

Tourists warned about long queues and congestion following the opening of controversial road toll.



British holidaymakers driving in the Algarve this summer have been told to expect delays and disruption following the introduction of a controversial road toll on the A22, the region's main motorway.

The toll was levied in December as a response to pressure on the Portuguese government to raise taxes, but has been described as "unworkable" by visitors and local residents.

The cost to use the A22 from Faro to Lagos is €8.30 (£6.90), but there are no booths on the road at which payment can be made.

Anyone driving a foreign-registered vehicle must instead pay before using the motorway. Credits can be bought at a local post office or a designated "PayShop". At the border between Spain and Portugal there is a small booth where a pass lasting between three and five days can be bought from a machine. A new system is expected later this summer enabling foreign drivers to register their credit card and number plate, and have the correct fee deducted automatically.

Long queues at these machines have already been reported, and it is feared that drivers visiting this summer who want to use them could face very long waits. No such machines are to be found at other entry points to the motorway.

Confusingly, holidaymakers who hire a car (and local residents) must pay the toll, also at a post office or PayShop, between two and 10 days after using the road. Therefore all tolls incurred within 48 hours of departure cannot be paid. Portuguese authorities will instead contact the driver at his or her home address for payment.

The alternative to the A22 is the once-notorious and badly maintained N125. With Portuguese drivers boycotting the tolls, this is now very busy again.

A spokesman for AHETA, the Algarve's largest hotel and resort association, predicted a "chaotic summer", and said that traffic on the A22 had fallen by 56 per cent since the introduction of the scheme.

A representative of the Algarve Tourist Board also voiced opposition to the tolls, saying they were "not tourist-friendly".

source: telegraph.co.uk

[Algarve Car Hire](#) and [Portugal Car Hire](#) are available at cheap inclusive prices at <http://www.travel-car-hire.com>