Alentejo

ABOUT

Alentejo

The plains that extend as far as the eye can see start close to the Tagus. While to the north, the pace is set by the green of the flatlands, further south the landscape combines with the sun, the heat and a slower pace of life. This is the Alentejo.

To the north, the pastures of the marshlands; in the vast interior, unending flatness, and fields of wheat waving in the wind; at the coast, wild, beautiful beaches waiting to be discovered.

The vastness of the landscape is dotted with cork oaks and olive trees that withstand time. Santarém is a natural viewpoint over the immensity of the Tagus. Here and there, you find a walled town, such as Marvão or Monsaraz, or an ancient dolmen to recall the magic of the place. Around the hills, low, whitewashed houses stand on small knolls, castles evoke battles and conquests and the yards and gardens are witness to the Arab influences which shaped the people and nature.

In the Alentejo the power of the land marks the time and cities like Elvas and Évora, listed as World Heritage by UNESCO, show the tenacity of the people. Perhaps this is the reason that culture and spirituality take on a singular character here. These memories of the past are also shared by other cities, such as Santarém, Portalegre and Beja, and in the former Jewish quarters, particularly in Castelo de Vide.

The flat land makes hiking and cycling easy, though horses are also part of the landscape. You can combine these rides with birdwatching and, in dams such as Alqueva, with the tranquillity of the waters or stargazing.

But you must also explore the coast. The landscape here is hilly and rugged, with small sheltered coves between the cliffs, many of which are ideal for surfing. You will also breathe the scents of the countryside here, the aromatic herbs that season the fish, seafood and other regional fare to be accompanied by the region’s excellent wines. Indeed, the entire Alentejo lives according to the rhythm of the earth.

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FIND OUT MORE

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