

# São Rafael

## GUIDE TO THE AREA

01 November 2007

### COAST WALKS

There are two good walks along the coast, São Rafael to Albufeira to the east, and São Rafael to Castelo or Gále to the west. It is hard to give times for these walks as it depends so much on your pace and how long you pause. The first is at least an hour and a half to two hours, the second, to Castello, at least an hour to an hour and a half.

#### São Rafael to Albufeira

Walk to the beach. There is a path behind the restaurant. Take this path to the top of the cliff. From this point you can see right along the coast to Baleira, where the marina opens into the sea. Follow any of the paths to the east. Eventually you will not be able to go any further by sticking to the coast, and you must head inland, finding your way up the red 'inland cliffs'. Once at the top of these cliffs you will again be prevented from going any further to the east by the terrain and villas, and must head inland until you come to a dusty road. Follow this road until you come to a junction where the road turns back on itself downhill. Straight on is a dead end, but it provides excellent views over the marina. Turning back to the junction, go down the hill until you reach a road on your right. This leads directly to the marina. Walk through the marina, and take one of the staircases at the back, between the apartment blocks, to ascend to street level. There are toilets located in the stair wells. Walk towards the church in front of you. There is a cobbled road to the right hand side of the church. Follow this road to a roundabout, and then go up the hill. There are good views from here of the outer marina. At the top of the hill there is a cemetery, behind which there is a shopping centre with a super market and the Cerro Novo Offices. Cerro Novo is an Estate Agents, for those interested in purchasing property. This is a good place to park in the evenings, then walk down into Albufeira. Keeping the cemetery on your left and staying on the main road, take the first on the right past the shops. This is a steep hill downwards, at the bottom turn left into Rua do Latino Coelho ('Street of the Latin Rabbit'(?)), enjoy the view over Albufeira, and continue into the town. You will come to a staircase which you can descend into one of the main shopping areas. As an alternative, go straight on, uphill, and take the road to the right of the police station. This is 'Rua da Bateria', one of the secrets of Albufeira, which offers fine views over the Fisherman's beach. Or, pass in front of the police station and go straight on to discover another secret, which offers good views over the town itself, though you may have to jump to look over walls!

## São Rafael to Castelo or Gále

This is hard going cliff top walk, with several steep ascents and descents. On occasion you will pass close to the cliff edge and long drops! Please take care.

Walk towards the beach. At the new roundabout head up the hill to your right. You will pass alongside a wall. Follow the wall round and then just follow the cliffs. You will come to another low wall with a gap in it. Follow along the coast. You will come to a steep stepped descent to a stream bed, ascend the other side. Shortly you will pass alongside the wall and green screening of a villa, passing under some low trees. At the end of this bit be sure to turn left back towards the coast. You will see a villa on a headland. You will come to a steep descent opposite the villa. At the lowest point of the descent, and opposite a gate leading into the villa, there is a stepped path down to a tiny beach. There is a fantastic stone archway through which the sea races.

Ascend once again and continue. The path passes very close the edge, overlooking a beautiful but inaccessible beach. Follow the path on. You will reach a point where there is a barrier making a headland inaccessible. There was a massive rock fall here some four years ago. A huge chunk of the cliff just fell into the sea. You can still continue though, by heading inland a bit and passing behind some bushes. This path is hard to find, but it is there! Follow the red path round and on along the cliffs. There is one more sharp descent and a very steep and slippery ascent, and then you are at Coelho or 'Rabbit' beach. There is a restaurant / bar, but it may well be closed in the off season. You can walk along the beach here. A path ascends behind the cafe, up onto the cliffs again until you reach Castello, and its beach restaurant, which is bigger and more likely to be open. If you want to go beyond Castello and it is LOW TIDE, walk round the rocks to the smaller beach behind the restaurant and cliff the cliffs again. If it is HIGH TIDE it is much harder to continue. There is a path behind the restaurant but it comes to a VERY steep and slippery drop, and may well be closed now. Not really recommended. Beyond Castello there are further beaches and eventually Gále, which has a big beach restaurant. You can return to São Rafael by the road, but this is a long walk after the cliffs. I recommend a long lunch first!

## ROAD WALKS

You can walk to Albufeira via the roads. From the apartment, head up the hill back to the main road. At the top, turn right and go down the steep hill. The hotel here hires bikes, though they do not advertise this. Go in and ask and strike a hard bargain, the price is very negotiable we have found! Don't pay the initial price offered! At the bottom of the hill turn right and walk to the marina. Pass straight through the marina, past the church and up the hill into Albufeira. It probably takes a bit less time than the cliff route.

## SEA SWIMMING

The best local beach for swimming is the large beach to the right, not the small beach immediately in front of the apartment.

## GOLF

Salgados Golf is the nearest Golf Course. The web address is [www.nexus-pt.com/salgados/welcome.htm](http://www.nexus-pt.com/salgados/welcome.htm).

## ALBUFEIRA

Albufeira is primarily a tourist town. There are many, many restaurants and bars, with the restaurants ranging from traditional Portuguese to Indian and Chinese. Most restaurants are very good. Our personal favourite is MINAR, an Indian Restaurant in a side street just behind the Fishermans' Beach. Of the Portuguese restaurants, our favourite is ADEGA DOM PIPAS. This is to the north of the square in 'Travessa dos Arcos which runs parallel with Rua 5 de Outubro. For fish, go to the restaurants lining the beach front. These tend to be more expensive than the restaurants more in the town. The smaller restaurants off the main thoroughfares are normally better value. There is a nice coffee / cake café in the road exiting the square bottom right.

