

Helpful hints about the villa

Turning the hot water on.

The first thing to do is to switch the boiler on. It's in the laundry. We have a new Vulcano boiler and it is so simple even I can use it.

1. Switch the gas on. That is the tap looking thingy on the wall to the right of the boiler with a little yellow dot in its middle. 'On' is parallel to the benchtop, in line with the gas hose.
2. 'Push to open' the panel on the boiler and press the on button (top left). If the reset button is on – press that too.
3. The hot water temperature (bottom right dial) should be on 'e' or between e and 6.
4. The radiator temp should be on cold. If you want the radiators on – turn that dial up to 6.

If the pressure is below the green section, gently turn the red water tap to the left of the boiler for a little burst. But not too much – less is more with this tap.

Ignore the hot water tank on the left. This is for emergencies. It took me 8 years to work that out.

The drinks fridge is to the right of the washing machine. This is of no relevance whatsoever to this section, I'd just hate it if you went the whole holiday without knowing it was there.

About the hot water – it takes a ridiculously long while for the water to make the journey to the bathrooms, especially the far one. So be patient while you waste gallons of the stuff waiting for it to reach you. It will – eventually.

For all bathroom taps – cold is right and hot is left.

For the kitchen – cold is away from you and hot is toward you. I still think this is the wrong way round, but there you go.

Opening the bedroom blinds.

Please be extra careful when opening the bedroom blinds as they have a tendency of catching on the door handles. Some of the blinds are already damaged. Just guide them over the handles as they rise.

Outdoor sofa cushions

Please bring the cushions for the outdoor sofa indoors at night to save them from getting wet by a combination of dew and the sprinkler system. We just stack them behind the sofa in the lounge room.

Mozzies.

The mosquitoes aren't vicious like Aussie mozzies or the dreaded Scottish midgies, and they are few in number when the wind blows – and there is usually a breeze of some sort. However, sometimes a few of the deadly bloodsuckers do like to sneak in to the bedrooms at dusk, so best close the bedroom sliding doors as the sun sets. There are mosquito repellent plug ins in the bedrooms and fans.

Fuse box. Is in the hallway near the front door – along with a funny little tool box. Spare light bulbs are in one of the drawer under the printer in the next cupboard.

Banging doors.

With so much flow through ventilation, it is inevitable that the bedroom doors will bang like a dunny door in a cyclone if left open. I'm paranoid that some little fingers will get caught, so I recommend keeping the bedroom doors shut or propping them open with chairs – or small children.

Supplies

Help yourself to anything in the larder and the drinks fridge - just please replace anything before you leave. Any breakages, just let us know. The supermarkets now do a fab line in 'Nicola' brand copy Nespresso pods.

Blinds in the dining / sitting rooms. Recommend you keep them down in the afternoon.

Airconditioning. There isn't any. It took me ages to work that out. But there are fans. Definitely use the fans.

Internet. If you want to get online, the MEO wireless password code is **CF1C1AB5AE**. They tell me the router is the box on the wall in the storage room.

TV

We have a selection of Portuguese TV, the MEO cable TV, Apple TV and a DVD player.

Apple TV for Netflix, Amazon Prime et al or the DVD player.

To operate:

Turn TV on using remote. Use this remote for volume controls.

Go to 'Source' and select HDMI1 for Apple TV and then use the little silver Apple TV remote control.

MEO is accessible from HDMI2 – Sky News and stuff available from this.

Select AV1 for the DVD player. The DVD remote is the same brand as the TV but is a separate control.

Rubbish. There are big recycling bins in the Golf Course car park and lots of big green bins for other rubbish dotted about the resort.

The outdoor awning. We installed an electric awning for some shade over the outdoor table. Please be careful with it. It can be opened as far as you like up to 3m, so opening it part way may be a good idea if the wind is a little strong. **If it is very windy, don't use it.** The remote for the awning is on the wall in the kitchen.

Towels for the pool. There are 8 blue beach towels in the cupboards in the first bedroom (the one with the ensuite and the two large single beds).

The Pool.

Pool Heating. To turn the pool heating on (which I strongly recommend doing asap), just hold down the on/off button on the pool heater. This is the faded tan-coloured box with a fan on the front, lurking in the corner of the garden. The heater should be set for 27 degrees and will switch off automatically once this temperature has been reached. It may take a while to get to 27 from a standing start, so be patient. (To turn the heating off when you leave, just hold down the on/off switch.)

Taking the pool cover off. There is a manual handle turning cranky thing on a pole in the laundry. The battery operated 'Rolltrot' died. Sob.

Step 1: Unleash the pool cover from its moorings. Make sure you completely disconnect the 3 ratchet/shackle thingies (there's a knack to this involving releasing both catches at the same time, but you'll work it out) and place them to one side. You don't want these pieces of metal rolling up with the pool cover.

Step 2. Take the long black ribbon that is connected to the centre of the driveway-end of the pool cover and lay it out flat along the pool cover to the skimmer boxes and beyond. Half of this ribbon will roll up with the cover.

Step 3. To remove the cover – manual handle turning cranky thing on a pole in the laundry. The battery operated 'Rolltrot' died. Sob.

Putting the pool cover on. Luckily, this is really simple. Pull up the ladder and lock it in to the horizontal position. Take the black ribbon that is connected to the centre of the pool cover, walk to the driveway end of the pool and pull on the ribbon, thus unfurling the cover. Pull the cover tight and connect the 3 ratchet/shackle thingies (not as simple as it sounds – but you'll work it out - and stretch the cover tight. Voila!

Other stuff

Restaurants in the resort. There is only one - the golf club house bar and it's pretty good. They make a big deal about having to book and yet there are always empty tables. Welcome to Portugal.

