



# Villascapes

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Booking Procedure:

We hope you enjoy browsing our website. If you have any queries or wish to make a booking, please phone this office on 020 8579 2854, or EMAIL us – [nichola@villascapes.co.uk](mailto:nichola@villascapes.co.uk) and we will hold an option for an agreed number of days pending receipt of your booking form and the deposit. We are regularly updating our programme, so if you see something of the type you are looking for, but require something slightly different, do check with us, as we may have an additional property to offer you. It may also be possible to provide more photographs of a particular property by email, if requested and available.

The rental period is normally a minimum of one week, although shorter breaks and long weekends may be possible, particularly between October and March. Flexible breaks such as 9 and 10 day bookings may also be accommodated particularly outside of the peak season. Just let us know, and we will see what we can do.

### Pricing and Payments:

All prices are quoted per villa or per apartment per week unless otherwise indicated.

Once we have received your 25% deposit and booking form, we will issue you with a confirmation invoice indicating the accommodation and services you have booked, and payment dates. The balance due date is 8 weeks prior to departure. If you book within 8 weeks of departure, full payment is due. On receipt of your balance, your travel portfolio with directions, maps, local information and local manager's contact details will be sent to you. Please notify us if you have not received this information within a week of your departure.

### Change-over Day:

For Portugal - Vale do Lobo rentals, bookings generally commence and end on a THURSDAY, or in some cases a SATURDAY. For Val Verde, Quinta do Lago, Dunas, Parque da Floresta, Praia d'el Rey, there is some flexibility on the change-over day. Due to the variations, please check specific dates with us first. For Italy - The change-over day for all apartment rentals is a SATURDAY. The rooms at the Castello di Meleto may be booked on different days, subject to availability.

### Access Times:

Generally speaking, in Portugal, you are able to gain access to the property booked between 2.00 and 4.00 pm on your day of arrival. You are requested to vacate the property by 10 am on your day of departure. Exact timings depend on the property booked. We always try to be as flexible as possible, and depending on other clients' arrival/departure times, slight variations to the above may be accommodated. However please note that these timings are specified in order to allow the maids enough time to clean the properties in between incoming and outgoing guests. Your understanding of this is appreciated. In Italy, the access time is usually between 5.00 and 8.00 pm on your day of arrival, and departure is by 10.00 am

### Occupancy:

Each property specifies the number of people able to occupy the property at any one time. ONLY the people mentioned on the booking form may occupy the property, unless there are later additions added within the permitted number, and agreed by us. Unfortunately we cannot accept bookings for groups of young people on their own, unless previously agreed.

### Assistance Overseas/Local Management:

Each property is privately owned, has been inspected by the Company, unless otherwise stated, and is looked after by the owner's appointed local manager whose responsibility it is to maintain the property to a high standard. Each manager (English or English speaking) is only a local phone-call away, and is there to be contacted in the event of any problem or for other assistance you may require. Contact details will be given to you in the travel notes sent to you before you travel.

### Breakage Deposit:

This is held against damage or loss occurring during your tenancy of a particular property, and will be returned to you, less any monies claimed by the accommodation owner/manager if applicable, within 10 days of the end of your holiday (see booking conditions). The amount of deposit taken for Portuguese rentals varies from £100 for an apartment or village house to £150-£300 for a villa with pool, depending on the property booked. Obviously accidents do happen, so if you do break something, please either replace it, or report it to the local manager. Ideally all breakages should be paid for locally, but if not, the costs involved will be deducted from the breakage deposit we have received from you.

In Italy, when you arrive you will need to hand over a breakage deposit to the owner or his representative. This is then returned to you at the end of your holiday, less any breakages or damage which the owner deems necessary.

### Services Included:

The rental rates include charges for gas, water and electricity (unless otherwise stated). House linen, including sheets and towels, is also provided, but you will need to bring pool and beach towels with you.

In Portugal, sheets are changed weekly and towels, twice weekly, unless otherwise stated. Irons and ironing boards are always provided. Where air-conditioning is not available in a particular property, mobile, free-standing or overhead fans will be available. Maid service is also included, generally 5 days per week, but the number of days depends on the property (see individual property details). The maid's duties comprise general cleaning, bed making, and weekly linen change, but not generally personal laundry, washing up and cooking. It may be possible to organise and pay for extra maid service locally to include these extra duties should you require them. You will be provided with soap and a supply of toilet paper for your arrival. After that you will need to purchase such items with the rest of your self-catering requirements.

Garden and pool maintenance is also included where applicable. This is often carried out early in the morning, to minimise disruption to you.

In Italy, gas, water and electricity charges are also included (unless otherwise stated in the property details). House linen, including sheets and towels, is provided but you will need to bring pool/beach towels with you. Maid service during your stay is usually not included, but can be organised and paid for on request. A final cleaning charge is payable locally to the owners or their representative (see individual property details). Air-conditioning, if available, is always an extra charge.

