

algarve,  
europe's  
most famous  
secret



# lagos

municipality

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# lagos

Gigantic sculptures carved by the pounding waves that plunge into a crystal sea; the iridescent greens of sea caves; beach after beach of soft sand tucked away between ochre cliffs or stretching clear to the horizon; verdant countryside dotted with the white of houses: just a few reasons to discover one of the most attractive parts of the Algarve.

## HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAGOS

Part of the pre-history of the southwestern Algarve, the area occupied by the municipality of Lagos has been inhabited since the distant past, as various archaeological sites bear witness. The city's old name - Lacobriga - indicates that its origins are Celtic and date back to approximately 2,000 B.C., and for a long period it was a port visited by Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians.

During the Roman period the city prospered and grew, and it became necessary to build a dam to supply water and a bridge to span the Bensafirim river. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Arabs built a ring of ramparts, but this was not enough to stop the Christians conquering the city in 1249.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century was a golden age for Lagos. For approximately 40 years, thanks to its location across the sea from Africa, the city became a port of departure and arrival for the vessels that set off year after year on voyages of discovery along the coast of that continent. A centre for trade in ivory, gold, silver and other exotic merchandise brought back from Africa, Lagos attracted merchants and bankers, Portuguese and foreign alike, and poured its wealth into new churches and sumptuous houses.

New city walls, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, marked the urban expansion of the city, which from 1573 was an Episcopal see and residence of the governors of the Algarve. These defences were reinforced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the construction of forts at strategic points.

The earthquake of 1755 and the tidal wave that followed in its wake destroyed much of the city, which only began to recover its former prosperity in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of the fish canning industry and the return of trade.

Today Lagos is a dynamic and bustling city, proud of its past.

## VISITING LAGOS

The glowing gold of Baroque carving on church walls; battlements evocative of past conflicts; the presence of Prince Henry and the seafarers who unveiled the ocean's first secrets at the helm of fragile caravels: all fascinating points of interest on an itinerary through a city proud of its history and the role it played in the voyages of exploration known as the Discoveries.



### CHURCH OF SANTO ANTÓNIO (ST ANTHONY)

Rebuilt in 1769 on the initiative of those in command of the Lagos Regiment of Infantry, it served as their chapel. For this reason the statue of the patron saint received a captain's wages, increased to those of a lieutenant-general from 1780 onwards. The façade is typically Baroque with an interesting eye-window and pediment. It has two bell towers of different proportions. On the lateral façade, a large porch formed by a renaissance portal (16<sup>th</sup> century), originally taken from the former "Compromisso Marítimo" building, leads to the Municipal Museum. The charm of the church resides principally in the rich profusion of gilded carving to be found inside it, which covers the high altar and the side walls, making it a prime example of what is one of the most striking features of the Portuguese Baroque. Whimsical Baroque forms are to be found side by side with curiously naturalistic features (a pig being slaughtered, a fishing scene etc) on the pedestals and lateral panels of the pilasters. Beneath the choir, there is a carved panel representing the Three Virtues (faith, hope and charity). Paintings depict scenes from the life of the saint. There is a dado of tiles with kneeling angels (dating from around 1730). The church has a cradle vault, decorated with a painting in perspective. There are also statues of Santo António (St. Anthony) with a military sash, Santo Elói (St. Elói) and São José (St. Joseph) (18<sup>th</sup> century).



Church of St. Anthony - VC



Church of St. Anthony - VC

### CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA OR MISERICÓRDIA (HOLY MARY OR MISERICÓRDIA)

This building, which has a symmetrical façade, dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its main doorway has Doric columns and busts of São Pedro (St Peter) and São Paulo (St Paul) on either side of the archivolts. The side doorway is dated 1568. Inside there are fine statues from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, notably those of Nossa Senhora do Assunção (Our Lady of the Assumption) and Nossa Senhora da Piedade (Our Lady of Piety). In the sacristy and storeroom there is a collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century statues.

