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# Discover the Serra da Arrábida and the Sado Estuary, two protected areas

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## ABOUT



Photo: José Manuel

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**The Serra da Arrábida Natural Park, amidst the deep blue sea and the green of the hills, is an excellent place to test your physical condition.**

Situated by the sea, the park offers some of the most stunning coastal scenery in the Lisbon area. The highest point is in the Serra do Risco, a magnificent cliff 380m high. Good ways of getting to know this pristine place, featuring pure Mediterranean vegetation, are by hiking or cycling the waymarked footpaths. You can choose the most appropriate level of difficulty, and even make night trips.

Like a wall of green sticking out over the Atlantic, the hills offer shelter to small coves of white sand where, despite being on the edge of the ocean, the sea is almost free of waves.

**Portinho da Arrábida** is one of the most beautiful beaches and a great place for scuba diving, with unique flora and fauna to be discovered in the clear waters of Pedra da Anixa, a small island just off the beach. You can discover it all in the **Oceanographic Museum**, housed in the fortress of Santa Maria da Arrábida. **Galapos, Galapinhos** and the secluded **Praia dos Coelho**s are some of the other beaches in this protected landscape, which are well worth exploring. **Figueirinha beach** is one of the most visited.

The **Sado Estuary Nature Reserve** has other attractions, whether it is the dolphins accompanying your boat trip, or because it is a very special bird observatory, with more than 250 species to be sighted. **Moinho de Maré da Mourisca** (the Moorish Tidal Mill) is one of the best places to do this.

To further unravel the Sado estuary's secrets, take a trip on the galeões do sal, traditional boats that cross the river to Arrábida, or even on a trawler. The contrast between the white of the salt flats, the blue river, the green of the pine forest and the golden sand is the guarantee of a time well spent.

In autumn and winter, flamingos cover the estuary with a blanket of pink, and in spring and summer the miles of beaches on the Troia peninsula provide an escape from routine. The white storks that build their nests on church steeples and on the highest chimneys are a familiar, customary sight for the local people.

In this region, men have always followed the course of the River Sado, - which runs from south to north, contrary to what is usual in Portugal - to enjoy the gifts of nature, undertaking activities such as fishing, salt extraction or rice growing.

With luck, your trip will be enriched by the symbol of the estuary - the dolphins accompanying you with their magnificent leaps. For a different viewpoint, a balloon flight is a great suggestion and an experience you will not forget.

**Don't miss**

- > take a boat trip on the Estuary
  - > discover the beaches of Arrábida
  - > follow one of the trails on Serra da Arrábida
  - > treat yourself to some freshly caught grilled fish
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**USEFUL INFORMATION**

See the range of nature activities offered by tourism enterprises using the website's search function. Boat trips usually leave from Setúbal.

Information on the protected areas available at [www.icnf.pt](http://www.icnf.pt).

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**GETTING HERE**

50km from Lisbon via the 25 de Abril or Vasco da Gama Bridges.

There are also regular trains ([www.fertagus.pt](http://www.fertagus.pt)) and buses ([www.tsuldotejo.pt](http://www.tsuldotejo.pt)) .

Catamarans and ferries run regularly between Setúbal and Troia. Information at [www.atlanticferries.pt](http://www.atlanticferries.pt).