



June 16th 2012, sunny 27°

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Agenda items

- June 8 We had the wedding of my son Bob and the love of his life Digna
- July 5-7 TassJazz Festival Odemira
- July 19-22 Tall Ships Lisbon
- July 20-22 Faceco São Teotónio
- Sept. 19 Mark and Anne are having a baby. I'll be a granny.
- Oct. 4-11 Paintingweek Monte do Casarão
- Nov. 28 Mariza in Amsterdam, Royal Theater Carré

www.rotavicentina.com
www.chocolatesdebeatriz.com
helenaloermans.blogspot.pt
www.tallshipslisboa.com

1. ROTA VICENTINA

Since the middle of May, Portugal has gained a long-distance path. The 340-kilometre so-called *Rota Vicentina* runs from Santiago de Cácem (approximately 100 km south of Lisbon) to



Cabo de São Vicente, the far south-western tip and constitutes, as it were, the last leg of the GR11/E9.

The trail consists of two sections: one is the Historical Way, which runs further inland, calling in at various villages, and makes use of existing paths and roads; the other is the Fishermen's Trail, which is completely new and skirts the Atlantic coast.

The entire trail is an eye-opener, an introduction to the Alentejo. Wherever necessary, a stream has been bridged, or stepping stones have been put in place. The signposting is outstanding. You won't need have any doubt about what direction to take. And everything radiates love and respect for the land.

From Monte do Casarão, you can walk various sections. You will be driven to the desired starting point and collected from where you stop. If you don't overdo it, that is.

2. ODEMIRA

A nice destination for one of your Rota Vicentina walks is the town of Odemira, dating from 1256, capital of the eponymous Concelho Odemira. As an administrative centre, Odemira has any conceivable facility: a hospital, swimming pool, library (in a former castle), cinema-cum-theatre, fire brigade, secondary school and higher vocational education, bus station. Even a court and a jail have been built there.

What Odemira has as well - which is far more interesting to you as a holiday-goer - is the Beatriz chocolate factory, with hand-made chocolates in all sizes and flavours (favourite: with pepper and piri-piri). Moreover you'll find two goat cheese factories (that sell to the public), a few wonderful restaurants, a working windmill and a gallery of the artists association *Sopa dos Artistas*.

Last but not least, there is a weaving studio established by Dutch-born Helene Loermans.



Helene can tell you all about the ways she weaves, the materials she uses and the workshops she organises. For the last three years she had woven parasols. True pieces of art, every one of them. Why not see it yourself and look her up?

3. TALL SHIPS IN LISBON

If you prefer the wind and the water, you should make for Lisbon. From July 19 to 22, the quays are lined with *tall ships*, de mighty sailing vessels that once sailed the seas far and wide.

The rise of the steamboat and the irreparable damage incurred in both world wars marked the end of the sailing freight vessels. Incidentally, a ship was still used for training purposes, but most schooners, barques, brigantines and brigs remained confined to the dockyards. But then, in 1954, the Portuguese ambassador Pedro Theotónio Pereira and the English jurist Bernard Morgan put their heads together to breathe new life into their hobby and this past glory. The Tall Ships Races had been born.

In 1956, the first race took place, from Torbay in the south of England, to Lisbon, with 12 contestants. Since then, the race has grown into a world-class event. This year about a hundred ships take part in it.



The race runs by way of Saint Malo in France, Lisbon to Cadiz in southern Spain. In Cadiz, they turn round and from there they sail by way of A Coruña in northern Spain to their final destination, Dublin.

4. CRISIS

Pauline Blom is the foreign-correspondent of the Dutch GPD (the Allied Press Services) in Spain. She lives in Cadiz and frequently writes about the economic misery on the spot. But how is the crisis experienced just across the border, in neighbour Portugal, and specifically in the Alentejo? Wynand and Bas served as interpreters when she interviewed José Manuel Guerreiro, *president* of São Teotónio, Garcia Francisco, chairman of the São Teotónio hunting association and Graça, owner of Café Graça in Casa Nova da Cruz, and her two daughters. She produced a realistic, recognizable article that radiates gloom. Fortunately, the mental legacy of what once was a communist bulwark is still standing tall: 'Helping each other, sticking together, that's what it's all about.'



Nel