

Portugal: Cape St. Vincent ~ Walks, Orchids & Birds on the Edge of Europe

www.kudutravel.com/tours/cape-st-vincent-holiday

28 March – 4 April 2021

Jutting into the Atlantic, 9° west of Greenwich, Cape St. Vincent marks Europe's most south-westerly point. From here, Prince Henry the Navigator sent forth his caravels during Portugal's Golden Age of Discoveries. Now largely protected as a National Park, the Cape provides scenic coastal walks with a plethora of wildflowers, including orchids, and migrant birds.

Comfortably based in a traditional 4-star Pousada and a pleasant Alentejo hotel, we enjoy excellent seafood and Portuguese wines, explore the historic small towns of the area and also spend a day walking and birdwatching on the immense open plains of the Baixo Alentejo, carpeted with spring wildflowers beneath the holm oaks.

HIGHLIGHTS of our Cape St. Vincent walking holiday include:

- Expert botanical guiding to discover the many endemic plants of Cape St Vincent
- A scenic boat trip in search of dolphins, gannets and Cory's shearwaters
- Historical insights, from Moorish castles to the voyages of Prince Henry the Navigator
- Opportunity to look for great bustards and lesser kestrels on the open plains of the Baixo Alentejo

Guests' comments on this trip:

'This was a well-balanced trip catering for a wide range of interests - history, scenery, plants and birds.'

*'A really good, interesting and enjoyable trip. **Carla** is an excellent guide.'*

'A very enjoyable trip. The food was super - lots of fresh fish - and marvellous Portuguese wine! The Pousada had a great position and we had good rooms overlooking the sea. Carla was really great - so enthusiastic and knowledgeable - a joy to be with.'

Itinerary

DAY 1

D included

After meeting at Faro airport in the afternoon, we drive west (1.5 hours) to the village of Sagres, set within the Cape St Vincent National Park, and settle into our clifftop 4-star Pousada hotel before a seafood dinner in the excellent traditional restaurant.

DAY 2

B, L, D included

After breakfast we walk from the hotel, finding our first mirror and bumblebee orchids and endemic flowering gum cistus on the clifftops as we explore the Sagres promontory. We see the 18th century Fortress on our way to the lighthouse at the Cape itself, following sandy tracks through the windswept coastal vegetation, full of wild gladioli and 'hooped petticoat' narcissus, and providing shelter for migrant birds such as cuckoos, hoopoes and flycatchers.

DAY 3

B, L, D included

Departing from Sagres' small fishing harbour on a well-equipped rigid inflatable boat, we learn about the coastal geology as well as looking for dolphins, gannets and Cory's shearwaters (weather dependent, alternative walk available). Returning to land, we have lunch on the fish harbour and spend the afternoon walking a scenic coastal path looking for dipcadis, fritillarias and centaureiums. A Slow Food restaurant provides a memorable dinner.

DAY 4

B, L, D included

This morning we walk round the saltpans of the Alvor estuary in search of flamingos and spoonbills as well as salt tolerant plants. We see the replica of the 15th century caravel 'Boa Esperanca' moored in the harbour before lunch in a lively restaurant popular with the locals, then explore the cobbled lanes of the historic town of Lagos, visiting the small regional museum and the mediaeval fortress. En route home we pause to walk on a hillside covered with wild peonies.

DAY 5

B, L, D included

This morning's walk on the wild Atlantic coast in the north of the Park reveals spectacular coastal scenery and unspoilt countryside harbouring many wildflowers, including the charming little *Leucojum trichophyllum*, the endemic *Astragalus lusitanicus* (Portuguese milkvetch) and the parasitic *Cytinus rubra*. We visit a small interesting museum of fishing and walk through sand dunes to a beach restaurant for a typical 'cataplana' lunch. After a scenic coastal drive, we stop at the 14th century chapel at Guadalupe where Henry the Navigator and his ships' crews prayed before departing into the unknown and return to our hotel in good time to admire the sunset over the Cape.

