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Portugal has always had a reputation as one of the best holiday destinations in Europe. Whether you like basking in the sun, playing golf or gorging on delicious food (or all three), Portugal has been exceeding the expectations of holidaymakers from around the globe for years.

But a relatively little known fact about Portugal is that it possesses some of the very finest surf conditions in Europe. The West and South coasts of Portugal are perfectly placed to pick up the breezes and swells from the North Atlantic, and the range of reefs and depths offer conditions to suit surfers of all levels of skill and ability.

If you're a fan of surfing you should definitely mark Portugal on your map of destinations to visit, whether you go to just watch one of the several professional surf tournaments that take place on Portugal's beaches or to experience the sheer bliss of catching an unspoiled breaker that's rolled from over 3000 miles of the ocean.

As Portugal is blessed with a wide variety of surf conditions, it's a great place for all surfing levels – whether you're an amateur or an experienced wave rider you're sure to find the kind of surf conditions that you're looking for.

Lagos in particular is a great destination to visit for your Portuguese surf experience. Not only do Lagos's beaches have the warmest water in Portugal and some absolutely breathtaking vistas, they also offer a great variety of surf conditions, from gentle waves to fierce reef breaks.

As the number of surf pilgrims heading for Portugal rises, more and more of them are electing to stay at surf camps when they take their surfing holidays, because compared to standard package holidays they allow a much more dedicated and rewarding surf experience.

By staying at a surf camp you not only get access to professional instructors with unparalleled local knowledge, but you also get the chance to interact with other likeminded adventurers and thrill seekers.

Surf camps allow you to access some of the best equipment (assuming you haven't brought your own) and instructors around, as well as offer you a real flexibility as to the kind of holiday you take. If you're a group of mixed surfing ability you can spend your days at different breaks yet still all enjoy a holiday together. Whether you're a lone wolf or a party animal you can enjoy exactly the kind of vacation you want.

If you're interested in surf camps, one of the best in Lagos is run by a company called Extreme Algarve (www.extremealgarve.com) who has a camp set up in a beautiful location near the centre of Lagos equidistant from the bustling bars and restaurants of the town and the beautiful local surf breaks. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced surfer the company's staff will be able to take you to the breaks of your choice and provide you with all the equipment and advice you may need. Their facilities mean that whether you want to spend your evenings bobbing in the Jacuzzi, chilling in your room or partying with your fellow guests, you'll have a surfing holiday you're unlikely to ever forget.

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