



ALENTEJO WINELANDS

The wine tour that we propose to do in the Alentejo will take you through the region's vast plains and stop at the most emblematic locations. The cold climate in winter and high temperatures in summer give the region its ideal conditions for the production of wine. Its history boasts many large estates for the large scale production of wine as well as cereals, olive oil and cork extraction, Portugal being the world's largest producer and exporter of cork.

Estremoz has large marble quarries and one of the most internationally appreciated marbles is mined and produced here. The "Rosa Aurora" is a white marble stone with a characteristic cloudy vein that varies greatly in colour and pattern.

The people of Alentejo who have been shaped by the climate also have very specific customs and traditions unique to the region, like the type of singing that is performed by farmers, classified as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Alentejo landscape is still well known for its hills and houses with whitewashed walls and coloured bands ranging from blue and red to yellow. We therefore have a wide and rich offer of itineraries tailored to our customers, depending on the weather and time of year they visit. As we arrive in Beja, we start the day off by breathing in the fresh air and visiting this town and other emblematic locations, and end with a visit to one of the many wine estates, where we can learn about the entire wine production process and enjoy a wine tasting paired with regional sausages and cheeses. Then, have dinner at one of the typical restaurants in the area.

- **Beja**

From the top of its 277 metre hill overlooking the surrounding plains, the countryside forms a natural border between the city centre and the rural area. This location dates back to the Iron Age, proven by a section of protohistoric wall discovered in the street, Rua do Sembrano. This extremely important finding dispels all doubts about the existence of a village prior to the Roman occupation and the founding of the city Pax Julia by Julius Caesar. It was the capital city of Conventus Pacensis in the Roman province of Lusitania. It was also Civitas, i.e. a City responsible for a region and colony with clear competences in the administrative structure of Roman regionalisation.

- **Évora**

Évora is located in the centre of the low-relief plain where the rivers Tagus, Sado and Guadiana join up, on the trade routes that connected the coast to the interior of the peninsula from North to South. The occupation of Évora dates back to prehistory due to its privileged geographical position. During the Roman period, it acquired the status of Municipality with the designation of Liberalitas Julia. Visigoths



Leopoldo Figueiredo

+351 965 594 751

terradalgharb@hotmail.com

Terra D'Al Gharb,
Unipessoal Lda.
Rua Ilda Stichini nº4
8100-231 Loulé

NIPC 514 688 882
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and Muslims also settled here but their history is largely unknown and by the end of the Islamic period, the city featured two mosques and thrived with commercial and farming activity. In 1165, it was conquered and integrated into the Kingdom of Portugal, taking on a relevant position as the main urban hub in the south of the country, a religious, political and military centre.

- **Estremoz**

Estremoz boasts a history of eight centuries where kings and queens lived, with vestiges of Roman, Visigoth and Muslim occupation, including a county cemetery. In 1211, it was donated to the Friars of the religious military order of Avis who built the hermitage of Saint Benedict and where the Church of Saint Francis was later built. In 1258, it received the charter of King Afonso III, renewed in 1512 by King Manuel I. Queen “Saint” Isabel, consort of King Dinis, spent much of her time here. She died in 1336 in her chambers of the Medieval Castle. Estremoz survived the 1383-85 Crisis, the Portuguese Restoration War and the Liberal Wars until the Carnation Revolution on April 25, 1974.

- **Vila Viçosa**

Vila Viçosa, occupied by the Romans and Muslims, was conquered in 1217 by King Afonso II. In 1270, it received the charter of King Afonso III, elevating it to the status of a town. King Dinis had the Vila Viçosa Castle built here. In 1461, it became part of the Duchy of Bragança. Duke James I started to build his residence, the “Paço Ducal”, in 1502, becoming the most emblematic monument in the village and the Duchy’s headquarters. In 1640, John II, Duke of Bragança succeeds to the Portuguese throne and the Paço Ducal of Vila Viçosa became the Royal holiday residence. And the story goes on.

The princess of the Alentejo may be a small town but it is one of its most precious jewels, with its Duchy, the Mother Church and Castle as some of the highlights.

- **Herdade do Freixo**

Tour of the wine cellar, explanation of the production process, wine tasting paired by sausages and cheeses.



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