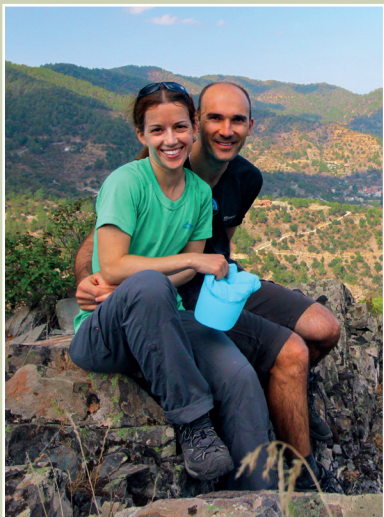


WALKING IN THE ALGARVE



About the Authors

Nike and Jacint met many years ago on a long coach journey as they both travelled into the unknown to build a new life in a different country. It wasn't long before they became inseparable. Travelling quickly emerged as their favourite activity: they had their first walking holiday in Madeira in 2008 and now wherever they go they try to find the best trails.

Nike went to journalism school and Jacint is a keen photographer. They really enjoy walking in the mountains and would happily spend every day on the trails. When they first visited the Algarve they were mesmerised by the diverse scenery and dramatic coastline. Having collected the best routes, first in Cyprus and now in the Algarve, they want to share their passion for walking with others.

Other Cicerone guides by the authors

Walking in Cyprus

WALKING IN THE ALGARVE

33 WALKS IN THE SOUTH OF PORTUGAL
INCLUDING SERRA DE MONCHIQUE AND COSTA
VICENTINA

by Nike Werstroh and Jacint Mig

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Updates to this Guide

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/994/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time.

The route maps in this guide are derived from publicly available data, databases and crowd-sourced data. As such they have not been through the detailed checking procedures that would generally be applied to a published map from an official mapping agency, although naturally we have reviewed them closely in the light of local knowledge as part of the preparation of this guide.

We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

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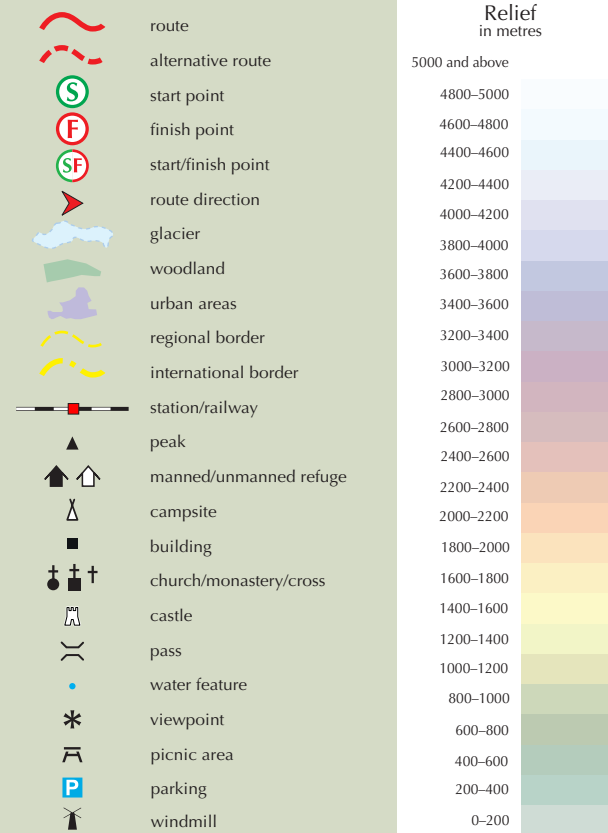
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Symbols used on route maps



GPX files for all routes can be downloaded free at www.cicerone.co.uk/994/GPX.





INTRODUCTION

Portugal's southernmost region, with its rugged coastline, hidden coves, rock-fringed sandy beaches and pleasant climate, has been attracting beach-loving tourists since the late 1960s. Small fishing villages have gradually grown into tourist resorts. Endless summer days see a great number of people in the coastal resorts. Admiring the sandy beaches surrounded by cliffs from the coastal path, it is not difficult to see why the sun-seekers come here.

For this reason, the Algarve is mostly known for its charming coast and inviting hot summers, but not too far from the busy beaches there are small, less-known villages where the way of life hasn't changed greatly over the past decades. Leaving the busy coast, carob and cork oak populate the hillsides, and almond and olive trees provide ingredients for local products.

