



# ALGARVE, WHO ARE YOU?

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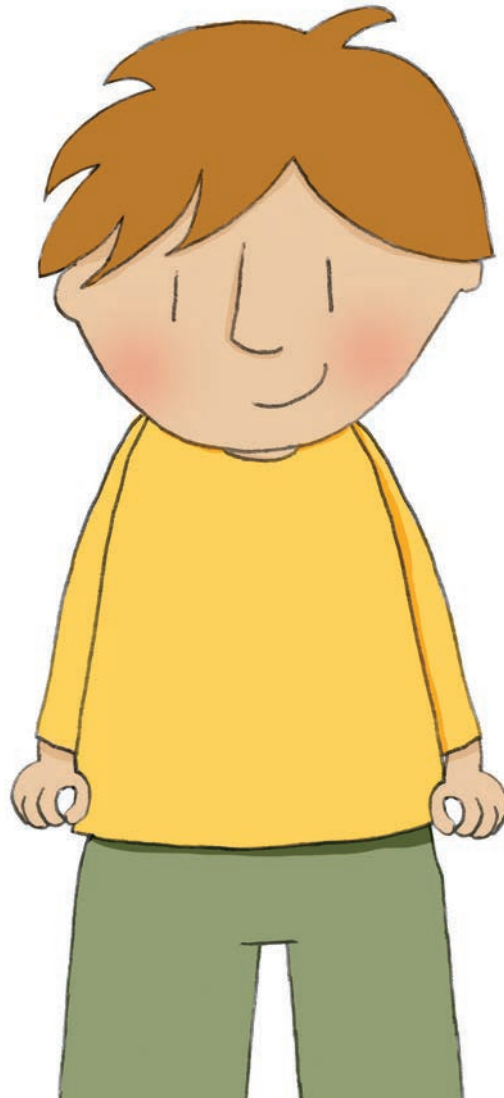
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Hi, I'm **Afonso**. My parents named me after the king who conquered the Algarve from the Moors in 1249. Afonso III was his name. At that time the Algarve wasn't called the Algarve. To the Arabs, who lived here a long time before I did, it was called the *al-gharb*, a word that means 'the West' or 'the Occident'. It seems that the Arabs used the sound **al-** as a prefix on lots of names and toponyms (place names). Did you know we can still find some in the Portuguese language? Here's an example: **Al**bufeira.





Albufeira is one of the region's municipalities. But we have 16. In this book, I will tell you my favourite things about each of them. One is the beach. I go there almost every day in summer to bathe. I love dipping my toes in the fine sand, splashing about in the water until my skin gets wrinkly, building sand castles and monsters with shells and pretending to be a breaded chicken, rolling around in the sand after I get out of the water! There are more than 100 beaches in the Algarve. My sister Catarina and I – say hi, **Catarina**. “Hi!” – will show you some of them. And once you leave the beach, there's everything else. And the rest is esk... eshkw... exkisi... This word is a right mouthful. Exquisite! That's it! The rest of the Algarve is exquisite. Turn the page if you want to see it.



**ALJEZUR.** Aljezur is all about **sweet potato**. That's what I think, anyway. When I go there I eat it in pastries, soups or just roasted. I smear it all over myself but it doesn't matter because it is the best sweet potato in the world. And it has even been awarded the seal of Protected Geographical Indication! My teacher told me that just one of these little potatoes has twice as much vitamin A and a third of the vitamin C that you need in a day. With some in my tummy I'm full of energy, so I take the opportunity to wander round the **South West Alentejo and Costa Vicentina Nature Park**. And I don't go alone, right Catarina? "No. You come with me and the donkeys with the flowers around their ears!" In Aljezur they organise outings in the company of these long-eared and docile creatures...



The Costa Vicentina is so beautiful! There are cliffs, slopes and birds, and plants like snapdragon. “It has **dolphins** too”, adds Catarina. We saw them leaping out of the sea when we went on a boat trip. On the Aljezur coast it is easy to see them, because the nature guide takes you to the place where cetaceans go. They are very good swimmers. You also need to know how to swim if you want to learn how to surf. I learned to get on a board in Aljezur, at a **surfing lesson** with a proper suit and everything. The instructor told me how to catch the waves. The first few times I swallowed a few gulps of water. But now I already know how to stay standing on the board. Look at me!



Did you know that the Costa Vincentina is the only place in the world where **storks** nest in the cliffs? Try to spot them when you go for a walk. What were they doing? How many did you see?





## VILA DO BISPO.

“Afonso, I feel like eating goose barnacles...” Since we went to Vila do Bispo, Catarina can’t think about anything else. I like **goose barnacles** too; they have a strong sea flavour. But Catarina can gobble them down one after another. This crustacean lives fastened on to rocks by the sea. That’s where the fishermen gather them before they land on someone’s plate (or in Catarina’s tummy). The Costa Vincentina has lots of goose barnacles. And Vila do Bispo is on the Costa Vincentina like Aljezur.

Other creatures that catch my eye are the **birds**. Specialists have counted them: more than 4,000 birds of prey fly over Sagres in the autumn, on their migration to the south.



I swear I have seen eagles, falcons, vultures and kites with the help of my Dad's telescope and some binoculars. And do you know what else I saw once, do you? A peregrine falcon, the fastest bird on the planet! Besides bird watching, which is what you call it when you look out for birds, I like to find **menhirs** in Vila do Bispo. Menhirs are rough stones sticking out of the ground, put there for religious ceremonies or tracking stars. The comic-book character Obelix carried them on his back. I'd rather just look at them though. They are very heavy. At Monte dos Amantes, which means 'Lovers' Hill', there is a menhir with a symbol left by pirates to mark hidden treasure nearby. At least that's what I think it means. Archaeologists probably have another explanation.