There is a Tourist Office, just on the town side of the beach tunnel, but they do not seem to have much in the way of tourist materials, but try to be helpful. The Post Office is just next door.

There are Toilets in the main square.

The square is notable for a concert area, a tree with hundreds of nesting birds, and live street performers such as Peruvian pipe bands, puppetry, mime etc.

The Bus Station is to the north of town, follow the Avenida da Liberdade which exits top right of the square. Taxis normally congregate in the Avenida 25 de Abril, which exits bottom right of the square. Telephone 289 583 230 for a taxi.

## RESTAURANTS

<b>Albufeira</b>	--	
A Casa da Avó	289 587 886	
A Lagosteira	289 501 679	
Adega do Zé	289 501 617	
Alfredos	289 512 059	
Âncora	289 515 655	
Atrium	289 515 755	Recommended. Old Theatre Hall on town side of beach tunnel. Good, a bit expensive, and FADO, traditional Portuguese music.
Boi na Brasa	289 322 911	
Bravo	289 589 240	
Brazão	289 542 489	
Cabaz da Praia	289 512 137	
Casa Alentejana	289 542 913	
Casablanca	289 587 340	
Castelo do Bispo	289 585 417	
Churrasqueira Beira	289 589 916	
Costa Rica	968 774 007	
Dom Pipas	289 588 091	Recommended. Quick, good food, good value. From tunnel, first left, first right.
Galeano	289 512 995	
Grill Boa Vista	289 589 175	
Ideal	289 561 623	
Jokers	962 564 900	
Lenitas		Recommended. Rua du Latino Coelho, on the walk route into Albufeira. Family restaurant, good basic food.
Lousiana	289 587 018	
Marisqueira	289 541 987	
Minar		Recommended. Behind the fish restaurants on the fisherman's beach. Great Indian Food!
O António	289 501 387	
O Cabaz de Praia	289 512 537	
O Cacho	289 585 044	
O Duarte	289 501 292	
O Farol	289 513 552	
O Marinheiro	289 592 350	
O Rosmaninho	289 478 482	
O Teodósio	289 561 318	
Páteo do Golfe	289 501 841	
Palacete	289 512 114	
Pedras Amarelas	289 591 993	
Portofino	289 587 419	
Praia do Evaristo	289 591 666	
Restaurante David	289 587 645	
Restaurante Ideal	289 561 761	
Restaurante Veneza	289 367 129	
Retiro do Isca	289 502 668	
Roa Restuarant	916 193 653	
Ruina	289 612 094	
Taverna Imperial	289 512 583	
Torre Velha	289 580 780	
Trigo Limpo	289 586 039	
<b>Albufeira - Praia de São Rafael</b>	--	
São Rafael	289 540 339	Opposite the Apartment! Big set menu.
<b>Castello</b>		
Pic Nic		On Castello Beach, good.



**BUS TIMETABLE Albufeira - São Rafael**  
(Provided by Tourist Office October 2004, and not guaranteed!)

The bus stop is located on the main road, outside the São Rafael complex.

*Monday to Saturday*

Depart São Rafael	Arrive Albufeira
0800	0815
0900	0915
0955	1010
1315	1330
1355	1410
1705	1720
1805	1820

*Monday to Saturday*

Depart Abufeira	Arrive São Rafael
0735	0750
0835	0850
0930	0945
1250	1305
1330	1345
1635	1650
1735	1750

**DRIVING**

**ALWAYS** have your

- Driving Licence
- Passport
- Hire Documents

with you when you are driving. If you are stopped by the police and do not have them there is a fine and a tedious trip to the Police Station to present them.

There are on the spot fines for motoring offences which can blow any holiday budget!

## **OTHER PLACES TO VISIT**

These are just my personal impressions, for full details please see the web or any of the large number of tourist guides to the Algarve.

### **CAPO DE SÃO VICENTE**

Wind swept headland, the west most point of Portugal. Lighthouse to climb.

### **FARO**

Marina, two museums, one a nautical museum beside the marina, the other the opposite side of the marina. Old town with beautiful church. Shopping. Worth a day trip.

### **LAGOS**

Mainly shopping

### **MONCHIQUE**

Mountain hideaway amongst the orange groves. Still unspoilt and well worth a visit. Climb to the old convent above the town. If you are lucky you will be granted access to the old building by the caretaker, who only requires a small tip. Also nearby is **CALDAS DA MONCHIQUE**, an ancient spa now with restaurants and shops.

**PORTIMAO** Fishing port with good shopping.

**QUATERIA** Fish market, but very spoilt and high rise. Not recommended.

### **SILVES**

Beautiful Moorish capital of the Algarve, with castle and cathedral. Tourist shops, museum and art galleries. Great café in the square beneath the castle, with beautiful decor and interesting artifacts. Slow service, but worth it. A trip to Silves is a must!

### **TAVIRA**

Fishing town with Roman Origins.

### **VILAMORA**

THE tourist trap of the Algarve. Massive villa complex, a small city!

### **WEST COAST**

Beautiful unspoilt beaches washed by the Atlantic rollers. There are some remote parts where you may find yourselves the only people about. Head for VILO DE BISPO and then make for the coast.

### Some Distances

						<b>ALBUFEIRA</b>
					<b>CADIZ</b>	<b>357</b>
				<b>FARO</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>40</b>
			<b>HUELVA</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>516</b>
		<b>LAGOS</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>50</b>
	<b>SEVILLE</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>235</b>
	<b>TAVIRA</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>V.REAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>276</b>