

Olhão

Faro District · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Olhão is a working fishing town on the eastern Algarve coast. Boats still land fish and shellfish here, and the town lives more from the sea than from resorts. The old centre has whitewashed, cube-shaped houses with flat roof terraces. They are often described as North African in style.

It suits a short, relaxed stay. Come for the waterfront markets, fresh seafood and the ferries to the sandy barrier islands of the Ria Formosa lagoon. Faro and Tavira are both a short train ride away.

When to visit

Spring and early autumn are the easiest times to visit. Days are warm and sunny, and the town is calmer than in peak summer. July and August are hot and busy, and this is the best time for swimming. Winter is mild but wetter. Island ferries run all year but are more frequent in summer.

The Festival do Marisco is the main annual event. It is a seafood festival with food stalls and concerts, usually held in August. Check the exact dates before you plan around it.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for wildlife watching	16° / 18° Feels like 12°	10° / 7°	Dry air
February	Great Great for wildlife watching	16° / 19° Feels like 13°	11° / 7°	Dry air
March	Great Great for wildlife watching	18° / 22° Feels like 15°	12° / 9°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 25°	13° / 10°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 28°	16° / 12°	22 sunny days · Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 31°	19° / 15°	23 sunny days · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Great Great for the beach	29° / 33°	21° / 17°	28 sunny days · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for the beach	29° / 33°	21° / 18°	28 sunny days · UV 8 (Very high)
September	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 30°	20° / 17°	23 sunny days
October	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 28°	17° / 14°	
November	Great Great for wildlife watching	19° / 22°	13° / 9°	Dry air
December	Great Great for wildlife watching	16° / 19° Feels like 13°	11° / 8°	Dry air

Best months: April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- Two red-brick market halls stand on the waterfront: A Mercado do Peixe and B Mercado das Verduras. One sells fish and the other sells fruit and vegetables. They opened in 1916 and have an iron and glass structure. Go in the morning.
- C Igreja Matriz is the parish church, built between 1698 and 1715. Its baroque interior is free to enter. The small chapel behind it is where fishermen's families prayed for sailors at sea.
- D Barco Bom Sucesso is a replica of the boat in which 17 fishermen sailed to Brazil in 1808. It is moored near the markets and can be seen from outside.
- E Museu Municipal is a short stop for local history.
- F Jardim do Pescador is a waterfront garden. It is a good place to sit and also hosts the seafood festival.
- G Quinta de Marim is the headquarters of the Ria Formosa Natural Park, just east of town. It has walking trails through dunes, salt marsh and pine woodland. Chameleons and rare birds live here.
- H Praia da Armona-Mar is a sea-facing beach on Armona island, reached by a short ferry ride from town. I Praia da Culatra on Culatra island is another option, with a longer crossing.

Olhão – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

What to experience

- Morning at the markets. Visit the fish hall and the fruit and vegetable hall by the waterfront.
- A day on the islands. Take the ferry to Armona or Culatra, walk to the ocean beach and return in the evening.
- Wildlife walk at Quinta de Marim. Follow the nature trail at Quinta de Marim and look for chameleons and water birds.
- Festival do Marisco. This August seafood festival takes place at Jardim do Pescador.
- Evening on the waterfront. Walk Avenida 5 de Outubro in the evening, when the restaurants fill up.

Day trips

Olhão is on the coastal rail line, so the best day trips are easy by train.

- A Faro is a short train ride west. It has a walled old town, a marina and the main airport.
- B Tavira is about 25 minutes by train. It has an old town beside the river. Boats cross from there to its island beaches.
- C Vila Real de Santo António is about 50 minutes by train, near the border with Spain. It has a planned grid town centre and a riverfront promenade.



Where to explore

- Nearby: Ria Formosa is the lagoon and island system in front of Olhão. Faro is west along the coast.
- East: Tavira and Vila Real de Santo António follow along the same rail line.

Getting there

- By air: The nearest airport is Faro (FAO), west of Faro city. Take a taxi to Olhão, or go to Faro first and continue by train or bus.
- By train: The Olhão station is a short walk from the centre. Regional trains run along the Algarve coast. From Lisbon you usually change at Faro. Book on the CP Comboios de Portugal site.
- By bus: Vamus buses, formerly EVA, run between Faro and Olhão, and on to Tavira. See timetables at Vamus Algarve. Long-distance coaches also stop in Olhão, often with a change in Faro.