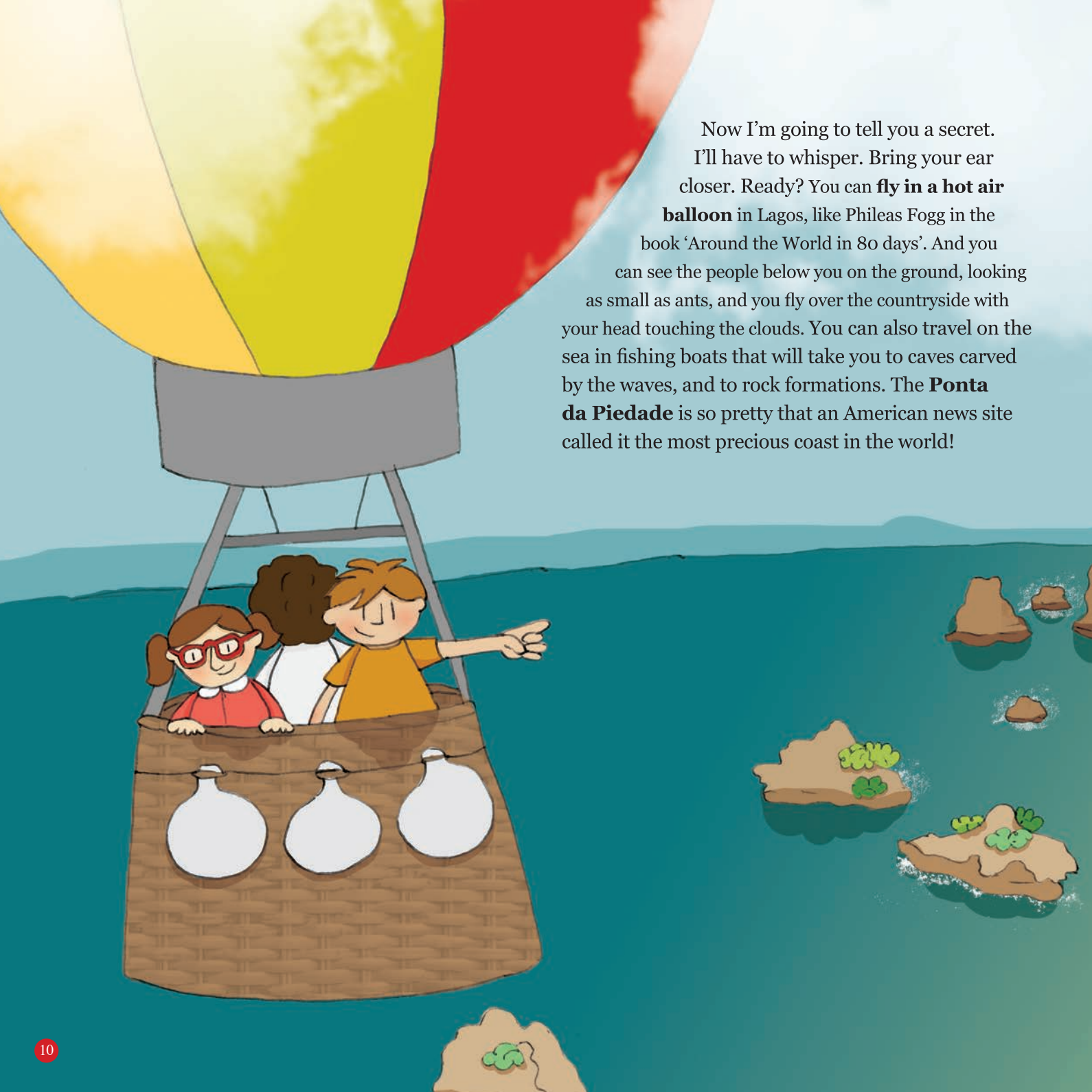
If you like history like me, you will be happy to know that Sagres has one of the biggest lighthouses in the world and the fort where Prince Henry died (poor thing!). The prince (or 'Infante' as he is known in Portuguese) started the **Discoveries**, which led to our explorers encountering America, Africa and the Indian and Pacific oceans. It was Prince Henry who built the *Vila do Infante* on Sagres headland, which had a fort, a chapel and a nautical school. Or rather, some people think there was a school there. I don't know. But Sagres was a starting point for the caravel ships of the Discoveries. Heave ho!



What's my job? A conductor!  
On the Sagres headland, go into  
the 'sound chamber' designed  
by architect Pancho Guedes, listen to  
the **symphony of the sea**, which  
sounds like loud musical instruments,  
and give the waves instructions with  
your imaginary conductor's baton.

**LAGOS.** Don't think that Lagos was any less important than Sagres in the age of the Discoveries. Oh, no. Lagos was the port of departure for expeditions to the coast of Africa, if you'd like to know. That is why the **Boa Esperança**, a replica of the Portuguese caravels that sailors used in the 15th to 17th centuries, is here. I've already been on board. I was the captain; I held on to the heavy rudder and shouted 'All aboard!' I faced the raging wind and fought against the corsairs. I was only pretending, of course. Because sometimes I am a pretender. And other times I am a monkey because I monkey about to make Catarina laugh, like the gibbon from **Lagos Zoo**. The zoo has 140 animal species. I spend hours looking at them to try to understand what they eat, how they play and what they say to each another in their duck, iguana and lemur languages.





