

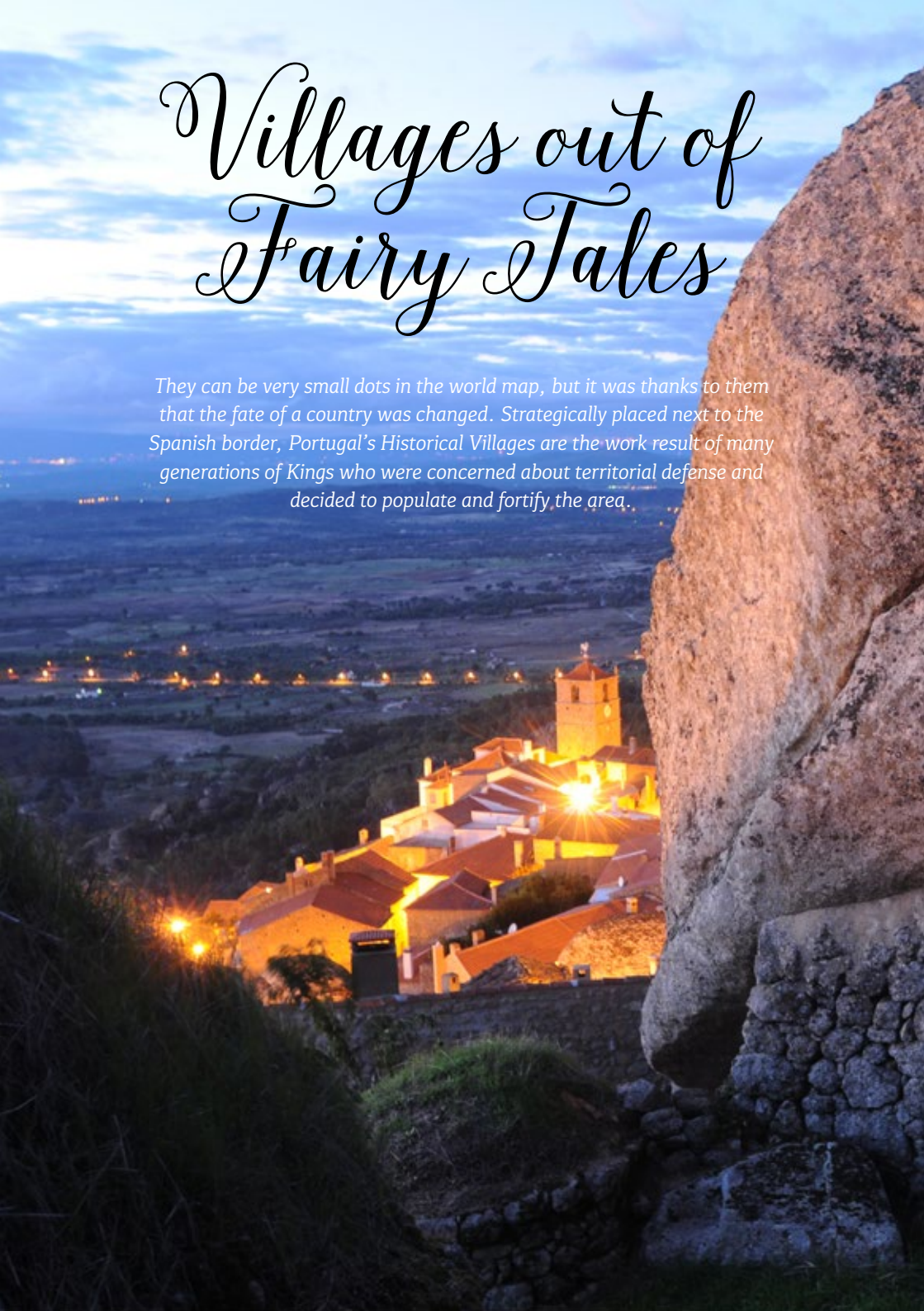
# Center of Portugal





# Villages out of Fairy Tales

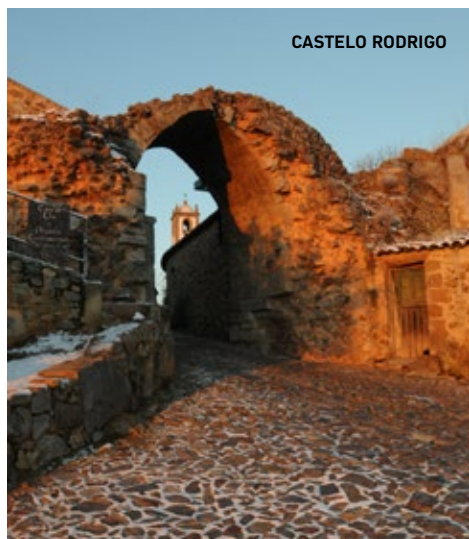
*They can be very small dots in the world map, but it was thanks to them that the fate of a country was changed. Strategically placed next to the Spanish border, Portugal's Historical Villages are the work result of many generations of Kings who were concerned about territorial defense and decided to populate and fortify the area.*







This mission was carried out especially by King Afonso I, who created the County of Portugal, and by D. Dinis, the King who signed the treaty which would establish the final border with Spain. Nowadays, this is the oldest border in Europe and there were many rulers who built castles and walls, granted charters and gave privileges to those who would establish themselves in these areas. Because if no one lived in a place where so many battles were fought, it would have been easier for the enemy to conquer it. People saw each victory as a miracle, so they quickly built chapels or churches. For each event, a legend was created and this gave a magical feeling to the Portuguese Beira (border). And so, century after century, our heritage was built, destroyed and then built again. Nowadays, it still echoes the entire History of Portugal. Discover it in Almeida, Belmonte, Castelo Mendo, Castelo Novo, Castelo Rodrigo, Idanha-a-Velha, Linhares da Beira, Marialva, Monsanto, Piódão, Sortelha and Trancoso.



CASTELO RODRIGO



PIÓDÃO









# WORLD CATWALKS

Join us on a fantastic tour across the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Center of Portugal! These amazing places of indisputable beauty carry a unique history and a very special charm!



JOANINE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA  
PHOTO: SIVAN ASKAYO







MONASTERY OF ALCobaça



MONASTERY OF Batalha





### MONASTERY OF BATALHA

The Monastery of the Dominicans of Batalha was built to commemorate the victory of the Portuguese over the Castilians at the Battle of Aljubarrota in 1385. It was to be the Portuguese monarchy's main building project for the next two centuries. Here a highly original, national Gothic style evolved, profoundly influenced by Manueline art, as demonstrated by its masterpiece, the Royal Cloister.

### MONASTERY OF ALCOBAÇA

The Monastery of Santa Maria d'Alcobaça, north of Lisbon, was founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by King D. Afonso Henriques. Its size, the purity of its architectural style, the beauty of the materials and the care with which it was built make this a masterpiece of Cistercian Gothic art.

