

The Fishermen's Trail

Rota Vicenta

General Route

Day 1(a): Porto Covo to Vila Nova de Milfontes

Distance: 12.43 miles

Ascent: 524.93 ft

Descent: 524.93 ft

Lunch: Porto das Barcas (80% of the trek)

UNKNOWN

Dinner: Tasca di Celso (In town of Vila de Milfontes)

Water: 2 liters should last full hike

Average time: 5 hr 15 min

OPTION TO MAKE SHORTER:

If we go the #1 (shorter hike) one (praia do mahhao)—there is only 2:45 hour hike to the end. If we go to #2 adds another 90 min approx.

the marked trail
Around 2km further on is a building and car park used by surfers, as well as a stream. Here the lovely cliff path resumes, followed by a 3km sandy piste where the occasional pine tree spells sparse shade. At a large car park (1hr 40min) at Praia do Malhão the path returns once more to the glorious seafloor with boardwalks and



benches, perfect for picnics. (For those who can't resist the call of the sea, flights of wooden stairs lead down to the golden sand.)

The path leads inevitably due S high over the coast to where the end of the beach marks the beginning of the rugged **Alluras do Norte** sandstone cliffs and the first of the sea stacks which double as nesting places for acrobatic storks. A spectacular section runs high over a string of marvellous fine sand-sorbble coasts before leading gradually SE to **Ponta das Barcas aka Canal** (1hr 45min) with a cafe-restaurant.

The route proceeds along a quiet road above a modest fishing harbour, and is when pointed onto a lane. At a cluster of new houses bear R through empty lots and past houses and hotels. You emerge on Avenida Marginal and the wonderful waterfront of Vila Nova de Milfontes (50min) with another beckoning beach.



Notes

Starting elevation: 116 ft

Highest point: 165 ft

Stop in city and drive

OPTION TO MAKE SHORTER:

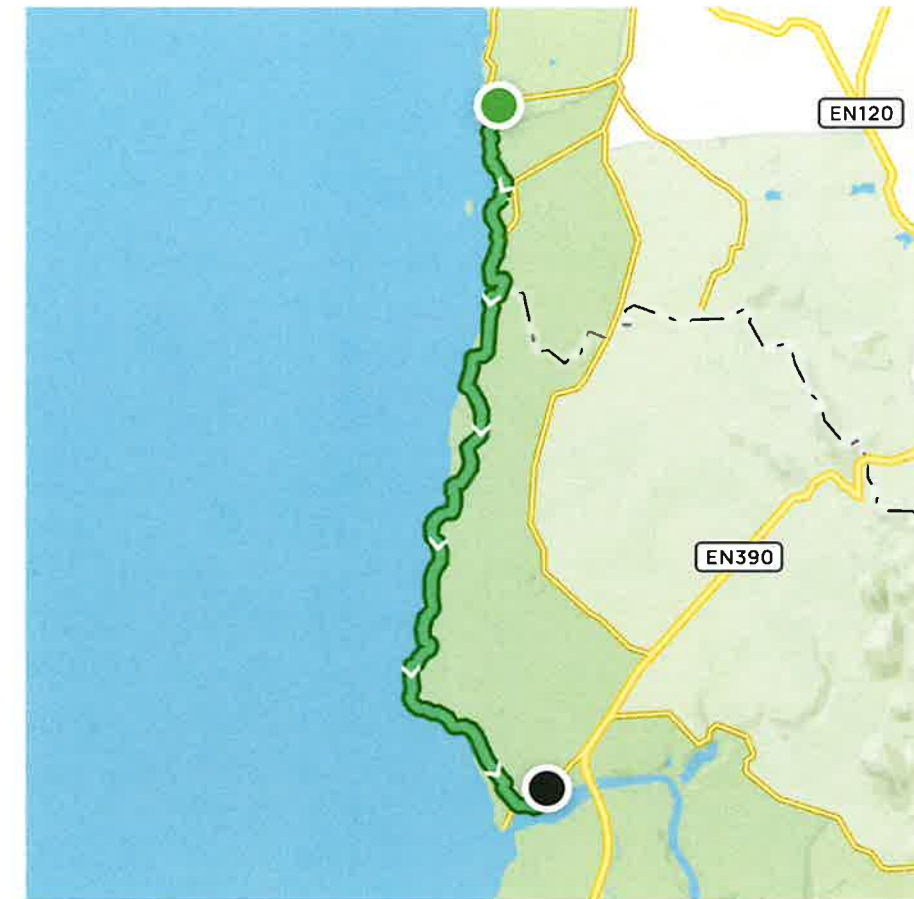
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Notes

Bring Sand Gators as you will trek on sand for a good portion of the day.

