

The Algarve

Cyneticum, Hispania Ulterior, Lusitania, Al Gharb al Andalus

The Algarve region represents the first modern civilisations of Portugal. Ancient Celts settled also in Lacobriga (Lagos) in 1899 BC. Coastal Ports were established by the Phoenicians after Cadiz was settled in 1000 BC, in Portimao, Tavira, Lagos and even as far as Lisbon. The Greek Cynetes or Conii were established in Algarve by the 6th. Century, giving the region the name Cyneticum. When the Kingdom of Portugal was formed in 1139, Algarve was its own nominal kingdom until 1910.

Conii/Cynetes - Cyneticum

The capital of the Conii was Conistorgis, (probably means "City of the Conii"). Pax Julia (Beja) is possibly founded over the ruins of Conistorgis. Other Conii towns (Oppida) included Ipses (Alvor), Cilpe (Silves), Ossonoba (near Faro), Balsa (Santa Luzia – Tavira), Baesuris (Castro Marim; Iberian-type mint: Baesuri) and Myrtilis (Mértola).

Phoenicians/Carthaginians

A powerful urban aristocracy of Phoenician and Turdetanian or Turduli colonists dominated all the trade, fishing, and shipbuilding in these same coastal settlements from the 4th Century BC, until the Carthaginians occupied the Cyneticum and founded the Punic colonies of Portus Hannibalis (near Alvor) and Portus Magonis (Portimão) in 550 BC. Lagos was established in the 3rd Century by Celtic tribes from the north.



Roman Algarve - Lusitania, part of Hispania Ulterior

The Algarve region came under Roman control after Fabius Maximus Servilianus defeated the Lusitanians and the Turduli during the Lusitanian War, and was absorbed into the Roman Republic in the second century BC. "Cyneticum" became integrated into Hispania Ulterior and into Lusitania afterwards, being under Roman influence for around 600 years (from 200 BC till 410 AD), and thus adopted Latin as the official language, as well as Roman cultural, political, architectural, religious and economic principles. Importantly, they brought vines and fruit trees to Portugal...

As a passageway between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean, connecting countless Roman ports to several provinces (in Hispania, Gaul and Britannia), the region experienced a great level of prosperity. There was an expansion of trading and commercial capabilities, mainly from the production and commercialization of highly sought olive oil and garum, both Roman staples and sought throughout the Roman empire. It was shipped from Lagos and Balsa (Tavira).

Castro Marim, Tavira/Balsa, Sao Bras, Vilamoura, Lagos, Estoi, Portimao/Alvor, Olhao. all have Roman remains. The main Roman route south from Evora, via Beja and Mertola, followed the Gardania river to Baesuris (Castro Marim) and its major salt flats.

The coastal route was – Baesuris, Balsa, Ossonoba, Cilpes, Portus Magonis, Ipses, Lacobriga, known today as Castro Marim, Tavira, Faro, Silves, Portimao, Alvor, Lagos.

Post-Roman / Pre-Moor Algarve

The Algarve region came under Visigoth control around 500, conquered by the Byzantines 552 – 571, then recaptured and held until 711.

Moorish Algarve

The Moors conquered Lagos in 716 (renamed Zawaia). Santa Maria (Faro, settlement of the knights), or Ossonoba, now Faro, was the fortified capital, before Silves became the capital (9-12th Century). The Portuguese Reconquista pushed the Moors south to the Algarve in the 12th Century, Silves and Tavira captured in 1241, and finally the whole of Algarve was captured in 1249 with the fall of Faro. During the conquest of Silves in 1189, Sancho I first used the title "King of Algarve" and "King of Portugal and Silves". King