### CONVENT OF CHRIST IN TOMAR

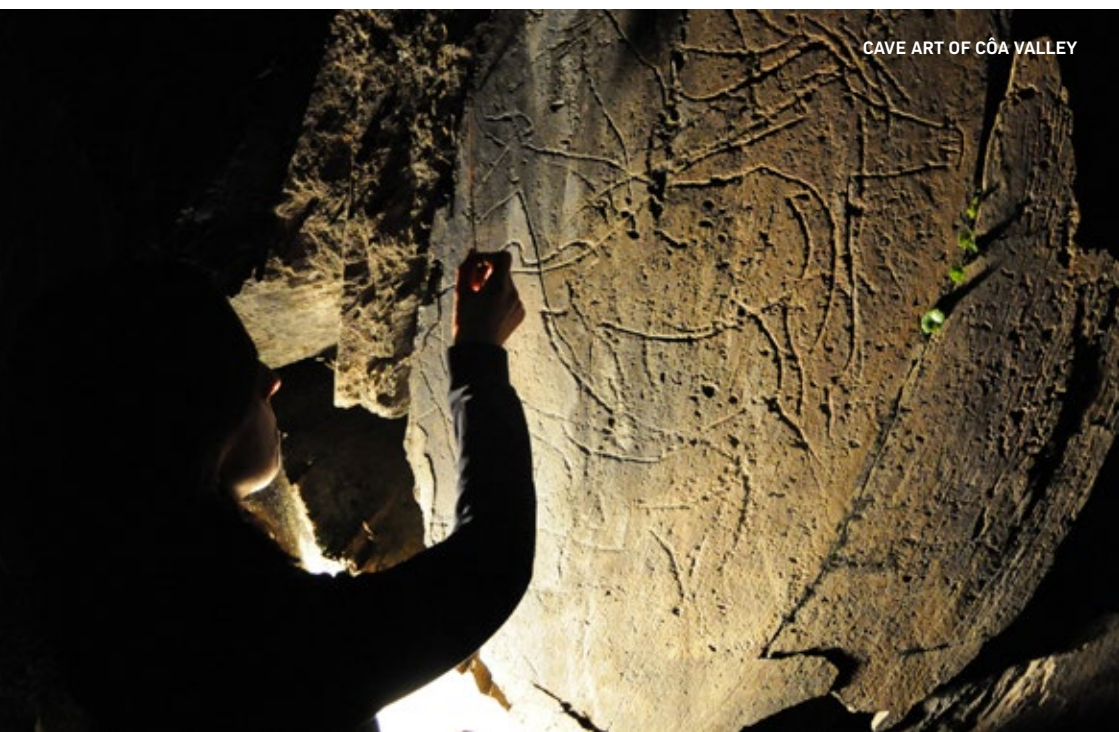
Originally designed as a monument symbolizing the Reconquest, the Convent of the Knights Templar of Tomar (transferred in 1344 to the Knights of the Order of Christ) came to symbolize just the opposite during the Manueline period – the opening up of Portugal to other civilizations.

### UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA – ALTA AND SOFIA

Situated on a hill overlooking the city, the University of Coimbra with its colleges grew and evolved over more than seven centuries within the old town. The classified area includes the 12<sup>th</sup> century Church of Santa Cruz and a number of 16<sup>th</sup> century colleges, the Royal Palace of Alcáçova, which has housed the University since 1537, the Joanine Library with its rich Baroque decor, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Botanical Garden and University Press, as well as the large "University City" created during the 1940s.

### PREHISTORIC ROCK ART SITES IN THE CÔA VALLEY AND SIEGA VERDE

The two Prehistoric rock art sites in the Côa Valley are located in the margins of Águeda and Côa rivers, two tributary rivers of Douro River. These sites have an extraordinary concentration of Upper Palaeolithic petroglyphs (22.000 – 10.000 BC), which is unique of its kind in the world as well as one of the most outstanding examples of the first artistic creations of the human being. The engravings are essentially figurative, depicting animals and some geometrical schematic forms. The rock art sites of Côa Valley (Portugal) and Siega Verde (Spain) are the most important Palaeolithic rock art set in the open air of the Iberian Peninsula.



CAVE ART OF CÔA VALLEY





# THE WORLD AT HER FEET

Fátima is one of the most spectacular Catholic sanctuaries of the world, a place of tranquility and the meeting point of Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and agnostics from the four corners of the world. Discover the history of this enchanting place of confinement and inner peace, as well as its most iconic spots!









# Perfection

Only in Center of Portugal will you find absolutely unique landscapes, such as the timeless glacial valleys of Serra da Estrela. Places far away from the world, where time stands still. An enchanted kingdom inhabited by authentic people who greet you with an open smile. Incredible parks, the highest peak of the Portuguese mainland, protected ecosystems. Set for discovery either in bike or on foot, climb the most daring mountain tops and fall in love with primordial landscapes! Millions of years. It seems like yesterday.



LORIGA GLACIAL VALLEY



The Serra da Estrela massif is a lot more than just a set of beautiful mountain views. Its glacial valleys are unique landscapes in the country and incomparably beautiful.

The Glacial Valleys of Zêzere, Alforfa, Loriga, Covão Grande and Covão do Urso were originated 20.000 years ago, when the ice sheet which covered the plateau where nowadays the tower stands, was damaged due to a rise in atmospheric temperatures.

