

## Having horses in Portugal 101

### **Hay/Feno**

Finding good hay is really difficult. First of all, forget what you think hay should be like. Hay in Portugal is always always drier than what you are used to. It comes in three varieties:

1. Acevem - which is rye grass
2. Aveia - which is what we would call oat straw, but since the oats are still in there, this classifies as feno
3. Meadow grass - feno nascido only available in the North and Center of the country I think.

Mostly, it's just really hard to find a good supplier. Stock often runs out towards the end of the season and you will only find new hay once the new crop is in, roughly in June. So if you do find a good supply, try to make a deal which will cover you until the next summer. Quality can be hugely variable, even within the same loads or even within the big bales.

Local prices seem to stay strangely stable even if there is a shortage, but some companies and importers have begun to charge higher prices for high quality (and steadily available) hay.

Hay prices can be anywhere upwards (emphasis on **upwards!**) from 3 euro / 20 kg bale, bigger bales often cheaper price per kg. Imported hay can be closer to 15-20 euro / 20-30 kg bale. Straw is often quite easily available, prices starting at 2 euro / 20-30 kg bale, 40 euro / 300kg bales.

Local horses often eat the local hay with gusto - but imported horses may take a while to get used to it. You will most likely need to supplement your horses with hard feed or alfalfa (lucerna) - the quality of hay is usually not good enough to sustain "a hay only" -diet.

### **Other feed**

Lots of feed available both imported and local, ranging from alfalfa pellets to lots of different mixed feeds. Find the local feed shop (called "drogaria" or "casa das racoes") and ask what they have. Bigger feed companies in Portugal can also be contacted directly. Look on their websites for local salespeople: Intacol or SF Racoes.

Oats (aveia) and alfalfa (lucerna granulada) are often available in "casa das racoes"/ "cooperativa" that stock farm animal feeds.

For imported feed and supplements, there is:  
Karen Allwright (914 382 342)

Vicky from Equus Ourique (913 482 371)

Equi Karma - 914 889 022 [www.equi-karma.com](http://www.equi-karma.com)

The Spanish company [www.caleya.com](http://www.caleya.com)

Supplements can also be bought from many of the shops listed below in the shops section. Many of us order specific supplements online from our home countries, because they are not widely available in Portugal.

### **Farriers**

Lots of decent farriers available all over the country. Ask around in your área or ask in a post for your specific area. Here are a few:

Herbert Peter, Alentejo, 916 034 181

Jill Kastrup, Alentejo, +49 1575 8239147

Imke Barnett, Algarve, 932 572 680

Tom de Graeve, whole country, only barefoot, 964 105 069

Rui Jorge, whole country, 912 720 912

Gonçalo Cordeiro, Lisbon, 919 134 077

Team Farrier Algarve (Paul and Lee), Algarve, 910 190 660

José Lopes, Algarve and Alentejo, 967 984 193

Tim Döpper, hoof orthopedic, only barefoot, Algarve, +49 178 374 1660

Marcio Paz, Algarve, 968 240 262

Adriano Art, Central Portugal, 927221391

Chris Richards, Lisbon, 912 659 097

Filipe Paciência, Santarém and Leiria, 962 444 611

Nuno Bernardes / Lisbon, Alcochete, Coruche, Ericeira, 916050766

Victor Manuel Martins António, Monchique, 968 967 851

Carlos Cavalo, between Lisbon and Alcobaca, 967280002

Jorge Faia, Castelo Branco, 962803584

Elias Pinheiro, Faial, Açores, 966539631

Lucas Magnelli, whole country, +34 628 621 724

### **Vets**

Lots of good equine vets are available, of course easier around the big cities and in densely populated areas like the Algarve, but you should be able to find one by asking around. Here are a few:

Albufeira: Dr Nuno Onofre 936316611

Portimão/Lisbon: Dra Ana Costa 919825219

Portimão: Dra Sara Teixeira 917 456 428

Tavira: Dra Joana Campos 912350569

Castro Verde: Dr Nuno Rosa 969023380

Beja: Dra Ines Faustino 915555531

Lisbon/Algarve/Central Portugal: Manuel Lamas 916766933  
Lisbon/Algarve: Rita Costa Cabral 917 855 607  
Evora Clinic: Eqimuralha 932 992 100  
Lisbon University Vet Hospital at the university 21 365 2800  
Vet Clinic in Sevilla Hospital Equino Aznalcollar - 954134007

