



Lisbon

The Portuguese capital is a year-round destination that oozes appeal, is tough on your feet, yet easy on your wallet

WHY GO?

Lisbon has the likeability factor – large but unimposing, lively yet laid-back. It's a city that positively buzzes. Whether it's the clattering of trams through Alfama's historic streets, or the sound of locals and tourist mingling in Barrio Alto's Fado filled streets, there's always something going on, someplace to be, or a new sight to see, and endless food and drink to sample. Built on a succession of hills this is a no pain no gain city where your efforts for conquering some scarily steep hills is rewarded with breathtaking views and historical and cultural delights.

GETTING THERE

The following airlines operate direct flights to Lisbon from the UK:
 BMIbaby (@ www.bmibaby.com) from Manchester (27 March-30 October, British Airways (@ www.ba.com) from London Heathrow, Easyjet (@ www.easyjet.com) from Bristol, Liverpool, London Gatwick, and London Luton and TAP Portugal (@ www.flytap.com) from London Gatwick and London Heathrow.

GETTING AROUND

WALKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Despite some steep hills, many city sights are fairly close together and walkable. However, trams, buses, taxis and the metro are good value, efficient and can be a quicker way to visit the sites, especially those on the outskirts of the city.

ORGANISED TOURS

Many of Lisbon's sights are close together, but steep hills can make even seemingly short walks feel like an Olympic endurance event. Although the city's hills can't be avoided altogether (and why would you when they provide some of the city's breathtaking views), a hop-on/hop-off bus or organised tour may be an easier way to explore Lisbon, especially for those with walking difficulties. While a more expensive method of sightseeing, such tours are a convenient way for everyone to see the city's main sights, especially if you are short of time or visiting the outer realms of Lisbon.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

WHICH? HOLIDAY TIP Weekend visitors benefit from free entry to government-run museums on Sundays until 2pm (plus other select museums).

■ Castelo de São Jorge (St George's Castle)

(www.castelosajorge.egeac.pt)
 Perched high above the city on top of one of Lisbon's highest hills, this historic castle has origins dating back to the 11-12th centuries. The castle's strategic location now attracts visitors wishing to take in the fabulous views (Miradouro) from the very top of its fortress walls. **Open** 1 November to 28 February 9am-6pm, 1 March to 31 October 9am-9pm **Admission** €5

■ Sé Catedral (Lisbon Cathedral)

A modest cathedral built in the Romanesque style in the second half of the 12th century. The more elaborate Gothic cloister was added between 1261-1325, with additions and restorations added later, up until the last century. Archeological excavations in the former cloister gardens have uncovered Iron Age, Roman and Islamic structures and artefacts. Tram 28 stops outside the cathedral. **Open** church: 9am-7pm Mon to Fri. The cloister

10am-6pm Monday to Saturday, Sundays Oct-Apr 2pm-6pm

Admission church free, cloister €2.50

■ Mosteiro dos Jeronimos (Jeronimos Monastery)

(www.mosteirojeronimos.pt)
 This stunning early 16th-century monastery is the star attraction of Belem, possibly even Lisbon. Enter through the striking statue adorned Main Portal to find a church and chapel with stone and artwork of the highest distinction. The exceptional craftsmanship continues throughout Diogo de Boitaca's Manueline (Portuguese late Gothic) designed cloister, where vaulted ceilings and religious, royal and nature symbols are intricately carved into the stone. **Open** Oct-Apr 10am-5pm, May-Sept 10am-6pm. Closed Mondays. **Admission** church free, cloister €6. Combination ticket for Jeronimos Monastery (cloister) and Tower of Belém €8

■ Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument to the Discoveries)

(www.padraodescobrimentos.egeac.pt)
 This distinctive ship-shape monument was erected in 1960 and is situated on the banks of the Tagus River. It features 33 sculptured figures of historical importance, including navigators, missionaries, writers and poets. Head to the roof for unobstructed views of the Jeronimos Monastery. **Open** May-Sept 10am-7pm every day (last admission 6.30pm). Oct-Apr 10am-6pm, Tues to Sun (last admission 5.30pm) **Admission** €2.50