### CHURCH OF ST. SEBASTIÃO (ST. SEBASTIAN)

Built in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries on the site of a former chapel, it was damaged in 1755. It has a plain façade, dominated by an imposing bell tower. At the side entrance there is a profusely decorated-renaissance doorway and two interesting figures, a man and a woman, on the corners. The interior consists of three naves supported by Doric columns. There is a tile dado with various patterns, most notable of which are some polychrome examples painted with birds and jugs with a fish scale pattern (18<sup>th</sup> century). On the high altar there is a monumental statue of Nossa Senhora da Glória (Our Lady of Glory) (18<sup>th</sup> century), brought back from Brazil and given by King João V to the now-defunct Capuchin Monastery, and a 16<sup>th</sup> century crucifix, which, according to tradition, was present at the battle of Alcácer-Quibir (1578). There are other paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries on the high altar and the lateral altars. The sacristy has a large chest, 18<sup>th</sup> century statues, religious objects and vestments. Built on a hill, the church enjoys a sweeping view over Lagos and the sea.

### CHURCH OF NOSSA DO CARMO (OUR LADY OF CARMEL)

Part of a former monastery (16<sup>th</sup> century) it displays harmonious proportions. Currently being restored.

### CHAPEL OF SÃO JOÃO BAPTISTA (ST JOHN THE BAPTIST)

Built in the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> centuries and rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup>. Its chancel is built on an octagonal floor plan.

### CHAPEL OF SÃO PEDRO DO PULGÃO OR NOSSA SENHORA DOS AFLITOS (ST. PETER OF PULGÃO OR OUR LADY OF THE AFFLICTED)

A typical country chapel with white walls and a Baroque façade. Its doorway is in the Manueline style (16<sup>th</sup> century). It stands not far from the Monte Molião archaeological site.

### ORATORY OF SÃO GONÇALO (ST GONÇALO)

The place where, according to popular accounts, the saint's parents lived. 18<sup>th</sup> century stonework and statue.

### THE HOLY SON OF FISHING FOLK

Born in Lagos in around 1360, the son of a fisherman, the young Gonçalo showed early signs of spirituality. After attending Lisbon University he rejoined the Ordem de Santo Agostinho (Order of St. Augustine) and rose to be abbot of several of its monasteries. A holy orator and musician. His presumed intervention in the miraculous saving of fishermen won fame for his cult and he was beatified in 1778.

### SLAVE MARKET

The place where the first slaves brought back by ships from their journeys to Africa were sold (15<sup>th</sup> century). Four arcades at floor level define a patio. One of the walls bears the arms of the Marquis of Nisa (17<sup>th</sup> century). On one side, a window (once a door) from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

### ARMAZÉM REGIMENTAL (REGIMENTAL STORES)

A 17<sup>th</sup> century building. The façade bears an interesting Baroque mortar decoration (18<sup>th</sup> century), two coats of arms of the Kingdom of the Algarve and a seal referring to its construction in 1665.

## TOWN WALLS

It is thought that the ramparts facing the sea date from the Carthaginian or Roman periods, with subsequent Arab and Christian additions. Two proud watchtowers defend the entrance to Porta de São Gonçalo (St. Gonçalo's gate). The remaining walls around the town were built between 1520 and the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to protect the new neighbourhoods springing up as a result of the rapid growth of international trade. They include a number of gateways and bulwarks adapted to allow the use of artillery.

The walls afford panoramic views over the city, the bay and the hills of the Serra de Monchique. A number of buildings of historic and architectural interest form part of the defensive structures around Lagos.



## GOVERNORS' CASTLE

Of Arab construction, and possibly once a fortress, this building was altered on many subsequent occasions. During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries it was the residence of the Governors, Captains-General of the Algarve. The façade includes a window in the Manueline style (16<sup>th</sup> century) where, tradition has it, King Sebastião heard mass before setting off for the fateful battle of Alcácer-Quibir. In the garden, there is a panel evoking this battle by the sculptor João Cutileiro and a sculpture of the navigator Gil Eanes.