### **Equine Dentist**

Vet Dr Manuel Lamas specializes in dentistry 916766933  
Vet Dr Tina Iglar specializes in dentistry 961 946 566  
Equine Dental Care, Manou van Rooij 911922997  
Imke Barnett, Algarve, 932 572 680

### **Body workers**

Karen Allwright, osteopath, whole country, 914 382 342  
Ruth Mayer, osteopath, whole country, +49 172 946 1945  
Julie Hartmann, osteopath, Lisbon region, 933 458 917  
Joana Santos, osteopath, 913 918 168  
Richard Green, shiatsu, 932 897 046  
Melanie Santos, physiotherapist, 926 391 444

### **Saddle fitters**

- Rachael Argo (Master Saddler, Master Saddle Fitter and also make and fit bridles and do bit fitting. I also do saddlery and leather repairs and k9 equipment.) 911 894 331
- Lucy Evans (Saddle, bridle and bit fitter. And human and equine sports massage) 912 139 685
- Louisa Kellie (Saddle fitting, working alongside Rachael and Lucy. Covering the algarve and central areas. Coming soon, hemp and cbd products for humans, dogs, and horses, feed and supplements all with 100% pure organic hemp.) 910 853 154

### **Health issues specific to Portugal**

Some horses which were moved to Portugal from other countries have developed a sweet itch. This can happen to any horse which is moved, simply because the environmental factors are different. Sweet itch is difficult to deal with, but most important is that you recognize the signs and start acting as soon as you see them. Affected horses will begin to scratch their mane and tail. Often a fly sheet is the quickest, most effective solution.

More dangerous but easier to treat is tick fever. This is actually an umbrella term for a number of different diseases which are transmitted to the horse via the tick's bite. If your horse has intermittent fever, is unusually lethargic, doesn't seem to eat as eagerly as usual or even when the horse has signs of colic, please suspect tick fever. Ask your vet to check for symptoms and to start treatment asap. (Sandra's comment: in my opinion, the actual blood test is expensive and not usually worth the wait, while the antibiotics are inexpensive and just two injections a couple days apart. I've had tick fever myself and did not wait for the test results.)

Both against flies and ticks, there are a few natural remedies that work somewhat, such as Neem Oil (mixed with coconut oil, only 10% of the mixture needs to be neem). Alternatively, you can ask your vet for Butox or similar pour on solution. This also works for crab flies which can be a pest. Your local pharmacy may be able to order this for you.

### **Vaccinations**

The only legally required vaccination for equines in Portugal is the combined influenza/tetanus shot, which should be refreshed every year. Competition horses need a refresher every six months. If your horse has not had any vaccinations or if they are seriously out of date, contact your vet to get started with at least two consecutive vaccinations within the next three months. Recently, a vaccination against West Nile disease has become available, but not obligatory. Chances of catching the disease are still low, but if your horse does catch it, it's a horrible death. As is tetanus, by the way.

### **Temperatures**

Horses do well in the Portuguese winter. With temperatures not going much below zero, they can usually be left unrugged, unless they do not have enough room to move around, have been clipped or are old or sick. Summer temperatures are much harder to tolerate, especially for horses who grew up in colder climates. Make sure they have shade available, can stand in a windy spot and have access to plenty of fresh water.

Be aware that at least in the south of Portugal the heat of the summer is so intense that you may need to schedule your riding for early morning, late evening - the temperatures can soar up to over 45 degrees.

### **Trees & Plants to be aware of**

Depending on the area of Portugal you are in, you may find cork oaks and carob trees in your pastures. Acorns and carobs in large quantities can be a problem for horses.

## **Legal requirements**

Every horse in Portugal needs to be chipped and have papers in the form of a “book/livro”. This can either be a blue book, which requires signing up with a stud book but does not actually mean that the horse is any specific breed, or a green book, which is cheap and easy to do. If you have anything purebred, it makes sense to have a blue book. If it's of unknown breed, a green book usually suffices, with one catch: if you ever want to take your horse out of the country, green book horses are considered unregistered (\* registered for slaughter purposes- animals meant for slaughter have stricter rules for transport and thus require more stops on the journey) and few transport companies can deal with the additional bureaucracy and the additional stops required. Anyway, to get either a blue or green book for a horse, the first step is to contact your vet and get him or her to fill out the required form. This form then needs to be handed in at your local DGAV offices. DGAV is the entity responsible for agriculture and veterinary issues in Portugal and they have local offices in most towns all over the country.

