



Oeste

Land of Vineyards and Sea

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The Oeste region has delightful and exquisitely preserved landscapes, extending inland from the Atlantic Ocean to the Montejunto, Aire and Candeiros mountains, to the "gates of the capital" and the Pinewood of D. Dinis.

It is a territory bathed in intense sunlight and blessed with a gentle climate, creating a unique harmony between the countryside and coast, in a green expanse dotted with white houses, set against the vast blue ocean. The local inhabitants have a long tradition of hospitality, and maintain strong ties to both the land and the ancestral call of the sea.

Encompassing the municipalities of **Alcobaça, Alenquer, Arruda dos Vinhos, Bombarral, Cadaval, Caldas da Rainha, Lourinhã, Nazaré, Óbidos, Peniche, Sobral de Monte Agraço and Torres Vedras**, this is a unique region, of modern rurality, united by a common cultural heritage and cemented by centuries of winegrowing and maritime and fishing traditions.

The development of the Oeste region has been powered by its proximity to Lisbon and its strategic location, close to other major urban centres.

Access to the Oeste region is now rapid and straightforward, via the A8 motorway (Lisboa/Leiria), (A17/A29 connecting to Porto), the A15 motorway (Óbidos/Santarém), and the IP6, A1 and A23 (the latter connecting to Spain). Any trip within the region is now a comfortable and pleasant experience.

Easy access to Lisbon and Porto International Airports also facilitates connections between the region and the main urban centres in Portugal and Europe.



History and HERITAGE

Inhabitants of the Oeste region exhibit a fascinating genetic mix of northern peoples (especially Celts), Phoenicians from the south, and above all Romans and Arabs. Intermingling of these cultures has forged an open outlook and a strong spirit of hospitality - one of the region's hallmark characteristics and a source of great pride.

Key heritage sites include **archaeological stations** (ranging from prehistoric grottoes and Copper Age forts, to Roman cities and settlements), **Arab castles**, Roman bridges and aqueducts, **churches**, **16th century fortresses**, and **17th and 18th century** manor houses, perched atop hills, observing the passage of time in this ever-changing region. The **Monastery of Alcobaça (12th century)** - a UNESCO World Heritage site and the Convent of Santa Maria de Cós - are excellent reasons for an extended stay. The Region's principal monuments include the Copper Age fort in Zambujal (Torres Vedras), the Roman archaeological stations in Óbidos, Arab castles in Torres Vedras and Óbidos, the Convents of S. Francisco (Alenquer), Varatojo and Graça (Torres Vedras), the magnificent Sanctuary of Our Lady of Nazaré, the church of S. Quintino (Sobral de Monte Agraço), the church of Our Lady of Salvation (Arruda dos Vinhos), the Royal Ice Factory in Montejunto (Cadaval), the **historic centres** of Alcobaça, Óbidos, Alenquer, Torres Vedras and Caldas da Rainha. These sites guard an important part of the region's history and offer us a glimpse of the secrets of local popular culture.

The impressive array of monuments - testimonies to the region's long history - include the **Museums** of Torres Vedras, Alenquer, Óbidos, that are rich in archaeology, painting and Sacred Art; Lourinhã Museum, with its fine collection from the Jurassic period, including the world's largest collection of dinosaur eggs; Peniche which has an ancient maritime tradition and now serves as one of Portugal's leading fishing ports; Caldas da Rainha which houses the Malhoa Museum, São Rafael House Museum (Bordalo Pinheiro Factory), the Pottery Museum and Sculpture Museums; the Joaquim Manso Ethnographic Museum in Nazaré and the Gorjão Palace Museum in Bombarral; the coastal defensive fortresses of Nazaré, Paimogo, Peniche and Berlenga, and the "Linhas de Torres" defensive fortifications.

Handicrafts are perhaps the archetypal representation of the Oeste region's popular culture, including bobbin lace from Peniche and ceramics from Caldas da Rainha - one of Portugal's leading ceramics centres. Indisputable icons of the Oeste region include the ancient tradition of faiança blue glazed earthenware in Alcobaça and the new generation of handmade glass and ceramics, samples of which are transported throughout the world by visitors to the region.





