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# Travel Guide Lisbon

Splendor on the banks of the Tejo River

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## Quick view

### Lisbon: Splendor on the banks of the Tejo River

You could forgive Lisbon for having a bit of an ego these days. As one of the trendiest capital cities in Europe, it gets lauded for everything from its affordability and its waterfront location to its well-preserved looks and its near-constant pleasant temperatures. Sunshine and scenery aren't all it offers, of course – you'll also find several millennia of history,

a compact centre well suited to weekend explorers, a seafood-rich gastronomic scene and a nigh insatiable nightlife. Unfurled across a series of hills and stitched together by a web of atmospheric backstreets, today's Lisbon has become one of the continent's top city breaks.



## Portugal

### General knowledge

#### Country overview

Long considered primarily a haven for sunseekers and golfers, Portugal is also one of Europe's unspoilt gems when you take the chance to dig a little deeper. This land of traditional villages and vibrant cities has a charming countryside strewn with historical treasures and a wide assortment of

World Heritage sites – natural and cultural wonders that offer a window into this once great seafaring nation. Take in the prehistoric drawings at Foz Coa or 15th-century sea port at Angra do Heroísmo, alongside the other designated sites around the country that zip you back in time.

#### Geography

Portugal juts out into the Atlantic in the far southwest of Europe otherwise known as the Iberian Peninsula. The only country it shares a border with is neighbour Spain to the north and the east, with the Atlantic Ocean hugging its 800km (500-mile) coastline to the south and west. It has a land mass of 89,000 sq km (34,400 sq miles) with the Portuguese islands of the Azores and Madeira boosting that by another 3,100 sq km (1,200 sq miles). The Azores lie around 1,100km (700 miles) west of Lisbon, while Madeira sits just north of the Canary Islands to the west of Morocco.

Outside the large urban areas, the countryside is a great deal more rural and sparse than in many other European countries. Portugal is crossed by several rivers which have their origin in Spain. These flow from east to west out into the Atlantic or north to south, the main rivers being the Minho and Douro in the north, and the Tagus and Guadiana in the south.

Portugal possesses a high plain of varying height intersected by deep valleys.

The north of the country is rugged, mountainous and dotted with vineyards. The high northern point of the Serra da Estrela proves a popular area for skiing, while Serra de São Mamede further south on the Spanish border is a hiking favourite.

After the stunning slopes of the central regions, the vast plains of the Alentejo region stretch south of Lisbon, with a range of mountains dividing the Alentejo from the Algarve, whose wide sandy beaches and attractive bays run along the south coast.

Over half the country is used for agriculture, though the soil is much richer for cultivation in the greener north. The capital, Lisbon, sits about two-thirds down the west coast. Porto is also situated on the coast in the northwest of the country. Smaller Faro nestles on the southern end of the country, its airport a busy hub for Algarve sunseekers and swathes of golfers looking for year-round sun. Braga, Coimbra and Setubal are also near the coast and rivers.

## General knowledge

### General knowledge

Population: 10.6 million (2018)

Capital: Lisbon

### Language

Portuguese is spoken in Portugal with different dialects throughout the country.

### Currency

Euro (EUR; symbol €) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

### Electricity

230 volts AC, 50Hz. Continental two-pin plugs are in use.

## Public holidays

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

### 2020

Ano Novo (New Year's Day): 1 January 2020  
Sexta-feira Santa (Good Friday): 10 April 2020  
Páscoa (Easter Sunday): 12 April 2020  
Dia da Liberdade (Freedom Day): 25 April 2020  
Dia do Trabalhador (Labour Day): 1 May 2020  
Dia de Portugal/ Dia do Camões (Portugal Day): 10 June 2020  
Corpo de Deus (Corpus Christi): 11 June 2020  
Assunção de Nossa Senhora (Assumption): 15 August 2020  
Dia da República (Republic Day) : 5 October 2020  
Todos-os-Santos (All Saints' Day): 1 November 2020  
Dia da Restauração (Restoration of Independence Day): 1 December 2020  
Imaculada Conceição (Immaculate Conception): 8 December 2020  
Natal (Christmas Day): 25 December 2020

### 2021

Ano Novo (New Year's Day): 1 January 2021  
Sexta-feira Santa (Good Friday): 2 April 2021  
Páscoa (Easter Sunday): 4 April 2021  
Dia da Liberdade (Freedom Day): 25 April 2021  
Dia do Trabalhador (Labour Day): 1 May 2021  
Dia de Portugal/ Dia do Camões (Portugal Day): 10 June 2021  
Corpo de Deus (Corpus Christi): 3 June 2021  
Assunção de Nossa Senhora (Assumption): 15 August 2021  
Dia da República (Republic Day) : 5 October 2021  
Todos-os-Santos (All Saints' Day): 1 November 2021  
Dia da Restauração (Restoration of Independence Day): 1 December 2021  
Imaculada Conceição (Immaculate Conception): 8 December 2021  
Natal (Christmas Day): 25 December 2021

All information subject to change.