To keep horses at your home, you must apply for a license, a marca de exploracao. It's relatively easy to get and not expensive. The local DGAV offices will help. There are still many horses in Portugal without papers and not living at a place with a license, but it's getting more and more difficult for the owners. Should you acquire such a horse, it is strongly recommended that you spend the few euros to get at least a green book and a marca. The same rules apply for mules and donkeys btw. They need papers and you must have a marca to keep them at your place.

It is illegal to buy or sell horses without “book” and marca de exploracao.

## **Where you can ride**

Where you are allowed to ride is not very limited in Portugal. As long as you use common sense, it is even ok to open (and close) gates to go across pastures. There are different restrictions in certain áreas:

In Nature Parks, like the Costa Vicentina, riders are never allowed on beaches which are protected by a lifeguard (official bathing beaches) during the bathing season. The season stretches differently depending on the area. The highest ruling law in Nature Parks is the ICNF. Fines go up to 2.000€ per horse.

Outside of protected areas, riders are allowed even during the bathing season but only during "night times", which starts when the lifeguards shift ends (normally at 7pm) and ends when the lifeguards shift begins (normally at 7am). Droppings must be cleaned away. The highest ruling law outside of protected areas on beaches is the "Capitania".

If the rider is riding for a horse business, there are specific rules in Nature Parks, which must be cleared with the ICNF to prevent fines up to 13.500€ (yes, thirteen thousand five hundred).

## **Equipment**

When you move to Portugal, consider bringing as much as you can with you. Equipment of any kind can be hard to find in Portugal. Not that it's not available, but companies and shops still don't have a great internet presence and are thus hard to find. Here are some ideas of where to find equipment:

### **Shops which carry horse stuff in Portugal:**

Alequine.com (Evora)

Horsefire.pt (Porto)

Rbequitacao.pt (Tavira)

Equiloule (Loulé)

Equinvest (Lisbon)

Decathlon (all over plus online)

Local "Cooperativa", "Drogaria" for fencing equipment and other basic products

Pharmacies for dewormers

### **Online shops with delivery to Portugal:**

Horze.eu

Kraemer.de

Horse1.es

Zafiroequestrian.com

Hipposport.de

Amazon.es & amazon.de

Loesdau.de

## **Transport of horses**

You will need a green book or even a blue book for international travel. Some of the companies which transport in Portugal are listed below. Internationally, but within Europe you will need a TRACES certificate - the transporter should be able to help with this. The destination yard/property for your horse must have the marca de exploracao.

Quinta do Trevo 966 148 104

Truckequine 937 020 020

José Gomes 918 234 726

## **Welfare issues - Reporting mistreatment**

Legally, horses are not very well protected in Portugal and horse welfare standards are

fairly low. It is common practice to tether horses outside as is keeping them stabled 24/7. Gypsy culture is still strong in some areas of Portugal, and horses are used as a mode of transport as well as tender for trading. It is not uncommon to see totally malnourished and injured horses on roadsides.

What to do in these situations- report to authorities: SEPNA 808 200 520 / email [sepna@gnr.pt](mailto:sepna@gnr.pt) Make sure you have the exact location of the horse, preferably with gps coordinates or a map screenshot. When making a report, you will receive a case number that will be followed up. Authorities have very limited resources to deal with these cases so do not expect miracles. Horse rescue associations can help with the legalities, Contact ALGARVE HORSE ALARM - 924358566

As for urgent help in the situation where you have found a suffering horse - you can always offer a horse water, but be careful with feeding a very malnourished horse, the horse's digestive system is very sensitive to sudden change. It is not uncommon for tethered horses to be given water only once or twice a day, even in the heat of the summer.

### **When a horse dies**

You can have the body buried in your property - your local council may be helpful in providing a machine to dig a deep enough grave. If this is not a possibility, there is a country wide collection service which will, for a prepaid fee of 100€ come and collect the body. Contact SIRCA - 217541270.

### **Facebook Groups to Browse for more information: (selling and/or buying horses in those groups is forbidden)**

Portugal Horse Friends  
Naturalistic Horse Care PT  
Central Portugal Horse Friends  
Horse Welfare Services Portugal

### **Donations**

If you are grateful for this information we've put together, please donate some euros to Algarve Horse Alarme. Either visit their website at <http://www.algarvehorsealarm.com/> or paypal them at [purplewhisper](https://www.purplewhisper.com/).

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