- Place to stay, Casa da Eira highest rated spot in city



STAGE 4

Porto Covo to Vila Nova de Milfontes

Start	Porto Covo tourist office
Distance	20km
Ascent	160m
Descent	160m
Grade	1
Walking time	5hr 15min
Refreshments	Forte da Ilha, Ponta das Barcas
Accommodation	Vila Nova de Milfontes

A simply spectacular day out on the coast in the company of the magnificent Atlantic Ocean, inviting beaches, dramatic cliffs, bright wildflowers and hardy sea birds. The historic Forte da Ilha do Pessegueiro (usually shortened to Forte da Ilha) and a welcoming café-resto await on the glorious beachfront where a swim is definitely called for – allow for extra time today.

Alternating with clifftop paths are inland tracks traversing the undeveloped plain parallel to the coast. It is rather tiring as you'll be walking on sandy terrain and shade is a rare luxury so go prepared with abundant sun protection and drinking water. While there are no technical difficulties, strong winds could make the cliff paths risky so take care and keep well back from the edge. The memorable day wraps up at Vila Nova de Milfontes, a lovely small town on the estuary of the Rio Mira river where Hannibal reputedly took shelter.



The stage begins at the Porto Covo tourist information office

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STAGE 4 – PORTO COVO TO VILA NOVA DE MILFONTES

From the tourist office at Porto Covo take the steepish street SE down across the stream (the way you arrived in Stage 3) and up the other side where the HW and FT part ways. Keep R on the FT branch with green-blue markers past an excellent lookout and onto a boardwalk. This proceeds along the low clifftops touching on secluded coves, to where the glorious Praia da Ilha beach is joined near the island Ilha do Pessegueiro. Continue along the sand to Forte da Ilha (1hr) and its inviting café-resto.

The adjacent fort dates back to 1588. Designed by an Italian architect, it was intended to prevent attacks from English pirates. Immediately offshore is



Praia da Ilha backed by the Ilha do Pessegueiro

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the fortified island of Ilha do Possegueiro. Occupied by the Carthaginians in the third century BC, the Romans later used it as a fishing port complete with tanks for salting fish.

At low tide when the sea is calm, by all means walk along the beach all the way to Praia do Malhão where wooden stairs lead back up to the marked trail.

Looking back onto glorious Praia do Malhão

The well-marked FT leads along the lane behind the old fort before veering R as a beautiful path along clifftops through masses of flowering plants to the sandy expanse of **Praia do Queimado**. Not far from a house you're pointed briefly inland to cross a stream then you need to follow low pole markers carefully to join a sandy lane over consolidated dunes parallel to the beach. ◀

Around 2km further on is a building and car park used by surfers, as well as a stream. Here the lovely cliff path resumes, followed by a 3km sandy piste where the occasional pine tree spells sparse shade. At a large car park (1hr 40min) at **Praia do Malhão** the path returns once more to the glorious seafront with boardwalks and



STAGE 4 – PORTO COVO TO VILA NOVA DE MILFONTES



benches, perfect for picnics. (For those who can't resist the call of the sea, flights of wooden stairs lead down to the golden sand.)

The path leads inevitably due S high over the coast to where the end of the beach marks the beginning of the rugged **Alturas do Nortes** sandstone cliffs and the first of the sea stacks which double as nesting places for acrobatic storks. ▶ A spectacular section runs high over a string of inaccessible sand-pebble coves before bearing gradually SE to **Ponta das Barcas** aka Canal (1hr 45min) with a café-restaurant.

The route proceeds along a quiet road above a modest fishing harbour, and is soon pointed onto a lane. At a cluster of new houses bear R through empty lots and past houses and hotels. You emerge on Avenida Marginal and the wonderful waterfront of **Vila Nova de Milfontes** (50min) with another beckoning beach.

Marvellous spreads of wildflowers shelter near the seafront

Here the rocky-sandy ground is lined with rabbit tracks and carpeted with Hottentot fig plants sporting bright pink blooms.

