

A photograph taken from the interior of a motorhome, looking out through a large window. The view outside shows a sunset over a body of water, with a horizon line of orange and yellow light. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds in shades of blue and grey. The motorhome's window frame and interior structure are visible in the foreground, framing the view. The overall mood is peaceful and scenic.

# BUMBLING ALONG EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR MOTORHOME





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# PORTUGAL





## Vila Do Bispo

## Friday 9 January

Today, Craig is up bright and early because we are heading off to a new port of call. He does get excited when we move on and I do know why, it is a challenge to explore a new place. Breakfast over and just in time, Mark aka Mr MAN walked by with Bessie. We shouted him over and wished him happy 55 birthday. After a quick catch up on the latest 'what a wonderful day' news we wished him well and said our goodbyes.

We tootled down towards the most southwesterly point of Portugal. The road was lined with massive cork trees. Eventually we arrived at today's highlight, a Lidl. We've not shopped for about 10 days as we wanted to get rid of all the food we bought for Christmas and New Year. Well, we are now quite empty. Motorhome cupboards don't stock as much as household cupboard, so it doesn't take long to empty. We parked up, got the picnic basket ready (Craig can take a while) and headed in to Lidl. Half way round and we heard a familiar voice, it was Tony...we don't know his real name but we called him Tony Robinson cause he sounds like him. After a catch up and chin wag we carried on down the isles. Several hours later we reappeared and stuffed Vin to max.





We planned on going to Sagres but I suggested to Craig we stop in this little town for a night. Vila do Bispo is nothing special just a tiny, typical Portuguese village but I just fancied having a look. The village has the usual sugar cubed white houses, plaza and cobbled streets. It is the first village where we have discovered an open, old fashioned washroom. Fully equipped with donkey stone in each sink! It has a beautiful 17th century church and a few tiny restaurants offering the usual crustacean, percebes. These ugly looking things are hand picked by the fisher men and served in all the restaurants. Which reminds me, we are parked just behind the fish mercado so should be good fun in the morning to watch them sort out their catch.



## Sagres

### Saturday 10 January

Sleepless in Bispo comes to mind. What a night. There must be 101 dogs in this place and once one started it set the blinking lot off. Barking, helping, scratching, howling, yapping, sniffing, growling, snarling, yelping, panting...ever bloody noise a dog can make and we had it. Then the dustmen arrived at some godly hour, followed Ned the horse, which confused the hell out of the cockerel and then finally to end the night damn moo moo as a herd of cows walked passed Vin..and it was only 6am.

Today we're gonna head towards Cabo do Vincente, the most south-westerly harbour in Europe. Along the way we will stop at a few beaches to see what they are like.

First stop, Cardoama. A very big bay beach with parking and restaurant but the road down is quiet narrow and off the beaten track, so I can't imagine this place getting busy, which can be a good thing. Second beach, Castelejo (above). Again very similar to the last but with a big castle looking rock just on the headland. Very pretty and not a soul around. The beach tacks after this got a wee bit small and bumpy for Vin, so we headed to the lighthouse. On route we stopped at Praia do Belisha and had a spot of lunch whilst watching a boogie board completion. No idea what they have to do but some cool moves by some young dudes.





The lighthouse was a bit of flop really. A bit like John O Groats and Land End, spoiled with bits of tat stalls selling end of Europe badges. The lighthouse was off bounds but you could go in its little museum and gadget shop. However, the cliffs around were stunning with sheer vertical drops of 100ft+ straight to the crashing waves. The odd fisher man balanced precariously on a rock waiting for the catch of the day (if you look closely at the pictures you can see them). The length of the line on some of the rods! It will take them an eternity to wind in if they catch anything. Russ would love it here the views of the coastline are stunning, think it's time to sprinkle a few more of his ashes here. As I did so, I couldn't help but think of this time last year when hope still existed. I took a walk and spent some time alone, life can sometimes be so cruel. I then started to think about my scuba diving buddy Vinny, he too would have loved it here but more because he shared a name with such a landmark. The Romans believed this to be the end of the world and every night the sun sank in to the water. Later the Spanish fled to this point with the remains of Saint Vincent and built a chapel. The chapel is no longer here but instead a 19th century lighthouse with the most powerful beam in Europe.

