

# COMPARISON OF TRAIN SERVICE BETWEEN LISBON AND THE ALGARVE

## WINTER 1981 /1982 AND WINTER 2025/2026

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>

### 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 Barreiro 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                       | <i>1502</i> | 1307 | 1829        | 2123 | -    | 2355 | 0612 |
| Tavira arrive                     | <i>1550</i> | 1340 | <i>1921</i> | 2215 | -    | 0034 | 0704 |
| Vila Real de Santo António arrive | <i>1632</i> | 1415 | <i>2000</i> | 2243 | -    | 0105 | 0753 |
| Lagos arrive                      | 1503        | 1338 | <i>1900</i> | 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 | <i>1313</i> | 1510 | 1540 | <i>1640</i> | <i>1900</i> | 2145 |
| Vila Real de Santo António leave | 0650 | 1255        | -    | 1340 | 1555        | <i>1807</i> | 2100 |
| Tavira leave                     | 0717 | 1339        | -    | 1417 | 1631        | <i>1847</i> | 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 – most of it still is not. A total of 22 stations have since been closed. 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 and 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. **0600** – these trains in 1981 ended or started at the ‘town’ 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 |      | <b>2225</b> |      | <b>0032</b> |          |

|              |  |          |      |             |      |      |      |      |          |      |      |
|--------------|--|----------|------|-------------|------|------|------|------|----------|------|------|
| VRSA leave   |  |          |      | <b>0600</b> | 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 at 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 of course.

The bridge over the Tagus in Lisbon was opened in 1999 and the original short line to Coina extended to Pinhal Novo and 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 be 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); Alvaleda (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 ten 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.

### TIMELINE UPDATE FEBRUARY 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. The work is substantially complete along the whole line. Test trains first ran between Faro and Vila Real de Santo António in June last year, between Tunes and Lagos on 27<sup>th</sup> January this year. There is currently no indication when passenger service will begin.

## **POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO SERVICE?**

Journeys along the Algarve line will be faster. The electric trains have better acceleration than the diesel trains they will replace. It has been stated that they will be as much as 25 minutes faster for the complete journey Lagos to Vila Real de Santo António, which currently takes a minimum three hours for the 141km (88 miles) journey.

The next hope for local service is more frequent trains. Currently the service is very irregular, with gaps in the daytime of around 3 hours between trains on the western section between Faro and Lagos.

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. It is not thought that the two Alfa Pendular trains will also 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 will also help 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 crossing at the other end.