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At **Vila Nova de Milfontes** the picturesque mouth of the Rio Mira river spreads out: once navigable for 30km inland to Odemira. There's also a modest castle, Forte de São Clemente, draped with palms; it was built in the late 1500s to protect the village from pirate attacks. The town's claim to fame nowadays is as the largest resort on the Aentejo coast, although in comparison to the crowds of the Algarve region, it's decidedly laidback, especially in walking season. The name derives from 'a thousand fountains' due to its myriad watercourses and underground springs.

Tourist info (tel 283 996599 <https://turismo.cm-odemira.pt>), shops, restaurants, Rede Expressos bus services to both Lisbon and Lagos. Sleep at Casa da Adro (tel 917 171811 www.casadoadro.com.pt) or Blue Guide rooms (tel 968 780680 blueguidegh@gmail.com, stayinalentejo@gmail.com).

Day 1(b): Vila Nova de Milfontes to Zambujeira do Mar

Drive: Take a cab from Vila Nova de Milfontes to Zambujeira do Mar (31 mins)

Hotel: Rosa dos Ventos



Day 2: Zambujeira do Mar to Odeceixe

Distance: 11.18 miles

Ascent: 918.64 ft

Descent: 1,017.06 ft

Lunch: Café Palhinhas (50% of trek)

Dinner: ODX Resturant

Water: Water option at about 50% of trek (lunch spot)

