
Sailing

ABOUT



Photo: Turismo do Estoril

Sailing

With its mild climate, bright sunshine and favourable winds, sailing along the Portuguese coast is a great pleasure. As always in the Atlantic Ocean, it is sometimes calm for a relaxed spot of sailing, and sometimes more temperamental, offering challenges that require a lot of energy.

Whereas in the 15th century, the Portuguese set sail in caravels and ships to venture into "uncharted waters", as Camões so well narrated, these days the sea offers exceptional conditions for this sport. **Sailing** in various classes of boat is practised from the north to the south, as well as in the Azores and Madeira.

There are, however, a few places that stand out. **Cascais** bay, near Lisbon, and **Lagos** bay in the Algarve are considered amongst the **best regatta locations in the world**, which is why they regularly host some of sailing's most prestigious events and trophies. Many international races, including competitions and stages, take place in Portuguese waters, such as the Tall Ships Races and the Volvo Ocean Race in Lisbon, the Clipper around the world Regatta in Madeira, TP/52 Audi Med Cup in Portimão and the Centenary of the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), which was held in Cascais.

Companies, schools and yacht clubs promoting sailing and teaching those who want to learn are spread throughout the country, but some of the areas with the greatest potential for the sport are worth mentioning. For example in **Northern** Portugal, Viana do Castelo, Póvoa de Varzim and Leixões; and in the **central region** the Ria de Aveiro from Ovar to Costa Nova, Figueira da Foz and the Óbidos Lagoon. Near **Lisbon**, it's common to sight many white sails on the horizon along the Estoril coastline, such as in Sesimbra and further south in Troia. And besides Lagos, the entire **Algarve coastline** is enjoyed by yachtsmen, especially Vilamoura, which has the oldest established marina, and Portimão, where top competition teams go to train. In the mid-Atlantic, there are the islands of **Madeira and Porto Santo**, as well as the **Azores**, particularly Faial, whose marina in Horta is legendary among yachtsmen worldwide.

You can **rent a boat** in any of these areas and enjoy the freedom of plying the waters and enjoying the landscapes from other perspectives. And not only at sea, because there are vast expanses of water to explore on the Douro River, or the Alqueva reservoir, for example. For those who would like to have the experience of sailing a route they've mapped out but who haven't yet learnt to operate the rudder, you can also rent a boat with a skipper, and let yourself be piloted across the water. Another option for sailing, with every convenience to hand, is to join an **organised excursion** on an old sailing vessel and sit back to enjoy the views over the coastal areas.

Across the country there are docks, **marinas and yacht clubs** that provide all kinds of services and facilities for those making long journeys, and many proposals for those who just want to experience the sport. They provide the

support you can rely on ashore, a safe haven for any “old sea dog”.