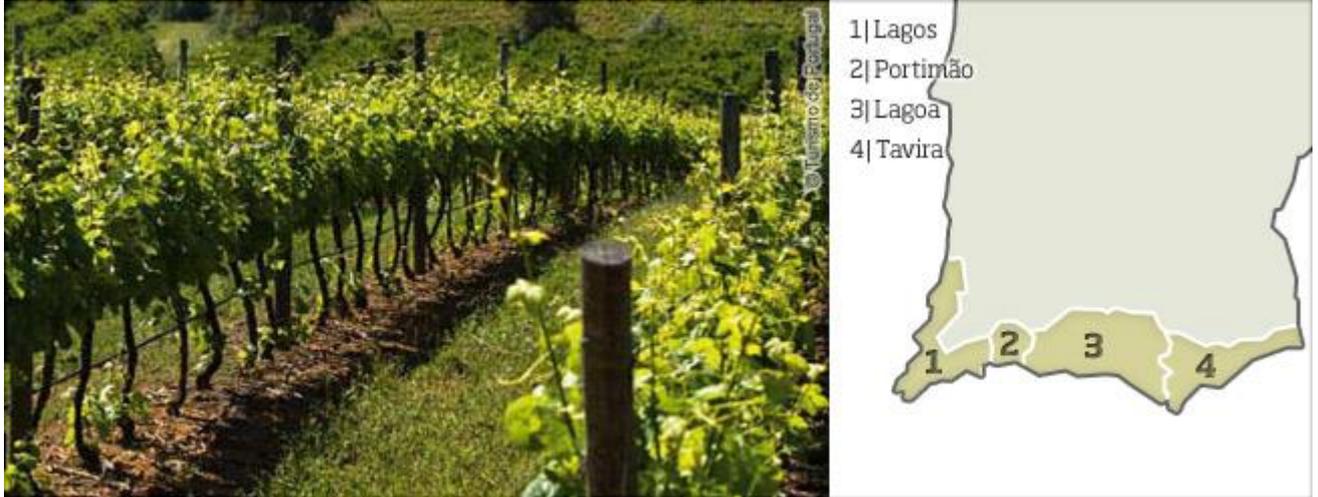


## Algarve

Vines love Portugal's southernmost region for the same reason the tourists do - it's never too hot, never too cold, and they can be sure to enjoy more than 3,000 hours of sunshine every year.



The ‘border’ with the Alentejo region to the north is a mere 20 or 30 miles from the Algarve coast, yet the Algarve suffers none of the Alentejo’s extremes of temperature. Why? A beautiful chain of mountains running all the way between the Spanish border and the Atlantic coast separates the two regions and blocks the hot, dry winds from the north, leaving the Algarve under the moderating influence of the sea – the Mediterranean to the south, the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

East of Faro out towards Spain the climate is warmly Mediterranean, whilst west of Faro the Atlantic makes itself felt in a more temperate climate, fresher and more humid.

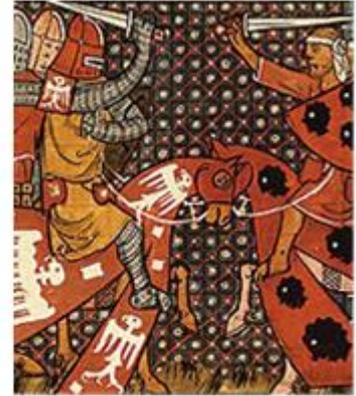
The soils in the Algarve are very varied: sandy, clay, limestone, sandstone, sometimes very shallow over rock, with some rare areas of schist on the mountainous slopes in the north.

Anyone who has holidayed in the Algarve will recognise the the major towns that lend their names to the region’s four wine DOCs: Lagos, Portimão, Lagoa and Tavira.

For these traditional wines, the main white grapes are Arinto, Malvasia Fina, Manteúdo and Síria, and for the reds Castelão and Negra Mole. However, the new wine estates are making mainly Vinho Regional Algarve from national and international grapes: Touriga Nacional and Syrah, Aragonez and Cabernet Sauvignon, Trincadeira, Alvarinho, Chardonnay, Viognier... New estates and wineries are springing up in the Algarve – this is a region to watch.

## **Muslim Occupation**

During the Muslim occupation of the Algarve, the vine was widely cultivated. As Muslim religion doesn't allow the ingestion of alcohol, the wine would be used as a transaction currency to acquire other products. After reconquering the Algarve, the Christians used the Muslims' economic organisation.



## **Commercial importance**

Algarve's wine tradition is not limited to cultivating and producing wine: the region has played an extremely important role in the commercial trades made during the Middle and Modern Ages.