

# Heart of Portugal

Single center   guided walking

- Luxury ★★★★★ hotel: swimming pool, romantic restaurant, converted chapel and cloisters
- Outstanding [and wholly] unspoiled walking: lush valleys, glacial cirques, pretty white villages unchanged over the centuries
- Lots of flora and fauna: eagles, buzzards, goshawks,
- Bronze Age remains, Roman relics, Moorish settlements
- Super-value, all inclusive holiday; option to add on extra nights in Lisbon



In the very heart of central Portugal, where few tourists ever visit – there are more friendly shepherds than foreign walkers! – the unspoiled Beira is a region of outstanding natural beauty: magnificent mountains, lush gorges, turquoise lakes and stunning river valleys. The terraced hillsides are carpeted in colorful wild flowers – over 150 species – and there’s a high chance of spotting rare birds of prey circling overhead.

Your base for the week is the wonderfully peaceful and hugely atmospheric ★★★★★ Convento de Belmonte. With just 24 spacious rooms – each with its own private terrace – it exudes a feel of luxury and exclusivity. Antique furnishings abound and the small swimming pool affords sweeping valley views. Breakfast is a lavish buffet and evening meals – wine included – are taken in the romantic, candle-lit dining room\*. If you fancy pre-dinner aperitifs in Belmonte – impressive C13 castle and Roman church – it’s just a 30-minute stroll away.

\* One evening we take you (15 mins) to Valelhas where dinner is arranged in a traditional village restaurant.

*“Very enjoyable holiday. Lovely food and a guide who knew local people we met on walks which enabled us to see more of how they live and work.”*

*Miss H Stephens.*



Book now on 1-800-567-6286 or visit [www.breakaway-adventures.com](http://www.breakaway-adventures.com) for more information

## HEART OF PORTUGAL | DAY BY DAY

### Day 1 Arrive in Belmonte

We meet you at Lisbon airport and take you (3 hrs) to your ★★★★★ hotel in Belmonte.

### Day 2 Malceta Nature Reserve 12km/7mi/4hr

Today's circular walk takes us through one of the last refuges of the Iberian Lynx and the only breeding site in Portugal of the Black Vulture. After a gentle climb through open chestnut woodland, we then follow the river Coe (the old border with Spain) and a haven for wildlife - we often see short toed eagles, bee eaters and golden orioles. Gorgeous picnic spots and good river swimming at the end of the walk.

### Day 3 Zézère Valley 9km/6mi/4hr

Our path follows the line of traditional tiny farming communities strung out along the magnificent glacial valley, in the shadow of Portugal's highest mountain, the Torre (1993m). En route are typical stone cortices (tiny farmhouses with thick granite walls and thatched rye roofs) and all around are dizzy steep, terraced hillsides and meadows carpeted in bright mountain flowers. Down to the picturesque white village of Manteigas where there has been a settlement since Moorish times – lovely views down to the River Zézère - then lunch is at Jose's bar (all local produce: sheep's cheeses, black pudding, mountain wines).

### Day 4 Macainhas Circuit 14km/9mi/5hr

The early part of today's walk follows a pretty gurgling stream through a hidden valley and out past meadows carpeted with colorful wild flowers. We stop off at the tiny village of Monteiro where old ladies, dressed in black, sit on doorsteps crocheting, and farmers with donkeys continue to plough the land by hand. An old drovers route takes us along the ridge - fantastic views out over the Serra da Estrela - before heading back down to the stream and hotel.

### Day 5 Free Day

It's just a 30 minute stroll into Belmonte so we've left today free for you to explore it's castle, Jewish Quarter (you'll find the only synagogue in Portugal outside of Lisbon here), museums, Romanesque-Gothic church of Santiago. Lots of local restaurants for lunch. In the afternoon either laze by the pool or follow one of the independent circular walking routes provided.

### Day 6 Three Villages Walk 15km/9mi/4hr

First the former major Roman city of Idanha-a-Velha, with its wonderful collections of columns, statues and tombs. Then onto the stunning Medieval fortress of Monsanto where life continues as it has for centuries - superb 360° views from the C11 castle, ruined Renaissance church and bell tower. We have lunch in the *pousada* here, sampling produce from their own vegetable garden, before a final stop in the lovely folkloric village of Penha Garcia.

### Day 7 The Serra da Estrela 14km/8mi/6hr

The highest walking in Portugal: sparkling clear blue mountain lakes (perfect paddling!), rugged peaks and surprisingly easy walking. Beautiful alpine flowers are carpeted across vast areas and striking granite rock formations rise eerily from the lakes. Dunnocks, Dartford warblers and eagle owls inhabit the forests, and kestrels and goshawks circle and soar above the highest peaks. Peace reigns and there is not a soul in sight.

### Day 8 Leave Belmonte



*"Better than expectations. Saw the real Portugal and its people."*

*Miss D Goodall*

## Dates and Prices

Departs Saturdays	Tour Only
<b>2012 departures</b>	
May 19*, 26*, Jun 9, 16	\$2,869
Jun 2, Sep 1*	\$2,869
Jun 23, 30, Aug 25	\$2,886
Jul 7*, 14*, 21, 28, Aug 4*, 11, 18	\$2,920

**Singles:** Add \$51 per night for sole occupancy of a double room. **No single supplement on dates marked \*.**

**Child:** This holiday is unsuitable for children under 12.

**Room upgrade:** Prices from \$57 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

**Holiday type:** Guided walking, single center, groups of typically 4-8 people on each tour.

**Departs:** Saturdays from May 19 to Sep 1.

**Duration:** 8 days (7 nights).

**Meals:** Continental breakfast, 5 lunches and all evening meals with wine.

**Other details:** For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

## Tailor-made travel choices

### Nearest Arrival Airport: Lisbon Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

**The above prices include our standard transfers:** Lisbon Airport at 12:50, (transfer to hotel, 3 hrs, provided). **Return:** Lisbon Airport by 11:35 (transfer provided).

**Tour only:** Transfers included from Lisbon airport at 12:50, and back to Lisbon airport departing the hotel at 08:45.

W07PO

## HEART OF PORTUGAL | WALKING DETAILS



This is a typical walk which follows good paths. In order that you see as much of this varied region as possible, minibus transfers are built in to the beginning / end of most walking days.

**Average daytime temperature (°C):**  
 20 23 25 25 24  
 MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP

**Average monthly rainfall (mm):**  
 87 41 20 26 51  
 MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP