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**Travelling Beyond The Algarve Reveals The Real Portugal**

**By Mr Hanna**

The Algarve is atypical sun and sand holiday destination attracting tens of thousands of Europeans

every summer. Although the region has much to offer both the package holiday maker, independent traveller and, of course, golfer, many visitors to Portugal fail to get beyond the trappings of the holiday resorts and sample the real Portugal.

Outside of the Algarve, Portugal has a long and illustrious history. An independent nation since 1143, Portugal is one of the oldest nations in Europe and it's location on the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula dictates a long history of sea faring and discovery. A vast monumental and cultural legacy has been left for modern visitors to enjoy. The tourist information site gives an interesting and informative overview of the cultural and historic attractions of the country as well as useful guides to the regions and cities of Portugal (

<http://www.portugal.org/tourism/index.html>

).

The capital city, Lisbon, is an ideal location for a short break and is rapidly gaining a reputation as such. A thriving and bustling mix of the old and new, Lisbon retains a respect for its historic past whilst offering the visitor the attractions and amenities that could be expected of a main European city. The city is dominated by the old port area - the departure point for explorers such as Magellan - and recent regeneration of the area is sympathetic and impressive. Lisbon comes to life at night as the locals descend on the pavement restaurants and bars creating a relaxed, sociable and informal atmosphere.

Further North and the impressive, World Heritage status city of Porto can be found. The city, of course, lends its' name to the world famous variety of wine but the city's baroque and Romanesque architecture leave a lasting and perhaps not as regrettable impression. Although the Algarve signs to mind when you mention beaches and Portugal, the coastal region of Minho, to the north of Porto have perhaps the most stunning beaches in the country. The area has some resorts, but these are quieter and smaller in scale to their southern counterparts and offer a quieter, perhaps more relaxed beach holiday than the Algarve.

## Travelling Beyond The Algarve Reveals The Real Portugal

Travelling to Portugal via, Lisbon, Porto or Faro is relatively easy from the UK with most operators offering direct flights from a range of UK airports. Internal flights are relatively inexpensive and the rail system is cheap and efficient. Portugal is a relatively small country and is negotiable by road for those looking to traverse wide areas. Car rental in Portugal is abundant - especially in Lisbon and Porto and most of the major car hire firms offer one way or return car hire in Portugal (

<http://www.easycar.com/car-hire/destination/Portugal.aspx/EN>

).

The Algarve is an ideal family holiday destination and has many charms but Portugal as a country has much more to offer for those willing to explore a little further.

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### **Five "Must Visit" Places In The Algarve**

#### **By Islands In The Sun**

Why is the Algarve such a popular destination? Yes, it's because you can get cheap flights from most UK airports and Yes it's because the weather is good pretty much all year round. Oh, and Yes, it's because it has a huge number of golf courses. But the next time you go to the Algarve, have a day away from the beach and take in some of the Algarve's more traditional attractions.

#### Lagos

Portugal has an impressive history, and this is reflected in the surviving buildings in the marina town of Lagos. Take a break from the sun by visiting the cool, historic churches of Santa Maria of Misericórdia, Santo António and São Sebastião and then relax at the marina - a great day out.

#### Loulé

Many of Loulé's most impressive buildings were destroyed in the Algarve's great earthquake of 1755, but sections of the castle, dating back to the 12th century, remain. Loulé is inland from the Algarve coast, so it's a great opportunity to take a short drive inland - particularly on Market Day, when the town is busy and full of life.

#### Faro

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Most tourists fly into Faro and drive straight out to their holiday destination. Few bother to come back during their stay and take a look at the historic buildings and fascinating museums in the town. As the Algarve's capital, there's a lot to see within its medieval walls, including the Roman–Gothic cathedral and the Infante Dom Henrique Museum. Get to Faro before your flight home to catch it at its best.

### Sagres

Sagres is the most south–westerly point of Europe and is commonly known as "the end of the world" by locals. It's best to visit Sagres when the weather is good, but walking out to the rocks jutting into the Atlantic on a rainy, blustery day really makes you feel at one with the elements, and it's worth the drive along the Algarve coast to get there.

### Silves

Set slightly inland from the popular coastal destinations, Silves is a beautiful historic town, with Phoenician, Roman and Moorish influences making it a great day out. It boasts what is probably the most intact castle in the area, and its cathedral was built on the site of a Moorish Mosque. Narrow streets and hidden cafes make Silves a real "must visit" destination.

Islands in the Sun specialises in holiday accommodation. Visit their website to find out about

[http://www.webeventseurope.com/Internet\\_Marketing\\_Consulting/article7626.aspx](http://www.webeventseurope.com/Internet_Marketing_Consulting/article7626.aspx)



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