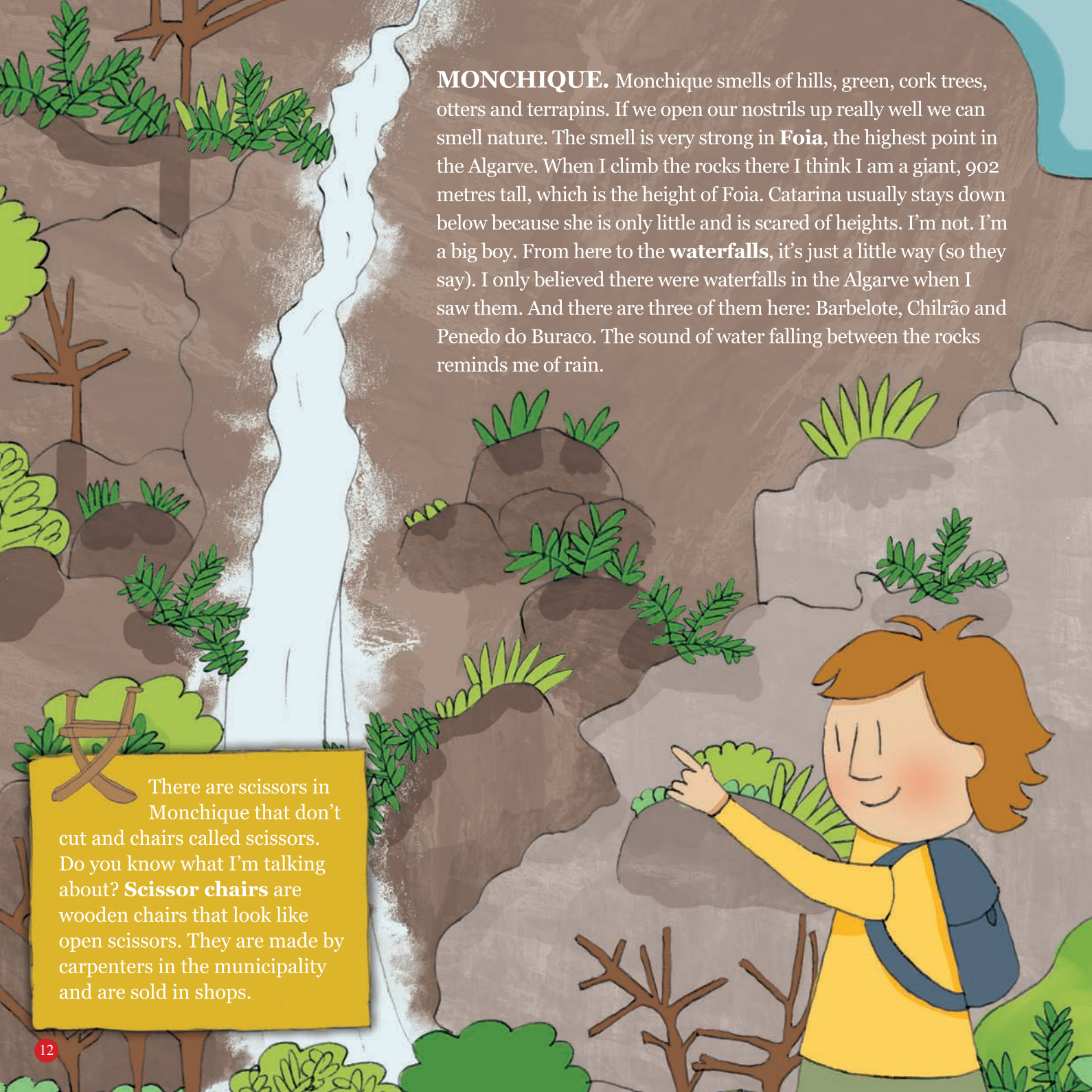
Now I'm going to tell you a secret. I'll have to whisper. Bring your ear closer. Ready? You can **fly in a hot air balloon** in Lagos, like Phileas Fogg in the book 'Around the World in 80 days'. And you can see the people below you on the ground, looking as small as ants, and you fly over the countryside with your head touching the clouds. You can also travel on the sea in fishing boats that will take you to caves carved by the waves, and to rock formations. The **Ponta da Piedade** is so pretty that an American news site called it the most precious coast in the world!



You can also play at being a scientist because my Mum says science is ageless. That's what I do when I go to the living science centres here in the Algarve. In Portuguese they're called **Centros Ciência Viva**. There's one in Faro, another one in Tavira and another one in Lagos. The one in Lagos challenges you to an activity with rocks, palaeontologists and... theropod and ornithopod **dinosaurs**. It's true! They were here and left a trail: 120-million-year-old footprints. Can you believe it? Catarina's foot is tiny compared to the prints left by those dinosaurs. They are on the Santa and Salema beaches, in Vila do Bispo, but the Ciência Viva Centre in Lagos organises the trip there. You won't need a magnifying glass to see them...






A colorful illustration of a young boy with brown hair, wearing a yellow shirt and a blue backpack, pointing towards a waterfall. The waterfall is a white stream cascading down a brown, rocky cliff. The landscape is dotted with green ferns and small bushes. In the bottom left corner, there is a yellow rectangular box with a small illustration of a wooden chair that looks like a pair of scissors. The background shows more of the rocky terrain and some trees.

**MONCHIQUE.** Monchique smells of hills, green, cork trees, otters and terrapins. If we open our nostrils up really well we can smell nature. The smell is very strong in **Foia**, the highest point in the Algarve. When I climb the rocks there I think I am a giant, 902 metres tall, which is the height of Foia. Catarina usually stays down below because she is only little and is scared of heights. I'm not. I'm a big boy. From here to the **waterfalls**, it's just a little way (so they say). I only believed there were waterfalls in the Algarve when I saw them. And there are three of them here: Barbelote, Chilrão and Penedo do Buraco. The sound of water falling between the rocks reminds me of rain.

There are scissors in Monchique that don't cut and chairs called scissors. Do you know what I'm talking about? **Scissor chairs** are wooden chairs that look like open scissors. They are made by carpenters in the municipality and are sold in shops.





Talking of water, Monchique's water is famous. My Dad told me that it has a high pH, which is good for our blood. The Romans thought it was sacred. I think it's good. That's why I drink six glasses of **Monchique water** a day. Sometimes more, if I'm bouncing about and playing football. Grown-ups use it in treatments in **spas**. Grown-ups tend to drink other things too. Things that my Dad says burn your throat, like **medronho** brandy, which is made from the fruit of arbutus trees. These fruits are little red balls with spikes that don't sting. You can see lots of them in the Monchique hills. I always collect a handful to eat with Catarina. But they can't be too ripe because otherwise we will get giddy and silly from the alcohol in them.

Cascata do Barbelote

250m



**PORTIMÃO.** There is a reason I get adrenaline rushing from my head to my toes in this municipality: the **kart track**. This course is very long and I can drive very fast. *Vroom vroom*, here I goooooo. Catarina goes too. They have a track just for her and other children up to 6 years old. At the kart track I race against the clock. At **TEMPO** I don't. 'TEMPO' is the name of Portimão Municipal Theatre and it means 'time' in English. So, I take my TIME watching concerts, plays and other shows. All sorts of things happen at the theatre. Even a bullfight between puppets where the bull looks like a dog and asks for pats on its head. I saw it.