## Travel etiquette How to fit in

### Social Conventions

Portugal is a fascinating mix of culture and folklore, depending on what part of the

country you are visiting. Traditional *ranchos folclóricos* folklore, which is often illustrated with dance and song, tends to dominate the smaller towns and villages, with art and drama bigger in the larger towns and cities.

The Portuguese are warm, hospitable people who revel in exhibitions, films, crafts, concerts, plays, café culture and also shopping malls (to combat the summer heat!).

The summer festival season is a particularly pleasant experience, with football and bull fighting also enjoyed, along with the traditional religious activities that cater for the majority Catholic population.

Casual wear is widely acceptable, but you shouldn't wear beach clothing in towns. Smoking has been prohibited in public indoor spaces since 2008 and the ban includes cinemas, theatres, buses and most restaurants.



## Health Health

**Main emergency number:** 112

### Food & Drink

You can drink tap water in major cities and towns, although you should be cautious in small villages. Thankfully, bottled water is widely available but if it's not then any questionable water should be boiled for five minutes or treated with iodine. Salads and fruit are safe to eat anywhere in Portugal. Take care with shellfish such as cooked mussels that have not opened properly and avoid undercooked meat, particularly minced meat. Ice cream is fine, unless it has been melted and refrozen.

### Other Risks

You will be treated on the same basis as a Portuguese resident, but you might have to make a patient contribution to the cost of your care. If you have to make such a payment, you may be able to seek reimbursement for this cost when you are back in the UK if you are not able to do so in Portugal. It is important that you ensure you are treated by a state healthcare provider, as you will not be covered for private healthcare. You should be particularly careful if the healthcare arrangements have been made by a hotel or travel representative. There are state health centres throughout the country (generally open from 0800 to 2000) where you can receive treatment for minor ailments and injuries, and major emergency hospitals in large towns which remain open throughout the night.

Even though pharmacies are well stocked, take a decent supply of medication with you, and be aware pharmacies are usually closed for two hours over lunchtime. Carry a legible prescription with you to show that you legally use the medication. If you wear glasses, take a spare pair and your prescription just in case you need to get new glasses made up quickly.

Be sure to take the usual precautions against sunburn and sunstroke, as the sun in Portugal can be blisteringly hot in the height of summer: wear high-factor sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses, and drink plenty of water.

Vaccination against hepatitis B is sometimes recommended.

### Contractual physician of Lufthansa

Dr. Pombal, Rui Manuel C.  
UCS Integrated Health Care  
Aeroporto de Lisboa  
Edif 35  
1800 Lisboa  
Portugal  
Tel. +351-21-8436305

Please note that Lufthansa accepts no responsibility for the treatment nor will it

bear the cost of any treatment.



## Phone calls & Internet

### Phone calls & Internet

#### Telephone

Country code: +351

#### Mobile telephony and Internet

Since June 2017, EU citizens traveling within the EU, and also in Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein have been able to use their cell phones and surf the Net without incurring any extra charges: In other words, customers pay the same price for phone calls, text messages and data volume as they do at home. Restrictions do apply to the constant use of SIM cards abroad, however, and caps may be set on data packages. For full details, contact your mobile telephony provider in your country. Travelers using a SIM card from a non-EU state do not benefit from the new arrangement.

Free Internet access via Wi-Fi is possible in many busy tourist spots. When using public Wi-Fi networks, it is a wise precaution to ensure encryption of all passwords, credit card details and banking credentials entered. Use of a VPN app or security software to check the safety of a hotspot is recommended.



## Getting around Lisbon

### Getting around

#### Public transport

A lot of the more central sights are easily explored on foot, but for those who need to use public transport, there are trams, buses and a metro system to keep things easy. The metro is clean and efficient, with many of the stations decorated with eye-catching artworks.

#### Taxis

The majority of Lisbon's taxis are cream-coloured Mercedes, and have a reputation for being cheaper than comparable taxis in many other European capitals. You can either hail one on the street or find one outside a train station or main square.



## Top 10 sights

### Top 10 sights in Lisbon

#### Monastery of Jerónimos

A UNESCO World Heritage Site and prime example of the Manueline style of architecture, this huge monastery was built in honour of Vasco da Gama's voyage to India in the early 16th century.