Nature

The extraordinary fossil cliffs that border the region's exquisite beaches and coves - a zone extremely rich in dinosaur relics - are some of the many examples of the region's geological history, that make the territory one of the world's most interesting paleontological sites.

Visitors can embark upon many natural adventures, including pedestrian walks to **Paul da Tornada**; a day spent in the **Berlenga Island nature reserve** (Portugal's only marine nature reserve), whose crystal clear waters and abundant sea life entice us to take a dip; a trip to the circuits of the **Serra do Socorro**, the **Serra de Montejunto protected landscape** and the **Serra D'Aire e Candeeiros Natural Park**, that will delight all fans of speleology, mountaineering and mountain climbing; a walk through the Planalto das Cezaredas plateau, or taking part in a wide range of nautical sports in the Óbidos Lagoon.

The cliffs of the Oeste region and Serra de Montejunto offer excellent conditions for hang-gliding, paragliding, mountaineering, mountain climbing and even speleology.

Nazaré offers one of the most spectacular views of the region. The **Bay of S. Martinho do Porto**, an almost perfect cove, has unique characteristics. Further south, the capricious and rugged coastline opens out over Baleal, Peniche and the Berlenga Island. Nature has been particularly generous in the Oeste region, blessing it with unique and spectacular landscapes, waiting to be discovered by visitors at each step of their journey.

In Peniche, visitors should walk along the maritime promenades that wind around the entire coastal perimeter of this distinctive peninsula, including picturesque rocky formations sculpted over the centuries by the forces of wind and sea erosion.

From the "Nau dos Corvos" ("Ship of Crows"), in Cabo Carvoeiro, a majestic promontory that seems to defiantly challenge the mighty sea, it is possible to see the outline of the Berlengas archipelago - a small but charming group of islands, which in addition to serving as the main nesting zone of marine birds in the Iberian peninsula, also harbour unique species of fauna and flora.



Golf Resorts

The Oeste region is now a modern and attractive golf destination

There has been growing investment in 5-star high-quality hotels and golf resorts in the Oeste region by leading international brands.

Visitors who travel to the Oeste region - as a golf destination, on holiday or a weekend break - will encounter many complementary attractions that will transform their stay into a unique experience. The diversity of cultural activities, spectacular landscapes and well-preserved rural habitats, allied to exceptional hospitality and a high level of comfort and finesse, will amaze visitors and make them eager to return.

The par-73 **Praia d'El Rey** golf course, designed by Cabell B. Robinson, has just celebrated its 10th anniversary and is one of the best-known golf courses in Europe. It's an 18-hole championship quality course, with nine holes along the maritime rim thus conferring a Links classification. The Praia d'El Rey Resort also includes a magnificent 5-star hotel, with 180 rooms, delicious restaurants and a fantastic Spa. Accommodation at the resort also includes first-class apartments, villas and residences.



The par-72 **Campo Real** course, designed by Donald Steel, is an exquisite 18-hole golf course, surrounded by vineyards, offering a unique atmosphere and pleasant golf experience for players. The Resort has a five-star hotel, with 150 rooms, a renowned Spa, villas, apartments and residences.

The par-72 **Bom Sucesso** course, designed by Donald Steel, is yet another excellent 18-hole golf course, integrated within a forestry zone, that has a distinctive atmosphere and offers player's a delightful golf experience. Flanked by the sea on one side and Óbidos Lagoon on the other, the Resort will soon open a 5-star hotel and Nautical Club in the Lagoon. The complex also includes villas, apartments and residences designed by renowned architects, endowing a touch of exclusivity.

The **Royal Óbidos** golf course will open at the end of 2011, with 18 holes and a spectacular landscape, overlooking the sea and Óbidos Lagoon.

Other sites include the **Vimeiro Golf Club**, designed by Frank Pennink, and **Botado** Golf Course which have been classified as 9-hole "Executive Courses". They are also located by the sea, offering distinctive landscapes and plush hotel units: Golf Mar and Atlântico Golf.

New five-star hotels and golf courses are planned for the coming years in the Oeste region, thus reinforcing its position as a major residential tourism and golf destination.



