

São Lourenço Trail



Access bridge to the Ancão beach, at the beginning of the trail

Civil Parish: Almancil

Municipality: Loulé

Location: Quinta do Lago

How to get there: head towards Almancil on the N125, then turn to Quinta do Lago and follow the signs to the parking lot of Quinta do Lago beach.

Type: walking and cycling

Circular trail: no, linear

Distance: 3,3 km (there and back)

Average duration: 1h30m

Cumulative elevation gain: 55 metres D+

Type of path: dirt paths

When to visit: all year

Approval: no

Signposted: no signage, but there are some information billboards and directional arrows.

Specific features: the trail is located in the Ria Formosa Natural Park (PNRF) and the Ria Formosa/Castro Marim Natura 2000 Site.

Points of interest: wet areas - salt marshes and freshwater lakes, marine birdlife. This is one of the most interesting trails to get to know the fauna and flora of Ria Formosa.

Owners: public paths

Responsible Party: Infraquinta - Empresa De Infraestruturas Da Quinta Do Lago, E.M.

Remarks: the trail may sometimes be flooded, since the water levels of the salt marsh are affected by the tides. Be wary of stray balls when walking near the golf course.



Sultana bird, or western swamphen, an aquatic bird, symbol of the Ria Formosa Natural Park



Freshwater lagoon, part of the São Lourenço golf

The trail encompasses the typical habitats of Ria Formosa, affording the possibility of spotting marine species of birds.

A – Along the path between the salt marsh and the golf course, on the silt banks at low tide, you can watch the *Uca tangeri* fiddler crab busying around, as well as many species of waders (e.g. the pied avocet and the black-winged stilt) and, occasionally, fishermen catching bivalve molluscs. By the water, with an attentive eye, you can see one of the many of the river's *olheiros* (freshwater upwelling) bubbling. Typical succulents can be seen here, adapted to the soaked saline soil. In drier land, the *Limoniastrum monopetalum*, a bush endemic to the south coast, displays its exuberant lilac flowering.

B – Underneath the stone pine groves there are plants like the mastic tree, the cistus, the sage-leaved rock-rose and aromatics like the thyme, the Spanish lavender and the Mediterranean dwarf palm, the only palm tree native to Europe. Birds like the azure-winged magpie or the Eurasian hoopoe are common and, with some luck, you may

even be able to spot a chameleon, a reptile adapted to the Algarve's coastal pine woods.

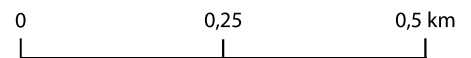
C – This freshwater lake, with its marshy vegetation (mainly cattails and reeds), is one of the most interesting places in Algarve for birdwatching. You can find the Western swamphen (symbol of the PNRF) and other rails, as well as ducks, herons, grebes, seagulls and common terns, among others. The observatory for birdwatching offers a good view over the lake. During the summer you might also see freshwater turtles native to Portugal: the Mediterranean pond turtle and the European pond turtle.

D – Here, with a backdrop of the large carob trees so common in the Mediterranean, you can see the ruins of fish salting tanks (*cetárias*), evidence of the Roman presence in the region. These tanks were used to make *garum*, a sauce made from the maceration of fish and crustaceans, much appreciated by the Romans.

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1 Start of the trail
37° 01' 41.76" N 8° 01' 15.72" W



 Trail

