

# THE LESSER KNOWN AREAS OF PORTUGAL



Portugal has many attractions away from the Algarve and Lisbon. The country's history is best explored away from the most popular areas.

Portugal has, for many years, had the reputation of a country, which simply 'makes up the numbers' in Europe. Without significant political influence and without significant geographical size, it is often neglected.

Nowadays, many associate Portugal with an array of **top footballers** it has produced, the 2004 European Championships in football, and the Algarve. The capital, **Lisbon**, also receives praise in world press. However, there are a number of jewels in Portugal, which the average tourist does not see, away from Cristiano Ronaldo and the Algarve.

**Sintra** is admittedly within the famous Lisbon district yet is one of Portugal's best places for walking holidays. The Palacio de Pena is a superb testament to the royal past, yet the architecture grips its visitors the most of all. The Iberian peninsula is famous for superb architecture yet few people come out of Sintra without believing they have just witnessed something superb.

For climbers and hiking enthusiasts, Portugal may not be the number one destination in Europe. However, the **Serra da Estrela** as Portugal's highest point offers a lot, with or without snow. It is actually a national park and, for the highest point in the country, offers an ambience of sincere tranquility.

On a similar note, and similarly unknown, **Folgosinho** is a village situated 900 metres high. It is a typical example of tourists having the opportunity to witness the culture of a new country first hand without the crowds of tourists. Although not perhaps the easiest place to get to on the planet, many say that Folgosinho is well worth the rare trip.

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