Wine Route

The Oeste is one of the largest winegrowing regions in Portugal and the World, producing aromatic full-bodied wines of precious alcoholic value. The south produces red wines, that are intense and lively while young, and balanced with a rare aroma after ageing; the north primarily produces deliciously fruity white wines.

In tribute to this diversity, 1989 saw the creation of the Óbidos winegrowing zone, covering almost the entire area of the municipalities of Bombarral, Cadaval, Óbidos and Caldas da Rainha; and the Alenquer, Arruda and Torres winegrowing zone (covering the municipalities of Alenquer, Arruda dos Vinhos, Sobral de Monte Agraço and Torres Vedras), both with DOC seals (controlled denomination of origin).

The region is also distinguished by the DOC production of "Light Wines", with lower alcoholic content and Portugal's only DOC-classified brandy - **Aguardente Vínica from Lourinhã** - together with more recent sparkling wines.

The "Oeste Vine and Wine Route", a tourism circuit of tremendous potential, aims to reinforce and publicise the region's tremendous cultural, tourism and economic wealth in this field.

The route includes around 25 vineyards, which open their doors to visitors, incorporated into three distinct circuits. In addition to offering spectacular vineyard landscapes the route also offers visitors the possibility to experience rural activities such as grape harvesting, visit different spaces of the wine cycle or taste some of the region's most emblematic wines, accompanied by fine cheeses or convent sweets.

The "LINHAS DE TORRES" circuit retrace the movements of the Duke of Wellington and the Peninsular War.

The **ÓBIDOS** circuit mixes the medieval spirit of the Monastery of Alcobaça, the town of Óbidos, Queen D. Leonor's exploits in Caldas da Rainha, the Quintas de Bombarral estates and the fresh air of the Montejunto mountains in Cadaval.

The **QUINTAS DE ALENQUER** circuit transports visitors to the emblematic atmosphere of 16th century estate and manor houses, the "crib town" of Alenquer and historical figures such as Pedro Álvares Cabral or Damião de Góis.



Beaches

In the Oeste region, the **capricious natural forms of the coastline** are complemented by delightful, iodine-rich beaches, **with fine, golden sands**, such as Santa Cruz, Santa Rita, Porto Novo, Areia Branca, S. Bernardino, Consolação, Peniche, Baleal, Foz do Arelho, the charming Bay of S. Martinho do Porto and the picturesque Nazaré Beach with its ancestral traditions, including ex-líbris features such as "Xávega art" and the typical seven skirts of Nazarene women.

Oeste's coastal area is distinguished by the high quality of the waters. Many beaches have been classified with a European blue flag and are served by modern structures, perfectly integrated within the landscape. The beach of Seixo (Santa Cruz) received an environmental award as a "Golden Beach".

As visitors gaze across the wide golden sands, stretching from Pedra do Ouro to Praia Azul, they will discover a zone of almost pure unspoilt beauty, enticing voyages of discovery and the thrill of numerous nautical sports.

Sun, sea
and emotion...



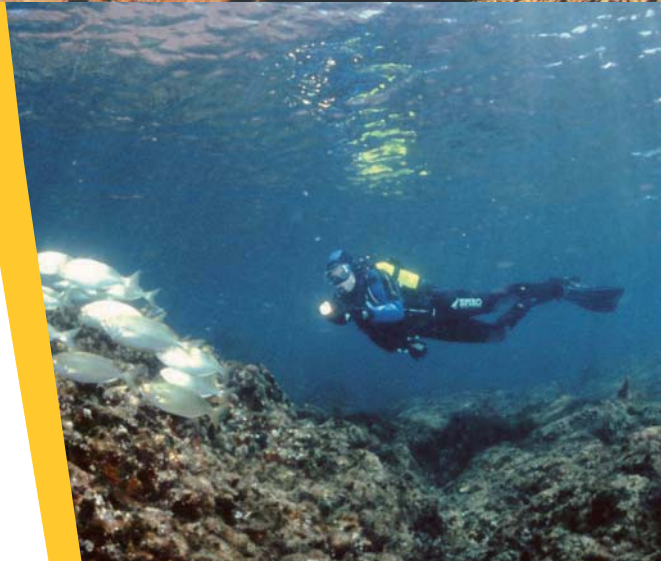
Nautical Tourism

Peniche's new Recreational Port houses a vast range of nautical sports companies, for whom the Berlenga archipelago is a sanctuary for fishing and diving activities.