■ Torre de Belem (Belem Tower)

(www.mosteirojeronimos.pt)
 Built to protect the city of Lisbon from invasion this early 16th century Manueline-designed fortress with Moorish watchtowers stands proud at the mouth of the Tangus River. Follow a series

of narrow winding staircases to the very top for views of the river and surrounding area.
Open Oct to Apr 10am-5pm, May to Sept 10am-6.30pm. Closed Mondays. Last entry is 30 minutes before closing.
Admission €4

■ **Museu Calouste Gulbenkian**

🌐 www.museu.gulbenkian.pt

A fascinating museum displaying a permanent exhibition of around 1000 objects from Calouste Gulbenkian's personal collection. The easy-to-navigate galleries showcase the collection in chronological order, with classical and oriental Art and European Art on display. Don't miss the unique collection of jewellery and glassware from René Lalique.

Open 10am-5.45pm, Tues to Sun. Closed Mon
Admission €4. Combination ticket with Modern Art Centre €7

■ **Centro de Arte Moderna**

(Modern Art Centre)

🌐 www.camjap.gulbenkian.pt

A five-minute walk through the tranquil gardens shared with the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian brings you to the striking building of this modern art gallery. The museum houses permanent and temporary exhibitions with a focus on modern and contemporary works by Portuguese artists.
Open 10am-6pm, Tues to Sun. Closed Mondays
Admission €4. Combination ticket with Gulbenkian Museum €7

■ **Museu Nacional do Azulejo**

(National Tile Museum)

🌐 www.mnazulejo.imc-ip.pt

On paper, a tile museum may not stand out as must see attraction, but this exquisite collection of tiles dating from the second half of the 15th century to the present day can't fail to impress. And if the tiles fail to make an impression, then the beautiful early 16th-century convent housing the collection should make the trip worthwhile – the church, choir and chapter house are worthy of a particular note.

Open 10am-6pm Weds to Sun, 2pm-6pm Tues. Last entry at 5.30pm. Closed Mondays
Admission €4

■ **Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga**

(National Gallery)

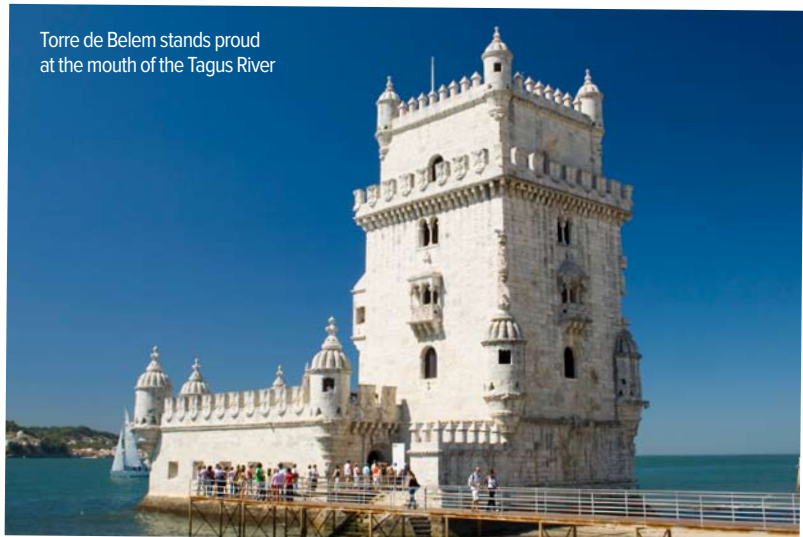
🌐 www.mnarteantiga-ipmuseus.pt

Three floors and 70 rooms of Lisbon's finest National and International art, all housed inside a honey-coloured 17th-century palace to the west of the city. Follow the museums guide to the "10 highlights of the MNAA" to maximise your visit.
Open Weds to Sun 10am-6pm, Tues 2pm-6pm. Closed Mondays
Admission €4

■ **Museu Colecção Berardo**

(Berardo Collection Museum)

🌐 www.museuberardo.com



Torre de Belem stands proud at the mouth of the Tagus River

Jose Berardo's personal collection of modern art is so large that a regular stream of expertly constructed temporary exhibitions is needed to display its quality works.