### Website Accuracy:

Please note that all details contained on this website were correct at the time of going to press. The vast majority of our properties are privately owned, and individually furnished. We visit all the properties on a regular basis, and endeavour to provide an accurate picture of the properties with both interior and exterior photos and description. However properties are obviously updated from time to time or furnishings are changed by the owners. Equipment may also be removed or replaced. We will obviously inform you of any major changes, but cannot be held responsible for the more minor ones. Please note that a particular villa may be more expensive than others due to its location (i.e. near the beach, or on a particular resort) rather than due to its interior furnishings.

### Facilities - Equipment, Plumbing, Water and Electricity Supplies:

Obviously certain facilities and pieces of equipment require maintenance, and may have to be temporarily removed, or power supplies may fail from time to time. The electricity supplies in Portugal and Italy are not always as constant as our own. There may be the occasional cut, especially after a storm. It may also 'trip' off if too many appliances are used at one time. If this happens, check the villa book for details of the fuse box, and reset the switches once some appliances have been turned off. Equally Portuguese and Italian plumbing is not always as efficient as ours, and cannot cope with nappy or other such disposal. We cannot be held responsible for unforeseen happenings, but should they occur and you cannot resolve the problem, please contact your local villa manager who will do their best to remedy the situation where possible. Water is generally safe to drink, but most people prefer drinking bottled water. Please note that as Portugal, in particular, has a small annual rainfall, water shortages may occasionally occur.

**Kitchens:**

All the properties have a kitchen providing a fridge/freezer, an oven/hob and cooking utensils, as well as crockery and cutlery sufficient for the number of guests the property accommodates. All our properties in Portugal and some of those in Italy have washing machines for the benefit of our clients, although the maids may also use them for the house laundry. Most of our properties also have a dishwasher and a microwave. Where this is the case, this is indicated in the individual property descriptions.

**Televisions - Satellite and Cable Networks:**

Each of the Portugal properties featured on our website has a television, which may be linked to cable, laser cable or satellite networks. Actual channels received will vary, so if this is of particular importance to you, please talk to us before booking. Please note that as there is no 'formal' agreement between Portugal and service providers, the service may be withdrawn at any time. We cannot absolutely guarantee or be held responsible for any specific channels that may or may not be provided. In Italy, not all the properties have a television, and the service available tends to be more limited.

**Electricity:**

This is 220 volt with continental twin plugs. You will need to bring an adaptor if bringing items to use from the UK.

**Telephones/Internet connections:**

Many of the properties in Portugal have telephones. The telephone may be limited to making local calls and receiving incoming calls only, or it may be on a meter, checked at the beginning and at the end of your stay, with you paying locally for any calls you have made. Where there is no meter, but outgoing/international calls may be made, a minimum deposit of £50 will be requested from you locally. This deposit will then be refunded to you on receipt of the telephone bill, which could be up to 12 weeks after your return. If you do require use of the telephone, please check with us as to which system applies to the property you have rented. Please be aware that phone calls (particularly back to the UK) are generally more expensive than in the UK, and in many cases it may be preferable to use your mobile phone if you have one. With regards to the internet, it may be possible to use the telephone line in a particular villa as mentioned above, and again a deposit will be taken locally. It will be probably cheaper, if a little less convenient, to use local internet cafes, such as the one in Almancil or else in Faro or Lagos, (depending on where you are staying).

In our Italian properties, telephones are not widely available.

**Pool Fencing:**

We have found that some families with young children prefer to have the added safety benefit of pool fencing. This is available at certain villas in Portugal - Vale do Lobo and Quinta do Lago, for example, as noted on the details of those properties. At most Val Verde properties, it is also possible to hire a fence to be put around the pool (extra charge).

**Extras:**

Cots, high-chairs, and extra beds are available to hire at a small extra cost. In some cases, stair-gates can also be provided. Please note that most of the cots for hire are travel cots. Generally cot linen will be provided, but please check with us at time of booking. Additionally in Portugal where the property does not already provide such equipment, it may be possible to hire video recorders, CD players and DVD players, although in all cases you will need to bring your own CDs, DVDs, videos etc.

**Barbecues:**

Unless otherwise stated, most properties have a barbecue, either mobile, or built-in. It is not within the maid's duties to clean these, so we do ask that clients leave them in a clean state.

**Air-conditioning/Swimming Pools and Pool Heating:**

Unless otherwise stated, air-conditioning and pool heating are extra costs. Pool heating includes a pre-arrival warm up period. Pool temperatures will of course vary according to the exterior temperature so no specific temperature can be guaranteed. Where available, it is of course worth drawing a pool cover across the pool at night. The pool sizes in our descriptions are approximate as many are irregular or kidney shaped. We would strongly suggest that NO diving takes place. Pools are checked and cleaned and a pool net is provided for clients to remove any leaves that may appear in between times.

