Portugal

Birds & Wine in Winter



Little Bustard by Rob Williams

Southern Portugal offers a fantastic diversity of habitats, and consequently an equally diverse array of birds, in a relatively small area, allowing us to visit several species rich areas without needing to travel long distances. The Mediterranean climate of Southern Portugal is very agreeable to birds during the winter. Early February weather is pleasant, with the first signs of Spring coming and the first migrants just arriving from Africa. Coastal wetlands and interior grasslands host thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, cranes, bustards, raptors, and passerines. We anticipate encounters with a great diversity and number of birds. Some examples include: Graylag Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Common and Red-crested Pochards, Ferruginous and Tufted Ducks, Greater Flamingo, Eurasian Spoonbill, White and Black Storks, Squacco Heron, Eurasian Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, Golden, Spanish Imperial, Bonelli's Snake, and Booted Eagles, Red and Black-winged Kites, Common Crane, Great and Little Bustards, Eurasian Stone-curlew, Black-winged Stilt, Pied Avocet, European Golden Plover, Northern Lapwing, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits, Common Greenshank, Common and Spotted Redshanks, Audouin's, Slender-billed and Mediterranean Gulls, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Hoopoe, Common Kingfisher, Iberian Yellow, Pied and White Wagtails, Water and Meadow Pipits,

Bluethroat, Blue Rock Thrush, Sardinian and Dartford Warblers, Iberian Grey Shrike, Iberian Magpie, Long-tailed and Eurasian Penduline Tits, Spanish and Rock Sparrows, Eurasian Serin and Rock, Reed and Cirl Buntings.

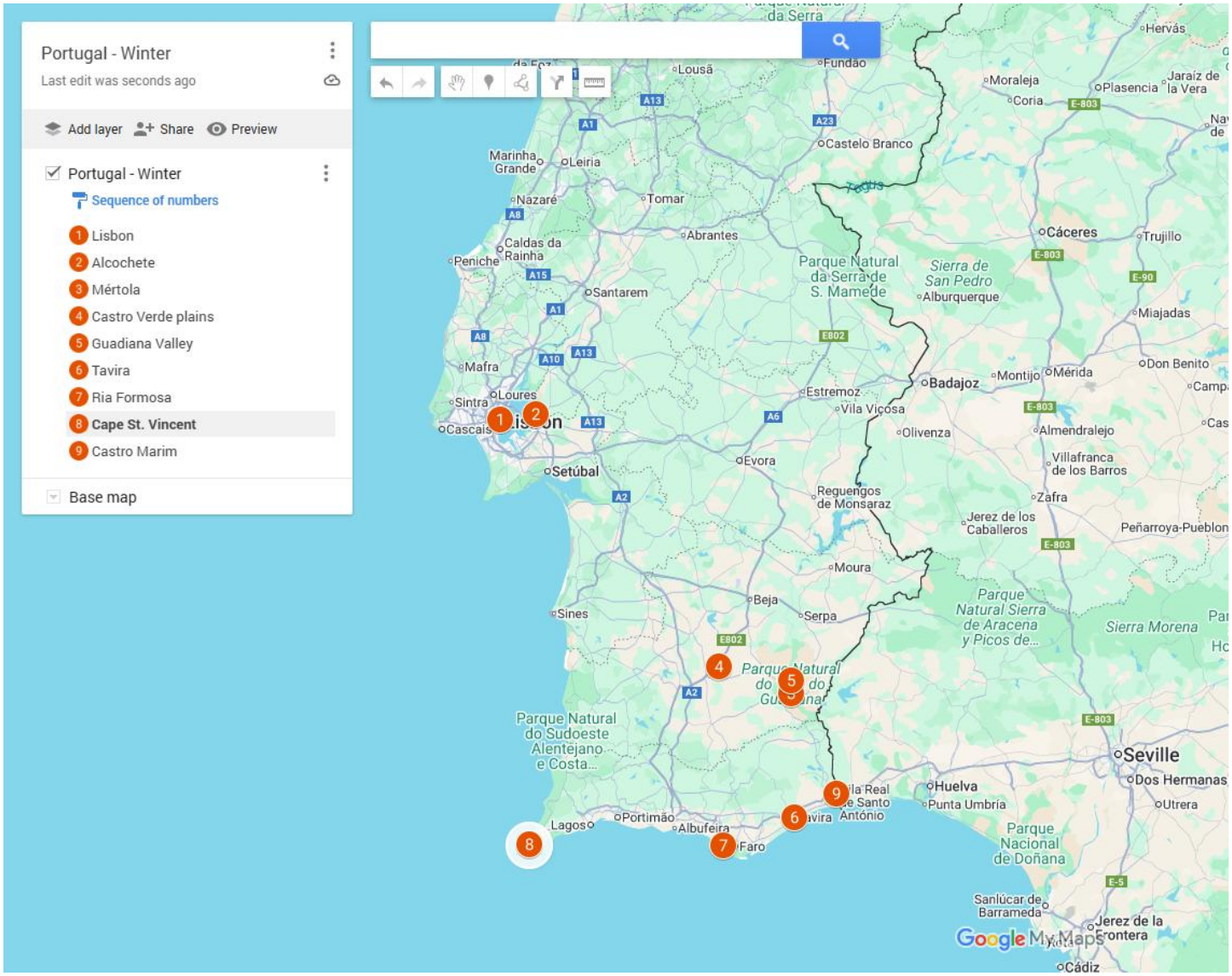
Around Lisbon we'll visit the famous Tagus Estuary Nature Reserves, the most important wetland in Portugal. A short drive of less than 90 minutes and we start to explore the Castro Verde rolling plains and the Guadiana Valley Natural Park, with the steppe like habitat, the hills, escarpments, and Cork and Holm oak and Stone Pine woodland of the Alentejo region; here, we shall find vultures, eagles and bustards; another short drive of less than one hour and we shall visit the Algarve, the southern tip region of Portugal, with its salt pans, lagoons, and beaches, with several protected wetlands, in order to find some of the more localized species of Europe.

