

Amazing Algarve

Portugal's holiday hotspot has a host of resort openings and attractions to entice travellers this summer, writes **Lina Molloholli**

1he ever-popular Algarve has long been synonymous with cliff-backed sandy beaches, high-end resorts and more than 300 days of sunshine each year – even more than California, according to the Met Office.

It's a magnet for golfers and spa-goers alike, and the region is already warming up for 2024 with an array of new hotels, attractions, tours and flight connections. Faro will welcome a weekly easyJet route from Southampton on June 6, a new British Airways CityFlyer service from Derry City, and an increase in capacity across Jet2.com's regional

network to 70,000 seats for the forthcoming summer season.

From new trails to elegant accommodation, here's our pick of the interesting developments that will entice visitors back for more.

REVVED-UP RESORTS

Opening this autumn, Viceroy at Ombria Algarve blends modern style with authentic Portuguese charm to create a chic and tranquil escape. The hilltop resort features 76 rooms and 65 residences offering views across the region's rolling countryside. For an activity-filled afternoon, guests can hire one of the on-site bikes and head to the nearby ➤

DESTINATIONS

SPAIN & PORTUGAL | ALGARVE

Ria Formosa Natural Park, or be one of the first to play the 18-hole Ombria golf course.

Away from the busy tourist hotspots, there's the newly opened low-rise Amaria, nestled in the heart of Costa Vicentina Natural Park. The boutique hotel offers a serene spa, outdoor yoga deck and surf lessons on the Atlantic waves. After soaking up the hotel's ambience, guests can venture out to explore the charming town of Aljezur with its historic cobbled streets and markets.

For a family getaway, suggest the Verdelago Resort in Praia Verde. The property opened last August with a contemporary feel and focus on sustainability. Only a short walk from the coast, it offers cosy flats and townhouses, with a garden, an outdoor swimming pool, kids' club and babysitting service. Beyond the standard amenities, the property has an open-air market full of locally sourced organic products



ABOVE: New property Amaria, in the Costa Vicentina Natural Park

plus a private park with cycling and walking paths, and a lake.

Hilton is expanding its portfolio in Lagos, a historic maritime town famed for its cultural scene, with two openings this summer. Lagos

Marina Hotel, Curio Collection by Hilton, will have 189 rooms, a spa, restaurant and two bars, one of which is set on a large rooftop terrace complete with infinity pool. For a budget-friendly

alternative, the Hilton Garden Inn Lagos will offer 90 rooms – 27 of which can be converted into suites with kitchenettes – as well as a bar, restaurant, fitness centre and outdoor pool.

And it's not too early for fans of Hard Rock Hotels to start looking forward to the brand's newest outpost, due to open in summer 2026. Set in Praia do Vau in Portimão, it will have 275 rooms and 150 serviced apartments, plus six restaurants and bars, a trio of pools, a Rock Spa, sports area and beach club.

FORCE OF NATURE

In the hills around Monchique, the recently added Demon's Creek walkway is creating a buzz among nature enthusiasts. With babbling brooks, fragrant eucalyptus groves and panoramic views, this hiking route offers visitors access to sites that have previously ➤

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ABOVE: The EDP Art Reef exhibition features sculptures made of parts from old power stations

been inaccessible. Suitable for a leisurely stroll, a family outing or a challenging hike, the highlight is a suspension bridge that crosses the Barranco do Demo gorge.

For diving and marine enthusiasts, there's a new underwater museum less than a mile off the coast of Albufeira. Created by Portuguese street artist Alexandre Farto, also known as Vhils, the EDP Art Reef exhibition features 13 sculptures made of repurposed parts salvaged from deactivated power stations. With time, surrounding elements will take over and fill them with life, transforming them into a man-made coral reef and contributing to the Algarve's commitment to sustainability and decarbonisation. All certified divers to the submerged EDP Art Reef must be accompanied by a specialised company.

GET ACTIVE

For adventurous clients seeking a blend of active exploration and cultural immersion, Exodus Adventure Travels has introduced the Lisbon to Algarve Ride cycling trip. Setting off from the vibrant

“Quaint fishing villages give a glimpse into local life and are the perfect spot to try a seafood stew

capital, it winds southward to the picturesque landscapes of the Alentejo region, famed for rolling plains, vineyards and cork forests. The route then descends towards the Algarve's enchanting countryside, where riders will encounter fishing villages and coastal towns backed by rugged cliffs, before finishing in Lagos.

If a slower pace is a priority, Inntavel's new walking trip, Algarve's Coast and Hills, might do the trick. The eight-day tour leads visitors through sites including Ponta da Piedade, renowned for its rock formations; the Rocha da Pena natural park; and the historic town of Silves, where medieval architecture and a grand Moorish castle transport walkers to another era.

Quaint fishing villages such as Carvoeiro give a glimpse into local life and are the perfect spot to try scrumptious dishes such as seafood stew *cataplana de marisco*. The journey concludes in regional capital Faro, where the historic old town and Ria Formosa Natural Park offer a great backdrop for a leisurely stroll. **TW**

BOOK IT

Exodus Adventure Travels' eight-day Lisbon to Algarve Ride trip starts at £2,379, departing on April 28. The price includes flights, B&B accommodation, bike hire and the services of a tour leader. exodus.co.uk

Inntavel offers a seven-night Algarve's Coast & Hills walking-themed holiday from £845 per person, based on two sharing. It includes a week's car hire and routes, maps and notes, and some meals. Flights are extra. inntavel.co.uk

ASK THE operators



Kelly Jackson,
managing
director
EMEA, TTC
Tour Brands

“Portugal is an increasingly popular stop for guided travellers and I think that's down to the range of cultural and historical sights to explore. The relaxed charm of the Algarve, with its sweeping sandy beaches and incredible seafood, makes it particularly appealing. I recommend agents look for tours that include authentic dining and well-located accommodation. For example, Insight Vacations' Country Roads of Portugal tour offers a day in Lagos, the stunning fishing port nestled in the bay of Meia Praia, plus the chance to enjoy seafood restaurants overlooking the Atlantic, and a night's stay at the Ria Park Hotel & Spa in Ria Formosa Natural Park.”



Rebecca Bruce,
product
manager,
Inntavel

“Away from the Algarve's more famous resort towns, the western end of the coast is wild and beautiful. The historic harbour town of Lagos, the impressive fortress at Sagres and the westerly tip at Cape São Vicente can all be explored. From autumn to spring, this part of the coast attracts surprisingly few visitors. It's great walking country, with timeless villages, rugged hillsides and an exquisite coastline. It's also easily accessible from Faro.”