Getting around

- On foot: The old town, markets, waterfront and ferry terminal are all within a short walk. The town is flat.
- Cycling: The flat terrain makes cycling easy.
- Ferries: Boats to the Ria Formosa islands leave from the waterfront ferry terminal. Armona is the nearest, about 15 minutes away. Culatra takes longer. Service runs all year and is more frequent in summer, so check the time of the last boat back.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old centre, markets, waterfront and ferry terminal are close together and flat.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The flat terrain suits cycling, but there is little dedicated infrastructure.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? Not for Olhão itself. The centre is compact and the coast is well served by train. A car helps only for the inland Algarve.
- Parking: Streets in the old town are narrow. Park at the edge of the centre and walk.
- Roads: The A22 motorway along the coast has been free of tolls since 1 January 2025. The N125 is the older coastal road and is slower.

Food & drink

Olhão is a good place for simple seafood. Look for grilled fish such as tuna and swordfish, cataplana stew, clams and oysters from the lagoon, and shrimp dishes. Tinned sardines are also a local product.

The best eating areas are by the water. Avenida 5 de Outubro along the waterfront has many seafood restaurants with outdoor tables. Small seafood stalls and cafés sit beside the market halls, and the fish is fresh there.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Caldo Verde
A simple, comforting soup of shredded kale, potato, and slices of chourico sausage.

Francesinha
A hearty Porto specialty: a meat-stuffed sandwich covered in melted cheese and a spiced tomato-beer sauce.

DINNER

Bacalhau
Salt cod, Portugal's national dish, said to be prepared in hundreds of different ways across the country.

Sardinhas Assadas
Charcoal-grilled sardines, especially popular in summer street festivals and along the coast.

Arroz de Marisco
A rich, soupy seafood rice, similar to paella but wetter, packed with shellfish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Pastel de Nata
A small custard tart in flaky pastry, best eaten warm with cinnamon and sugar.

DRINKS

Vinho Verde
A young, light, slightly sparkling white wine from northern Portugal, meant to be drunk within a year of harvest.

Port Wine · Vinho do Porto
A fortified wine from the Douro Valley, aged in cellars around Porto, ranging from sweet ruby to complex aged tawny styles.

Ginjinha · Ginãa
A sweet liqueur made from sour cherries, traditionally served in a small cup, sometimes with a cherry at the bottom.

Olhão – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Olhão is a safe town for visitors. Petty theft is the main risk. Watch your bags in crowded places, such as the market and the seafood festival.

On the islands there is little shade, so bring sun protection and water. Check the last ferry time before you go.

History

Olhão grew from a small fishing settlement. The earliest written record dates from 1378. Fishermen settled on the shore in the early 17th century, and in 1695 the community became its own parish. Igreja Matriz was built soon after, between 1698 and 1715.

The town's defining story is from 1808. On 16 June, the people of Olhão rose against the French occupiers and drove them out. A month later, 17 fishermen sailed to Brazil in the caique Bom Sucesso to tell the Portuguese court. The prince regent then made Olhão a town, called Vila de Olhão da Restauração. Barco Bom Sucesso is a replica of that boat. Olhão became a city in 1985.

The red-brick market halls by the waterfront were started in 1912 and opened in 1916.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