## PONTA DA BANDEIRA FORT (OR OF OUR LADY OF PENHA DE FRANÇA)

Opposite the entrance to the Bensafrim river, it used to defend the old port. It was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with a moat, a drawbridge and an imposing gateway. Inside, there is a small chapel decorated with 17<sup>th</sup> century tiles. It is an excellent viewing point from which to look out over the city.

The other fortification that used to defend Lagos - Forte do Pinhão (Pinhão Fort)- was destroyed by the earthquake of 1755 and part of the cliff on which it stood broke off and fell into the sea. Some stones from the walls are still visible. A private house was recently built on the site of the battery that replaced the fort.



## LAGOS MUNICIPAL MUSEUM

Attached to the Church of Santo António (St. Anthony), this museum boasts an important collection of religious works of art, with statues from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the archaeology section there are examples of decorated menhirs (4,000 to 3,000 B.C.) and remains from prehistoric, protohistoric, Roman and Arab sites. There is also an interesting numismatic collection and an Algarve ethnology collection.

## HISTORICAL CENTRE

Although the earthquake of 1755 caused great damage, the streets and squares of Lagos have retained much of the charm of a town hundreds of years old. On the site of the old medieval town - a quadrilateral defined by the town walls and two streets (Rua de São Gonçalo and Rua 5 de Outubro) - the houses preserve much of their former character in the stonework around their windows and doors, in their wrought iron balconies, in the cool, shady areas created by the narrow streets, and in the patios where flowers, fig trees and vines are to be found growing. The part of the town that grew up as a result of expansion between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries has its heart in Praça Gil Eanes and in the meandering streets where tiles in the "art nouveau" style are to be found alongside grand houses, impressive façades and white walls, broken only by the stonework of windows. From the Avenida dos Descobrimentos, on the other hand, it is possible to view the profile of the city, to look out seawards to the horizon, to watch the bustle of fishing boats and the shimmering masts of yachts mirrored in the still waters of the marina.



## getting to know lagos municipality

### ODIÁXERE

A picturesque town of white walled houses. Nearby there are panoramic views over Lagos bay.

### MAIN CHURCH 19

Rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it has a fine doorway of red Silves sandstone, exuberantly decorated in the Manueline style (16<sup>th</sup> century). Plain interior. The altars have 18<sup>th</sup> century statues, including one of Christ in Indo-Portuguese ivory, notable for its dramatic expression. Dado of 17<sup>th</sup> century tiles. There are good views over Lagos bay from nearby.

### BRAVURA DAM

A man-made lake stretching out beneath broad mountainous horizons. A place to relax and enjoy nature. Excellent viewpoint.



### BENSAFRIM

A typical small town, surrounded by hills looking down on the sea. It has a church (20) with some valuable statues. The Fonte Velha necropolis (21) is situated nearby. Dating back to the Iron Age, it was later used in the Roman era. At Corte de Bispo there are some remains of Roman ruins.

### LUZ

A fishing port nestling between cliffs, which, in spite of being an important tourist centre, maintains its traditional character.

#### MAIN CHURCH 22

The church is medieval in origin. Its chancel has a Gothic vault and triumphal arch. The altarpiece of the main altar is decorated with gilded carving in the Baroque style (18<sup>th</sup> century).

#### ROMAN RUINS 23

Also to be found there are the ruins of an important Roman villa with mosaics and pools. There is a small aqueduct to channel water from Quinta da Luz. Next to the beach are tanks for salting fish, probably built by the Carthaginians and then used by the Romans. Rising above the beach is the old fort of Nossa Senhora da Luz (Our Lady of Luz) (17<sup>th</sup> century), which has now been turned into a restaurant. Nearby, at Cerro de Lorvão, there is a Roman burial ground. The Miradouro da Atalaia, at 108 m (360 feet) offers sweeping views along the coast.

### PONTA DA PIEDADE

A huge rock formation hollowed out by the sea. The bold colours of the strangely shaped rock - yellow, ochre and red - contrast with the crystal blue of the sea. There is access by boat to innumerable beautiful sea caves and hollows. The lighthouse stands near the site of an old coastal defence fortification.



