



Algarve Resumes Tourism Business and Welcomes Visitors

13th May 2020: The Algarve in southern Portugal is open for tourists this summer and will be welcoming international visitors once travel restrictions are lifted.

João Fernandes, President of Algarve Tourism comments: “The country was quick to adopt preventive measures and extensive testing at an early stage to mitigate the spread of the pandemic, and as a result we have had much fewer cases than other European countries. Furthermore, the Algarve is one of the least affected regions in Portugal, and so we are now in a position to carefully plan a gradual reopening of its economic and social activity”.

Timelines

- Golf courses, marinas and car hire businesses are already open with strict health protocols
- Hotels - Over a third of the region’s hotels are open already, by June 75% are expected to open and by July most will be open.
- Beaches will open in June, with health regulations and procedures in place
- Restaurants will open on 18th May with 50% capacity restrictions
- Water parks will open in June and July

In April the region, in conjunction with Portugal Tourism, launched a “Safe & Clean” stamp, that certifies and gives training to businesses who comply with new hygiene measures.

João Fernandes says that “As a result of a large effort by the national authorities, public and private sector agents in the region to define the best practices in terms of safety and security,

the Algarve is ready to restart its tourist activity. Sector agents in the region are strongly committed to reopening their businesses in a gradual, responsible and safe manner.”

Rules are being defined for the access of beaches, which will be issued by the Portuguese Environment Agency shortly. They will allow the use of these space, whilst guaranteeing safety for visitors and workers.

Fernandes says: “It will be nothing that prevents a vacationer from enjoying a nice sunny day on the sand or an appetizing dip in the sea, but taking care of the necessary rules applicable to the spaces and collaborators supporting the beaches (parking, access, help stations, restaurants, bars or umbrellas and sunbeds).”

With regards to other key attractions in the region Zoomarine will open in June, Slide & Splash mid-June and Aquashow water park in July. Parks capacity will however be reduced with compulsory use of masks in closed areas (restaurants, stores). The dates may change according to the evolution of the pandemic and new recommendations.

Visitors will find measures in place at Faro International Airport on arrival , in accordance with Health Entities and the National Civil Aviation Authority instructions, which aim to ensure the protection of passengers and staff. These include temperature measurement at arrivals, hand sanitizers at all points of the terminals, signage and disclosure of the use of a mask at the terminal, warnings for the need for extra hygiene care and the need for physical distance; installation of personal protections in service counters (acrylic and glass), reinforcement of cleaning of spaces and equipment with hospital-level disinfectants and use of UV equipment, among other measures.

Public transport is subject to measures that isolate drivers from contact with passengers and the use of masks is mandatory for everyone.

Fernandes says: “The priority now is to guarantee visitors, workers and residents in general that their safety is our first concern. In this sense, the Algarve is very well prepared, as attested by the rapid adhesion of companies to the “Clean & Safe” seal. From yesterday the Algarve had had 271 hotels, 176 tourist entertainment companies and 177 travel agencies, duly certified by this initiative of Turismo de Portugal, who pioneered this worldwide. We are also finalizing a Manual of Good Practices “Algarve Clean & Safe”, a document

complementary to the seal and that gathers all the specific operating measures for the different tourist activities, in accordance with the rules of the General Directorate of Health and existing international guidelines, which should be presented at the end of this week. ”

The question of the reopening of borders and the resumption of air traffic is the main factor that still remains undefined and that prevents the return of tourist activity in full. “This is an issue that obviously affects many countries, not just Algarve. All major European tourist destinations are keenly awaiting the EU guidelines on this matter. However, the Algarve has received some positive signs. Several international airlines and tour operators are showing great interest in restarting their operations for the region, some of which already have information on their websites and are taking holiday reservations” says Fernandes.

The number of Covid-19 cases since January in Algarve has been just 340, much less than most other southern European countries.

Notes to Editor:

The Algarve is the southernmost region in Portugal framed by a 200km coastline. Known for its promise of more than 300 days of sun per year, the region is home to award-winning beaches, authentic gastronomy and a range of outdoor activities from surfing to cycling, walking, and birdwatching that attracts thrill seekers, nature lovers alike. The Algarve’s 16 municipalities offer traditional and distinct experiences that allow for visitors to discover its rich heritage as a region.

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