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## Relax at Alqueva, the Great Lake

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### ABOUT



Photo: Turismo do Alentejo

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**The Great Lake resulting from the Alqueva Reservoir provides the perfect place for spending a few days relaxing and in good company.**

We are talking about one of the largest artificial lakes in Europe, built on the River Guadiana. It has a reservoir of 250km<sup>2</sup> and covers five Alentejo municipalities, with many points of interest. The right bank offers the castles of **Juromenha, Alandroal, Terena, Monsaraz** and **Portel**, and on the left bank, **Mourão** and **Moura** provide spectacular viewpoints over this reflecting pool.

The lake has brought an amazing environment to this region. Where once there were fields of olive trees, cork oaks and holm oaks, today there is water and renewed life, with optimal conditions for **outdoor activities** and for **water sports** such as sailing, water-skiing and wakeboarding, or for invigorating trips by canoe or kayak. For lovers of **hiking** and **biking**, there are marked trails to be followed. They are a good way to discover the customs and traditions and to mix with the local population.

It's a great place to **surprise the family** with an outing through the scenic roads around Alqueva or, better still, renting a houseboat and sleeping under the stars – which is also an idea worth considering for a **romantic weekend**. Don't forget that you are in a region where the sky is considered by UNESCO a reservation for stargazing. At night, public lighting is minimised to afford the perfect conditions to see the sky, even for the most inexperienced astronomers.

You absolutely must visit the new **Aldeia da Luz**, the only village to be submerged by the dam waters, and which had to be literally relocated. Incidentally, a Museum was created here, the greater part of whose collection consists of objects from the inhabitants, and where all the memories of the old village are recorded.

The town of Monsaraz is also unmissable. A preserved mediaeval town-museum, complete with walls and streets of schist that delight and surprise. Very close by, in the area of the Convent of Orada, the square-shaped **Cromlech of Xerez** is also a must-see.

Naturally, in **Alqueva**, as is the case across the country, you cannot resist the flavours of the regional cuisine. In this case, we suggest the açorda (bread casserole), migas (breadcrumbs and garlic sauté), the pork dishes, the sausages and the Alentejo wines.

In the **Great Lake**, it's easy to let yourself be captivated by rural tourism while appreciating the simple pleasures of country life and contemplating the surrounding nature.

**Don't miss**

- > sleep under the Alqueva stars in a houseboat
  - > taste the wines of the region
  - > delight in the traditional cuisine
  - > climb up to Monsaraz castle
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**USEFUL INFORMATION**

To rent a houseboat, make a boat trip, or see where to moor your own boat, check out our database of Activities.