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**Today, you will be walking towards the south western tip of Europe. This is a magical place where one can almost hear the echoes of the voices of sailors and pilgrims. Monumental cliffs, outstanding views over the coastline and a privileged area to watch the natural phenomenon of autumn bird migration.**

On this section, the very high cliffs provide unique scenery. Ornithologists and birdwatchers are attracted to Sagres by the autumnal migration of soaring birds and seabirds, which amount to more than 5000 individuals from more than 300 species. In fact, Sagres is the stage of the Birdwatching Festival that takes place annually in October.

Migratory species can be seen, such as whinchats, wheatears, subalpine warblers, spectacled warblers, booted eagles, black kites, European honey buzzards, shorttoed snake eagles, hawks, red kites, lesser kestrels, Eurasian hobby, Eleonora's falcons, hen harriers, Montagu's harriers, western marsh harriers, black storks and different species of vultures. Less often, the Iberian imperial eagle and the golden eagle appear. In addition, several seabirds can be easily observed, like the scopoli's shearwater, great black-backed gull, great skua, sandwich tern and common terns. Most passerines migrate during the night, resting and feeding during the day. Other species migrate during the day, as in the case of eagles, storks, flamingos, wagtails or bee-eaters. Among the resident birds, it is worth mentioning the little bustard and the red-billed chough, which have in Vila do Bispo the only breeding center in the south of Portugal. The merlin can be found here in the winter.

The vegetation dominates this trail following along the cliff. It crosses the Sagres Biogenetic Reserve, a sanctuary for botanists because of the rare chalk soil plants and species unique to the world, some of them previously thought to be extinct. The undergrowth is dominated by gorse, heath, thistle, Lithodora lusitanica, rosemary, thyme, violet and hyacinth. You are about to finish the Historical Way of Rota Vicentina, but before you'll pass an area called Vale Santo. For centuries, it was part of the pilgrimage route of the devotees of Saint Vincent, whose journey finished at a monastery, where nowadays the lighthouse of Cabo de São Vicente is located.

## 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](http://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





# VILA DO BISPO » CABO DE S. VICENTE

HISTORICAL WAY | 14 KM

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## DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

Starting from the church, pass by the market next to the restaurant Eira do Mel, and take the road on the left to continue walking straight towards the west. Next to the ranger house (Casa do Guarda), the trail will turn away from the Circular Route

Cordoama. Continue walking straight on, and you will pass an air traffic control station, just before the crossroads with a sign for the viewpoint of Torre de Aspa.

The land here reveals the influence of the strong winds, with shrubs being almost non-existent and a panorama dominated by ground cover plants. Turn to the left and head south. The path to the right will lead to the view point of the Torre de Aspa. On this site, a plant that was previously thought to be locally extinct has been found – the *Silene rothmaleri* – a species endemic to the far Southwest Portugal. The views over the beaches of Castelejo and Cordama are not to be missed!

Only 1 km ahead, a detour invites hikers to visit the view point of Ponta Ruiva, and a little further on, at the fork, the Fishermen's Trail separates from the Historical Way to your right. Continue to the left, descending a little to witness a scenery with a predominance of pastures for cattle. You have arrived at the area called Vale Santo (the Holy Valley), which owes its name to the ancient tradition of pilgrims and devotees, who would finish or start their pilgrimage here. From here, the Historical Way

overlaps with another long distance path – Via Algarviana (with similar white and red signs), and follows along a tar road with some viewpoints to Cabo de São Vicente – the magical and mythical place, which marks the end of this journey along the most astonishing coast in Europe.



### Fact Sheet

**Distance :** 14 km

**Approximate duration:** 4 h

**Accumulated climb:** 100 m

**Accumulated descent:** 120 m

**Difficult level:** Easy

**Max. / Min. altitude:** 150 m / 60 m

**Recommended season** September till June

### Where to start?

**Vila do Bispo:** next to the Mother Church, heading towards the market.

**Cabo de S. Vicente:** at the lighthouse of Cabo de São Vicente.

### IMPORTANT WARNINGS

There is no supply point throughout the whole route, bring enough water and food. Pay attention to the signage as there are intersections with several Circular Routes.

### TIPS

**Strong wind:** This is an area of particularly strong winds. Get ready for northern blows.

**Cabo de S. Vicente » Sagres:** From the lighthouse to Sagres, you can continue through the Fishermen's Trail, along 7 km or opt for a taxi.

