# COMPARISON OF TRAIN SERVICE BETWEEN LISBON AND THE ALGARVE

# WINTER 1981 /1982 AND WINTER 2026/2027

For the current Lisbon – Algarve timetable, go to
https://www.cp.pt/info/documents/d/cp/comboio-porto-lisboa-faro-lagos-v-r-s-antonio

For the current Algarve line timetable, go to
https://www.cp.pt/info/documents/d/cp/comboios-regionais-vila-real-s-antonio-lagos

**Updated 3rd November 2026**

## 1981 / 1982

The line was not electrified in 1981 / 1982 nor had the bridge over the river into Lisbon been built. Trains from and to the Algarve used the Barreiro station south of the river. Lisbon itself was a 30 minute ferry ride to / from Barreiro.

Trains Barrieiro to Algarve. Times in italics are connections. Not all stops shown!

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barriero leave | 0715 | 0850 | 1505 | 1715 | 1842 | 1920 | 2305 |
| Tunes arrive | 1325 | 1220 | 1747 | 2027 | 2201 | 2302 | 0518 |
| Albufeira arrive | 1425 | 1234 | 1758 | 2040 | - | 2315 | 0531 |
| Faro arrive | *1502* | 1307 | 1829 | 2123 | - | 2355 | 0612 |
| Tavira arrive | *1550* | 1340 | *1921* | 2215 | - | 0034 | 0704 |
| Vila Real de Santo António arrive | *1632* | 1415 | *2000* | 2243 | - | 0105 | 0753 |
| Lagos arrive | 1503 | 1338 | *1900* | *2230* | 2318 | 0025 | 0705 |

The 0850, 1920 and 2305 divided at Tunes, one part for VRSA and one for Lagos.
The 1715 ran only in summer. The 1842 ran on Fridays only and was direct to Lagos.
The 2305 was a regional train, seats only and I should imagine not the most comfortable of journeys!

Trains Algarve to Barreiro

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lagos leave | 0727 | *1313* | 1510 | 1540 | *1640* | *1900* | 2145 |
| Vila Real de Santo António leave | 0650 | 1255 | - | 1340 | 1555 | *1807* | 2100 |
| Tavira leave | 0717 | 1339 | - | 1417 | 1631 | *1847* | 2139 |
| Faro leave | 0805 | 1424 | - | 1502 | 1705 | 1930 | 2230 |
| Albufeira leave | 0844 | 1505 | - | 1541 | 1741 | 2000 | 2314 |
| Tunes leave | 0858 | 1515 | 1630 | 1656 | 1756 | 2008 | 2337 |
| Barriero arrive | 1227 | 1813 | 1954 | 2333 | 2140 | 2250 | 0550 |

The 1255 ran on Sundays only and not during summer.
The 1510 from Lagos ran only on Sundays

The 1227, 2140, 2333 and 0550 arrivals at Barreiro had through carriages from both Lagos and VRSA. Trains joined at Tunes.

There was also a train from Lagos to Évora at 0637 via Tunes and a ramble via Funcheira, Beja and Casa Branca, eventually arriving in Évora at 1327. The return working ran to Faro, leaving Évora at 1830, arriving in Faro at 0058.

# LOCAL SERVICE ALONG THE ALGARVE LINE 1981 / 2

**Notes**

The line was not electrified. After many delays, electric trains finally began running on the whole length of Algarve line on 19th July 2026. A total of 22 stations have been closed since 1981. Many of the trains in 1981 stopped at most of them, therefore journeys were often much slower than today. Only major stops shown. VRSA = Vila Real de Santo António. This was the Guadiana station, down by the ferry to Ayamonte (Spain). The Guadiana station was closed when the road to the docks (also since closed) was built across the tracks. Trains now use the other station, 1 km from the town centre. 0600 – these trains in 1981 ended or started at the 'other' station. So far as I can tell, all trains ran daily. The typeface in the original is at about 6pt!