Walking is the best way to explore the Algarve's surprisingly diverse scenery. The Algarve might not be considered a walking destination as there are no high mountains; however, there are two long-distance trails across the area. Shorter hiking and biking trails are advertised as well, and active holidays are encouraged for the growing number of people who want to explore beyond the sandy beaches.

Jagged coastlines washed with turquoise waters dominate the

scenery in the south, and even in the early autumn, you can still stop for a swim on one of the remote sandy beaches. The narrow southern coastal path is easy to follow and it gives numerous opportunities to admire sinkholes and sea stacks created by the power of nature.

The waves of the Atlantic Ocean batter the Algarve's least-developed region, the wild western coast, constantly and without mercy, making the west coast beaches the must-visit playgrounds for experienced surfers.

Roaring wind greets you by the lighthouse of Cabo de São Vicente, and every part of the impressive coastline is moulded by the forceful elements. The outcrop with the lighthouse marked the end of the known world until the 14th century. But during the 15th century, Prince Henry the Navigator began the maritime expeditions from Lagos which helped to establish the Portuguese Empire and broaden the knowledge of the world.

Only about 30min drive from the coast, the Monchique Range – the highest part of the Algarve – is altogether different. Trails meander over the slopes near small, tranquil villages, surrounded by cork oak and eucalyptus. Locals work on their land and the meadows are often dotted with grazing animals.



Forest track descending from Cerro dos Negros (Walk 4)

By following the trails you can experience the many colours, sounds and smells of the Algarve through the seasons.

Almond flowers whiten the countryside like snow from late January. Spring arrives early, bringing fresh colours with its wide selection of orchids and wildflowers. In the summer, shimmering heat characterises the countryside and the scenery is parched. The ground is dry yellow and brown, and the dusty leaves hardly move in the gentle breeze. The golden sandy beaches are packed with holidaymakers and the coast is throbbing with life. Almonds and grapes are harvested in September, and late autumn brings some much-needed

rain. During the short winter, streams come alive, happily gushing down over the rocks.

After a day spent walking in the countryside, on the coast or in the Monchique, you can enjoy a well-deserved seafood dinner in one of the coastal towns, or the popular Portuguese peri peri chicken in the small restaurants. And the fine local dishes should be accompanied with great local wine.

The Algarve was under Moorish rule for 500 years (AD 711–1250) and the name comes from this period, when it was called Al-Gharb (the west). Many town names and about 1000 words in the Portuguese language have an Arabic origin.



A stone building near Fonte Santa (Walk 9)

Many of the trails offer great views as well as interesting historical sights to look out for. You can still see some rusty *noras* (wells) in the countryside, ruins of forts and lighthouses along the coast, an abandoned hamlet on the slope of Fóia, or a megalithic burial site (built during the 3rd or 4th Millennium BC) near Mealha.

Many locals might think that walking for leisure is a strange activity, but they welcome the growing number of people who want to explore the diverse landscape on foot.

GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The Algarve, the southernmost region of mainland Portugal, can be divided into three main regions: the *serra* (mountains), the *barrocal* (transition between the mountains and the coastal strip) and the coast.

Serra

The northern part of the Algarve, the Serra, forms part of the Iberian Massif. It consists of the shale terrain Monchique mountains and Caldeirão.

The Monchique Massif is a result of volcanic activity about 72 million years ago. This area consists of granite and schist. Today, pine trees, eucalyptus, cork oaks and shrubs grow on the slopes. The hills of Caldeirão consist of schist; cork oak and Mediterranean shrubs, such as rock roses, oaks, rosemary, and lavender populate the hillsides.



The barrocal

The Central Algarve, formed of clay and limestone is the transition between the 'mountains' and the coastal regions. The *barrocal* is formed of limestone from the Jurassic era. The hills and plains are today mainly characterised by agriculture. They are home to almond, orange, fig, carob, and olive trees. Mediterranean shrubs also grow in this area.

The coast

The rocky western coastline between Odeceixe and Vila do Bispo is carved into the Iberian Massif of dark-coloured shade and greywacke of the Paleozoic era, but the Pontal da Carrapateira area and the Sagres

Bigger sea stacks – such as these on Walk 22 – can provide a safe nesting place for birds



Peninsula are made of the light-coloured limestone of the Mesozoic Era.

In Sagres and near Figueira beach, the limestone cliffs are Jurassic, while the most recent marl cliffs between Figueira and Porto de Mós are from the Cretaceous period. The cliffs

between Porto de Mós and Olhos de Aqua are made of the younger carbonate rocks of the Miocene period. These rocks are sculpted by both fresh and sea water, creating a stunning coastal landscape with sea stacks, natural arches and coves.