Open Sun-Fri, 10am-7pm (last admission 6.30pm)
Sat, 10am-10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission free

■ **Museu Nacional Dos Coches** (Coach Museum)

🌐 www.museudoscoches-ipmuseus.pt

A first-class collection of 17th to 19th century-coaches and carriages that even Cinderella would be proud of – a rare travelling coach belonging to King Philip II of Portugal is the star attraction. Once inside, take time to look up at the equestrian motifs on the ceiling of the main hall, a lasting sign of the buildings former life as the Royal Riding School.

Open Tues to Sun, 10am-6pm (last admission 5.30pm). Closed Mondays

Admission €4

■ **Parque das Nações**

This is new Lisbon – an ultra-modern development of shops, restaurants, offices and exhibition spaces originally built for Expo 1998. This well-designed mini-metropolis flanks the river to east of the city and is home for many residents. The areas mix of sculpture filled contemporary parkland and other key attractions make it an appealing destination for tourists:

■ **Cable Car - Parque das Nações**

Take to the skies for a cable car ride along the Parque das Nações waterfront. Not for the faint hearted!

Admission €3.90 single, €6 return

■ **Oceanário de Lisboa – Parque das Nações**

🌐 www.oceanario.pt

An aquarium of the highest calibre with enough fish, birds and plants to impress even the biggest

of kids. Set on two levels around a central tank, numerous viewing points allow you get up close to over 8000 animals and plants at both surface and underwater level.

Open summer, 10am-8pm, (last admission 7pm).
Winter, 10am-7pm (last admission 6pm)

Admission €11

■ **Tram 28**

At the top of many tourist must-do list is a trip on Tram 28 culminating in a thrilling ride through the historic district of Alfama. Jump on board for Lisbon's answer to an Alton Towers white-knuckle ride as your rickety, yet lovable yellow tram hurtles its way downhill through the scarily narrow streets of Alfama, only slowing for a steep uphill climb or an impromptu stop as a car or tourist infiltrates the tracks. Sardine alert – seats can be hard to come by at busy times and you may become one of the many trams sardines. Try and board near the Gracia or Martim Moniz to increase your chances of a seat.

■ **Feira da Ladra (Flea Market)**

Anything goes at this lively free-market at Campo de Santa Clara, close to Alfama, where everything, including the kitchen sink, is on sale. Interesting antiques and collectables tempt visitors alongside an eclectic mix of household items, some of which would be better off in the skip!

Open Tues 8am-12noon and Sat 7am-5pm

VIEWPOINTS

■ **Miradouro da Gracia**

A superb city vista with great views of the castle. A small kiosk serve drinks, with tables and chairs taking advantage of the view.

■ **Elevador de Santa Justa**

This 147ft-elevator of iron construction was originally steam-powered and was designed to connect the Bairro Alto district with the lower

Baxi (Downtown) area. Located just off Rua Augusta, one of Lisbon's most popular shopping streets. Fabulous views of the city and São Jorge castle can be seen from the top.

Open 7am-11pm (last admission 10.45pm)
Admission €2.70

■ Parque Eduardo VII

A manicured stretch of landscaped parkland offering far-reaching city views down to the River Tagus and beyond. Combine with a trip to Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, a 10-min walk away.

A LITTLE FURTHER

■ Sintra

This magical hilltop town is the pot of gold at the end of Lisbon's rainbow, it's weird and wonderful fairytale palaces, castles and gardens dotting the steep landscape. Sintra is an easy 40-minute train journey from central Lisbon.

■ Palácio Nacional de Sintra (National Palace)

🌐 www.imc-ip.pt

This former royal palace in the heart of historic Sintra has origins dating back to the Middle Ages – each new resident adding their own stamp on its design. The Swans' Room, the palaces' Grand Hall and Coat-of-Arms Room are sure to impress with their elaborate interiors, while the Magpie Room will leave the superstitious in a spin as they try counting the magpie motifs on the ceiling.