We did plan on stopping here tonight but it is very dusty and quite windy, so we headed back to Sagres. Sagres is famous for Prince Henry's Navigational base to which many explorer set sail and discover the new world. Once in Sagres, we searched for an Aire but struggled to find one. But we did pass a lovely marina, a central square with lots of Portuguese playing boules and plenty small bou-



tique hotels. Eventually we opted to stop on the car park near the Fortaleza. We were early hoping for an aire, so we could do our bedding, towels, Peanuts bedding and monthly spring clean. It's been a month since we set off and we both feel it would be good to shuffle a few things around. We somehow don't think it would be right to empty half the contents of our Motorhome on to a public car park. Knowing our luck folk would think its a car boot. Anyway, at sunset we had a ride up to the fort, which was much bigger than expected although damn ugly. Looked more like a prison than a fort. The sunset wasn't brilliant and we didn't stop too long because Peanut got too cold. Once back at Vin we got a little beam...the lighthouse was flashing its tackle. Nighttime once more.

Pottery shop on the way in to Sagres







Bispo Forest

Sunday 11 January

Today is cleaning day and sad as it may sound I am looking forward to it. We headed back to Vila de Bispo and set our stall up in the communal wash rooms. We scrubbed the bedding, seat covers, throws, dog bed, mats etc. if it looked slightly dirty it got washed. We went to town on washing but it was felt good.

We then filled up with water and headed off to find somewhere to park that we could dry all this washing. Not long and we found a perfect spot, a little forest just outside of Bispo. It was a beautiful spot. We hung all the washing out to dry and then I set to and scrubbed Vin until he sparkled like new and it went something like this...

WashscrubCLEAN**Polish**DUSTrinserinsewipe**sweep**shakepatWashscrubCLEAN**Polish**DUSTrinserinsewipe**sweep**shakepatWashscrubCLEAN**Polish**DUSTrinserinsewipe**sweep**shakepatWashscrubCLEAN**Polish**DUSTrinserinsewipe**sweep**shakepatWashscrubCLEAN**Polish**DUSTrinserinsewipe**sweep**shakepatWashscrubCLEAN**Polish**DUSTrinserinsewipe**sweep**shakepat

Craig disappeared in to the garage for fear of being scrubbed and Peanut hid n the foot well. I didn't care, it felt good to be squeaky clean with no dust or sand in sight. In the evening we went outside with the telescope and did a spot of stargazing. Such a beautiful, clear night we couldn't resist. Jupiter was so bright and even its little



moons were visible with the naked eye. We got the iPad star app and looked at stuff we'd never even herd of. Craig was lucky and spotted a shooting star, I was to busy getting neck ache in the other direction. A really pleasant end to the day but to top it, just before bed, we had a nice shower and climbed in to bed with clean sheets...sweet dreams x

Public washing facility  
in Bispo.







## Praia de Cabanas

## Monday 12 January

I went for my morning run whilst Craig had a shower. This little spot is really quite nice and definitely deserves a hidden gem award. The views from here over the hills towards the beach are spectacular. We had a little walk along the coastal path and wandered through what I can only describe as coastal gardens with wild flowers, bushes and variety of birds. We then found a small picnic area with brick bbq, benches and rope swing. The whole area is covered in distinct Castellejo fir trees, which are very pretty BUT they are covered in loads of procession caterpillar cocoons (see next page). Horrible, deadly little buggers.