The Recreational Port of Nazaré and the Bay of S. Martinho do Porto also harbour nautical tourism vessels and various schools encompassing a wide array of different nautical sports.

Santa Cruz, Peniche (Supertubos) and Nazaré are obligatory sites for surf lovers, and host top-class international competitions.

Óbidos Lagoon offers excellent conditions for sailing, rowing and windsurfing, and also has various schools dedicated to these activities.





The sweet taste
of tradition...

Gastronomy

Oeste's gastronomical heritage dates back to the foundation of the Kingdom of Portugal, and the ancestral skills of monks living in the region's convents and monasteries - in particular the guiding role played by the Monastery of Alcobaça, whose tradition of convent sweets is still a key reference.

In the countryside, the art of "putting" the bread and winegrowing and fishing, have originated some of the region's most emblematic gastronomic traditions, where pride of place is held by fish and shellfish dishes.

The region's gastronomy is highly varied: ranging from rich dishes associated to the "pig-killing" ceremony, to oven-roasted kid, stewed rabbit with rice, famous stews and succulent boiled or oven-roasted sea-bream and rock-bass of Peniche and Nazaré, eels and cockles of Óbidos Lagoon and shell fish from the nurseries of Porto de Barcas, where, amongst other delicacies, Atlantic "sweating" lobster is a unique dish.

Recipes passed down from convent traditions such as "trouxas" (sweet cakes), "lampreias de ovos" (sweet dish made with eggs) and "cavacas" (light, crisp cakes) from Caldas da Rainha, bean pasties from Torres Vedras or sponge cake from Landal, Painho and Alfeizerão, complement the traditional flavours of convent sweets from Alcobaça - the "crown jewel" of this gastronomical paradise, a thousand-year heritage from a Monastery that remains a key cultural centre.

The "*Oeste Rocha Pear*" and "*Alcobaça Apple*" are ex-libris foodstuffs of the region, that have already achieved international prestige and certification.



Events

The Oeste stages major cultural and artistic events, which are already renowned at both the national and international level. **Torres Vedras Carnival** "Portugal's most Portuguese carnival", the Santa Cruz Summer Carnival, the Festivities of Our Lady of Good Journeys of Peniche, the Festivity in Honour of Our Lady of Nazaré, the Pilgrimage to Montejunto in Cadaval, the Ascension Festival in Alenquer, the Festivity of São Pedro in Torres Vedras, the Festivity of S. Bernardo in Alcobaça, the Festivities of Sobral de Monte Agraço and Arruda dos Vinhos in honour of Our Lady of Salvation and hundreds of other popular pilgrimages, festivities and fairs that bring life and emotion to every corner of the Oeste region throughout the year.

The region's various **horseriding centres** include Vimeiro, in the Hotel Golf Mar, that holds international horse-jumping competitions every year.

For **go-kart** lovers, the region has one of Europe's finest circuits in Bombarral.

Óbidos is a historic town, brimming with cultural activity, including art exhibitions, antique music and major events such as the **Christmas Town**, **International Chocolate festival**, **Medieval market**, **Baroque Music Cycle**, **Harp-**



chord Music Cycle, **Opera Festival**, **International Piano Week** and **Holy Week**.

The cultural panorama also includes Cultural Centres in Alcobaça, Caldas da Rainha and Torres Vedras, where visitors will find high-quality and diversified programming.

The Oeste region also has many **Gastronomy Festivals** that delight visitors every year: Flavours of the Sea Festival (Peniche), wine and gastronomy festivals (Arruda dos Vinhos, Bombarral, Sobral de Monte Agraço, Cadaval and Torres Vedras), Shellfish Festival (Lourinhã), Convent Sweet Festival (Alcobaça) and Summer Taverns Festival (Caldas da Rainha).

There are also **Modern Shopping** centres in Torres Vedras and Caldas da Rainha, including cinemas and restaurants that provide a cosmopolitan offer, complementing the region's **Traditional Shops**.

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Turismo do Oeste