Open 9.30am-5.30pm (last admission 5pm).
Closed Wednesday

Admission €5

WHICH? HOLIDAY TIP Self-guided tours follow a circular route around the palace. An early start is advised to prevent being stuck behind one of the many tour groups. We arrived at opening beating the first of the tour groups for a quiet, bottle-neck-free tour.

■ Palácio Nacional da Pena (Pena Palace) and gardens

🌐 www.parquesdesintra.pt

Prince charming and his fairytale princess could live quite happily in this mid 19th-century-Disney-esque palace. Enter through the folly filled gardens, where a steep 500m walk through the diverse mix of trees, foliage and flowers will bring you to the palace – we advise you to take the walk slowly, or alternatively hop on the overpriced, yet appealing, mini tram (€2). The steep gradient of the gardens make exploring hard work, especially if you have walking difficulties or if it's a hot day, so you may prefer to focus your efforts on visiting the palace and enjoying the spectacular views.

Open Palace: Apr-Sept, 9.45am-7pm (last admission 6.30pm). Oct-Mar, 10am-6pm 7pm (last admission 5.00pm). Gardens: Apr-Sept, 9.30am-8pm (last admission 7.00pm). Oct-Mar, 10am-6pm 7pm (last admission 5.00pm)
Admission €8 (combined ticket with Moorish Castle €11)

■ Castelo dos Mouros (Moorish Castle)

🌐 www.parquesdesintra.pt

This former military fort dates back to somewhere between the 8th and 9th century, its strategic location providing spectacular far-reaching views from its steep hill top location. Only the castle's exterior walls and watchtowers remain.

Open Apr-Sept, 9.30am-8pm (last entry 7pm). Oct-Mar, 10am-6pm 7pm (last entry 5pm)
Admission €5 (combined ticket with Pena Palace €11)

WHICH? HOLIDAY TIP A tourist bus follows a circular route from the train station to some of Sintra's most popular tourist sights. Although expensive at €4.50, the extremely steep terrain makes it the easiest way to visit Pena Palace and

the Moorish castle if arriving by train. If you visit the Moorish castle first then you can walk up the steep hill to Pena Palace in about 5-10 minutes. A bus timetable and Sintra map are available from the train station.

■ Quinta da Regaleira

🌐 www.regaleira.pt

A 10-minute stroll from Sintra's historic centre brings you to the delightfully ostentatious Quinta da Regaleira – a former summer residence of the Carvalho Monteiro family. Yet it is the quite magical gardens that are the star attraction of this place, with lakes, grottos, wells fountains, tunnels, caves and churches just some of the intriguing delights you will discover as you follow the winding trail through the gardens.

Open Feb, Mar and Oct 10am-6.30pm (last entry 6pm). Apr-Sept 10am-8pm (last entry 7pm). Nov-Jan 10am-5.30pm (last entry 5pm)
Admission €6, guided tour €10 (advanced booking)

GOOD PLACES TO STAY

The following hotels and B&Bs are for one night's stay for two people in January 2010, and includes breakfast and taxes. Although Lisbon's transport system is efficient, pick a central hotel to maximise your time in the city.

■ Residential Alegria

📞 00 351 213 220 670

This recently refurbished hotel offers guests good sized rooms, beautifully decorated with simply painted furnishings and a calming colour scheme. Situated off one of Lisbon's upmarket shopping streets, the central location makes it a good base for exploring the city. **Doubles from €58 (£52)**
We like Historic building, good location, great value.

We don't like Poor sound-proofing between rooms and the outside world. Lacks the 'extras' associated with higher rated hotels.

■ Zuzabed & Breakfast

🌐 www.zuzabed.com

📞 00 351 934 445 500

Immerse yourself in Lisbon's laid-back and friendly culture by staying at this small but modern guesthouse – each of the four rooms come with their own personal travel guide in the form of owner Luis! Set above a popular restaurant, (don't be put off by the unusual entrance), Luis will share his knowledge and love of Lisbon to help you discover the best of the city, returning 'home' after your day's adventures. **Doubles from €80 (£73)**

plus €5 city tax

We like Luis, its central location and fabulous breakfast.