We went to Vila de Bispo centre to post mums birthday card. We found the post office but they had shut early. I couldn't believe it! For the last week or so I have searched for a birthday card and not found one and now I have cobbled together a card the damn post office is shut. There were about a dozen people outside waving their hands and tutting at the inconvenience of closing early, I joined them in frustration. I exchanged a few tuts with a lovely English lady and when she realised I was trying to post a card for my mum, she said wait a minute. She nipped back to her car and brought me a stamp. Thanks to this lovely lady mum will now get a birthday card. We then nipped in to Lidl for a few fresh groceries along with a nostril cleanse...I was looking for some detergent and couldn't understand the label, so I opened the caps and sniffed the contents. I was doing





fine until I went full pelt on the ammonia bottle, which knocked me sick after it burnt all my nostril hairs. On the way back to Vin we passed Steptoe (he is the spit of the guy from Steptoe & Son) and the his friends. Ahhh that's right, the couple with an open fire in their camper. I bet it's nice and toasty but my god I bet it's dirty with all that ash and soot.

For lunch we stopped at a really nice cove called Praia de Ingrena (top right). We made fresh hummus - one plain and one with sweet pepper. It was so yummy especially sat under the palm trees watching the waves crash on the rocks. If you look closely at Craig you can see he is a builder through and through!

We tootled long to several bays and Craig found one right off the beaten track. It was one hell of a bumpy road and poor Vin took some right bashing. Even peanut was on edge especially when we crossed the tiny and extremely fragile bridge. Finally the reached the hidden beach and was shocked...it was amazing...if you were a communal drop outs. The first thing to greet us was a dirty old caravan with massive marijuana plants in the window. To some that might sound like heaven but that really isn't our bag at all. Every camper was full of people who'd clearly been here for a while and hadn't discovered the benefits of soap and water. They looked like they all needed a good scrub. We parked up and took a walk on the beach. It was a nice beach but what's that up there? We gawked up at the rocks and then realised there were nappies hanging on a line. Then





as we looked closer we realised there were people up there living in the middle of the rocks. They were all huddled up together. We had real mixed emotions. We didn't know whether to feel for them living in such conditions or was it a life by choice? Who knows but we certainly felt like two complete spare parts. We stuck out like sore thumbs and so got back in Vin and left as quick as we'd arrived.

Eventually, we found a quiet beach cove, Praia de Cabanas. Apart from a wannabe surfer there was no else there. A gentle stroll at sunset before shutting shop and watching another episode of Prison Break.





## Porto do Mos

## Tuesday 13 January

In the morning, we did lots of talking about where we wanted to go, our route around Europe, our aspirations etc. After two hours of visiting every country and traveling 50,000 miles we were none the wiser. We plan to stay in the Algarve until the weather picks up and as we are in this region we will obviously do Spain. The question is, do we go slow and meander in and out of Spain or do we go a faster, hug the coastline, meander in land as and when but ultimately head to Finland and Norway for summer? Ummmmmm too many choices! For now we will tootle around the Algarve and be thankful for the warm weather.

Next stop Luz. We struggled to park with all the villas and chalet complexes but eventually we parked on a street just on the perimeter. Luz is full of alley ways and winding streets, so we decided to walk rather than cycle in to town. After an overcast start to the day the sun was just starting to peep out from the clouds and it felt so nice. The beach here is pretty deep and offset with massive sheer cliffs, making Luz a very attractive place to sit and watch the world go by.

We strolled along the palm fringed promenade and chuckled away to ourselves. First at the Englishman sat on a rock, trying to read his morning newspaper but every time he got to read the first line the wind picked up and wrapped the newspaper around his head. And if that wasn't funny enough the moist sea air slightly damped his face





allowing the ink to stick all over it, so he looked a dirty mess. You shouldn't laugh but we couldn't help it. That put us in good spirits and our journey of chuckles just got better. Luz is full of retired British people and so the promenade is full on little English cafes and bars with inviting terraces. Billboards everywhere tempting you to pig out on food that reminds you of home. Us Brits are so easily pleased and the simpler the delight the more pleased we are. Tea cakes, crumpets, scones, slice of cake and a nice pot of tea. I am sure we are the only people in the world who get completely giddy and overly excited at the thought of scone, jam and clotted cream. I love the facial expression too, a sort of.. well I shouldn't but go on then face. We chucked

away as dear old couples waddled to the cafes, linking each other and clutching their sticks. We are not sure what tempted them to their chosen cafe...a familiar face, a doily or today's special of jam roly poly and custard. It's good to people watch. As we walked further we found the ice cream brigade. These guys had clearly eaten at home but still felt they deserved a little treat. One thing they all had in common...the ability to get ice cream all over their face and smile like they have no idea. Classic.