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lagos | from | from | | 0637 | 0727 | 0815 | 0950 | | 1135 | 1313 | 1435 |
| Portimão | Évora | Barreiro | | 0706 | 0755 | 0843 | 1012 | | 1201 | 1335 | 1503 |
| Tunes | 0008 | 0523 | 0630 | 0753 | 0844 | 0928 | 1055 | 1110 | 1245 | 1414 | 1545 |
| Albufeira | 0016 | 0531 | 0639 | 0801 | to | 0940 | | 1119 | 1256 | 1425 | 1607 |
| Loulé | 0038 | 0558 | 0704 | 0823 | Barreiro | 1005 | | 1143 | 1322 | 1444 | 1635 |
| Faro | 0058 | 0612 | 0732 | 0841 | | 1032 | | 1203 | 1346 | 1502 | 1658 |
| Olhão | - | 0630 | 0751 | 0901 | | 1050 | | 1220 | 1403 | 1522 | 1728 |
| Tavira | - | 0704 | 0826 | 0930 | | 1123 | | 1248 | 1431 | 1550 | 1802 |
| VRSA | - | 0753 | 0911 | 1004 | | 1205 | | 1325 | 1517 | 1632 | 1847 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lagos leave | 1540 | | | 1640 | | 1815 | 1900 | 2000 | 2100 | 2145 |
| Portimão arr | 1609 | | | 1705 | | 1843 | 1922 | 2021 | 2126 | 2213 |
| Tunes arr | 1653 | 1729 | | 1743 | | 1928 | 2002 | 2110 | 2210 | 2258 |
| Albufeira | 1708 | 1739 | | to | | | 2020 | | 2227 | to |
| Loulé | 1723 | 1756 | | Barreiro | | | 2040 | | 2249 | Barreiro |
| Faro arr | 1742 | 1813 | 1835 | | 1937 | | 2059 | | 2307 | |
| Olhão | | | 1850 | | 1953 | | 2121 | | 2323 | |
| Tavira | | | 1921 | | 2024 | | 2153 | | 2354 | |
| VRSA arr | | | 2000 | | 2110 | | 2225 | | 0032 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VRSA leave | | | | 0600 | 0707 | 0827 | | 1035 | | | | 1205 |
| Tavira | | | | 0643 | 0753 | 0906 | | 1122 | | | | 1248 |
| Olhão | from | | | 0717 | 0826 | 0930 | | 1153 | from | | | 1322 |
| Faro leave | Barreiro | | 0705 | 0732 | 0845 | 0943 | | 1207 | Barreiro | 1225 | | 1350 |
| Loulé | | | 0725 | 0756 | 0914 | 1004 | | | | 1253 | | 1418 |
| Albufeira | | | 0746 | 0821 | 0941 | 1023 | | | | 1323 | | 1446 |
| Tunes leave | 0545 | 0725 | 0753 | 0833 | 0947 | 1032 | 1130 | | 1230 | 1347 | | 1454 |
| Portimão arr | 0635 | 0814 | to | 0920 | | 1111 | 1220 | | 1311 | 1433 | | 1540 |
| Lagos arr | 0705 | 0843 | Évora | 0948 | | 1130 | 1248 | | 1333 | 1503 | | 1602 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VRSA leave | 1340 | 1435 | | | 1705 | 1807 | 1838 | | 2000 | 2100 | |
| Tavira | 1417 | 1517 | | | 1749 | 1847 | 1921 | | 2046 | 2139 | |
| Olhão | 1444 | 1552 | | | 1821 | 1911 | 1956 | | 2120 | 2210 | |
| Faro leave | 1502 | 1610 | | 1752 | 1837 | 1922 | 2012 | | 2137 | 2230 | from |
| Loulé | 1522 | 1635 | | 1813 | 1902 | | 2058 | | 2204 | 2251 | Barreiro |
| Albufeira | 1541 | 1702 | | 1832 | 1928 | | 2105 | | 2228 | 2314 | |
| Tunes leave | 1549 | 1708 | 1800 | 1839 | 1934 | | 2111 | 2120 | 2234 | 2320 | 2322 |
| Portimão arr | 1649 | | 1839 | 1923 | 2027 | | | 2209 | | to | 0004 |
| Lagos arr | 1658 | | 1900 | 1950 | 2055 | | | 2230 | | Barreiro | 0025 |

A bit of history. Railways were late to come to the Algarve. The line down from Lisbon reached Tunes in 1899, Faro and Olhão in 1904, Tavira and Vila Real de Santo António in 1906. Tunes to Silves was opened in 1902, to Portimão a year later but did not reach Lagos until July 1922 – they did celebrate the centenary!

The station called Vila Real Guadiana was opened in 1952, but lasted only until 1998 and was substantially intact until recently. In an earlier timetable there is an advertised service between Lisbon and Seville, using the ferry at Vila Real to cross to Ayamonte. When the railway at Ayamonte was closed, so followed Guadiana. The ferries still run.

