

COMPARISON OF TRAIN SERVICE BETWEEN LISBON AND THE ALGARVE

WINTER 1981 /1982 AND WINTER 2021/2022

For the current Lisbon timetable, go to <https://www.cp.pt/StaticFiles/timetables/oporto-lisbon-faro-lagos-v.r.s.antonio-trains.pdf>

Notes

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.

For the current timetable go to <https://www.cp.pt/StaticFiles/timetables/vila-real-s.antonio-lagos-regional-trains.pdf>

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		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		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	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, 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 Tagus in Lisbon was opened in 1999 and the original short line to Coina extended to Pinhal Novo and thus allows 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); Alvaledo (between Algoz and Tunes); Benfarras (just east of Boliqueime); Vale de Éguas (just east of Loulé); Patação, 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 DECEMBER 2024

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 between Faro and Tavira, with some testing apparently having taken place using an electric train. Work is well advanced and ongoing east of there, with latest notices suggesting substantial completion by March 2025. But there is no indication as to when the electric trains will enter service. Between Tunes and Lagos, the western section, work is visibly under way all along the stretch. Masts are in place, but a great deal of wiring and cabling work remains to be completed.