**Ocean Revival** is an underwater park, like no other in the country, with four boats from the Portuguese navy that were sunk on purpose. Pretend you are a diver in this Portimão park. When you are on the beach, take a mask, a snorkel and some flippers and find the animals hiding at the bottom of the sea.

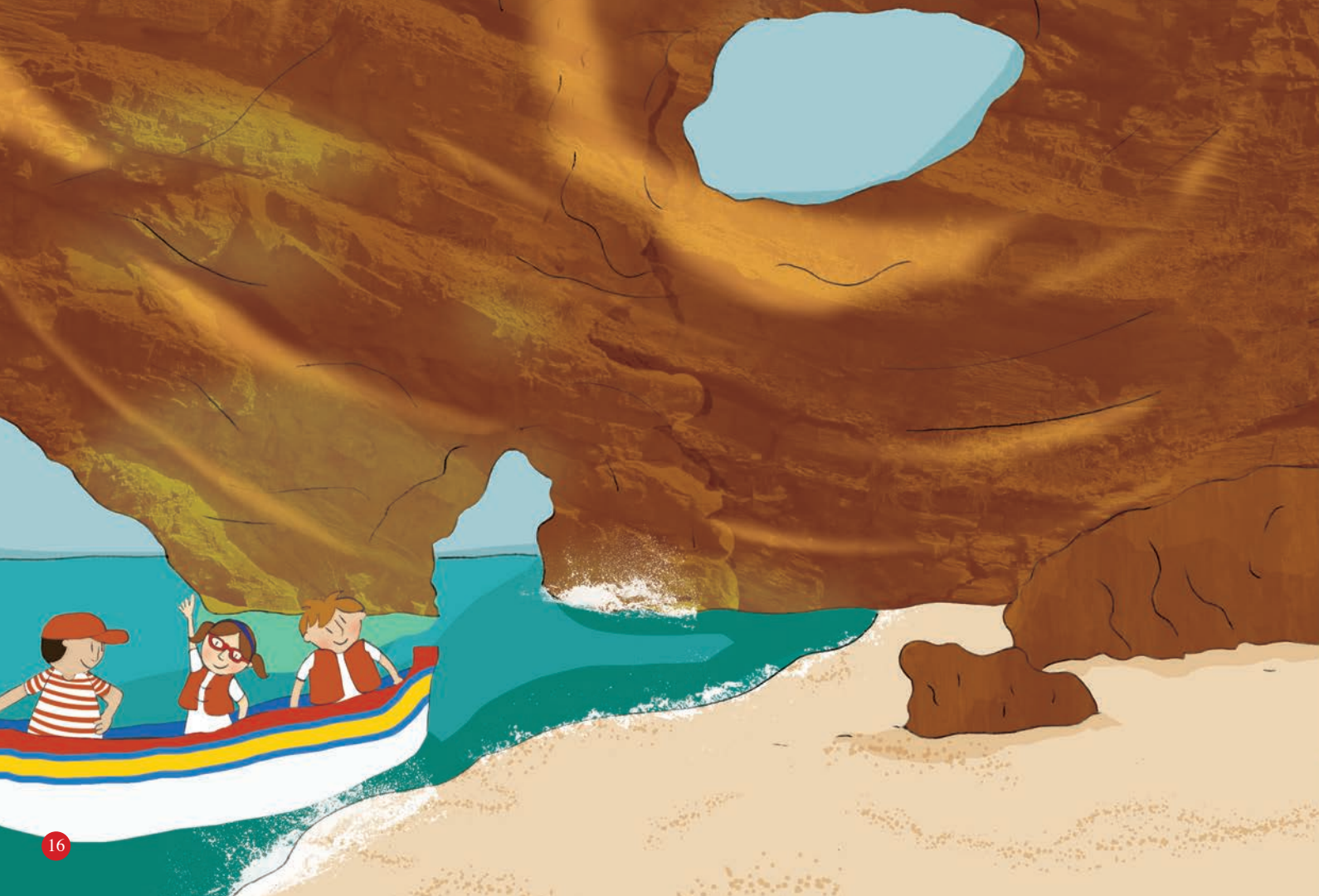


Another way to enjoy time is to travel in it. And you don't even need a special time machine with a thousand buttons, commands or handles. Just go to **Portimão Museum**, which is inside an old canning factory. It tells the story of Portimão's industrial and maritime history and shows the different stages of fish canning: from the arrival of the fish to the moment it goes in the can. Or go to **Alcalar**, where a prehistoric community lived 5,000 years ago. They have graves there. One of them looks like a mole's hole but it's not, because a mole digs underground and this is tall on the surface and covered with stones. I like the world like that: upside down...





**LAGOA.** “Whee! I slide and... splash!” Catarina splashes everyone when she jumps in the water. If you’ve been to water parks you’ll know what I mean. First we sit on our bums in the slides. Then the water helps us slide down. And finally, bam! Water drops are everywhere. This is all at **Slide&Splash** in Lagoa, at Aqualand in Silves and at Aquashow in Loulé. “Whee! I slide and... splash!” Somewhere you can’t slide is on the trail at the **7 Hanging Valleys**. They reach almost 50 metres at their highest point. The walk starts at the Vale Centeanes beach and goes to Marinha beach along a wooden walkway. One moment I’m running along the walkway, and the next I’m diving into the sea at the beach. I look like a flea jumping from one side to the other. And don’t think I’m just lying around doing nothing when I’m on the beach. I hop aboard a little fishing boat and go to see the **caves and chasms**. The most famous one is the Benagil cave.



