

Cycling Safaris

PORTUGAL The Meghalitic Heritage in Alentejo Guided Tour 2010



Alentejo is a sparsely populated region with open horizons, and with a pace of life perfectly suited to cycling. The tour is a feast of history from ancient times to recent; dolmens and cromlechs, Roman and Arab remains and medieval castles can all be seen on our travels. We cycle alongside vast wheat-fields and vineyards with intense green and golden colours. This contrasts beautifully with the picturesque villages with their traditional whitewashed one-story houses.

We visit Evora, which is classified as World Heritage by UNESCO, and some other beautiful villages, such as Estremoz, Vila Vicosa and Monsaraz. The people here are very proud of their heritage and they preserve the ancient buildings and also the ancient customs. The region has a very rich handicraft tradition – pottery, embroideries, hand-painted furniture, wrought-iron works, etc. The local food is varied and tasty and perfectly compliments the famous local wines.

This tour is a real opportunity to get away from it all and experience a unique rural landscape and to socialize with the people that live and work there. Portugal like you have never seen it before!

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 **Arrival**

We will meet you at Lisbon airport after that we will drive for approx 1H30 to S. Escoural followed by dinner. Tonight we will stay in a typical farmhouse in Santiago do Escoural in Alentejo (Rural Tourism) that combines traditional comfort with modern facilities.

Day 2 **On the trails of the Dolmens and the Cromlech - 56km (35mi); Level 3**

Lodging in a 4* Hotel located in the middle of the historical centre of Evora, next to the 14th century city wall.

Day 3 **Free day in Evora**

You will be free to explore Evora, classified as World Heritage by UNESCO. Lodging in a 4* Hotel located in the middle of the historical centre of Evora, next to the 14th century city wall.

Day 4: **Alentejo Fortresses and Cork Trees - 41km (25mi), level 3**

Lodging in a 15th century village of S. Gregorio whose small houses were converted into lodgings after being deserted (Village Tourism) maintaining its original architecture and layout.

Day 5: **The pure and beautiful marble of Alentejo - 72km (45mi), level 3**

Lodging in a restored 18th century building in the historic centre of Terena, 50 meters from the castle (Rural Tourism).

Day 6: **The medieval village of Monsaraz - 69km (43mi), level 3**

Lodging in a historic building in Monsaraz (4* Estalagem) that benefits from a privileged view over the plains.

Day 7: Departure

Farewell at Lisbon airport. 2H30 drive to airport.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Dolmens and Menhirs more than 10.000 years old
- Cork and olive trees
- Vineyards - guided visit and wine tasting
- Almendres Cromlech and Xurez Cromlech
- The white Medieval Village of Monsaraz on the top
- The typical and unique S. Gregorio village
- Evora - a World Heritage town classified by UNESCO
- Vast fields with wild flowers and herds
- Beautiful, white marble quarries
- The Highest Anta in the Iberian Peninsula (pre-historic monument)



Menhirs in Alentejo

GROUP TOUR DATES AND PRICES

Price per person sharing:	Price for single occupancy:	Group Tour Dates:
€1,380.00	€1,650.00	6 March
€1,410.00	€1,690.00	10 April
€1,410.00	€1,690.00	8 May
€1,440.00	€1,750.00	5 June

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 6 nights 4**** accommodation with breakfast
- 4 dinners and 4 picnics
- free refreshments in the van (energy bars and water)
- Hybrid bike with helmet
- Vineyard visit and wine tasting
- Guide cycling with the group
- Backup vehicle with luggage transport
- All necessary transfers
- Transfer from and to Lisbon airport

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation we use on this tour is usually in 4* Hotels, and at Turismo Rural accommodations; the latter are cosy and charming cottages or Manor Houses converted into small hotels. Some of the Hotels are new and some others are historic buildings. We always provide accommodation that has the best to offer in the region. We prefer beautiful and comfortable places, showing some of traditional architecture and heritage, where you can rest and enjoy the landscape. Many of these places have a swimming pool, where you can relax at the end of the day. Breakfast is included in the tour price.

Usually we arrange for double-bedroom occupancy, but in some locations, we may have to book larger rooms/suites/apartments for more than two people, depending on the season of the year. Participants signing up individually will be assigned roommates of the same sex, or pay a single supplement. On some tours, the number of available single-occupancy rooms is limited.

If you are interested to know the contacts details beforehand, please tell us and we will send you the list.

WHAT TO BRING

We would recommend that you bring padded cycling shorts and / or a gel saddle cover which will make your days cycling more comfortable. Cycling gloves are also a good investment, as are hard-sole shoes which will help protect your feet. And don't forget raingear including a rain jacket, rain pants and slip-on boots as well as swimsuit. A hat and sunglasses will protect you from getting too much sun. Finally, please make an effort to pack lightly. This will make your travels easier and will be much appreciated with the luggage transfers.

BIKE AND FITNESS



You will cycle the BH TREKKING SPORT K30K SILVERTIP **hybrid** bike. The bikes come in different sizes. We also have special saddles that are much more comfortable for women. You can also opt for SPD automatic Shimano pedals, normal platform pedals or pedals with cages. Our Hybrid Bikes have a front bag on the handlebar (2.5 litres)

Each ride is classified according to its difficulty level, from 1 to 5; level 1 is the easiest and level 5 is the most difficult. There are 3 important aspects that help us to determine the difficulty level of a tour: We typically ride less km/day (mi/day) when it is more difficult tour and when it is an easy tour, we ride more km/day (mi/day). For this tour you should be good in shape and we would recommend that you do some cycling before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable. But don't forget...our guide is always close by if you have any problems. Please note that about 30% of the cycling on this tour is off roads.

GROUP, GUIDE AND BACK UP SERVICE

The group has usually 7 up to 16 participants. In the morning, between 9:00am and 10:00am, you will follow your guide to discover the region and visit wonderful places, some of which you can only see or access by bicycle. Around lunch time we meet the backup car and have a nourishing picnic to regain our strength. After a leisurely lunch we head off again and usually arrive at our hotel between 4:00pm and 5:00pm. This allows plenty of time to relax before dinner.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Technical Data:

Region of Portugal:	Alentejo (inland)
Duration:	7 days / 6 nights / 4 days cycling / 1 day rest
Begin:	Santiago do Escoural (Alentejo)
End:	Monsaraz (Alentejo)
Overall difficulty level:	1 2 <u>3</u> 4 5
Skill Level:	Intermediate. You must be in good shape.
Distance:	238km (148miles)
Average:	60km/day (37mi/day)
Trails:	69% asphalt - 31% off-road

How do I meet you when I get to Portugal?

When you arrive in Portugal, we will meet you at the airport and we will take you to your hotel. Usually there is a welcoming dinner on that day so participants on the tour can get to know one another and we talk a little bit about what will happen on the tour.

Meals

A continental breakfast will always be served in the Hotel/Turismo Rural we are staying. For lunch, we serve a picnic at an attractive location on your tour route and, when possible, we provide local products of the region we are visiting. For dinner, we go to traditional restaurants where you can try different dishes of our rich cuisine including our famous wines and desserts.

Luggage transfers

Our backup vehicle will transfer your luggage from one place to the other. At the end of the day your luggage will be waiting for you at the Hotel/Turismo Rural where you will spend the night.