

Cascais to Sesimbra

Across the mouth of the Tagus and round Cabo Espichel to Sesimbra, then on along the limestone cliffs of the Arrábida to swim at Portinho da Arrábida, and back to Sesimbra for the night.

DATE	Friday 23 April 2027
DISTANCE	38.5 nm, 7 legs
TIME	8 h 44 min, including 2 h stopped
DEPART	09:30 WEST from Cascais. About 1 hour before low water at Cascais (10:39 WEST), so the Tagus ebb is ending as you cross the river mouth.
ARRIVE	About 18:14 WEST at Sesimbra. Back in Sesimbra in the early evening, with about 2 hours 5 minutes of daylight in hand (sunset 20:20 WEST).
TIDES	3 days after the full moon: big springs, range about 2.7 m
WIND	North to north-west most likely. The Arrábida hills shelter Sesimbra from the north
BOAT	35 to 38 ft sailing yacht, 1.9 m draught, 6 kn under sail, 5.5 kn under engine
CREW	Skipper and 3 crew, 2 watches of 2



Track and waypoints 1 to 6.

Go or no-go

Decide at 08:30 WEST. Go only if all of these hold:

- ☐ Wind from north to west, force 5 or less, and no southerly forecast. A southerly sends swell into Sesimbra bay and onto the Arrábida shore.
- ☐ Swell under 2.5 m: the banks at the mouth of the Tagus break in heavy swell.

- ☐ Visibility 2 nm or more: this is the approach to a major port.
- ☐ No navigation warning for the Tagus approaches.

If the weather is wrong, stay in Cascais and take the rest day there instead. Sesimbra is close, so the leg can be sailed the next morning before leg 7.

Route and waypoints

Waypoints are planning positions in open water, checked against a 1:10m coastline to be at least 1 nm off land except at the harbour ends. Distances and courses are calculated from them. Plot every one on the current chart before use. Courses are true.

#	WAYPOINT	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	COURSE	LEG NM	TOTAL NM	ETA	NOTES
0	Marina de Cascais	38°41.5'N	009°25.1'W				09:30 WEST	Depart. Call t
1	Cascais approach	38°41.0'N	009°24.7'W	148°T	0.6	0.6	09:39 WEST	Stay south of submerged b
2	Tagus mouth, west of the banks	38°37.0'N	009°23.0'W	162°T	4.2	4.8	10:21 WEST	Cross the Tag right angles. The Cachopo CHECK O
3	Off Cabo Espichel	38°24.5'N	009°15.5'W	155°T	13.8	18.6	12:39 WEST	2 nm off the
4	Sesimbra approach	38°25.6'N	009°06.8'W	081°T	6.9	25.5	13:48 WEST	South of the CHECK O
5	Off Portinho da Arrábida	38°27.7'N	008°59.6'W	070°T	6.0	31.6	14:54 WEST to 16:54	Swim stop of seasonal buo prohibited. (CHECK O)
6	Sesimbra approach	38°25.6'N	009°06.8'W	250°T	6.0	37.6	18:00 WEST	Back west al
7	Sesimbra harbour	38°26.5'N	009°06.5'W	015°T	0.9	38.5	18:14 WEST	Port of refuge Position app CHECK O

Tides and time

CASCAIS · FRI 23 APR · WEST (UTC+1)

HW	04:42	3.0 m
LW	10:39	0.6 m
HW	16:57	3.0 m
LW	23:06	0.6 m

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LW	10:39	0.6 m
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From the Cascais station.

Friday 23 April 2027, 3 days after the full moon: big spring tides, range about 2.7 m.

Crossing the Tagus mouth at low water. Low water at Cascais is at about 10:39 WEST. Leaving at 09:30, the ebb out of the Tagus, which sets west and south-west across the route, is in its last hour as you cross. The flood that follows sets the other way, into the river. Either way, cross quickly and at right angles to the fairways.

Sesimbra has no station in the TICON-4 set, so its times are from Cascais, 18 nm north-west. The harbour has no bar and no tidal restriction for this draught. [CHECK THE PILOT BOOK](#)

Tide times are predictions made for this plan from the TICON-4 harmonic constants (DGFI-TUM) with the Neaps tide predictor, because the official 2027 tables were not yet published when it was written. Tested against the official APDL table for Leixões on 23 July 2026, the predicted times were within 8 minutes and the heights 0.1 to 0.2 m lower. Heights are above lowest astronomical tide. Check every time against the official 2027 table before sailing.