**Child Friendly Villas and Villas Suitable for the Disabled:**

Obviously young children need to be monitored wherever you are, but some villas have fully fenced and gated gardens, and some have fenced pools, making them perhaps more of interest. If this is something on which you would like specific information, please let us know.

Equally if there is a member of your party who has some form of disability, we have some properties in Portugal which are all on one level with few if any steps, and some are wheel-chair friendly. A local company also hires specific equipment for the disabled, so we hope to be able to assist you with any enquiries you may have.

**Food Parcel:**

You can order one of these on your booking form. It is useful for tiding you over if you have a late arrival time. The food parcel is provided by the local villa manager to whom payment should be made based on the itemised receipt provided. Generally speaking, the parcel contents include mineral water, milk, bread rolls, butter, eggs, marmalade, fruit, tea, coffee, sugar, salt and pepper, and matches. Cleaning materials, washing up liquid and rubbish bags are usually provided free of charge.

**Holiday Insurance Cover:**

It is very important that you protect yourself against liability in the event of cancellation, and to cover medical expenses, repatriation and losses on holiday. You will find details on our site of a travel insurance scheme we recommend, valid only for those resident in the UK, but if you do not take this, you must provide details of alternative insurance of equal or higher cover. Although some credit cards do offer some protection, please check as such cover is often limited.

**Passports and Visas:**

A full 10-year passport is required for each adult and child travelling abroad. There are no longer any family passports being issued. The authorities recommend that it is valid for at the very least the duration of your holiday, but preferably for at least 6 months after you return from holiday. Do make sure that your passports and air tickets are in the same name. If you are newly married, and your passport is in your previous name, please take your marriage certificate with you. Visas are not required for British citizens visiting Portugal or Italy. However if you hold a non-British passport, you should check with the appropriate consulate in the country in which you are resident to confirm the present visa and inoculation requirements if applicable. The passport office is contactable on 0870 5210410.

**Flights:**

There is a very good choice of scheduled and low cost airlines serving both Portugal and Italy such as BA, Air Portugal, Monarch, Thomsonfly, Ryanair (Italy) and Easyjet (Portugal). They all have websites with full flight timings, prices and availability. Generally speaking these days, the sooner you book, the better, in terms of getting the best prices.

**Car Hire/Taxi and Minibus transfers:**

We have negotiated competitive rates with a good local company who will provide you with your hire car at the airport itself and not a transfer away down the airport road as with many companies. In Portugal, if you prefer, we can organise a taxi or minibus transfer for you from the airport to your particular property and then have your car delivered to you after that. Return taxi/minibus transfers and car collection are also available. All drivers must be in possession of a full driving licence and by law whilst driving, all drivers must carry further identification (a passport for UK citizens) and car hire documentation. As in most continental countries you must drive on the RIGHT hand side of the road.

**Local Wildlife:**

As with most hot southern European countries, there may be the occasional problem with unwanted visits from ants, mosquitoes, and other insects. Please take care to cover and clear up any food or crumbs, an obvious attraction.

**Building Work:**

As with all countries, building work in Portugal and Italy is sporadic and can start at any time. Even in well-established resorts such as many of the ones we feature, a villa owner may suddenly decide to renovate his property. Likewise local councils may start roadworks with little or no notice. If we are made aware of any such disturbances, we will contact you straight away. You may then choose to change villas (and if the new villa is more expensive, pay the additional costs) or may cancel with a full refund. If building work starts during your holiday we will try to move you in resort but this may obviously be difficult, especially in peak season. We will however do all that is practically possible to do.

**Problems during your stay:**

We obviously want you to have an enjoyable trouble-free holiday, but occasionally with the best will in the world, problems may arise. If this is the case, please contact the local villa manager immediately (their details will have been provided to you in your travel notes and will also be available in the villa book in the property), and they will endeavour to resolve any issues there may be. Please note we cannot accept complaints made on your return if you have not first made the complaint locally in resort, allowing the manager/owner an opportunity to rectify the problem. Problems can usually be sorted quite easily in this way, allowing you to continue to enjoy your holiday.

**Security:**

Please observe the same level of security as you do at home. Do not leave doors and windows unlocked whilst you are away from the property and even if in the property if you are by the pool at the back, it is best to keep any front windows closed too. Roll down the shutters whilst you are out, and if applicable use the safe in your property to store any valuables. It is best to leave items of great or sentimental value at home. Thefts from tourists can occur here as anywhere, so don't let it happen to you.

**Currency/Credit cards:**

Portugal and Italy have the EURO as its unit of currency. Credit cards, particularly in Portugal, are widely accepted.

**Bank/Payment Details:**

All cheques relating to your booking should be made payable to 'Villascapes Ltd'. Please note any charges incurred in the negotiation of foreign cheques, euro cheques, etc will have to be charged to your account.