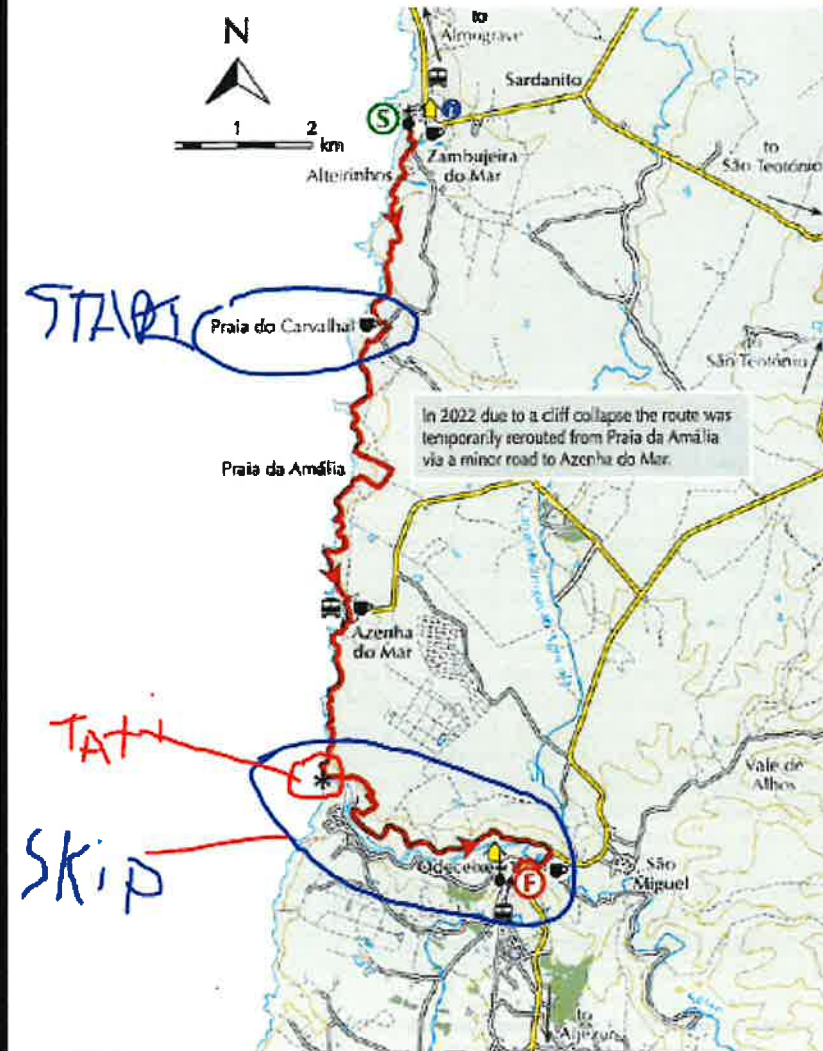
Average time: 5 hr

Starting elevation: 70 ft

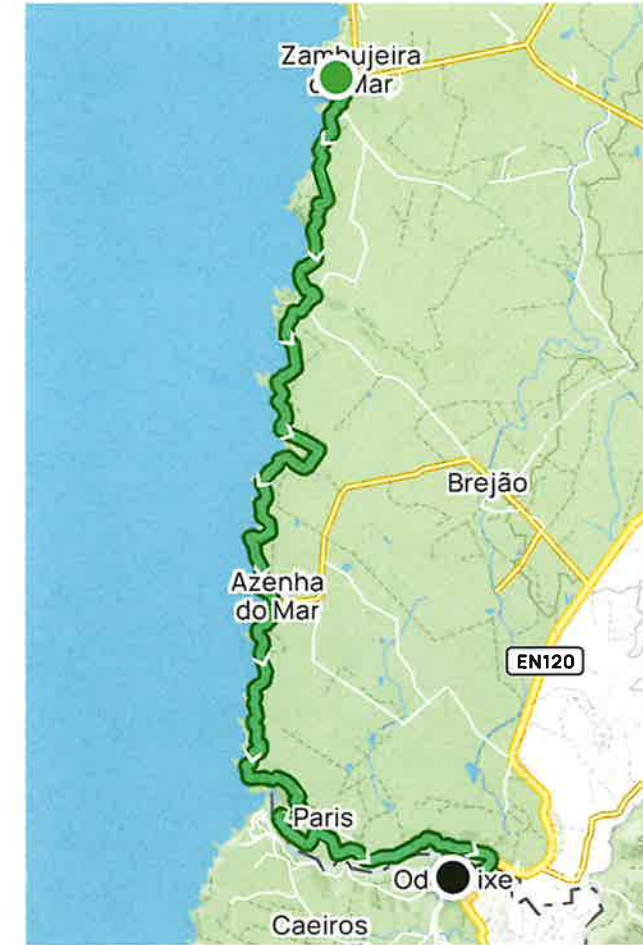
Highest point: 228 feet

OPTION TO MAKE SHORTER:

we can start at praia do carvalho –and that saves an hour and then also not do the last 4 k saving another hour.



- **Hotel to stay at after day 2 hike Quinta Azul**





STAGE 7

Zambujeira do Mar to Odeceixe

Start	Zambujeira do Mar seafront chapel
Distance	18km
Ascent	280m
Descent	310m
Grade	2
Walking time	5hr
Refreshments	Praia do Carvalho, Azenha do Mar
Accommodation	Odeceixe

An excellent varied stage that spends just about all day close to the ocean with dramatic cliffs and visits to inviting beaches, without forgetting quite a fair few ups and downs and some narrow steep hands-on stretches. Spectacular scenery is the flavour of the day.

Halfway along is the fishing hamlet Azenha do Mar with a local seafood restaurant, a great favourite with the Portuguese for its rice casseroles and goose barnacles; bottom line: plan on arriving well before midday if you want a table for lunch.