When I'm away from the coast, I entertain myself with other things. Jugs, mugs, plates and bowls, for example. But not just any ones. The ones from the **Porches pottery** are the cool ones. "There's so many flowers, it's like a field in spring", says Catarina. The most fun thing to do is watching the decorators painting the ceramic pieces right in front of our noses. And what gets my nose sniffing madly is the smell of bread stuffed with *chouriço* – that's a type of sausage – fresh from the oven. The ones they make at the **Sítio das Fontes** tide mill are scrummy! I mean they taste really good. I sit down at the picnic park and eat every last crumb. Then I take a walk around, following the beat of the wings of the dragonflies and damselflies.



At the Porches pottery, watch the decorators' hands as they paint the ceramic pieces. Ask them what paints they use, what techniques they have for drawing and keeping the paintbrush still. Now try to do your own **Porches plate** at home.





**SILVES.** I'll tell you a story I heard in Silves. There was once a king of the Moors, owner of the Algarve, who fell in love with a princess called Gilda. Even though Gilda was in love with the king too, she felt sad. She seemed to miss her homeland where it was cold and people were up to their necks in snow. Now, the Algarve is a land with lots of sunshine all year round; it is nice and warm and there is no snow. So the king thought up a way for there to be 'snow' in the region. He planted fields and fields of almond trees that grew a thousand and one white flowers in winter, just like snowflakes. And Gilda was happy. This is the **legend of the almond trees**. There are other legends in the Algarve, especially about enchanted Moorish maidens. They aren't true. But grown-ups do say that they sometimes see Moorish maidens walking along the street...

There are castles of cards, sandcastles and castles in the clouds. There are also real castles with walls that defended people and land from attack by enemies. **Silves castle** is one of these and it has been there since the time of the Arabs. It is quite old, more than a thousand years old. I imagine myself there commanding great battles. “The enemy infantry and cavalry are coming! Archers, to your positions!” I say to myself, while Catarina pretends to be a princess in a fairy tale, threatened by the bad guys. The **Cathedral of Silves** and the **Municipal Museum of Archaeology** are close by, but I will only take a look once I have won the war against the army attacking the castle.





It's normal to be tired after a stir like that. But it's not enough to keep me quiet (my Mum even says that I have ants in my pants...). So I can still have a stop at **Krazy World**. And it really is crazy, but with activity. Because of the reptiles, tropical birds, pony rides, inflatables and everything else. You can even feed the ring-tailed lemurs, just like the ones in the film *Madagascar*... They're so funny! They close their eyes and open their arms with their chests wide open to the sun, as if they're saying: "Oh, this feels REALLY great!"



**Silves oranges** are some of the best in the Algarve. Take them home, squeeze them and make the sweetest orange juice in Portugal. Share it with your friends and family.

**ALBUFEIRA.** I'm a king in Silves but in Albufeira I'm Tarzan. I move through the air from one tree to another. But I don't use vines like Tarzan when I go to the **Luso Aventura tree-top adventure park**. Do you know what this activity is? You go from tree to tree on walkways secured by cables, with your feet on planks of wood. There's lots of excitement on the ground too. Especially at **Zoomarine**, with sea lions, seals, 4D cinema, an aquarium and a giant wheel. The most surprising thing is playing with dolphins in the pool. For me they are the loveliest mammals on the planet and beyond. Have you noticed how they always look like they are laughing?