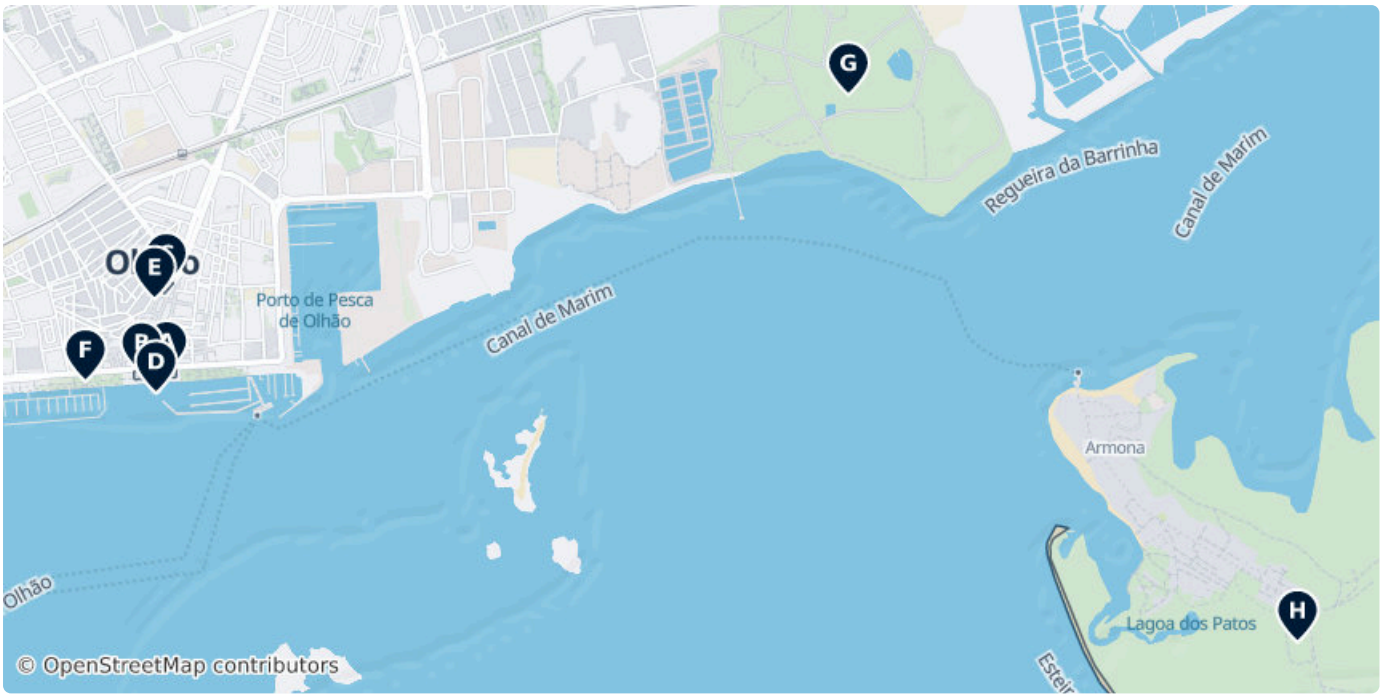


Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Top sights





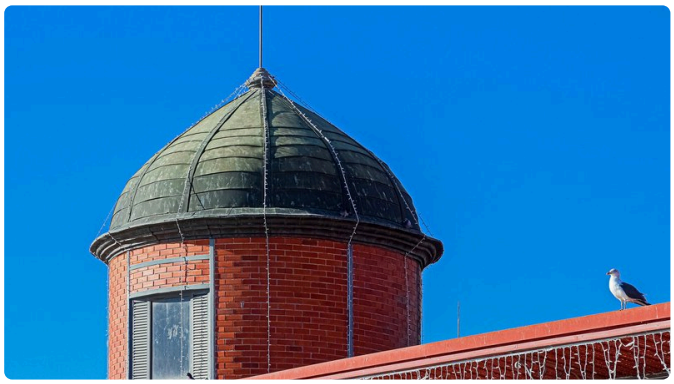
A Mercado

Municipal market in Olhão, listed as a cultural heritage monument.

Avenida 5 de Outubro, 8700-302 Olhão, Portugal
(37.02374, -7.84056)

Mo–Fr	07:00–14:00
Sa	06:30–15:00
Su	Closed

mercadosdeolhao.cm-olhao.pt



B Mercado

Municipal market building in Olhão, listed as a cultural heritage monument.

Avenida 5 de Outubro, 8700-306 Olhão
(37.02370, -7.84151)

Mo–Fr	07:00–14:00
Sa	06:30–15:00
Su	Closed

+351 289 090 664



C Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora do Rosário

Baroque parish church built between 1698 and 1715 with the funds of the town's fishermen, known for its tall tower and impressive façade.

5 Praça da Restauração, Olhão 8700350, Portugal
(37.02640, -7.84058)

D Barco Bom Sucesso

(37.02313, -7.84097)

E Museu Municipal de Olhão

8700-548 (37.02598, -7.84103)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Sa	10:00–12:30, 13:30–17:00
Su	Closed

museumunicipal.cm-olhao.pt, +351 289 700 103

F Jardim do Pescador Olhanense

174C Avenida 5 de Outubro, Olhão 8700304, Portugal
(37.02349, -7.84365)

G Marim Environmental Education Centre

8700, Portugal (37.03215, -7.81472)

natural.pt/protected-areas/parque-natural-ria-formosa/in...

H Praia da Armona-Mar

Rua de Sue, 8700-282 Olhão, Portugal (37.01560, -7.79770)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikidata, Wikipedia, Tripomatic, Official websites

IMAGE CREDITS

- Mercado — "Olhao Municipal Market 6 November 2015", cc-by-sa-4.0
- Mercado — "Mercado Municipal de Olhão - Portugal (51847685286)" by Vitor Oliveira from Torres Vedras, PORTUGAL, cc-by-sa-2.0
- Igreja Matriz de Nossa Senhora do Rosário — "Igreja Matriz de Olhão - Portugal (51807279982)" by Vitor Oliveira from Torres Vedras, PORTUGAL, cc-by-sa-2.0

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 22, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.