CAVES, ARCHES, SEA STACKS, AND RUGGED COASTLINE

Waves slowly make their way into the cracks in the limestone rocks, gradually making a cave. The water-formed cave becomes larger over time, and when it breaks through, it creates an arch. It then gradually grows and when the top can no longer be supported, it collapses, leaving a stack behind.

The limestone of the Algarve coast is constantly changing form through a combination of erosion by the sea and rain water dissolving the calcium carbonate from the limestone, deepening the cracks in the rocks and creating sinkholes and caves. This type of activity can be observed along the coast of the Algarve.

EASTERN ALGARVE

A well and trough beside the trail (Walk 1)



Only a short distance from busy Faro and the popular beach resorts, there is a different Algarve with small villages such as **Furnazinhas** and **Mealha**, where the way of life hasn't changed greatly in decades. The hills and plains are mainly characterised by agriculture. Almond, orange, fig, carob and olive trees supply ingredients for local products. There is also evidence of early human activity in the area. There is a megalithic burial site (built during the 3rd or 4th millennium) near Mealha (Walk 3), and a defensive wall from the Iron Age near Penina. You can enjoy fine views of the hills from Rocha de Pena (Walk 6) and admire the remaining walls of Paderne Castle (Walk 7), which was originally built as a Moorish fort. It is believed to be one of the seven castles on the Portuguese flag, representing those taken by the Portuguese from the Moors. The walks in this area described here are all under 10km and not demanding.

Accommodation can be found in or near **Faro** as well as **Loulé** and in some of the small villages. Faro has everything the traveller might need; hotels and apartments, bars, restaurants and shops. The old town, encircled by ancient city walls, and the harbour are great for an afternoon stroll, and there are plenty of restaurants and cafés where you can sample the local food. There are some small but busy roadside restaurants scattered around the countryside. You will be able to find cheaper accommodation in Loulé than in the coastal towns and it is easy to get around and get to know the eastern Algarve by car from the town. The trails in the region offer great views and history.