Melting ice sheets slid down to lower levels, dragging granite domes along with them and creating valleys where they passed. The traces of this natural work are great U shaped valleys with polished rocks, boulders and morainic deposits which have remained untouched throughout thousands of years.

Be amazed by these exceptional wonders of Nature and follow the Glacial Valleys Route, tracking the same paths through which the ice slid down.











BIRD WATCHING IN FAIA BRAVA NATURAL RESERVE • CASTELO RODRIGO



GIANT MARMITES • SEGURA • TEJO INTERNACIONAL NATURAL PARK

A photograph of a courtyard at dusk. In the background, a stone building with a red-tiled roof and a balcony with white columns is visible. A large statue of a man in a crown and cape stands on a pedestal. The courtyard is paved with grey stones and has several wooden picnic tables. People are sitting at the tables, and there are many green plants and flowers. The text "Al Fresco" is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

# *Al Fresco*





*I*n the Center of Portugal there is a heart that beats faster in the city squares, where life finds a whole new meaning and time is tasted with passion.

The granitic city of Viseu, whose origins date back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, seduces travellers with its rich historical heritage, the unspoken beauty of its streets and parks full of charm. The best city to live in, Viseu is like the first love: it will never be forgotten!

Óbidos is a scenery of fairy tales and therefore it always belonged to the queens of Portugal. The intricate beauty makes Óbidos one of the most enchanting towns in the world. Wander along the tiny streets or countless bookshops of Óbidos, literary town. Love of chocolate and books, this is Óbidos.

Al fresco, nothing is lost, everything is transformed!

#### HISTORICAL VILLAGE OF MARIALVA















# *Guilty Pleasures*

Because life is way too short not to fall in temptation, Center of Portugal invites you to know the noble wines of Dão, Bairrada, Beira Interior and Oeste region, along with the tastiest and most indisputable delicacies, such as the cheeses and sausages of Castelo Branco or the supreme king of cheese, the Serra da Estrela cheese, or the delicious Bairrada suckling pig.

Convent-made sweets treats, the iconic soft eggs of Aveiro, Ovar sponge cake, the sweet “kiss me quickly” (“beija-me depressa”) of Tomar, pleasures made of sugar and egg to taste passionately.

With no hurry.



OLIVES FOR EXTRAORDINARY OLIVE OILS





The cod is the most faithful of friends and you can actually pay a visit to it in the memorable Codfish Aquarium of Ilhavo Maritime Museum!



**STAR PARADE**  
CHEF LUÍS BAENA



**E**smolfe apple variety, known since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and named after the village Esmolfe (county of Penalva do Castelo) is an exclusively Portuguese product. This apple is a small pale green fruit. It has a strong and pleasant scent, which is quite unique. The pulp is white, soft, juicy and sweet, with lasting taste properties.

But there are thousands of flowers in Center of Portugal. As days go by, there are flowers of cherry, pear, peach and apple trees!

Mouth-watering fruits like the cherries of Fundão, the apples of Alcobaça or the pear variety “pêra-rocha” that taste of Nature’s almighty generosity.







