

# Go Slow... in Portugal

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

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### Outline itinerary

- Day 1** Fly Lisbon and transfer Peniche.
- Day 2/7** Visit a range of fascinating sites including the Berlengas Islands, the Paul de Tornada Nature reserve & Natural Parks of Aire and Candeeiros.
- Day 8** Fly Lisbon to London.

### Departs

Late May/Early June.

### Focus

Birds, plants, butterflies, reptiles, culture.

### Grading

Grade A. Easy walks only.

### Dates and Prices

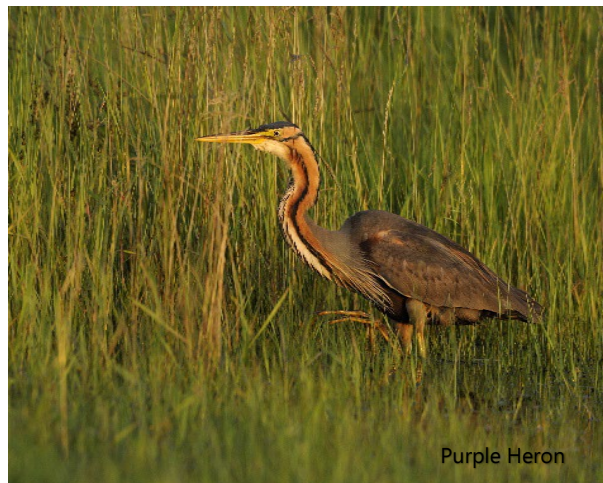
See website (tour code PRT13) or brochure.

### Highlights

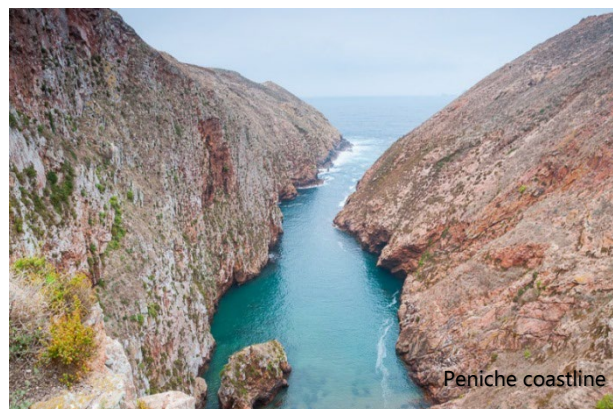
- Visit the special Berlengas Islands Natural Reserve.
- Greater Flamingo, Purple Heron, Hoopoe, Booted Eagle some of the special birds.
- Iberian Marbled White and African Grass Blue just two of many butterflies possible.
- A botanically rich landscape with many endemic species.
- Explore the spectacular Peniche coastline and peninsula.
- Led by expert Naturetrek naturalists.



Black-eyed Blue



Purple Heron



Peniche coastline



Naturetrek

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## Introduction and Summary

The coastline to the north of Lisbon is known as the 'Silver Coast' and is a most rewarding region to explore, especially for those enjoying both wildlife and scenic landscapes. On this new 'Go Slow' tour we will stay just outside the historic city of Peniche, a base that offers the all-round naturalist an exciting and varied holiday – one that we will enjoy at a leisurely pace. The city is built on a granite peninsula which juts dramatically out into the Atlantic and is fringed by white sandy beaches and rolling surf.

Our tour will be led by Fernando Romão, an expert local naturalist who has a great passion for his region's wildlife. With him, we will enjoy relaxed daily outings in search of a wealth of birds, butterflies and flowers. One such excursion will be to the Berlengas Islands, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve where Cory's Shearwaters and Madeiran Storm-petrels breed and such endemic plants as *Armeria berlengensis* and *Pulicaria microcephala* can be found. The Carbonell's Wall Lizard may also be seen here ... and when not totally absorbed by the natural history, we can savour the impressive views around us and the ancient São João Baptista Fortress. Inland, the Aire and Candeeiros Natural Park offers botanically-rich limestone ridges which hold a wealth of flowers and butterflies. *Arabis sadina* and *Iberis procumbens* are just two of the special plants to be found here, while Iberian Marbled White and African Grass Blue will be amongst the butterfly species we'll look for. Booted Eagle, Hoopoe and Golden Oriole breed locally, and lagoons hold Greater Flamingos and Spoonbills. At nearby Tornada's Marsh, Purple Heron and Purple Swamphen are both possible and Bluethroats are sometimes seen during migration.

