



8 days from £979

May & September

## Portugal - Cascais & the Sintra Natural Park

*Just a few miles west from the hustle and bustle of the city of Lisbon is a hilly, forested area stretching down to the coast which was a popular summer retreat for the rich and Royal families from the capital. As well as palaces, gardens and hermitages, there are traditional villages and towns making this a 'cultural landscape' worthy of a UNESCO World Heritage Site listing. From your base on the coast in Monte Estoril you have three guided walks in the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park. In your free time, you can relax in the seaside resorts of Estoril and Cascais or take the short train ride to enjoy the sights, sounds and flavours of Lisbon.*

- 7 nights hb Monte Estoril, with good access to Lisbon
- 3 guided walks in the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park
- Visit to Cabo da Roca, mainland Europe's most westerly point

### PROGRAMME

**DAY ONE:** Flight to Lisbon. Thirty-minute transfer to your hotel in Monte Estoril for seven nights half board accommodation.

**DAYS TWO TO SEVEN:** Your hotel is in Monte Estoril between Estoril and Cascais, the two main resorts on the Lisbon Coast. Estoril, with its plush villas and Belle Époque casino is the more traditional of the two, while lively Cascais still retains some of its character as a traditional fishing town. They are connected by a seafront promenade and your hotel is a 20-minute walk from the centre of either resort or you can take the frequent local bus. There are plenty of shops and cafés close by as is Monte Estoril train station from where there is a regular service to Lisbon. Everywhere you go in Lisbon you will find evidence of the city's historic links with the Age of Discovery from where intrepid explorers opened up the sea-trading routes to India, Brazil, China and Japan in the 15th century. Today, the city is a mix of old quarters such as the Alfama, a maze of steep cobbled streets, the wide avenues leading to the 18th century Rossio square and modern developments with fine shops.

During your stay you have three guided walks in the Natural Park, all different in content and character showing you varied aspects of the countryside, scenery and way of life here. There is a short coach transfer to the start of each walk of about 10 miles.

**Walk 1:** Sintra Sierra – the Mystic Mountain. On this walk you go to some of the Park's highest points with glorious views to the sea. You'll also discover how the Sintra Sierra has enchanted its visitors over the centuries. The walk takes you to the 'Holy Spirit' village of Penedo known for its countless springs and streams. Lunch is included in a local tavern. After lunch you complete the walk passing small stud farms. 9.75 miles with ascents/descents of 600m.

**Walk 2:** Land's End. The walk starts at Cabo da Roca, Europe's most westerly point. You walk along impressive cliffs hugged by the Atlantic and with a view of the untouched beauty of wild Ursa beach, considered by the Michelin Guide as one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. You approach the Fojo, a natural well that connects to the sea and where the Romans believed that deep down there was a Triton playing music in a conch. This walk ends at the beautiful Adraga beach. 5.5 miles with 450m ascents and 600m descents.

**Walk 3:** Hermitage and Gardens. The starting point is the same as Walk 1 but takes you on a different path and includes visits to a couple of the highlights of the Park. The Convento dos Capuchos was carved into the granite in the 16th century and the monks' austere existence in the minute cells is referred to in a poem by Byron. From here it is a 4.5 mile walk through a pine forest to the Monserrate Gardens and Palace, a unique, exotic landscape again featuring in Byron's poetry. The massively rich exile, William Beckford, landscaped the site in the 1790's. Sir Francis Cook continued the work in the gardens and restored the Palace which is a delightful mix of Moorish, Romantic, Gothic and even Indian styles. You return to the start point via the Musketeers Lake. An easy 6¾-mile walk full of interest with ascents/descents of 350m.

**DAY EIGHT:** Departure for the airport and your flight home.

### YOUR HOTEL

**ESTORIL EDEN HOTEL ★★★★★**, Monte Estoril (seven nights)

The resorts of Cascais and Estoril are now one municipality and Monte Estoril stands between the two old centres. The hotel has an indoor and outdoor pool, fitness room, sauna, bar and restaurant. The spacious bedrooms are aparthotel style with balcony, equipped kitchenette/dining area, tv, air-conditioning, minibar, and bathroom with hairdryer. ([www.estoriledenhotel.com](http://www.estoriledenhotel.com))

If you have friends who are not walkers interested in this itinerary, it is featured in our Escorted Holidays brochure with a touring programme.

