

Dunkeswell-Portugal Algarve 2011 by TB10

After a 3 month delay in our departure date to Portugal we (myself, John and Val) finally got away end of September which as it turned out was a fantastically hot week all over Europe.

As usual we flight planned to France (Perigueux this time). The pre booked Ibis hotel is next to the cathedral and don't charge you unless you actually get there which for us pilots is ideal.

Routing JSY, ANG LFPE we were there in 3.8 hrs and spent the following three days in this beautiful old town.

Monday morning we departed early down towards the Pyrenees. Unfortunately French ATC advised us that several restricted areas were active which involved some careful nav work for the next hour !

Over the fabulous mountains at FL 65 took us into Spain passing quickly from San Sebastian to Bilbao and then Vittoria control areas. The remainder of northern Spain is high plateau with an almost desert like look and little or no ATC to talk to. Flight time 4 hours.

We descended into Northern Portugal and landed for fuel and a loo at Braganca. This impressive airfield seems to be run be a local farmer who arrives on his tractor fills our tanks, hands us the phone to Lisbon and then departs again on his tractor ! We were now in a cash only airfield so took plenty with us. A litre was about 2 euros.

Flight plan again and depart for Portimao on the Algarve. Lisboa control are excellent and watched over our entire flight before passing us off to Faro who welcome us into their zone and pass us over to Portimao once visual. This last leg took about 2.8hours

A warm welcome was given by the staff at Portimao who remembered us from previous years and arranged a hire car for our week in Vilamoura. We stayed at the apartment for the week and returned flying the same route other than for landing for a night at Bergerac.

The weather was unusually kind and it was like summer all the way.

A fabulous trip that I would recommend to anyone with accommodation available in Vilamoura for fellow pilots.

We are already planning for next year.

Happy landings.

Phil Albrow