

Warning: this is a document to support the walker, not being allowed to be reproduced for commercial purposes, without the written authorization of Rota Vicentina®.

This is the most arid section of Rota Vicentina. It crosses a profoundly agricultural and rural Alentejo where, in spite the proximity to the ocean, you will be able to smell the fragrances and feel the might of this inland area. At Campilhas Dam, make a pause for a picnic and a dip on hotter days.

The scenery on the first half of this section of the Rota Vicentina may seem arid and even desolate. This is a sad reflection upon the threat that the dehesa face as it is the death and decline of these natural forests, which has been brought about by natural disease, poor management and the decline in the early part of the 21st century of cork's use as a stopper in wine bottles. But the dryness along the entire trail, especially during the dry season has another cause. This part of Portugal has an extreme Mediterranean-style climate with a rainy season concentrated in just three or four months. This hot dry climate with torrential rain concentrated in short bursts results in some spectacular scenery, sometimes arid but always interesting, changing according to the season. The southern half of the section is particularly interesting because of what ecologists call a "mosaic" of habitats. The mosaic here is made up of stands of forest separated by open fields of low intensity cereal and cattle farming with small streams, watercourses and even the odd patch of reed-ringed marsh. The mosaic promotes a wide diversity of both scenery and biodiversity. Along the way you will find olive groves, orchards, hedged vegetable gardens, small ponds and some beautiful rocky outcrops.

ROTA VICENTINA GENERAL RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Walk only along the market trails.
-  The circulation of motor vehicles puts hikers at risk. Choose alternative paths.
-  The trails cross private properties; always close gates and fences. The cattle are tame but can get aggressive if you approach their offspring.
-  Respect Nature. Do not collect or disturb animals, plants or rocks.
-  Do not camp or light fires outside designated areas.
-  Trails without WC, bring bag and leave the paths clean.
-  Keep your dog on a leash and clean up after it.
-  Prepare your hike well, don't run any risks from lack of preparation or planning.

SOS

Emergency: 112
Environment and territory Police Department:
808 200 520

For further information on accommodation, restaurants and nature/cultural activities please contact the local Tourism Office or go to rotavicentina.com

HELP US

For any further information or help regarding the Rota Vicentina, please contact us:
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Certified by the European wide label "Leading Quality Trails - Best of Europe".



Footpath registered and approved by FCMP, integrating GR 11 / E9, connecting Sagres to St. Petersburg.

Download the **Rota Vicentina APP** and take it with you all the information about this route





VALE SECO » CERCAL DO ALENTEJO

HISTORICAL WAY | 23 KM

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DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

The trail begins by passing some small agricultural properties and providing a glimpse of the rhythm of rural life. From here, you will have to cross the national road and then re-join the trail. After 300 m, you will climb up to the Moinhos do Paneiro, a former centre of the flour trade with two windmills. Continue walking towards Vale das Éguas, where you will be able to stop for refreshments at one of the two cafes of the village and enjoy its authentic atmosphere. The walk continues through the spacious and serene landscapes of Alentejo. Shortly before your arrival at Vale das Éguas, a farm with animals - Vale de Orjo - will bring back the smells of civilization.

At the exit from Vale das Éguas, the route will cross a tarmac road to rejoin the dirt track on the left towards the Campilhas reservoir. Built in 1954, the reservoir is an ideal place for a pause and a refreshing dip on a hot day. Cercal do Alentejo is not far from here, so take some time to appreciate the view from the Campilhas reservoir, as the trail will continue to the south through a landscape rich in gum rockroses and cork oaks. After crossing the bridge over the River Refróias, climb up and enjoy the views for the rest of the way until arriving at the village of Cercal. There, you can choose between turning towards Porto Covo, where the Fishermen's Trail begins, or continuing to the south along the Historical Way towards the village of São Luís.



Fact Sheet

Distance : 23 km

Approximate duration: 6 h 30

Accumulated climb: 200 m

Accumulated descent: 250 m

Difficulty level: Easy

Max. / Min. altitude: 210 m / 110 m

Recommended season September till June

Where to start?

Vale Seco: on the N120 road, between Cercal and Santiago, on the road to the Campilhas reservoir. 1st crossroads on the dirt track.

Cercal do Alentejo: from the roundabout of Cercal do Alentejo (Largo dos Caeiros), head towards to the church.

IMPORTANT WARNINGS

Pay attention to the signage as there are intersections with several Circular Routes.

TIPS

Refreshments along the way: At km 8, you'll pass Vale das Éguas village.

In this area there are 3 Circular Routes. Pay attention to the marking and consider extending your stay