Daylight. Sunrise at Cascais 06:51 WEST. Sunset at Sesimbra 20:20 WEST.

Weather

- **Shelter.** Sesimbra and the Arrábida coast face south, under hills that shelter them from the north. In a northerly the sea is calm under the cliffs; in a southerly they are a lee shore.
- **Downdraughts.** The harbour authority warns of strong currents and gusts dropping off the hills at the Outão narrows, at the entrance to the Sado, east of Portinho. This route stops short of them.
- **April.** North to north-west winds most likely, fronts still possible.

FORECASTS TO CHECK

- IPMA (Portugal) maritime bulletins and coastal warnings, ipma.pt, maritime section. The high-seas area for this coast is 17 Porto.
- NAVTEX Portugal (Monsanto): 518 kHz, station R, in English; 490 kHz, station G, in Portuguese. Check the station letters and broadcast times against the Admiralty List of Radio Signals. [CHECK THE PILOT BOOK](#)

- Bar status: Autoridade Marítima Nacional, “Estado das barras”, on the amn.pt home page, by zone. The online notice overrides the signals shown at the harbour.
- Navigation warnings: Instituto Hidrográfico local warnings, geoanavnet.hidrografico.pt.

Hazards

- **The Tagus approaches.** Heavy commercial traffic, mainly 10 to 40 nm offshore but converging on the river mouth. Lisboa VTS works VHF 13 and 74, Lisbon pilots VHF 14. The banks either side of the entrance channel (the Cachopos) break in heavy swell: keep well west of them. [CHECK ON THE CHART](#)
- **Cabo Espichel.** High cliffs and a steep sea off the cape in a northerly. Keep 2 nm off.
- **Luiz Saldanha Marine Park.** The Arrábida coast from Sesimbra to the Sado is a marine park. Anchoring is prohibited in the partial protection zone from Portinho da Arrábida to Figueirinha. In the park, boats may go only to the mooring buoys and the beaches, approaching at right angles to the shore through marked corridors, under 3 kn and in daylight only. The Portinho quay corridor runs from 38°28.440'N 008°58.820'W to 38°28.225'N 008°59.010'W. The seasonal buoys at Portinho are run by the Setúbal municipality.
- **Sesimbra bay.** Yachts may anchor between the submarine outfalls, at least 100 m from an outfall and 300 m from the shore in the bathing season.
- **Unreliable depths.** Chart depths near Figueirinha and Cambalhão, east of Portinho, are unreliable, with possible breaking seas. Do not go east of Portinho.
- **Beaches.** No navigation within 300 m of a beach in the bathing season.

Ports of refuge

PORT	FROM THE ROUTE	USE IT WHEN	NOTES
Cascais	Start	Within the first hour	Large marina, sheltered from the north and west.
Sesimbra	Destination	Always the first choice	Port of refuge all year.
Portinho da Arrábida	At waypoint 5	In season only	A port of refuge only from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October. Shelter from the north only.
Setúbal	6 nm east of Portinho	Not planned	Port of refuge all year, but the entrance at Outão is narrow, with strong currents and downdraughts, and has seen groundings.

Pilotage

LEAVING CASCAIS

1. Call Marina de Cascais on VHF 62 before slipping.
2. Leave close to the north breakwater head, then turn south, keeping south of the cardinal buoys MC1 to MC3.
3. Head south-south-east across the Tagus mouth to waypoint 2, listening on VHF 13. Give way to ships in the fairway early and clearly.
4. Make sail for Cabo Espichel.

