name from being part of this walk as "Meia" indicates the word "half". The approach to this beach is from the town of Lagos and it is easily accessed. This beach is popular with windsurfers and surfers alike as it faces the open Bay of Lagos and also protected to the west by the promontory of Ponta da Piedade. The beach is possibly a little longer than that of the Alvor and there are many small beach bars to satisfy the thirst for those who wish to walk its length.

PRAIA DO MARTINHAL

This beach is located in the Bay of Baleeira close to Sagres. Another windsurfers paradise and is a smaller beach in a reasonably shallow bay that is shouldered to the west by Ponta da Atalaia. It is recommended as a location if visiting the area of Sagres.

PRAIA DO CASTELEJO

One of the few beaches on the west coast were it is safer to swim due to the underlying dangerous currents. This beach is located just to the north-west of the small town of Vila do Bispo. It is one of the smaller beaches and has a completely different atmosphere to those found on the southern coastline. It may not suit everyone but those that do visit tend to return.

PRAIA DA BORDEIRA

This beach is on the west coast of the Algarve and can be reached by traveling north from Vila do Bispo, then after passing the small village of Carrapateira turn seaward where there is a sign that reads "Praia". Virtually a long sandy beach with many sand dunes and very often virtually deserted out of the season. Enjoy the feeling of being open to nature and exploring the surrounding area on foot.

PRAIA DA ARRIFANA

This is a beach which also is considered to be reasonably safe for swimming and a very special place with quite stupendous views. Take the road north to Lisbon from Lagos. Just before reaching the small town of Aljezur take the turning left when you see the name "Arrifana". On reaching Arrifana you will find the beach on your left at the bottom of a very steep narrow road with little or no parking area at the bottom. A visit to this beach out of season is seriously recommended.