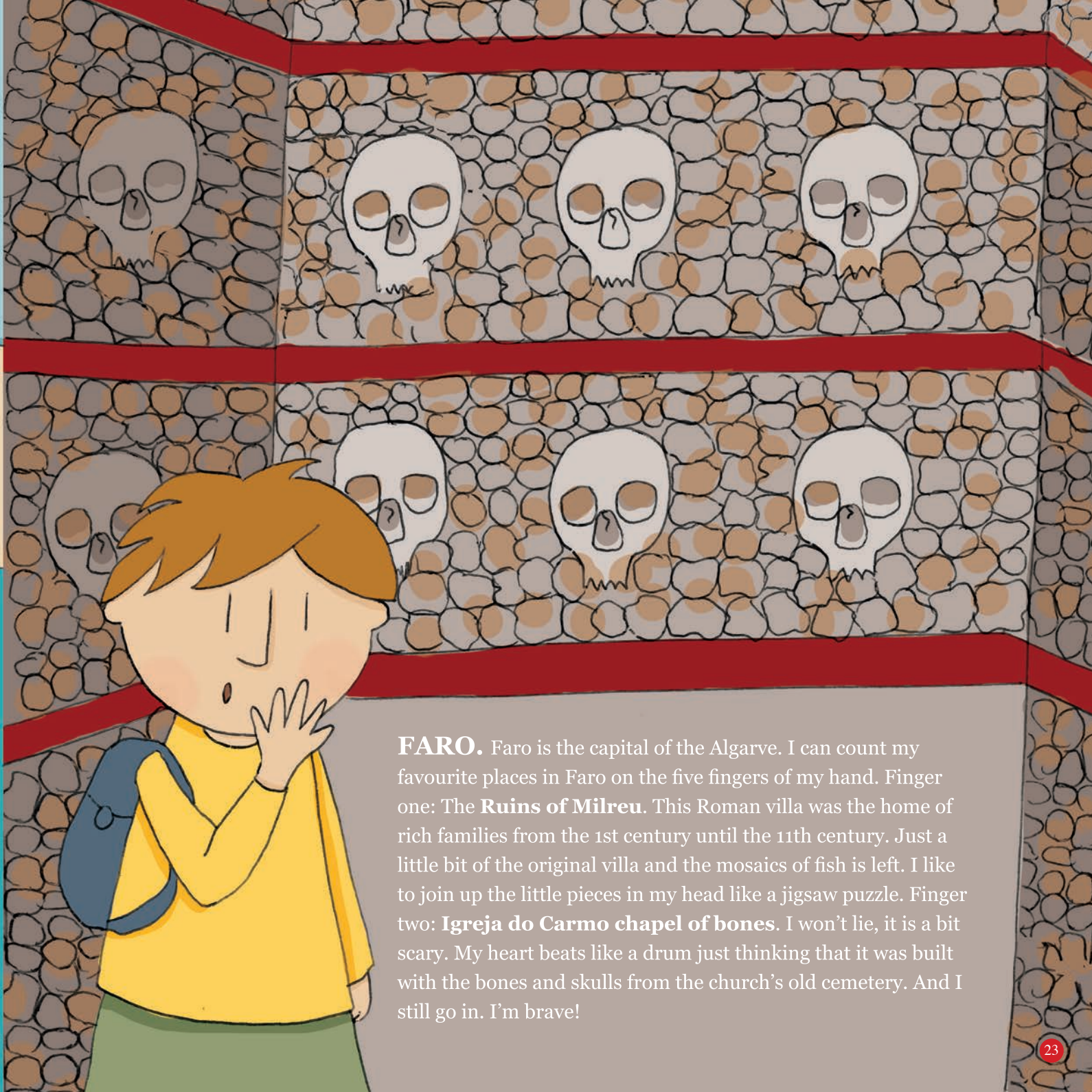




Now and again I go to the beach. Albufeira's beaches are great for **water sports**. Some are just for grown-ups, like water skiing and parasailing. But other ones are for us. The pedalo for example - no, it's nothing like an armadillo, they wouldn't be able to hold the weight, poor things - it's a pedal-powered boat. Canoes, banana boats, windsurfing and kayaking occupy me for hours on end, so long that my Dad has to call me to get out of the water. It's almost like I've grown gills like a fish. And when my tummy starts to rumble with hunger, I remember **Guia chicken**. It is cut into tiny pieces, all crispy and grilled on embers. "It tastes like all of the delicious foods in the world in one: pudding, toasties, steaks, chips, lasagne, strawberry jam..." says Catarina.



Did you know that **Paderne castle** is one of the seven castles on the Portuguese flag?



**FARO.** Faro is the capital of the Algarve. I can count my favourite places in Faro on the five fingers of my hand. Finger one: The **Ruins of Milreu**. This Roman villa was the home of rich families from the 1st century until the 11th century. Just a little bit of the original villa and the mosaics of fish is left. I like to join up the little pieces in my head like a jigsaw puzzle. Finger two: **Igreja do Carmo chapel of bones**. I won't lie, it is a bit scary. My heart beats like a drum just thinking that it was built with the bones and skulls from the church's old cemetery. And I still go in. I'm brave!



Finger three: **Lethes Theatre**. They say this is a miniature copy of the São Carlos theatre in Lisbon. I've watched shows there in a box like a very important person. Finger four: the **historic centre**. I go through the town arch, where storks sleep. I don't wake them. The narrow streets take me to the Cathedral See, which has a giant organ. And then I go to the Municipal Museum, which has the statue of King Afonso III in front of it. I told you about him before, do you remember? I also take a peek at the paintings in the Trem gallery. And like an art expert, I leave my opinion in the exhibition book. I write: "*Byootiful* paintings!" Signed: Afonso.





Take the boat to the islands and **become a 'shellfish gatherer'**. Get a bucket and put salty water in it, bend over and scavenge through the sand looking for cockles and clams.

Finger five: **the islands**. On the Isle of Culatra there are fishermen. On the "Isle" of Farol there is a lighthouse. On the Isle of Deserta there's almost nothing (that's why it's called 'Deserta', which means deserted island). On the "Isle" of Faro, there is a sandbank. I have never seen beaches that are so... so... what was that word again? Exquisite! And then multiply it by infinity times three. That's how happy those beaches make me feel!





**OLHÃO.** “Hey! Have you seen this beautiful cuttlefish? It’s like buying it fresh from the rod,” I hear at the **Olhão Market**, the one that sells fish and shellfish. Yes, because there is another one right next to it that only sells fruit and vegetables. There are two buildings. There are two of us as well – me and Catarina. At the market we see the fish that has just arrived from the fish auction; it is very, very fresh. Rays, different types of bream, eel, red mullet, scabbardfish, horse mackerel, sardines and sole – they are all there on the market stalls. And I eat them in every possible way: grilled, fried, baked in the oven or boiled. I’m not at all fussy. I love living in the Algarve because it’s a region where you can eat **fish and shellfish** all year round.



**Portuguese water dogs** are happy, docile and brave. There was once a breeding centre for them at the Ria Formosa Nature Park. They are loyal friends to fishermen and children. Even the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, has one...

My favourite dish is **cataplana**. You can make it with meat but it's better with fish and shellfish. At least that's what I think. The shellfish comes from the **Ria Formosa**, a nature park between Loulé and Vila Real de Santo António. The ria has marshes, islets, salt pans and endless animals. And it is one of the Seven Natural Marvels of Portugal, so it is. Which is easy to guess because of its name, since the word 'formosa' in Portuguese means 'beautiful'. The park's head office is in Olhão and has a tide mill, little birds and a recovery centre for wild animals that works like a hospital. When a bird breaks its wing, it is treated at the centre until it gets better. If I were a bird, I would be a spoonbill. Because they have one of the strangest beaks out of all of the birds, in the shape of a spatula, which lets it stir up the mud to catch food.








**LOULÉ.** The otter only eats fish and crustaceans. How lucky! Some say that there are otters in the **Fonte da Benémola**. I have whistled, squeaked and squealed like them to get their attention. But they never appeared. They are shy and must not want to be spotted by nosy humans.

Besides the otters that I have never seen, as I said, in Benémola there is a stream that doesn't go dry, called the Menalva. Along its course, you can smell rosemary, French lavender and thyme, which are herbs used for cooking. I know because I went to a workshop with my parents at the **Loulé Creative project**. I learned a lot. I was like a proper cook next to the grown-ups, although I did get tangled up in my apron.

Have you ever heard of an ‘alter ego’? Well when I get to the **village of Alte**, I like to say I’ve become my ‘**Alte** ego’. Catarina thinks it’s a cute joke. The village is very small with whitewashed houses and some little steps of master José Maria. The thing there that belongs to everyone is the Alte River, where I go swimming. While I dry up, I read Catarina poems by Cândido Guerreiro. His poems are everywhere! With the towel around my waist slipping down to my ankles, I recite: “As the place where I was born lies encircled by four hills / Through which waters run singing / The songs of bridges and mills, / Waters taught me to speak...” I’m also an ace at mini golf, oh yes, I am. With the club in my hand, I hit the balls until they sink into the holes of the **Family Golf Park** in Vilamoura. And as the **marina** is close by, I stop at an ice cream shop and watch the moored boats. There are hundreds with tall masts and open sails that get big in the wind on windy days.



