



HOWARD'S FOLLY

Visiting Estremoz

Commanding vineyards and golden plains, Estremoz is a historic city within two layers of defensive walls. The upper core was a medieval home to royalty, where the Queen Elizabeth of Aragon died in the 14th century. In the lower reaches there's a newer wall from the 17th century responding to the threat from Spain after the Restoration War.

Explore the old town and climb up to the castle

The castle rules over the town from the highest point, and has a glossy marble keep from the 14th century. You also get amazing views over Alentejo's golden plains from nearly every angle. At the foot of the 27 metre-high keep there's a square with a statue of Elizabeth of Aragon, who died at the castle in 1336, and a ceremonial hall that has a sumptuous marble arcade.

Visit the pousada (historical hotel) for a drink or snack and get a closer look at its Gothic architecture.

Go on a wine tour

The Alentejo is famous for its wines and many form part of the "Rota dos Vinhos do Alentejo" which is clearly marked on all roads. The drive from Howard's Folly to Esporão (where David Baverstock is also Chief Winemaker) is beautiful and their winery is surrounded by stunning vineyards.

The Quinta do Carmo winery and vineyards in nearby Gloria are owned by Joe Berardo and feature eye-catching modern sculptures. You can also walk through stunning cork forests on the property.

Estremoz has the nickname "Cidade Branca", the White City for its profusion of white marble that is quarried close by. Houses and monuments across the town are made from this material, granting them an irresistible lustre.



Walk round the walls

Work up an appetite by walking round the 17th century fortifications. The walls are broken by four gates: Évora, Santa Catarina, Santo António and Currais, each with its own historical details worth checking out, whether it's a coat of arms, drawbridge or sculpted relief.

Breathe in the stunning countryside

Contact one of the many companies offering walking, cycling, paddle boarding and even ballooning trips to experience the beautiful countryside at first hand.





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Visit the Saturday market and lower town

Rossio Marquês de Pombal is a gigantic public space in the middle of the old town, claimed to be the largest square in Portugal.

As well as great views of the castle, it hosts the weekly market on Saturday mornings. The square is crammed with stalls trading fruit and vegetables, cereals, herbs, cheese, olives and olive oil, cured sausages and even live animals.

Running at the same time is an antiques fair where people sell anything from old gramophone records to stamps, coins, furniture, porcelain and kitchen implements.

Explore stunning local towns & villages

Évora is a must. Inside the 14th-century walls, Évora's narrow, winding lanes lead to striking architectural works: an elaborate medieval cathedral and cloisters; the cinematic columns of the Templo Romano (near the intriguing Roman baths); and a picturesque town square. There are also many attractive restaurants serving delicious local food and a wide range of wines.

Evoramonte's castle dates from the 1300s and dominates the local skyline. The village is well worth a visit.

Also nearby is the town of Vila Viçosa. The palace can be visited and many rooms have been left unaltered since the day on which King Carlos was killed in 1908. Again situated in the marble heartland of Portugal, Vila Viçosa has a museum dedicated to the stone's importance in the area. The Pousada here is in an ancient and grand building, the Convent of Chagas de Cristo.



Enjoy a gastronomic feast

Try one of the many local restaurants serving great wines and local foods. Some of our favourites include Alecrim, Mercearia Gadanha and Cadeia which is in the old prison building near the Pousada.

The local bread, cheeses and pata negra are all outstanding so remember to leave room for petiscos and one of the great local meat dishes.

Where to stay

Pateo dos Solares Charm Hotel:-

www.pateosolares.com. A lovely boutique hotel with well appointed rooms, a nice garden and small pool. Three minutes walk from the main square.

The Pousada:-

www.pousadasofportugal.com

Set in a 14th century castle with grand public rooms, the Pousada has spectacular views, although the rooms are rather tired. A 15 minute walk down into the main town.