This region is also famous for its palaeontology, and in the Lourinhã Museum we may learn a little of the notable dinosaur discoveries made here. We will also visit a site which holds one of the world's largest and most important collections of sauropod footprints! Whatever your interest in the natural world, there is sure to be much to enjoy in this area, and with wonderful scenery, excellent local cuisine and time to unwind, we are sure you will enjoy a fascinating, yet relaxing, Portuguese holiday.



African Grass Blue

## Itinerary

*Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.*

### Day 1

### Depart London

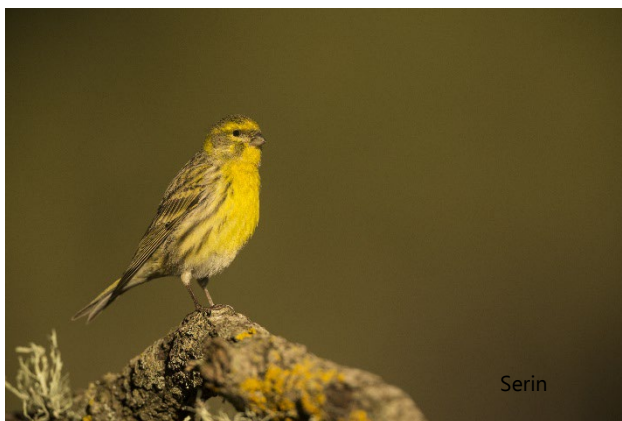
We depart London this morning on our scheduled direct flight to Lisbon. With around an hour to travel from the airport to our hotel we will soon be settling in to our rooms and with time, taking a short walk from the hotel.

### Day 2-7

We will have six full days to explore our surroundings with a varied mix of excursions. The exact order of activities will be decided on during the holiday and the order in which the sites are visited and will be kept flexible as always. There will of course be time to enjoy the hotel swimming pool and wellness centre and indeed the beach just opposite the hotel. We will enjoy a very diverse range of activities finding and enjoying a range of different species with the focus of the holiday being very broad. The following are some of the sites that will be visited during the week. Your leader Fernando knows the area very well indeed.

### Peniche and our surrounding area.

The historic fishing town of Peniche provides our excellent base. The peninsula of Peniche presents a geological succession of sedimentary rocks dating to the Jurassic age and forms a spectacular and dramatic landscape. The peninsula here provides an excellent place to watch migrating birds moving between African wintering grounds and European breeding quarters. Skuas, shearwaters, gulls and terns may be moving offshore and we will be keeping our eyes to the skies.



As well as the wonderful beaches and cliff tops to we will have the opportunity of course to walk through the historic centre with the Peniche Fort a must see. The fort was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to defend the coast, together with the Fort on Consolação beach. Black Redstart and Serin are just two species that can be found around the town and morning walks along the beach can be a lovely way to start any day.



## Berlengas Islands Natural Reserve



Cory's Shearwater



Carbonell's Wall Lizard

The famous Berlengas Islands archipelago are situated around 10kms off the coast of Peniche. With its abundance of wildlife 'Great Berlenga' is the only Island that allows a small number of visitors every year. We shall take a ferry for around 45 minutes to reach the island and before we arrive at the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve we may be greeted by the island's Peregrine Falcons, Cory's Shearwaters and possibly Madeiran Storm petrels who all breed here. Botanically the island is most interesting with over 100 grass and bush species plus endemic plants including *Armeria berlengensis*, *Herniaria berlengiana* and *Pulicaria microcephala*. With impressive flora comes marvellous insects and therefore reptiles, including the rare Carbonell's Wall Lizard. Not only will we delight in the island's natural history but we will also enjoy the ancient São João Baptista Fortress, the Island's operational Lighthouse and the truly magnificent views. This is sure to be a special visit.