**Dryland orchards,** which are common in Loulé, are made up of almond trees, fig trees, carob trees and olive trees. Collect almonds, dry figs and carobs on the ground. Later on, you will see what they are for.



**SÃO BRÁS DE ALPORTEL.** I don't like to rush things. I much prefer to take things slowly, like a turtle, which explains why São Brás de Alportel is like paradise for me. The hours go by very slowly and I can take part in so many activities that my Dad has to shout "AFONSO!" five times for me to get in the car. It all starts with the horses trotting.

Their hooves go *clop, clop, clop*, as they pull the cart that Catarina and I are travelling in. That's right.



You can ride in a **horse-drawn cart** along the streets of the town here. The horses leave us wherever we want. At the **Calçadinha Romana**, an old road used by the Romans, or the **Costume Museum**, where items of clothing that people wore in the 19th century are kept. And they don't smell of mould or mothballs like my granny's jumpers.

The museum opens out right onto the fabulous **cork trail**. The introduction to the history of cork in São Brás de Alportel is presented in a room. The rest is in the fresh air among the cork oaks of the Caldeirão Mountains and in the factories that turn cork into bales and champagne stoppers. Cork floats and is impermeable, elastic and a good thermal and sound insulator (I hope I haven't got that mixed up). And ours is so good that the singer Madonna has even used a cork bag from São Brás de Alportel. It's true, honest!





**TAVIRA.** Yippee! We are in Tavira, my city. Here we have pretty **beaches** with fine sand and the sea is so transparent you can see your toes under the water. At Barril beach, we walk along a railway track to get to the sand. And we take a boat to the **Isle of Tavira**. The adventure starts there. On the way to the island you see fishing boats, birds and salt pans. The salt is so white that it reminds me of the snow you get in cold countries. By the way, Tavira's **flower of salt** is really, really, really good. It has the seal of Protected Designation of Origin; my teacher told me so.



When I finally land on the island, I camp at the **campsite**. I bring a tent, lantern and sleeping bag and take naps. I can never stay asleep for long because I find the **stars** so interesting: it seems like there are millions more of them in the island sky than in the city. Every time, Catarina says: “Look, that’s the great bear!” and I reply every time that she’s the one that’s a great bear. Tavira doesn’t just have lots of stars. It also has lots of **churches, chapels and hermitages**. Shhh! You mustn’t make noise in these religious places. But they are so beautiful that I don’t mind keeping my mouth zipped shut during a visit. Of course I unzip it again as soon as I leave the church or when I enter the **camera obscura** tower, where I shout ‘WOW!’ as I peek at the giant camera with a 360 degree panorama over the city. Wow...



Tavira is the representative community of the **Mediterranean Diet** in Portugal. Do you know the 10 main parts of this diet? Discover them online at <http://dietamediterranica.net/en>.



**VILA REAL DE SANTO ANTÓNIO.** My Mum says there are poets and then there's everyone else. It's good that everyone else is around to appreciate the poets then, isn't it? The village of **Cacela Velha** has won the souls of poets. Some lived there, others wrote about it. The audio guide that the Information Centre lent me told me all about them: Sophia de Mello Breyner, Teresa Rita Lopes, Adolfo Gago, Eugénio de Andrade and Arab writers with names that are hard to pronounce, like Abû al-abdarî. There's another very well-known poet. His name is **António Aleixo**. He was born in Vila Real de Santo António, and you can find his verses in the streets. Catarina and I played at poem hunters and we found one on Rua da Princesa.



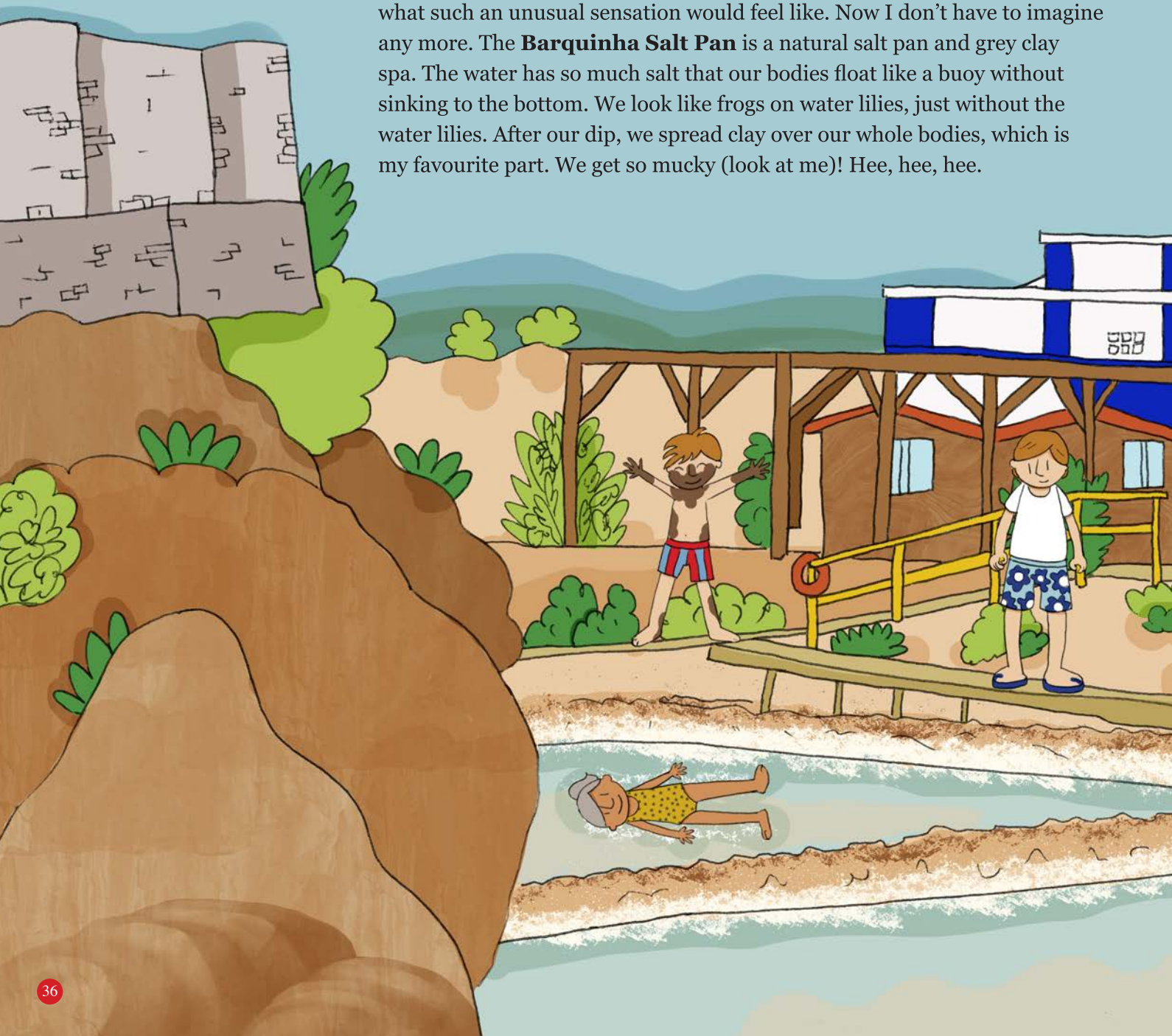
Rua da Princesa, which means “Princess Street”, is in the **Pombaline city centre**, which isn't called ‘Pombaline’ after the warthog Pumbaa in the Disney film *The Lion King*, but because it was designed by the Marquis of Pombal. There are textile shops in the area. I bought my towel in one. It's very fluffy. And the António Aleixo Cultural Centre, Main Church and Manuel Cabanas Museum? They're in this area too. And restaurants where I can fill my tummy with **tuna** are nearby too. The city used to have more than 20 canning factories. My Dad sometimes says that things are in a right sorry state nowadays, and there is only one cannery left now so I feel sorry about that. There's also only one **lighthouse**, which is open for visitors on Wednesdays. It's taller than me, my Dad, my Mum and Catarina put together so I don't feel sorry for it.