DAY 6

B, L, D included

We drive east and our first stop is the impressive Moorish castle in Silves. We spend the rest of the morning exploring the historic area around the castle and the cathedral. In the afternoon, we walk down to a river along an abandoned lane renowned for its remarkable number of orchids, then head north through orange and carob orchards to Castro Verde in the Baixo Alentejo. Our small modern hotel (3 star) is a comfortable and quiet base in the village centre and Alentejo wines at dinner are well worth discovering.

DAY 7

B, L, D included

Today we explore contrasting areas of the steppe, starting with a circular walk amongst holm oaks and gum cistus. After lunch in a picturesque whitewashed village, we walk and look for little and great bustards, Montagu's harriers and lesser kestrels on a vast open plain amidst colourful displays of flowering camomile, viper's bugloss and crown daisies.

DAY 8

B included

After breakfast, we head south for Faro and midday flights home.

Activity Level

Relaxed

6 walking days (1.5 – 4.5 hours daily at an appropriately slow pace). Lightweight walking boots that provide good ankle support are best as the terrain is often quite rough underfoot.

Temperatures

Average spring temperatures in southern Portugal are 15 - 20°C but it may feel cooler when the wind is blowing.

Accommodation

- 5 nights in Sagres, within the Cape St. Vincent National Park, in a traditional 4-star Pousada hotel overlooking the ocean
- 2 nights in Castro Verde, in a small modern hotel (3-star) in the centre

Trip Price, per person sharing:

£2,118.25 until 27th June 2020

£2,175.50 until 27th September 2020

£2,232.75 until 27th December 2020

£2,290 after 27th December 2020

<https://www.kudutravel.com/faq#discounts>

£330 double for single supplement

£400 deposit per person

Please note that the double for single supplement is imposed by the hotels and not by Kudu Travel. If you are willing to share but no other suitable guest books on the trip, we regret that the supplement will be payable.

Price Includes

- accommodation for Days 1 through 8, on a twin shared basis
- meals (with wine at lunches and dinners) as listed in the daily notation
- land transportation in a private vehicle as described, except during free periods
- a dolphin watching/coastal geology trip as described
- entrance, sightseeing and guiding fees, except during free periods
- gratuities for hotel and restaurant staff (appreciation for tour guides is at your discretion)

Price does not Include

- flights to and from Faro airport
- trip cancellation, medical or other insurance
- immunisations, prescriptions or other medical requirements
- passport, visa and health documentation
- personal expenses (laundry, alcohol, other than wine with group lunches and dinners, free time activities, etc.)
- transport and transfer of excess baggage
- Portuguese departure tax, if any

VALUE FOR MONEY - SO MUCH IS INCLUDED

On Kudu trips, you will only need money for postcards, presents to take home, the odd G & T or an irresistible ice cream. Festival and opera tickets, museum and gallery entrances, National Park fees, all meals (with a very few exceptions specified in individual itineraries), wine with lunch and dinner, access to specialist books carried by the guides, gratuities for porters and hotel and restaurant staff, boat rides, train trips, internal flights, wine tastings, 4WDs with drivers, the services of skilled local guides and trackers etc. are ALL INCLUDED in the cost of your holiday.

We are confident that, like previous very satisfied guests, you will discover that our tours give you excellent value for money.

Botanical Guidebook

Carla Cabrita, the tour leader, is co-author of a beautifully illustrated Botanical guide to Cape St Vincent (200 Plants of SW Alentejo and the Costa Vicentina) which is available locally.

Visa and Health Requirements

Visitors from the UK, EU, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand currently require a valid passport, but not a visa, for entry to Portugal. If you are a national of any other country, please check visa regulations with your nearest Embassy of Portugal.

At present, there are no specific and compulsory health requirements for entry to Portugal. Residents of countries in the EU can only claim free (emergency) medical treatment in Portugal by presenting their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You may also wish to check the advice given to travellers by the Department of Health (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/healthcare-when-travelling-abroad/>) and the FCO (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>).

Insurance

It is essential, and a condition of booking, that you protect yourself with a suitable travel insurance policy as soon as you book this trip. We can arrange comprehensive cover for UK residents. For further details, please see our website or ask our office.

Size of Party

This trip will run with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 14 guests.