### BARÃO DE SÃO JOÃO

A village on the edge of the forest that boasts a variety of tree species. Lots of shade and a peaceful atmosphere.



### THE PLEASURES OF SUN AND SEA

Are you looking for long beaches where the sand and the ocean stretch as far as the eye can see? Or do you prefer tiny beaches hidden among colourful rocks, far from the rest of the world? There is plenty of choice from among the wonderful beaches on Lagos' coastline.

#### Meia Praia

This broad expanse of sand stretches for 4 km (2.5 miles) and offers a range of facilities for those who enjoy water sports. On the long stretch of sand by the entrance to Alvor harbour stands the Fort of Meia Praia, which defended Lagos bay in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historians say that it was off these beaches that the galleons carrying the treasure of Moctezuma, an Aztec emperor captured by the soldiers of Hernán Cortez, were shipwrecked in 1522.



#### Batata, Estudantes, Pinhão, Dona Ana and Camilo

Sandy coves tucked between brightly coloured cliffs, these beaches include some interesting rock formations, with calm, clear waters. Many regard these as the most delightful beaches in the Algarve.



#### Canavial and Porto de Mós

Long beaches between cliffs. Tourist facilities



#### Luz

A tourist centre with a cosmopolitan flavour. Large beach.

## GOLF AND WATER SPORTS

There is a golf course situated in a scenic location looking out across the sea and the Ria de Alvor which attracts golfing enthusiasts. Sailing, windsurfing, water-skiing and parasailing are among the water sports enjoyed in Lagos. There are numerous caves along the coast from Lagos to Luz, making it an extremely interesting place to snorkel and scuba dive.



## VESTIGES OF THE PAST

It was possibly on Monte Molião, a small hill looking down on the Bensafirim river, that the first inhabitants of Lagos settled. Archaeological digs have found evidence of human occupation since the 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> centuries B.C. Roman structures, including a tank and a burial ground, are among the remains found at this site.

Part of a system for supplying water to the old city, of which the aqueduct has unfortunately disappeared, the Fonte Coberta dam, almost 75 metres (250 feet) long and more than 25 metres (8 feet) thick, bears witness to the technical skills of the Romans.

The bridge that joins the two banks of the Bensafirim river is also Roman in origin, and was rebuilt in medieval times, and again more recently.

## THE TASTE OF GOOD COOKING

In Lagos, culinary pleasures have a maritime flavour, because it is above all sea food that goes into delicious razor clam and fish soups, tasty "açorda" (a bread-based soup) with mussels, clams and cockles, and main courses to delight those who enjoy fish and shellfish. These include "carapaus alimados" (marinated horse mackerel), stew of conger eel or monkfish, tuna steak, clams in a cataplana, the fishermen's favourite of whelks with beans, and squid stuffed with a spicy mixture of ham and sausage. A good meal is incomplete without a good wine to accompany it. Lagos produces fragrant medium dry white wines and a full-bodied ruby red bursting with fruit and sunshine. Where cakes and puddings are concerned, Lagos has a tradition that goes back to the days when the sweet-loving nuns of the Convento de Nossa Senhora do Carmo (Convent of Our Lady of Carmel) created the recipe for "dom-rodrigós" a cinnamon-flavoured delicacy. "Morgados" made with figs and almonds, stuffed figs and honey cakes are all tempting ways to round off a meal, along with a glass of the sweet fortified wine made locally with Muscatel grapes.



## POPULAR CRAFTS

Traditional crafts are kept alive in pottery, some of which combines old shapes with new styles of decoration, and figures inspired by contemporary life. A link with the past is also preserved in the beaten copperware, made using a technique that is possibly Arab in origin.

Modern crafts are also to be found in Lagos, in the form of printed textiles, leather objects, articles in cane and pictures made with pressed flowers.



# lagos



Bulwarks - LC



Marina - LC

## Data sheet

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