Restaurants in the area – lots - see green folder and/or ask at Reception, including:

Bom Sucesso (the town) – several low key restaurants and they are all good.

Cavao dos Musaranhos. A little casual restaurant open for lunch just at this end of the lagoon near the SUPP hire and bike hire places. Fab fish, clams, octopus salad, sardines. You need to book. Call 262 969 930 before 10:30 and I recommend a 1pm booking otherwise they can run out of fish.

The **Restaurante Pizzaria Cozinha D'el Rei** in Serra D'el Rei is great – superb pizzas and seafood. Casual and large.

So many fantastic seafood restaurants at **Foz De Orelho** – cataplana, sardines, clams, dourada and other fresh fish – informal and beachside – fabulous.

Obidos – heaps of good restaurants. Just go for a wander.

Solar Dos Amigos in the hills above Caldas da Rainha is the place for meat-eaters (if you can find it – location and details in the green folder). Looks like it is frequented by Portuguese Matadors and the beef and pork (and chicken or fish if you must) is brill, the wine is great and the service and atmosphere is just a hoot – full of local families. It is really tough to spend 25€ a head – we've tried. But be careful not to order too much. A family of four will have oodles left over with just one serve of steak. Took 4 golfing buddies there and we ordered one half serve of beef and one half serve of pork, and we were full to the gunnels. And remember **they only take cash.**

We recently discovered **Praia da Areia Branca** south of Peniche – great beach bars/cafes and a fab upmarket, lavish Pizzeria overlooking the beach with lots of tables that is definitely worth a visit - especially as the sun sets. But the queue to get in can be an hour or more long – unless you eat early. 12-12:30 for lunch and before 7pm for dinner. We arrived at 6:45 and had our choice of tables. By 7:15, the place was packed and the queue was ridiculous. Great food, great service, great views, ... what's not to like? It's half an hour drive – head down the IP6 towards Peniche and then turn left towards Lorinha.

The supermarkets.

There is a little shop near reception that sells a few basics.

The nearest and best supermarket is **Pingo Doce** in Obidos. Go out of the resort and back the way you travelled when first arriving – back through Vau, on to the traffic lights at the T junction, turn left at these lights and then on to the next T junction 3 kms further on. At this T junction, turn left towards Obidos. Just before you reach Obidos, you will come across a roundabout with Pingo Doce on the right, opposite an indoor swimming pool. Take a Euro or fifty cent coin for the trolley. Good piri-piri barbecued chickens can be found at the deli counter. Huge seafood counter. Good wine selection and an espresso and pastel de nata at their café costs 1€. The Portuguese are big on UHT milk but you can get fresh stuff at Pingo.

A Continente has just opened up across the road from Pingo. It's really good.

There are **other supermarkets** in Peniche and Caldas Da Rainha.

You will find a very cool little **fish and vege** market in Peniche – see folder.

There's a **fresh fruit and vege** market in Caldas every day in the central plaza.

Golf. The golf course is super. The pro shop and booking office is at the clubhouse.

Tennis – book at reception.

Sailing. The sailing club (not part of the resort) is the other side of the lagoon. Run by very laid back people who cannot do enough to help you. Lessons available. They have hobie cats, oppies, a couple of lasers, windsurfers and kitesurfers. They also provide wetsuits if required. There's a cash-only bar and café/restaurant jobbie at the sailing club.

Stand Up Paddle Board at Obidos lagoon – turn left out of the resort down by the lagoon and you will find it 500m on the right.

This is the start of a 6-7km walk around the lagoon to Bom Sucesso town – well worth doing.

Peniche is Western Europe's premier surf spot. Excellent beaches, great surf schools. Remember to hire wet suits though.

Belanga Islands. Little islands directly off the coast. Great day trip from Peniche.

Maфра, Alcobaca and Sintra are all beautiful and well worth visiting. See green folder.

The Beach.

The Atlantic surf is wild and cold. Exciting though. To look at. There is plenty of sand at low tide and a cool little ocean beach worth checking out is down the newly paved road past the newly opened West Cliffs Golf Club en route to the town of Bom Sucesso.

Right in front of a makeshift little beach bar "Rio Contico Praia" (also owned by Susannah and Pedro nee Marco)

Useful numbers:

Phone number at the villa: +351 262 112 272

Reception: +351 262 965 300

They are mostly helpful and should help with anything – info about Obidos and the region, booking restaurants, golf lessons, tennis bookings, ...

Helena (cleaner). +351 916 316 396. Keep an eye out for Helena; the lady who has developed a thriving cleaning company – she and her daughter and others will have cleaned the villa before your arrival and washes all of the linen and towels when you leave. She is fab.

Also call her if anything breaks and you don't know what to do. She knows people and runs a fixit business on the side.

Us.

Obviously call us at any time with any questions/problems:

Cam +44 7748 704 705

Jane: +44 7966 799 241

Checklist upon departure.

Please sign the visitor's book!

Please throw all used towels out into the corridor.

Switch the boiler off and the gas off.

Turn the pool heater off.

Ensure the pool cover is secure.

Clean the BBQ and put it in the laundry

Please stack the outside dining chairs inside near the laundry.

Please take the outside table inside and stow it along the corridor between the kitchen and the laundry.

Stack the outside sofa cushions behind the sofa in the sitting room

Check every single glass sliding door is closed and locked – even the impossible one in front of the kitchen.

All blinds down.

All lights and bathroom fans off

Check the fridge, kitchen and larder are empty of anything that could smell.

Have you got the villa keys?

Passports?

Car keys?

Are you feeling properly patronised yet?

Done.