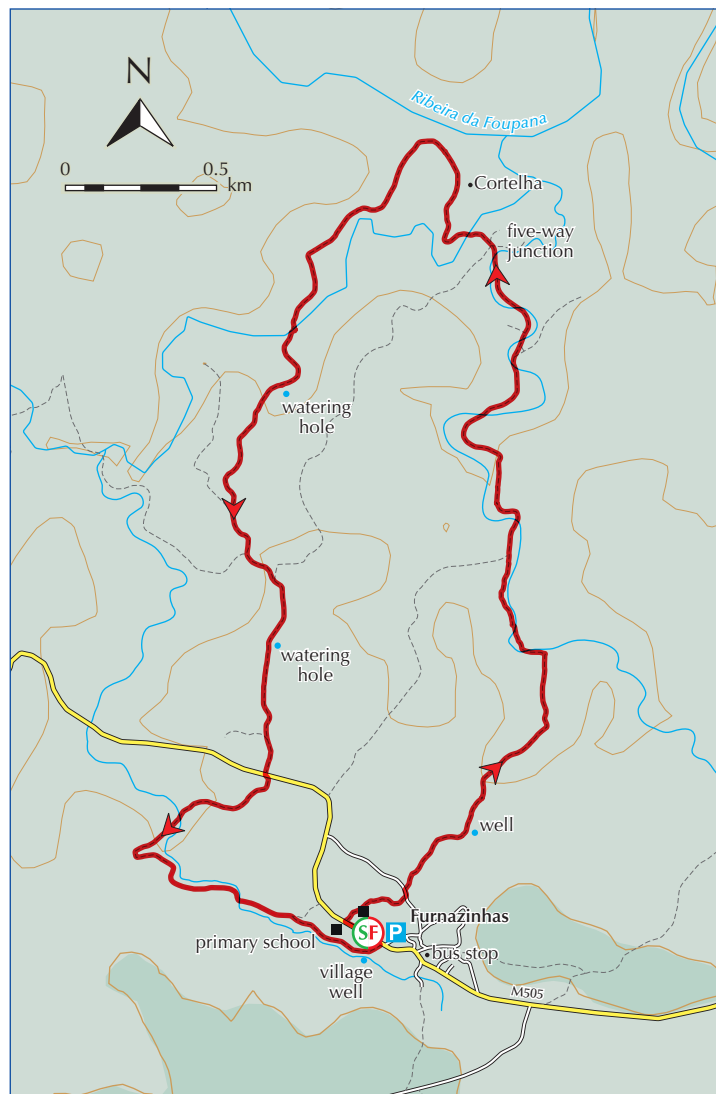
WALK 1

Barrancos

Start/finish	Furnazinhas. Near the old primary school (white building) at the edge of the village. An Information board about the walk marks the beginning of the trail. (N37.363575, W7.576650)
Distance	8.5 km
Total ascent/descent	185m
Grade	2
Time	2hr 30min–3hr
Refreshments	Small bar in Furnazinhas village
Access	Furnazinhas is located on the M505 road which can be accessed from the N122 from the direction of Odeleite. There is a very limited bus service to and from the village and it may be difficult to reach the start of the walk by public transport. It is advisable to ask for information about buses in tourist offices. There are plenty of places to park near the school.

Start from the small village of Furnazinhas, where the way of life hasn't changed greatly over the years. Follow the wide tracks over tranquil hills with several stream crossings. Water only flows in these shallow streambeds during the wetter months. Views are dominated by hills populated by almond, olive and carob trees. The trail then follows a streambed back to the small village.

Facing the information board by the old primary school, go right on the tarmac road and a few metres later leave it on the yellow/red marked path by a wall to the right. The beginning of the trail is marked with a wooden arrow: PR10CTM 'Percorso Pedestre Barrancos' 7.8km. Follow the wide cobbled road uphill past some houses. It soon becomes a wide stony path with the buildings of Furnazinhas on your right.



Soon join another track; keep left, and at the next junction take the middle path marked with a yellow/red sign. Leaving the houses behind, walk slightly downhill, with views dominated by the rolling hills in front of you. Pass a **well** and a trough and cross the streambed for the first time. Young pines grow on the nearby hills as you follow the wide stony path slightly downhill.

Shortly after the first crossing, cross the streambed again and then continue alongside it. ▶

Leave the wide track on a narrow, slightly overgrown path to the left about 30min after starting the walk. Follow the familiar yellow/red signs along the streambed, which is overgrown with reeds.

Cross the streambed again, follow the overgrown path on its other side for about 50m and cross over again. Notice some cork oak, olive, almond and carob trees and soon you will see another yellow/red sign. Young pines dominate the nearby hills and a tiny building appears on the other side of the stream.

Reach a dirt track about 15min after joining the narrow path. Keep right. A few minutes later, at the junction take the dirt track on the right and almost immediately

The trail crosses the streambed several times

The path is lined with shrubs; notice the olive and carob trees near the path.

cross the streambed. Continue along the track lined with almond trees with views to the hills.

When a track joins, keep left slightly downhill. The path crosses the streambed twice in quick succession and then splits; keep left as the sign indicates.

Cross the streambed again, ignore the path on the left and continue straight on. Cross the streambed twice more and in front of you there is a ruin on the top of a low hill.

At the **five-way junction** carry straight on downhill, cross the streambed again and then continue slightly uphill. A track turns off to the right with a sign 'Cortelha 150m'. You can take a short detour to the ruins and rejoin the track a little further on. Alternatively carry straight on and a few minutes later pass the track with the 'Cortelha 170m' sign.

When the dirt track splits, keep left as the yellow/red sign indicates. ◀ Oak, almond and carob trees populate the hill near the track, and the low streambed is now on your left. When the track splits again, go left; soon crossing the streambed, then continue slightly uphill. Shortly, notice a hunter's high stand and a **watering hole** on your

left. A dirt track joins from the right; keep slightly left as the sign indicates. A few minutes later, ignore the track on the right, carry straight on slightly uphill and arrive at a junction, where you keep left towards Furnazinhas.

Ignore the track on the left and carry straight on as the white/yellow/red sign indicates. Near the track, you might notice some beehives on the hillside, and you soon pass a small **watering hole**. Ignore the path on the right and carry straight on with views of the hills stretching into the distance. Reach an asphalt road; the PR10 trail continues on its other side slightly to the left. You quickly pass a ramshackle building and a well to your right. When the path splits, keep left by the cultivated land and cross the streambed. Leave the dirt track to the left on a narrow path as the yellow/red sign indicates. Walk alongside a drystone wall, cross the streambed and then continue by a fence. At the junction keep right and about 20–30min after crossing the asphalt road, the trail runs between some houses. At the next junction take the PR10 CTM path to the left. Reach the tarmac road, keep left and a few metres later arrive back at the primary school.

There are olive trees near the track and you might notice a well between the shrubs.

Pine trees populate the low hills near Furnazinhas