After a belly full of laughter we carried on passed the curry house, the kebab hut, the Chinese takeaway, the pub and the chippy. Jeez this place is



more English than England! No wonder it is popular with the Brits.

We couldn't stay overnight in Luz, so we moved a few kilometers down to Porto da Mos. Quiet little cove right at the bottom of a steep hill and 5 star beach complex.

Vin taking pride of  
place at Porto Do Mos







## Praia da Rocha

## Wednesday 14 January

Up bright and early and to our surprise it was quite overcast. Whats this? Cloud! What is it doing here! There is nothing for it on a day like today, off to the supermarket and petrol station. We set off to Portimao and first stop, GPL (or LPG if in UK). We have two gas cylinders that holds 42 litres of GPL, which we use for heating, hot water, fridge, freezer, BBQ and cooking. The two cylinders last around 3 weeks, so very cheap to run. Once we filled up with GPL we headed to Jumbo fuel station to fill up with diesel. They have the cheapest fuel on the Algarve except on Saturday and Sunday when every petrol station increase their prices to make a few extra cents...apparently 80% of people wash their cars and fill up at weekends! Today, BP are offering €1.16, Cespa €1.15 but Jumbo are definitely the best at €1.04. We filled Vin right up. Then we tried to get in to the Jumbo supermarket but we couldn't find the entrance. We drove around and around but nothing, so we gave up and moved on. We parked on Lidl but ventured across the road to Continental. Felt like we were back in Italy with a supermarket right in the middle of a shopping centre. We browsed the shelves looking for something different and exciting but nothing much. Just more the of the same in different packaging until...Aaaah Craig have you seen this? Its a pigs dick. They were just there amongst the pork chops, bacon and pork fillet. No warning or anything. Surely to god they should be on the top shelf or the porn section. Craig didn't believe me until I showed him the one with a full on erection and hairy balls. How the hell does it stay..OK enough of





these kinking pigs, we need to get back to Lidl for some normal stuff. With that shock we scurried off and just as we were leaving we bumped in to Roger the cabin boy. Hey old chap, how are you? We had a chat and he filled us in on all the births, deaths and marriages and of course, the weekly forecast. Back on Lidl tarmac, safe ground or so we thought when this woman walks over to Craig and smiles at him. She was all gum and one tooth. She started to speak to him in Portuguese. Craig obviously tried to explain he didn't understand but she didn't care, she kept babbling on at him. She then continued to bend down and start to measure the grass with her thumb, all the time talking to Craig. I had to walk away, I just couldn't control my laughter. Craig just kept smiling and struggling his shoulders then all of a sudden she stood up and flung her arms around him. She declared her undying love for him and tried to kiss him. His face was a picture, he stood there back arched with his arms flapping in the air. Get off me woman. I was two double laughing, I couldn't help it. Eventually, he peeled her arms off him and escaped in to the safe compound of the Lidl vestibule.

Portimao is just a network on one-way streets, its a nightmare. We found a few parking spots but all of them clearly showed NO motorhome parking, so we drove straight to the aire at Praia do Rocha. The aire was quite full but no wonder, it is only €2.50 for the day including water, wifi and showers. How cheap is that! It is right on the marina too. So not only cheap but in a pretty location. Thats gotta be the bargain the of the day! We found our spot and then pulled out the chairs and table. Peanut had a pickle and a stretch. That reminds me, he's been stretching funny all day. He keeps walking around, stretching his back and dragging his legs then occasionally he arches his back. He is not in pain but it is weird especially because he is doing it all the time. We'll have to keep our eye on him but for now, I will just tuck him on the chair and see if he settles down...what do you think?





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## ROUTE SO FAR









# OUR TOP 10

- 1. Seville
- 2. Salamanca
- 3. Alvor
- 4. Lagos



# OUR HIDDEN GEMS

- 1. Praia Do Arrifes
- 2. Prais Do Amado
- 3. Vila Do Bispo (forest)