Now that you've heard about  
some **Algarve writers**,  
investigate others that were  
born here or who dedicated  
texts to the Algarve.



**CASTRO MARIM.** What would it be like to get covered in mud from head to toe with just your eyes uncovered? I have often tried to imagine what such an unusual sensation would feel like. Now I don't have to imagine any more. The **Barquinha Salt Pan** is a natural salt pan and grey clay spa. The water has so much salt that our bodies float like a buoy without sinking to the bottom. We look like frogs on water lilies, just without the water lilies. After our dip, we spread clay over our whole bodies, which is my favourite part. We get so mucky (look at me)! Hee, hee, hee.



The salt pan is in the **Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António Salt Marsh Nature Reserve**, the first reserve in continental Portugal, created in 1975. It's good to walk or cycle along the traditional salt pans with your hair in the wind, on the Venta Moinhos salt marsh trail. From the top of the **medieval castle of Castro Marim**, you can see the salt marshes, the town and the Guadiana River really well. At the entrance, they give you a crown. My sister sticks it on her head and says, standing on her tiptoes: "I am Queen Catarina and I want goat's cheese!" Yes, oh great queen! So we go to the **Algarve goat trail**, a walking trail that takes you across seven shepherd pastures, and lets you see the native Algarve goats and taste the cheeses. Excuse me shepherd José. Thank you for the cheese Mrs Fernanda. Farewell, Joana the goat.



No two birds are alike. Grab some binoculars, the **Algarve Bird Watching Guide** and a field notebook for notes and watch the birds at the Nature Reserve. Can you find a pink flamingo or a pied avocet?



**ALCOUTIM.** I know a river in Portugal that you can cross in a boat or in the air on a **zip line**. The zip line is a steel cable hanging across the **Guadiana River** that separates us from the Spanish region of Andalusia. It only takes a minute to slide across it at 70 kilometres per hour. I close my eyes and I'm in Spain. \* Whew \* I open my eyes, and I'm in Portugal. \* Whew \* The **boat ride** is not as quick. The boat goes slowly like the waters of the great southern river. The Guadiana was once an important commercial route for the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. It was used to transport gold, silver, copper, wheat, olive oil, honey and lots of other things. The boats that sailed in the Guadiana then were different from the boats of today. I saw them in miniature in the **River Museum**, painted in the colours of the rainbow and with people's names. There in the museum Lucília, Zé Marujo and Rafa are boat names.



Alcoutim is also special for another reason. Catarina will tell you what it is: “The **Pego Fundo river beach**, it’s the only river beach in the Algarve, isn’t it, bro?” Yes it is. Its water isn’t from the sea. It comes from the Alcoutim reservoir. But you can swim there and bring crocodile inflatables to scare the grown-ups. Hang on a sec... What’s that, Catarina? You want to talk about the **Martim Longo dolls**? “Aha. They are made from jute fibre by lady artisans. The dolls show the people and jobs of the olden days.” Now it’s my turn to talk. I want to tell you about the **Via Algarviana**. It’s a 300km-long pedestrian trail. It’s organised into 14 stages so that you won’t be huffing and puffing with exhaustion. It starts in Alcoutim and finishes in Vila do Bispo. And talking about Vila do Bispo, when you get there go back to the beginning of this book to look through the municipalities again with me and Catarina. Ok? After all, that is the magic of the Algarve. We never ever want to say goodbye...







What sound is that beneath your feet? Whose footprint is that? What does tuna taste like?  
And goose barnacles? How many beaches does the Algarve have?

Join Afonso and Catarina to discover the Algarve. They will show you the 16 municipalities of  
the region and the fun things you can do there.

Ready, set... go!

Published by the Algarve Tourism Board (RTA), this book was written to spark the curiosity of  
the Algarve's youngest guests, so the whole family can get out and learn all about Portugal's  
biggest tourist destination.

