Perched on a rocky ledge 30m above a series of fine sandy beaches, ERICEIRA offers one of the few natural harbours between Cascais and Peniche. During the nineteenth century boats left from here to trade with countries as far away as Scotland and Brazil. Later, it provided a welcome escape route for Portugal’s last monarch, Dom Manuel II – “The Unfortunate” – who hightailed it to the harbour at Ericeira on October 5, 1910, fleeing into exile as Portugal finally jettisoned its monarchy. Continue reading to find out more about... World Surfing Reserve Popular with surfers year round – it’s just south of Europe’s first World Surfing Reserve – and certainly a busy resort in peak season when people flock here from Lisbon, Ericeira remains a laidback and highly attractive place of narrow lanes and whitewashed houses picked out in cobalt blue. It’s also renowned for excellent seafood – the town’s name is said to derive from the words ouriços do mar (sea urchin). **World Surfing Reserve** The Ericeira coast is famous as the heartland of Portuguese surfing, and was named a World Surfing Reserve in 2011, which aims to preserve the globe’s coasts and surfing culture. The first in Europe, it was awarded reserve status because of its high density of surf breaks and its established surfing culture. The reserve actually starts four kilometres north of Ericeira at Praia da Empa and continues north to São Lourenço. Surfers rate the biggest challenge to be the so-called Cave off Praia dos Coxos, while the World Surfing Championships have been held at Praia da Ribeira d’Ilhas (5km north), which also hosts the annual Quicksilver Pro Portugal professional surf event. To get an idea of the cliffs, bays and waves along the coast, visit the small surf museum space above the Ericeira tourist office, which has interactive displays.