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## Playing golf near Lisbon

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### ABOUT



Photo: Turismo de Portugal

### Playing golf near Lisbon

**The mild climate and the beauty of its coastal landscapes makes Lisbon a very much appreciated golf region by golfers from around the world.**

Designed by architects known for challenging courses, such as Robert Trent Jones, Rocky Roquemore, Donald Steel, Frank Pennink, Severiano Ballesteros and Jorge Santana da Silva, the golf courses are remarkable for their quality and diversity, combined with the comfort and high level of service in their hotels and club houses.

Lisbon's proximity to several areas of protected nature and to monuments and landscapes classified as World Heritage provides the perfect complement to a golfing holiday or a few concentrated days of golf.

The region was considered as Europe's Best Golf Destination by IAGTO in 2007 and 2003, and contains the first golf course in Europe to possess the Certified Gold Audubon Signature Sanctuary by Audubon International.

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### ESTORIL AND SINTRA

For golfers who like a good challenge, there are some great moments to be had between Sintra, Estoril and Cascais. Some carefully maintained courses can be found just outside Lisbon, set in breathtaking landscapes and with complex layouts.

Leaving Lisbon and travelling along the coast to the sea, you come to the emblematic and historic Estoril Golf Course, redesigned by Mackenzie Ross in 1936. This was where Severiano Ballesteros played his first professional competition outside Spain, at the age of 17. The uneven terrain of this course, combined with a landscape of pines and eucalyptus, promises a great challenge for testing the technique.

Continuing along the coast and passing Cascais, you will find the Quinta da Marinha Golf Club. This is a flat course but with a spectacular view over the sea and the Sintra Mountain, designed by the legendary Robert Trent Jones. Set amongst pine trees, the 13th hole is the most impressive. It is a par 4 of 339 metres, which descends towards the sea, ending in a green that has the ocean as a backdrop.

Now entering the coastal area of the Natural Park of Sintra, the Oitavos Dunes Natural Links Golf owes its design to the American architect, Arthur Hills, and respects the dune ecosystem on which it sits. It is the first course in Europe and the second in the world to be awarded the "Certified Gold Audubon Signature Sanctuary" by Audubon International. With great views of the Pena Castle and the Roca Cape, the course has wide, long fairways, but the

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main challenge lies in its rolling greens which demand finely-tuned puts.

Towards Sintra, in the foothills, Pestana Beloura Golf offers a very particular setting. More than 40,000 trees of various species, scattered around the course, form a green frame for a number of lakes and meandering streams that shape the fairways that are the delight of both professionals and those who just want to perfect their technique. It was designed by William Rocky Roquemore, the same architect who designed the exceptional layout of Belas Clube de Campo, also near Sintra. Very complete and varied, this course is used for various levels of handicap and has two holes that deserve particular attention: hole 2 and hole 18, a memorable par 4 called the Big Hole, where the second strike of the ball must travel 180 metres to the green that is well protected by a difficult to beat lake.

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## **TAGUS VALLEY**

Less than 50km from Lisbon, Riba Golf, in Herdade da Vargem Fresca, offers two 18-hole golf courses, set amid the Ribatejo landscape amongst woodland of cork oaks.

It's a rural landscape, surrounded by nature, with courses designed by Peter Townsend and Michael King, in association with European Golf-Design.

Also set in a preserved rural area, near Benavente, Donald Steel has given us Santo Estevão Golf. The unique landscaped setting, the cork oaks and the natural undulations of the land provide a pleasant course with greens for players at all levels. On the 11th hole, the view over the lake of the Vila Nova de Santo Estevão dam is spectacular.

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## **SOUTH OF LISBON**

Across the river Tagus, golfers are faced with some courses located in exceptionally scenic areas, with good holes to put their skills to the test, designed by architects Rocky Roquemore, Frank Pennink and Robert Trent Jones.

Located in a large tourist complex, Aroeira II was the first golf course in Portugal to use Penn A2 type grass, which makes its vast greens truly fast and challenging, with bunkers on the fairways and five large lakes which require you to fly the ball over the water several times. Closer to the beaches of Costa da Caparica, but thickly wooded, is Aroeira I. Built by Frank Pennink, they have been the setting for some major international golf tournaments.

Near Palmela, the Montado Golf Course is dominated by a landscape of vineyards characteristic of the region, which gives it a character all of its own. The highlight is the 18th hole, whose green is located on a small island.

With the Arrábida Hills as a backdrop, the challenging Quinta do Peru Golf Course, by Rocky Roquemore, was considered one of the top 10 golf courses by European Golf magazine, a proof of which is the fact that it has hosted rounds of the European Challenge Tour.

In an area of natural landscape between the Sado estuary and the sea, the magnificent Golf Links in Troia has a famous par 4 (hole 3) that its architect, Robert Trent Jones, included in the 18 holes of the ideal golf course.

In addition to golf, this region offers many attractions for the whole family, like seeing the dolphins in the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve, touring the mediterranean Arrábida Mountain, part of the Natural Park, or visiting Setúbal and Palmela. And never forget that we are in a wine region, where the famous Azeitão buttery cheese and fresh fish are also much appreciated gastronomic specialities.