We don't like Some street noise may be heard. The Castle Room is small.

VALUE
FOR
MONEY



The fairytale Pena Palace and gardens

DON'T BE TEMPTED

Tempting breads, cheeses, hams, etc brought to restaurant tables before ordering aren't free. Ask for their price before tucking in, and don't be afraid to turn them away.

LISBOA CARD

Buying a Lisboa Card from tourist info points gives free and discounted entry to a range of tourist sites – plus free public transport (excluding the Aerobus). Be aware though that you will need to have a packed itinerary planned to maximise your savings and cover your initial outlay – although the convenience of the card represents value in itself. Cards cost €16, €27 and €33.50 for 24, 48 or 72 hours respectively.



Hotel Britania

www.heritage.pt

00 351 213 218 200

A fine example of 1940's Art Deco interior design that has been sympathetically restored to its former glory. Apartment style rooms are large and furnished in keeping with the period. Doubles from €160 (£145)

We like Character-building, superb service, good location, quiet side street.

We don't like Room-only with expensive breakfast (€14)

SPECIAL OCCASION

GOOD PLACES TO EAT & DRINK

RESTAURANTS

O Cantinho das Gáveas

Rua das Gáveas, 82-84, Bairro Alto

Small modestly furnished Portuguese restaurant in a bustling side street serving simply cooked fish and meat dishes. Mains €9.50-€12.50.

Cervejaria Trindade

Rua Nova da Trindade, 20

Diners are treated to simple cuisine in this former monastery and brewery where elaborately tiled rooms counter the rather modest furnishings. Watch out for potentially expensive appetisers. Mains around €9 upwards.

Bomjardim

12, Travessa de Santo Antão

A popular Portuguese restaurant, best-loved for its speciality spit roast chicken served with a mountain of fries. Expect to pay €7.75 for half a chicken and chips.

Marisqueira de Santa Marta

TV, Enviado de Inglaterra

A fairly large restaurant with traditional Portuguese tiles. Expect traditional cooking from an extensive menu of meat, fish and speciality dishes, with prices to suit most budgets. A relaxed dining experience with prompt and friendly service. A five-minute walk from the Britania Hotel. Mains between €8-€26.

CAFES

Antiga Confeitaria de Belém

84-92, Rua de Belém

Pastéis de Nata (custard tarts) are a tasty treat found in local pastry shops and cafés, and the tarts found here (*Pastéis de Belém*) are said to be among the best in Lisbon. Grab one hot from the oven, adding sugar and cinnamon to taste.

Confeitaria Nacional

Praça da Figueira, 18 B

www.confeitarianacional.com

One of Lisbon's oldest cafés serving a tempting array of traditional cakes and pastries.

DRINK

Fado music at A Tasca do Chico

Rua do Diário de Notícias, 39, Bairro Alto

The historical origins of Fado music are almost as baffling as the definition of its musical style. What is certain, however, is the compelling desire for many Lisbon visitors to encounter this unique music experience. With many restaurants packaging the Fado and dining experience specifically for the tourist market, A Tasca do Chico is one of a smaller number of traditional Fado taverns where locals and tourists mix over drinks to enjoy twice weekly Fado sessions (Monday and Wednesday).

WHICH? HOLIDAY TIP Increase your chances of getting a seat by arriving at 9pm for a 10pm start.



USEFUL GUIDEBOOKS AND WEBSITES

Lonely Planet: Lisbon Encounter, £7.99 (ISBN 978-1-74104-853-4)

DK Eyewitness Travel: Top 10 Lisbon, £7.99 (ISBN 978-1-4053-3977-3)

Rough Guides: Rough Guide Directions: Lisbon, £6.99 (ISBN 978-1-84353-739-7)

www.askmelisboa.com

www.golisbon.com

www.cm-sintra.pt

For the magazine report on Lisbon for less, see p42 of the January 2010 issue of Which? Holiday