

Theme Holidays :: **Gourmet Holidays -- Food & wine experience**

[In the heart of Portugal]



Our Romantic Rural Hotel and Cooking School, located in Portel, a small village near Évora is based on a Vila manor house with elegant rooms, pool and patios. The cooking class kitchen opens to a very peculiar and beautiful courtyard. The hotel facilities and the extra-activities (biking, horse riding, touring, walking) can easily attract non cooking partners.

Portuguese cuisine is simple, characterized by a rich variety of regional dishes. Gathering herbs and produce from the local markets and paring them to timeless recipes, cooks of all levels can roll up their sleeves in the Vila Kitchen and prepare a variety of succulent Mediterranean dishes influenced by this historical region.

[Program]

Day 1 – The arrival!

Arrival in Lisbon, transfer to Hotel. Enjoy free time before a Welcome reception and Dinner. Overnight: in Lisbon (hotel Avenida Palace or Similar).



Day 2 – Introduction to Portuguese Gastronomy

We drive to Portel (small hidden village in the Alentejo), and Refúgio da Vila, our base for the week. After an orientation walk around Portel and lunch, we'll enter a Portuguese Kitchen and have our first cooking class: Introduction to Portuguese Gastronomy, a study in influences and seasonings. Dinner at the "Adega do Refúgio".



Day 3 – A magic potion - fish & olive oil

Tuesday starts with a cooking class about the importance of fish and olive oil in Portuguese cuisine. Lunch is a chance to sample your own cooking! Non cooking partners join at the table. This afternoon we'll visit the Esporão Wine State, blending ancient and modern winemaking techniques. The nearby Arts & Crafts Center of Reguengos displays a wonderful collection of Alentejo wares. We drive to Monsaraz, where we'll dine under the shadow of the 13th century castle built by King Afonso III.

Day 4 – The local produce

Today's focus is on local produce: the abundance from local Quintas (Farms) and Ranches. This afternoon, we'll tour nearby Évora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a beautiful white town with a wealth of monuments, from Roman times to the 19th century. After a walking tour, you'll have free time to explore and shop on your own. Dinner is at the Adega do Refúgio.



Day 5 – visiting the Northern Alentejo

Cooks, this is your day off! Today we'll drive into the Northern Alentejo, but before we lunch at Vila Viçosa (and visit its renaissance Ducal Palace). Passing through the marble area we visit the historical and beautiful white town of Estremoz, enclosed within its ramparts and overlook a vast plain of gnarled olive trees and wheat fields. Nearby Estremoz we visit the wine cellars of João Portugal Ramos, the country's premier winemaker. Finally we return to Portel in time for dinner.

Day 6 – The flavours of the South

Today's cooking class focuses on: the flavours of the South... After lunch, enjoy a "siesta" and a free

afternoon. This evening, dinner includes entertainment from local folklore group.

Day 7 – aromatic herbs, and wild flowers

This region is known for its aromatic herbs, and wild flowers. This morning we'll use them in dishes that the locals have passed on through the generations. Enjoy an afternoon excursion to several traditional peculiar small villages. This evening, sit down for a Farewell Dinner at the Adega do Refúgio

Day 8 – Departure

Check-out from the hotel and transfer to the airport
End of our services.