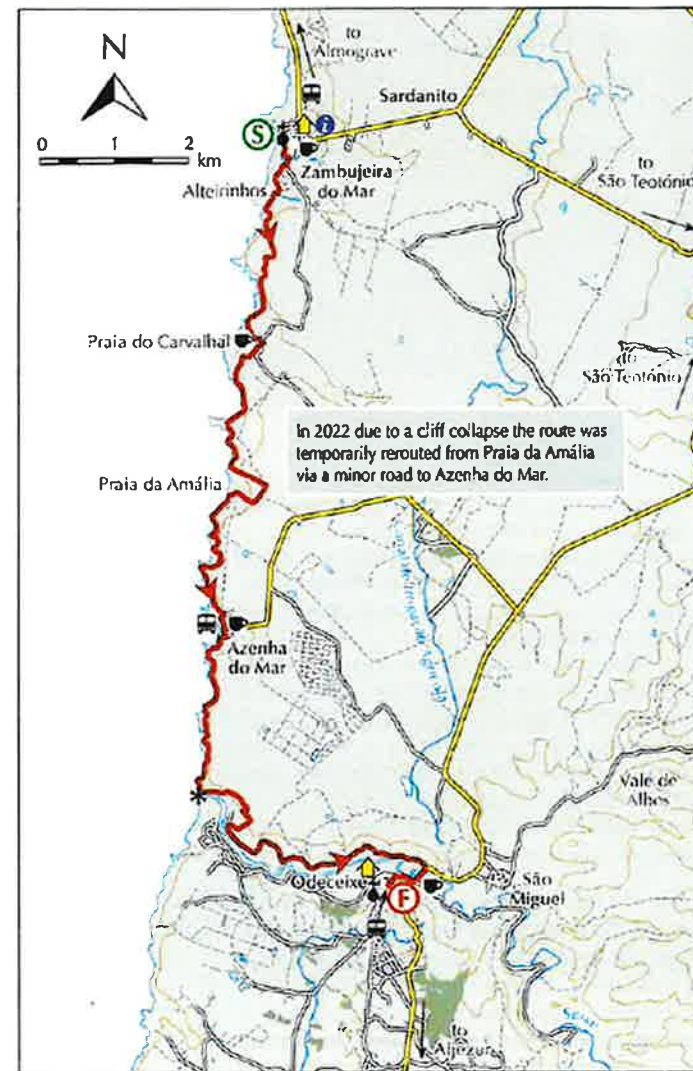
On the other hand Odeceixe, the day's destination, is a cosy friendly river town with plenty of accommodation. Located a tad inland, it marks the point where the main RV trek leaves the Alentejo region to enter the Algarve. It also marks the conclusion of the FT. Moreover, for walkers who opt for a circuit route, this is the place where the inland route begins – looping back up to Cercal do Alentejo on the northbound HW – see Stages 11R–41R.

Note: this stage concludes with 4km along a road, albeit quiet and following a river. Should you prefer to avoid it, ask your accommodation provider in Odeceixe to arrange for a taxi.

From the seafront chapel at Zambujeira do Mar head down to the beautiful main beach then take the path

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cutting uphill past a line of low-lying houses on the headland. Soon a long wooden staircase descends to **Alteirinhos**, an official nudist beach, although the FT leaves the steps before the bottom, forking L across a stream and cutting across a cliff flank on a marvellously scenic stretch. A brief detour inland crosses sandy terrain through woodland dominated by conifers and acacias, quickly returning coastwards via a boardwalk. Close by is a headland over an inlet. The path plunges to a car park and surf school-cum-café at **Praia do Carvalho (1hr)**.

Head uphill alongside fences belonging to a wildlife park, and on to a dramatic white headland. Soon a narrow path plunges to a saddle on a promontory then climbs through bracken past the top of a small waterfall via a batch of minor bridges. An abrupt detour inland features fields and greenhouses before a tunnel of bushes over a stream and the seafront with the stunning beach **Praia da Amália** ▶

You cross a stream and resume the clifftop high above rugged coves the rest of the way to the tiny village **Azenha do Mar (1hr 50min)** with its memorable restaurant (tel 282 947297) and bus stop. Both fishing and seaweed harvesting are practised at this village.

Leaving Alteirinhos behind, the path cuts around the cliff

The beach was named after Portugal's most famous fado singer, Amália Rodrigues, who reportedly learned to swim here.

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The path descends towards the harbour with a slippery final stretch before climbing quite steeply to a headland to resume the lovely cliff walk due S accompanied by masses of glorious wildflowers. En route are attractive bays and surf beaches, then all of a sudden you find yourself on a promontory **lookout (1hr)** above the stunningly photogenic estuary and sandbanks of the Seixe river, opposite a beach and houses.

The FT veers L (SE) inland through fields and down a rough lane to the tranquil verdant riverside. The final 4km, in the company of rushes, giant fernel plants and marsh orchids, are surfaced. Once out at the main road turn R for the bridge over the Seixe. ◀ On the other side go R again off the main road then next L into **Odeceixe (1hr 10min)** and its charming square.

As you do so you're leaving the Alentejo region to enter the Algarve.

Odeceixe appears along the Seixe river

Shops, restaurants, Rede Expressos bus to Lisbon, EVA Transportes bus to Aljezur and Lagos, Rodoviário to Santiago do Cacém. Accommodation includes Hospedaria Firmino Bernardino (tel 282 947362) and Odeceixe Hostel (tel 913 919357).

