

Culture and Heritage

Language

English

The Algarve is an amphitheatre facing south, protected by the mountain range and influenced by the Mediterranean climate. Tavira municipality has a mosaic of cultural landscapes created by the interaction of man and nature throughout the last thousand years.

The **slatty mountain** range, of poor soils and scrubland, developed areas with no rocks which enabled fields of non-irrigated farmland with dryland crops, cork tree, holm-oaks and some cereals such wheat and barley, family vegetable gardens, cattle breeding and the use of the wild resources.

In the peripheral depression through which the Gilão River runs, there are wetlands and irrigated fields, vegetable gardens, orchards in the middle of olive groves, almond trees, fig trees and carob trees.

A transition area to the coastline, referred to as **barrocal**, it benefits from groundwater aquifers, the mild climate during winter, with no frosts or low temperatures and further protected from the salinity of the sea. The vegetables, the citrus fruit, the fig, the carob, the olive and the soft skin almond are predominant.

Close to the sea, the city built along many centuries from a small Phoenician village situated at the genetic hill, it came down to the river in the 15th and 16th centuries, followed it occupying flooded lands and the two banks until the estuary.

On the **coast line** there is a lagoon system and barrier-islands, of Tavira and Cabanas, included in the Natural park of Ria Formosa internationally listed, an invigorated area with tuna activity and small-scale fishing, shellfish gatherers, mollusc and bivalves catching, salt culture and fish farms. The vineyard is grown and there are still some areas of mixed crops in the vicinity of the sea.

The cultural landscapes are part of the historical identity of the region. It is indispensable to **UNDERSTAND, PRESERVE AND IMPROVE** its high heritage value, leisure and economic potential.

With the settlement, the agriculture and extractive activities, the natural spaces were transformed in cultural landscapes, which provide us with precious historical information on our relation with the places, in many cases of great beauty and likely to be included in the listed cultural heritage and attract visitors.

Olive groves, vineyards, oak groves and meadows are striking images of the Mediterranean landscape.

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