PORTINHO, THEN SESIMBRA

1. At Portinho, approach the buoys at right angles to the shore, under 3 kn, through the marked corridor. Do not anchor.
2. Swim only with the engine off and a line streamed astern.
3. Back at Sesimbra, enter the port of refuge on the west side of the town. Speak to the Delegação Marítima if asked. [CHECK THE PILOT BOOK](#)
4. Berth where the harbour directs. Marina operator, VHF and depths: [CHECK THE PILOT BOOK](#)

LIGHTS ON THE WAY

Guia	Iso 2s, 58 m
Cabo Raso	Fl(3) 15s
Bugio	Fl G 5s
São Julião	Oc R 5s
Cabo Espichel	Fl 4s, 168 m
Sesimbra, Forte do Cavalo	Oc 5s, 35 m
Sesimbra pierhead	Fl R 3s
Outão	Oc R 6s, 34 m

Communications

Marina de Cascais	VHF 62 · +351 214 824 800
Lisboa VTS (Port Control)	VHF 13 and 74 · pilots VHF 14
Roca Control	VHF 69 and 79
Setúbal port	VHF 13 (permanent watch), 09 recreational
Capitania de Setúbal	+351 265 548 275 · capitania.setubal@amn.pt
Delegação Marítima de Sesimbra	+351 212 233 048

Polícia Marítima, Setúbal (out of hours)	+351 265 105 123 · listens on VHF 16
Sesimbra lifeboat station	+351 212 233 268
AMN working channels	AMN channels on this coast: VHF 16 calling, 11 Capitania and Polícia Marítima working, 67 search and rescue working.
Emergency	VHF 16, DSC 70 · 112
MRCC Lisboa	+351 214 401 919 · mrcc.lisboa@marinha.pt · watches VHF 16 around the clock

Contingencies

- **Southerly or swell from the south-west.** Skip Portinho and go straight into Sesimbra, or stay in Cascais.
- **No buoy free at Portinho.** Do not anchor in the park. Go back to Sesimbra bay and anchor between the outfalls, or swim from the harbour beach.
- **Fog at the Tagus mouth.** Fog routine, radar and AIS watch, sound signals. Cross the fairways only when the radar picture is clear; otherwise wait on the Cascais side, out of the traffic.
- **Engine failure.** Sail to Sesimbra bay and anchor between the outfalls, then call for a tow in.
- **Person overboard.** Shout, point, throw the danger buoy, press MOB, DSC distress alert, Mayday on 16.

Before leaving

- ☐ Forecasts read and logged before the go or no-go time
 - ☐ Bar status checked on amn.pt for departure, destination and refuges
 - ☐ Navigation warnings checked
 - ☐ Waypoints entered and checked against the chart
 - ☐ Ship's log started in UTC
 - ☐ Crew briefing: route, watches, safety gear, MOB, fog
 - ☐ Portinho buoys confirmed in place for the season
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- ☐ Fuel for 6 hours under engine, plus a reserve
 - ☐ Water, food and hot drinks for 10 hours
 - ☐ Lifejackets with crotch straps, jackstays rigged, harnesses
 - ☐ Liferaft, grab bag, flares in date, handheld VHF
 - ☐ Radar, AIS and navigation lights tested

Sources

- Setúbal and Sesimbra rules, anchoring, the marine park, ports of refuge: Capitania do Porto de Setúbal, Edital 97/2022 (amn.pt).
- Arrábida access corridors: Capitania do Porto de Setúbal, Edital 05/2026 (amn.pt).
- Setúbal bar: Plano Prévio de Intervenção, Barra do Porto de Setúbal (2024, amn.pt).
- Cascais: Capitania do Porto de Cascais, Edital 950/2024 and Plano de Salvamento Marítimo (amn.pt).
- Contacts: Capitania do Porto de Setúbal page, amn.pt.
- Bar status: Marinha, Estado das Barras, marinha.pt (all bars on this stretch shown open in October 2026).
- Local warnings: Instituto Hidrográfico, geoanavnet.hidrografico.pt.
- Tides: predictions from TICON-4 harmonic constants (Hart-Davis, Dettmering and Seitz, DGFI-TUM, 2025, doi 10.17882/109129) with Neaps (openwaters.io). Check against the Instituto Hidrográfico 2027 tables.
- Sunrise and sunset: calculated (NOAA method).
- Lights: The Lighthouse Directory (Rowlett), ibiblio.org/lighthouse, Portugal pages revised August 2024. Cross-check with the IH List of Lights, volume I.
- Pilot: RCC Pilotage Foundation, Atlantic Spain and Portugal, 9th edition (2025).

A planning exercise to RYA Yachtmaster standard. Not for navigation: use current official charts, the pilot book and the forecasts on the day.