*Pulicaria microcephala*

## Paul de Tornada Natural Reserve

This 45 hectare wetland reserve is awash with wildlife. The wonderful range of birds here may include Purple Heron, Water Rail, Purple Swampphen, and Marsh Harrier to name but a few. In the reeds we can find Great Reed Warbler, Savi's Warbler, Cetti's Warbler and Sardinian Warbler with Zitting Cisticola often "zitting" distincively overhead. We may also find Black-winged Kite hovering over the open grassland areas. With luck we may even have the opportunity of seeing Otter with reptiles including European and Mediterranean Pond Turtle, Schreiber's Green Lizard, Iberian Tree Frog and Grass Snake. Again when exploring this area we will be enjoying everything we may come across rather than a specific focus on one particular area.

## Óbidos Lagoon

Located near the small town of Foz do Arelho, the Óbidos lagoon is a natural wetland, separated from the sea by a dune system. It is around 5 km in length and a up to 1 km wide. It is perhaps one of the best sites along this stretch of coastline to look for water birds. In winter there are important concentrations of ducks, waders and gull and in spring and summer we hope to enjoy Purple Heron, Marsh Harrier, Great Reed Warbler, Kentish Plover and Black-winged Stilt while a flock of Greater Flamingo are regular here. We shall enjoy some varied easy walks here exploring the area. The pretty walled city of Obidos is very close by and can provide the perfect stop for a coffee.



## Aire and Candeeiros Mountains Natural Park

This imposing chalk ridge which separates the coast from the interior is a special area to explore. With its botanical richness the area is home to a wealth of butterflies. These may include the beautiful Iberian Marbled White, the rare Portuguese Dappled White and the African Grass Blue. Booted Eagle, Short-toad Eagle, Blue Rock Thrush, Chough, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Hoopoe and Golden Oriole breed locally and we shall search for these species with varied, relaxed walks.



Another fascinating and important feature of this area is its caves. These are home to Horseshoe, Greater Mouse-eared, Geoffrey's and Schreiber's bent winged bats. Here we can also find some Iberian and Mediterranean endemic amphibians and reptiles. Bosca's Newt, Marbled Newt, Iberian Wall Lizard, Large Psammodromus and Spanish Psammodromus can all be found here with luck.



This natural park covers a vast area of nearly 40,000 hectares and geologically this area is also fascinating. On the eastern flank we find the world's largest and most important collection of sauropod dinosaur footprints dating from the mid Jurassic period (175 million ago!). Several of the 20 or so tracks, discovered by chance measure over 100m in length. The site includes some of the largest and clearest footprints on earth being up to 95 cm in length and 70 cm wide. This gives an idea to the size of the largest creatures to have ever lived. During the week we will aim to make a short stop at the Lourinhã Museum which largely focusses on palaeontology and the findings that have been made in the region, especially in regard to new species of dinosaurs. It also shows the evolution of man and their primitive presence in the region till present time.

## Montejunto Mountain ridge

The Montejunto mountain is a diverse landscape lying close to the Tagus river valley. The mountain stands out dramatically from the surrounding landscape with its altitude being the highest natural viewpoint in the region at around 670m. This geological structure being 15km long and 7km wide holds various caves, ponds, a pre-historic necropolis and a famous area for fossil finding. On the western side we can see the Berlengas islands, to the northwest we look towards Nazaré with the Tagus plains to the south.

The mountain and surrounding agricultural land hold a great diversity of flora (around 400 identified species) and fauna with birds and butterflies a focus here.

Wild Chestnut, Pine, Holm and Kermes Oak have naturally adapted attracting a great range of birds including Bonellis Eagle, Griffon Vulture and Golden Eagle with Eurasian Eagle Owl also breeding here. Hoopoe, Woodchat Shrike and Montagu's Harrier are other species that may be seen in the area.

## Day 8

## Fly London

Today it will be time to leave as we travel back to Lisbon for our journey home after a holiday filled with special wildlife, wonderful scenery and also time for relaxation.

## Tour Grading

Grade A - This tour will include gentle walks taken at a very relaxed pace.



## Food & Accommodation

All food and accommodation is included in the price of this holiday. We will be staying in comfortable accommodation with all the expected facilities and private bathrooms. On most days we take a picnic lunch out in the field with dinner at the hotel.

## How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

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Baptista Fortress, Berlengas Islands