

Swimming out and about

There's a fabulous open air swimming pool at Aljustrel. There's a good snack bar and restaurant there. They are open to 11pm and 2am respectively. In the summer the pool itself is open until 8pm. It's usually pretty quiet and makes a good family day out. If you've kids there is a learner and a baby pool. There's also volley ball and table tennis poolside, and last time we went as a family of 6 there was change out of €10 for the entrance. It's 30 km and about a 30 minute drive. Turn left at the roundabout towards Beja cross the IC1 drive through Messejana and follow the signs. When you get to Aljustrel follow the map below. If you get lost ask for the Piscina. There's a good smattering of shops, a petrol station ATM's and a nice walk up the hill to the church. You can see it clearly from the pool.



A favourite place of ours to go is a beauty spot known as '**Pego das Pias**'. It is picturesque, off the beaten track usually very quiet and great day out for walking, bird spotting, swimming and exploring. There's a limestone ravine, trees with rope swings. It's good fun for kids of all ages. We take a disposable BBQ and make a day of it. There are crayfish and turtles and all sorts; and the fishing's pretty good. To get there go to Odemira (27 km about 25 mins) Turn



right at the tin tree roundabout (see photo) and follow the N120 north for exactly 5.1 km. Turn right onto a rutted dirt track after the river bridge and follow the track for about 2 km it gets rather rocky towards the end so you'll need to take care.

Mosquito spray is advisable especially in summer at dawn and dusk. Skinny dipping is acceptable - be warned. Search 'Pego



das Pias' on Google there are videos and some



pretty good photos but none really do the place justice.

The Coasts

On the west coast (Atlantic) just explore. There are lots and lots of little beaches and wonderful cliff top walks.

Zambujeira do Mar south of Odemira: turn left at the tin tree and follow the N120 south. You turn right at a



roundabout near Sao Teotonio. It's clearly signposted and about 47 km (30 miles) from the mill. It has a lovely beach and if you follow the sandy road by the beach south you'll



discover beach after beach after beach, most have good surf for boarding. The beach at Carvalhal da Rocha is



one of our favourites and good for families thanks to the little river. Snack bar just off the beach. Odeceixe further south is another spot worth a visit.

Travelling north of Odemira the beach at Almogarve is great but it's a fair walk down from the basalt cliffs.



Vila Nova de Milfontes with its little castle is a typical Portuguese seaside town with great beaches. It's more touristy but very Portuguese, reasonably priced and a good place to buy gifts.

Furnas beach, south side of the river at Vila Nova de Milfontes (47 km -28 miles- from the mill), is excellent for families with younger children, a great expanse of sand and usually gentle waves as the river Mira, the cleanest in Europe, protects the beach from the waves with sandbars. See map. B marks the beach, I think there is a sign-posted on the 393 for 'Praia do Furnas'. The turning off the 393 onto the dirt road to the beach is large and easy to find. Follow the track straight and take the first significant left straight down to the beach. There's usually plenty of parking and there's a handy bar just off the beach too.



Our favourite beach is the closest to the mill 'Praia do Malhão'. This is where the Portuguese 'in the know' go. It's just 42km (26 miles) and is magnificent: sand, sheltered bits, rock pools, caves (low tide), surf, it has everything apart from on-beach catering; but there are usually 'beach boys' with cool boxes with drinks and snacks for the ill prepared. We make a day of it.