OVOS MOLES OF AVEIRO



OVAR SPONGE CAKE

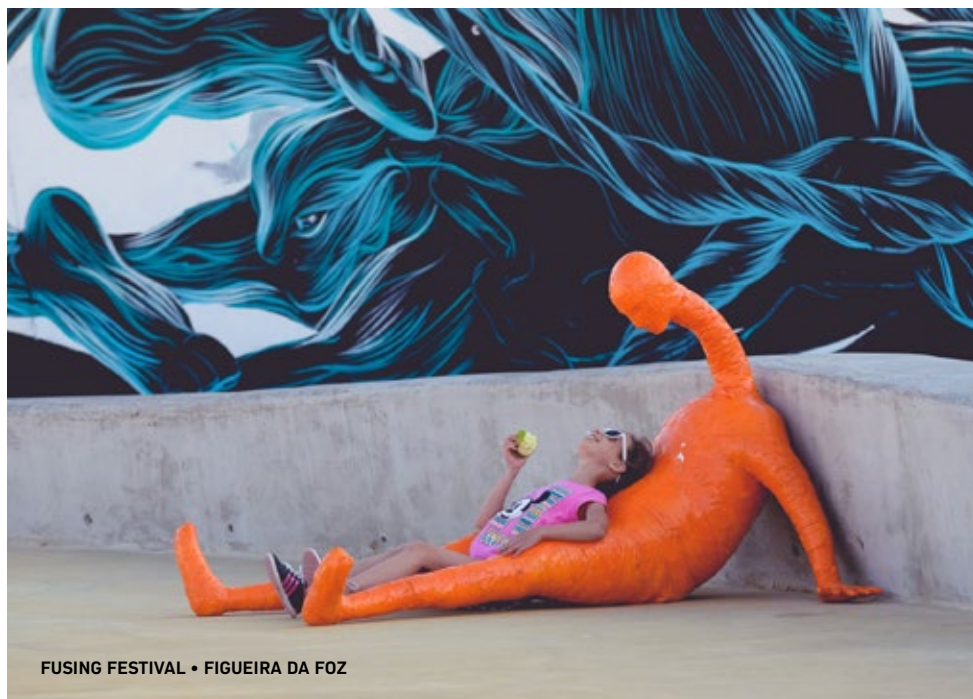
# 365 PARTY DAYS





Every year there are phenomenal concerts, eclectic festivals, events that combine tradition and contemporaneity in a region that offers you a very diversified and appealing event calendar. So let's get the party started and surrender to the good vibes of Center of Portugal!





FUSING FESTIVAL • FIGUEIRA DA FOZ



FADO DE COIMBRA • MACHADO DE CASTRO NATIONAL MUSEUM









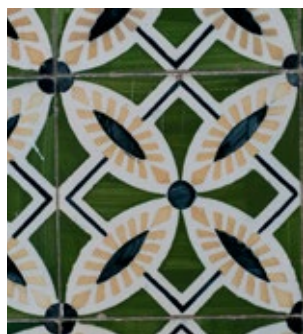
# STREET ART



Street art continues to fill up the cities of Center of Portugal with colour and passion. From Aveiro to Covilhã the most remarkable street artists are leaving their fantastic imprints on the steadily changing city streets. Take a closer look at the murals of worldwide street art star Alexandre Farto aka VHILS or at the works of WOOL in Covilhã and see the cities from a brand new perspective. Aren't tiles ("azulejos") the most Portuguese and the most daring expression of street art and of the pleasure that only aesthetics can bring?







# *Magical Islands*

Center of Portugal is not only about firm land! Almourol (Vila Nova da Barquinha) and Berlengas (Peniche) are our magical islands, precious places preserved like truly priceless jewels.

The Castle of Almourol (Templar Order) belonged in the past to the defense line of river Tagus, imposingly rising over a breathtaking natural landscape, bathed by a light that can not be described, only felt.

The archipelago of Berlengas is located in front of Peniche and it has a unique ecosystem in the world. It is a magnificent natural reserve, recognized in 1981, presenting an unrivaled geological richness.



CASTLE OF ALMOUROL





# WAVES

From Figueira da Foz with Europe's best right to the gigantic waves of Nazaré and the absolutely perfect tubular waves of Peniche, there is a sea of possibilities to surf on.

On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, 44 years-old Hawaiian surfer Garrett McNamara has reached the unthinkable: he surfed a 23,77 M-high wave in the North beach in Nazaré. On that year he set the Guinness World record and the waves of Nazaré have conquered the world.

Peniche continues to be the spot of world's most prestigious surfers. Breathtaking waves, spectacular maneuvers and a party atmosphere turn Peniche into a very cool place to be!