All this birding activity is combined with visits to some of the most important wine producers in the main wine regions of Southern Portugal, giving an opportunity throughout the whole of our route to better understand the country's rich wine heritage. At various times we'll be joined by qualified wine makers who will help us learn to discern the subtle differences between the various regions, terroirs, wines, and grapes. Besides the great wines, we'll have numerous opportunities to sample Portugal's many culinary delights.

Also, we shall have plenty of opportunities to enjoy the rich cultural heritage of Portugal, including some historical monuments and archaeological sites.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Lisbon, transfer to Alcochete; Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve**
Day 2	**Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve**
Day 3	**Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve, Ponta da Erva & Pancas areas**
Day 4	**Alcochete to Mértola; Castro Verde plains**
Day 5	**Guadiana Valley Natural Park**
Day 6	**Guadiana Valley Natural Park & Mértola archaeological sites**
Day 7	**Mértola to Tavira via Castro Verde plains**
Day 8	**Ria Formosa Natural Park**
Day 9	**Cape St. Vincent & Sagres; Salgados lagoon**
Day 10	**Castro Marim Nature Reserve; Travel to Lisbon**
Day 11	**Final departure**


Portugal - Winter
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Portugal - Winter
Sequence of numbers
1 Lisbon
2 Alcochete
3 Mértola
4 Castro Verde plains
5 Guadiana Valley
6 Tavira
7 Ria Formosa
8 Cape St. Vincent
9 Castro Marim
Base map
Lousã
Fundão
Castelo Branco
Leiria
Marinha Grande
Nazaré
Tomar
Abrantes
Caldas da Rainha
Peniche
Santarem
Mafra
Loures
Sintra
Cascais
Setúbal
Evora
Reguengos de Monsaraz
Moura
Beja
Serpa
Sines
Portimão
Lagos
Albufeira
Faro
Huelva
Punta Umbría
Seville
Dos Hermanas
Utrera
Sanlúcar de Barrameda
Jerez de la Frontera
Cádiz
Cáceres
Trujillo
Badajoz
Mérida
Montijo
Estremoz
Vila Viçosa
Olivenza
Almendralejo
Villafranca de los Barros
Zafra
Jerez de los Caballeros
Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo
Miajadas
Don Benito
Hervás
Moraleja
Coria
Plasencia
Jaraíz de la Vera
Alburquerque
Parque Natural da Serra de S. Mamede
Sierra de San Pedro
Parque Natural Sierra de Aracena y Picos de...
Sierra Morena
Parque Natural do Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa...
Parque Nacional de Doñana
Google My Maps

Birding sites in detail



Bluethroat by Clayton Burne

Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve. We'll spend time birding several areas and a variety of habitats within the Tagus Estuary Nature Reserve, including the inter-tidal mudflats and salt marshes of Hortas, the salt pans of Samouco, and Atalaya, Ribeira das Enguias and the Barroca d'Alva rice fields and pastures.

The Tagus Estuary and Sado Estuary Nature Reserves are remarkable, protected wetland areas with extensive bird lists that include Greater Flamingo, White Stork, Eurasian Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Greylag Geese, Squacco Heron, Black-winged Kite, Hen Harrier, Merlin, Western Swamphen, Little Bustard, Little Owl, Bluethroat, Iberian Grey Shrike, Spotless Starling, Crested Tit, Rock Sparrow, European Serin, Cirl Bunting and an excellent selection of ducks, waders, gulls and terns..

