

PORTUGAL · BEACHES · HIKING · FOOD · NIGHTLIFE



Algarve

Portugal's southern coast is the UK's most dependable short-haul beach escape: golden coves and sea stacks around Lagos, long sandy strands near Albufeira and the lagoon islands of the Ria Formosa, all under three hours from London. Go in May, June or September for hot days without August's crowds; winter brings mild sunshine, golf and low prices.

Read the UK government's travel advice for Portugal and entry requirements before you go.

COUNTRY Portugal	BEST TIME May–Jun, Sep	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h 50m direct ~£110–£380 return	DAILY BUDGET £60–£270 ££ Moderate
WARMEST MONTH July (29°C)	SEA TEMPERATURE 15–21°C coolest–warmest	TIME ZONE Lisbon same time as the UK now	CURRENCY Euro £1 ≈ €1.19

The Algarve runs about 150 km from Cape St Vincent to the Spanish border, and Faro airport sits near the middle, so few resorts are more than an hour's drive away. The west, around Lagos and Sagres, has golden coves, sea stacks and surf; the central strip from Albufeira to Vilamoura is the package-holiday and golf heartland; the east, around Tavira, is flatter and calmer, with sandbar islands reached by small ferries. July and August are hot, busy and expensive. The Atlantic stays cooler than the Mediterranean, peaking at about 21°C off the south coast, and the exposed west coast is colder still.

Highlights

- 1

NATURE

Ponta da Piedade

Golden sandstone cliffs, arches and sea stacks just south of Lagos. Walk the clifftop boardwalks and the steps down to the water, or take a small-boat or kayak trip from Lagos into the grottoes when the sea is calm.
- 2

NATURE

Benagil and the Seven Hanging Valleys Trail

A clifftop path of about 6 km between Praia da Marinha and Vale Centeanes passes above the Benagil sea cave, whose domed roof is open to the sky. Licensed boat trips and guided kayak tours into the cave leave from Benagil, Carvoeiro and Portimão.
- 3

WILDLIFE

Ria Formosa

A natural park of salt marsh, channels and barrier islands running about 60 km from near Quinta do Lago, past Faro, to Cacela Velha. Flamingos and spoonbills feed in the shallows, and cheap ferries from Olhão reach the car-free beaches of Armona and Culatra.
- 4

ARCHITECTURE

Tavira

The east's most handsome town, with an old arched bridge over the River Gilão, whitewashed houses, tiled façades and dozens of churches. A short ferry crosses to Ilha de Tavira, a long island beach with simple restaurants.

5

NATURE

Sagres and Cape St Vincent

Mainland Europe's south-western corner, where sheer cliffs drop into the Atlantic beside a lighthouse. Sagres has a clifftop fortress linked to Henry the Navigator, surf schools on wild beaches and big crowds for sunset at the cape.

Where to stay

WHERE TO STAY

Lagos

Lively old town with good restaurants, walkable beaches and boat trips; suits couples, younger travellers and families wanting more than a resort.

WHERE TO STAY

Albufeira

The biggest resort, with family hotels, all-inclusives, broad sandy beaches and the late-night Strip; the best value for a classic package break.

WHERE TO STAY

Vilamoura and the Golden Triangle

Marina, championship golf courses and upmarket villas around Vale do Lobo and Quinta do Lago; suits golfers and families with a bigger budget.

WHERE TO STAY

Tavira

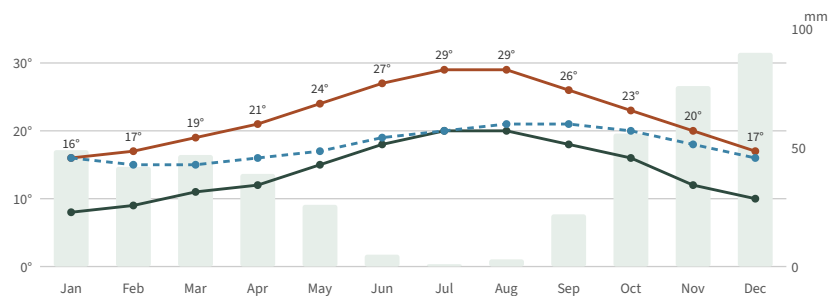
Quiet and characterful, close to Spain, with island beaches by ferry; suits couples, older travellers and anyone avoiding nightlife.

When to go to Algarve

Best time: **May–Jun, Sep.**

**Average climate in Faro**

High °C Low °C Sea °C Rain (mm)

**How much does Algarve cost?**

SHOESTRING

£60

per person / day
≈ €71.42

MID-RANGE

£130

per person / day
≈ €155

COMFORTABLE

£270

per person / day
≈ €321

Per person per day excluding flights. Return flights from London typically cost £110 off-peak and £380 in school holidays.

Visas & entry for Algarve

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Portugal, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Portugal are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Portugal

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 1 Nov 2026	All Saints' Day
Tue 1 Dec 2026	Restoration of Independence Day
Tue 8 Dec 2026	Immaculate Conception
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Sun 25 Apr 2027	Freedom Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day

Thu 27 May 2027	Corpus Christi
Thu 10 Jun 2027	Day of Portugal, Camões, and the Portuguese Communities
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Assumption Day
Tue 5 Oct 2027	Republic Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

The A22 motorway has electronic tolls only, with no booths. Take the hire company's toll transponder, or you risk fines and admin fees arriving long after you get home.

The west coast around Aljezur and Bordeira faces the open Atlantic, with big swell, rip currents and colder water. Families with small children do better on the sheltered south-facing beaches; always follow the lifeguard flags.

Plugs, money, phrases, emergency numbers and more: see our Portugal guide.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.