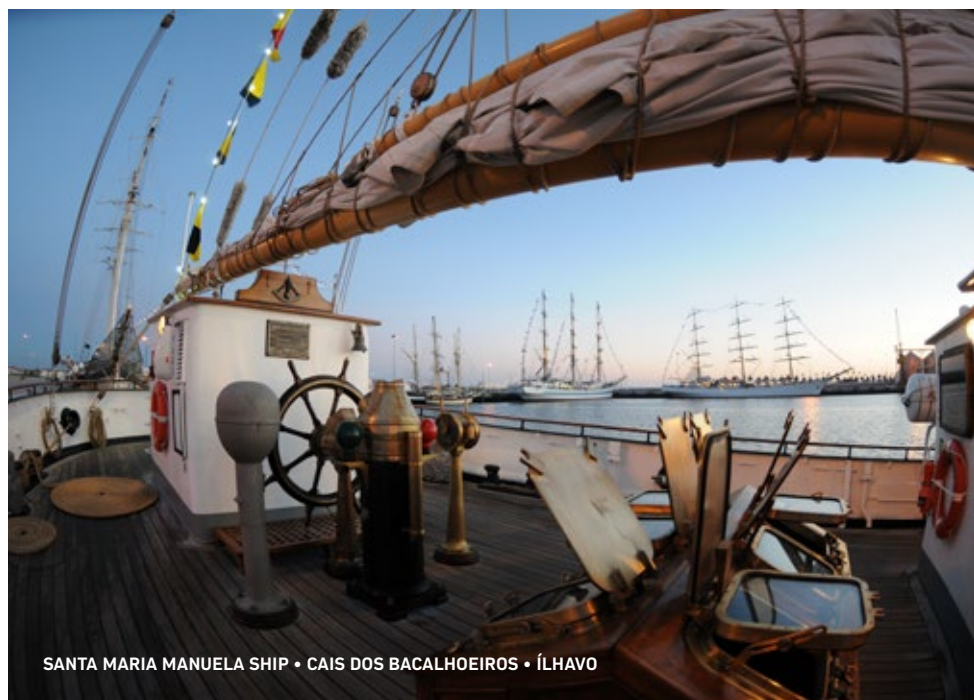
Still unknown for many surfers around the globe, Figueira da Foz is paving its way as a sunny surf destination, very welcoming and easy to reach. Figueira da Foz is famous for its 1 mile-long right waves. Cool waves!







COSTA NOVA



SANTA MARIA MANUELA SHIP • CAIS DOS BACALHOEIRAS • ÍLHAVO



*The Ria  
of Aveiro*



*Y*t is what identifies the city, gives it brightness and life and it has permanently marked local traditions. In Aveiro, everything happens around its 47 kilometres of water next to the sea. It is the Ria, a silver mirror, which reflects the colour of the moli-ceiro boats and the Art Nouveau houses; it is what makes Aveiro so seductive and unique.

The Ria of Aveiro began to form during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the shore line moved back and left behind sandpits along an area of eleven thousand hectares which created a lagoon. Nowadays, it has become a real network of canals and islands which has made Aveiro earn the title of “Portuguese Venice”.

The water shelters many species such as lamprey clams, storks, herons and some birds of prey or mammals like genettas and otters. Its wealth is so exceptional that the Lagoon has been classified as a protected area.

A great part of the Aveiro population has always depended on the Ria to work. It has enabled harvesting seaweed, fishing, producing salt and it has also stimulated shipbuilding. Over the last few years, the Ria has adapted to modern needs and has enabled the city to develop its tourism through activities such as sea sports. It receives its visitors with open arms.



RIA OF AVEIRO

# ENDLESS GREENS

For golf lovers, Center of Portugal is certainly a region to discover! Here you will find in the north Montebelo Golf course (27 holes), located in the surroundings of the city of Viseu with a remarkable landscape setting between Estrela and Caramulo Mountain ranges. Further south, Royal Óbidos Spa & Golf Resort (18 holes), designed by prestigious Severiano Ballesteros, is a competition

golf resort, with 6 holes over Óbidos lagoon and 12 holes facing the Atlantic Ocean. This golf resort also includes a 5-star hotel.

Bom Sucesso Golf Course (18 holes) is a fantastic project conceived by Donald Steel with spectacular views over the sea and Óbidos lagoon. It is a highly challenging golf course that you will never forget!







GOLF MONTEBELO



ROYAL ÓBIDOS SPA & GOLF RESORT

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