Castro Verde plains. Located in the south Alentejo region near to Mértola, we'll begin our exploration of these extensive rolling plains, home of Great Bustard, Common Crane, Red Kite, Lesser Kestrel, Eurasian Stone-curlew, Northern Lapwing, Golden Plover, Black-bellied Sandgrouse, Great Spotted Cuckoo and Calandra Lark.

Guadiana Valley Natural Park. We will visit the bluffs and hills of the Guadiana Valley Natural Park, including the Mértola, Canais, Mina de São Domingos and Alcaria Ruiva areas. Species of note that we may find today include Griffon and Cinereous Vultures, Spanish Imperial, Golden, Bonelli's Snake Eagle, Iberian Green Woodpecker, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Eurasian Crag Martin, Red-rumped Swallow, Dartford Warbler, Iberian Magpie, Blue Rock Thrush, Long-tailed Tit, Spanish Sparrow, Hawfinch and Rock Bunting.

Mértola archaeological site. Here we shall be guided by an historian, who will explain these fascinating archaeological remains (mainly Roman and Moorish) which make this town one of the most important archaeological sites in Portugal. We shall also visit other sites of this protected area, including the Pulo do Lobo gorge, Álvares and São João dos Caldeireiros.



Eurasian Stone-curlew by David Hoddinott

Ria Formosa Natural Park & Castro Marim Nature Reserve. Located in the Algarve we'll sepdn time at both Ria Formosa Natural Park and the Castro Marim Nature Reserve. This area of dunes, open water, inter-tidal mudflats, salt marshes, salt pans, reed beds, lagoons and pine woods are



Audouin's Gulls by Adam Riley

unique in Portugal as sites for rare and highly localised species such as Audouin's and Slender-billed Gulls and Lesser Short-toed Lark.

These are also excellent spots for getting close views of scarce species like Little Bittern. Little Owl, Eurasian Hoopoe and Common Kingfisher are particularly abundant here.

Cape St. Vincent. The cliffs and shore at Cape St. Vincent should provide an excellent opportunity for guests to see a wide range of seabird species, as well as some localized species such as Red-billed Chough.

Wine Tasting:
Alcochete area - Companhia das Lezírias.
Guadiana to Mértola area – Bombeira do guadiana (in a restaurant)
Castro Verde area – Herdade das Fontes Bárbaras
Tavira - Quinta dos Vales
Lisbon - José Maria da Fonseca

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels.
Birding Ease		Undemanding. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions.
Accommodation		Comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Mostly short walks on flat ground, with some areas of uneven/rocky ground.
Vehicles / Roads		Good quality sealed roads & unsealed dirt roads. Some long drives broken up with birding stops.
Photography		Worthwhile to good.
Annoyances		Some bright sunny days, rain is possible.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 11;
- All lodgings;
- Wine at dinner;
- Cellar and wine tasting sessions;
- Ground and boat transportation;
- Reserve and historical site entrance fees;
- Bottled water;
- All local guiding services

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (**including bottled water** and mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Tips (including local guides, drivers and hotels);
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities are NOT included on this tour.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 18kg (40 lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+-18 lb) for hand luggage.
- Fitness: This tour does not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health. Should you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a generally good standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of are comfortable.

Seasonal Timing & Weather Variability
This tour is scheduled to coincide with what has historically been the most productive period for birding in the region. However, weather patterns, including temperature, rainfall, snow cover, wind strength and wind direction, as well as broader environmental factors such as food availability, can significantly influence migration timing, breeding activity and bird distribution from year to year. In some seasons, key events such as migration peaks, breeding cycles or post-breeding dispersal may occur earlier or later than average, and the duration of these peak periods can be surprisingly brief. At migration bottlenecks in particular, prevailing wind conditions can have a major impact on the volume and diversity of birds moving through an area on any given day. While our itinerary is designed around long-term historical patterns and offers excellent birding prospects, no fixed-date tour can guarantee that it will coincide precisely with the absolute peak of every seasonal phenomenon. Guests whose primary objective is to experience a specific migration event or seasonal spectacle at its peak may wish to consider a Tailor-made Tour, where travel dates and locations can be adjusted closer to departure in response to prevailing conditions.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour departs Humberto Delgado Airport, Lisbon on the morning of day 1 with a group transfer to Alcochete. Do ensure that you arrive the previous day. The tour will conclude at Humberto Delgado Airport after breakfast on day 11.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Humberto Delgado Airport (IATA: LIS) is the main port of entry for international flights for this tour.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.