The bridge over the river Tagus (Tejo in Portuguese) at Lisbon was opened in 1999 and the original short line to Coina extended to Pinhal Novo, thus allow through running between Lisbon and Algarve, which began in time for the Euro 2004 football finals. The line was also electrified as far as Faro. Numerous tight curves were straightened out, look carefully and the old traces can seen.

**Closed stations**

Some remains can be seen, but many have vanished without trace. The smaller stations were just a raised pile of gravel and a shelter.

These were closed before 2001, west to east :

Figueira (only opened in 1954); Alvor (which was actually in Penina); Alvalede (between Algoz and Tunes); Benfarras (just east of Boliqueime); Vale de Éguas (just east of Loulé); Patacão, Marchil, Portas do Mar and São Francisco, all in the outskirts of Faro; Rio Seco, Marim, Bias, Santa Rita and Vila Real Guadiana.

These have been closed since 2001, west to east :

Odiáxere (closed 2003, apparently had fewer than 1 passenger per day); Patã (east of Albufeira); Vale Judeu (closed about fifteen years ago as I recall); Nora and Aroeira (both east of Tavira).

The stations at Almancil-Nexe and São João da Venda were replaced in 2004 by the new Parque das Cidades station near the Algarve Stadium. Vale Formoso halt was renamed Almancil in 2010.

Some more! I found a Wikipedia page with information dated March 1906, which lists several stops which seem to have disappeared with little or no trace. In the dark days of winter I shall see what I can discover. I can only imagine how slow the trains must have

been, stopping every few minutes. But remember that in 1906 the only alternatives were a a horse if you were rich, walking for most people. Cars were few, roads diabolical.

Some of these may have been renamed. And also spot the ‘old’ spellings.

Valle de Lama and Valla, both between Silves and Poço Barreto.
Lameira, between Poço Barreto and Alcantarilha
Sobrado, between Alcantarilha and Algôs (Algoz)
Fontainhas, just east of Albufeira
Vargem de Mão, between the old station of Vale Judeu and Loulé.
Diogal, between Parque das Cidades and Faro
Garganta and Meia Légoa, between Faro and Olhão
Pedras d’el Rei, between Luz and Tavira
Varanda and Pinheiro, east of Conceição

**TIMELINE UPDATE OCTOBER 2026**

This page was originally created in October 2022. At the time, it was expected that the work to electrify and generally upgrade the Faro to Vila Real de Santo António section would be complete by December 2023. That did not happen. Test trains first ran between Faro and Vila Real de Santo António in June 2025, between Tunes and Lagos on 27th January this year. After a further delay, apparently with paperwork and safety certifications, electric trains finally began running on 19th July 2026.

**POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICE?**

Journeys along the Algarve line are now a little faster. The electric trains have better acceleration and many more seats than the diesel trains they replaced. The complete journey Lagos to Vila Real de Santo António did take a minimum three hours for the 141km (88 miles) journey. Average journey time is now about 2 hours 40 minutes, with one train each way missing out some stops and making the complete trip in 2 hours 20 minutes.

That does create a **five hour** gap in the morning between trains at some stations on the western section of the line. On the eastern section, between Faro and Vila Real de Santo António, weekday service is about once every hour. Weekend and holiday service does have some gaps of two hours between trains.

The platforms at Olhão, Tavira and Vila Real de Santo António have been lengthened in readiness for the extension of the three daily Intercidades (IC) trains that currently run between Lisbon and Faro.

But, the locomotives used for the IC trains are too heavy for some of the bridges east of Faro. So, the railway either has to spend a lot of money improving them or find some lighter rolling stock suitably configured for long distance journeys.

It is not thought that the two Alfa Pendular trains will be extended, nor that there will be more trains between Lisbon and the Algarve. Most of the route is single track, which does constrain the timetable, particularly north of Funcheira where freight trains are numerous.

All stations in the Algarve have been rebuilt and modernised with high level platforms and step-free access. Several level crossings have been replaced by road bridges, which has helped speed up journeys. Good examples can be seen at Poço Barreto near Silves and Estombar, just west of Lagoa. In Portimão a bridge has been built to the east of the station to replace the narrow and congested level crossing at the other end.

The service is still affected by delays, especially on the trains from and to Lisbon. As I write, on Friday 23rd October, the morning train down from Porto via Lisbon to Faro is marked as running 13 minutes late. Delays like this have a knock-on effect, with connecting trains at Tunes and Faro having to be kept waiting.

A continuing programme of improvement works is in place, especially between Lisbon and Porto. Fingers crossed!