Praca do Imperio  
1400-206 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel.: +351-213/62 00 34

Opening times:  
Daily 1000-1730 (Oct-April);  
1000-1830 (May-Sep)

[www.mosteirojeronimos.pt](http://www.mosteirojeronimos.pt)

#### Calouste Gulbenkian Museum

Housing what is considered by some to be one of Europe's best collections – and set up by the Armenian philanthropist that it's named after – this excellent gallery contains works by the likes of Renoir, Rembrandt and Rubens.

Avenida Berna 45A

Opening times:

1067-001 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel.: +351-217/82 34 61

Wed-Mon 1000-1800  
  
museu.gulbenkian.pt

### Oceanário

The largest indoor aquarium in Europe, this colossal attraction is a chance to get up close to sharks, barracudas, penguins, eels and all manner of other marine and freshwater creatures. Always a hit with kids.

Esplanada Dom Carlos I  
1990-005 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel.: +351-218/91 70 02

Opening times:  
Daily 1000-2000 (summer);  
1000-1900 (winter)

[www.oceanario.pt](http://www.oceanario.pt)

### Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga

Containing important European artworks from the Middle Ages onwards, with some superb examples of Portuguese sculpture and painting, this museum is located in a palace that once belonged to local nobility.

Rua Janelas Verdes  
1249-017 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel.: +351-213/91 28

Opening times:  
Tues-Sun 1000-1800

[www.museudearteantiga.pt](http://www.museudearteantiga.pt)

### Torre de Belém

The most famous of Lisbon's landmarks – and sitting close to the Monastery of Jeronimos – this beautiful limestone tower was constructed in the early 16th century.

Avenida Brasilia  
1400-038 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel.: +351-213/62 00 34

Opening times:  
Daily 1000-1730 (Oct-May);  
1000-1830 (May-Sep)

[www.torrebelem.pt](http://www.torrebelem.pt)

### Castelo de São Jorge

A familiar sight on the skyline above the old neighbourhood of Alfama, this Moorish castle was largely constructed in the mid-11th century as a stronghold for the power of the day.

Rua de Santo Cruz do Castelo  
1100-129 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel.: +351-218/80 06 20

Opening times:  
Daily 0900-1800 (Nov-Feb);  
0900-2100 (Mar-Oct)

[www.castelodesaojorge.pt](http://www.castelodesaojorge.pt)

### Museo do Azulejo

Showcasing a huge number of the traditional Portuguese tiles known as azulejos, this museum is housed in a former convent. Some of the wall panels on display date back hundreds of years.

Rua de Madre de Deus 4  
1900-312 Lisbon  
Portugal

Opening times:  
Tues-Sun 1000-1800

Tel.: +351-218/10 03 40

[www.museudoazulejo.pt](http://www.museudoazulejo.pt)

## Castelo dos Mouros

Located out of town in Sintra (around half an hour from Lisbon proper), this hilltop castle is a striking remnant from the medieval age, and well worth a day trip from the city.

Castelo dos Mouros

2710 Sintra

Portugal

Tel.: +351-219/23 73 00

Opening times:

Daily 1000-1800 (Nov-Mar);

0930-2000 (Apr-Oct)

[www.parquesdesintra.pt](http://www.parquesdesintra.pt)

## Museo do Design e da Moda/MUDE

Still relatively new, this is a celebration of 20th-century design in all its myriad forms, with design objects and fashion items from well-known names across the world, among them Philippe Starck and Arne Jacobsen.

Note: The museum building is temporarily closed for works of integral rehabilitation. Parts of the exhibition is shown in Palácio dos Condes da Calheta, Jardim-Museu Agrícola Tropical, Rua General João de Almeida (Belém).

Rua Augusta 24

1100-/053 Lisbon

Portugal

Tel.: +351-218/17 18 92

Opening times:

Tues-Sun 1000-1800

[www.mude.pt](http://www.mude.pt)

## Parque e Palácio Nacional de Pena

Another attraction in the Sintra district is this Romanticist palace is a jaw-dropping attraction sat high on a hilltop.

Estrada da Pena

2710-609 Sintra

Portugal

Tel.: +351-219/23 73 00

Opening times:

Daily 0945-1900

[www.parquesdesintra.pt](http://www.parquesdesintra.pt)

## Shopping in Lisbon Shopping in Lisbon

### Key Areas

Downtown Lisbon, known as Baixa, is the main hub for souvenir-shopping – seek out old-fashioned shops selling everything from cotton and perfume to retro keepsakes. Elsewhere, Rua Dom Pedro V has some great independent outlets and the Chiado district has shopping options aplenty.

### Markets

The city's main flea market, Feira da Ladra, takes place on Tuesdays and Saturdays in the Alfama neighbourhood – you'll find everything from traditional tiles to vinyl records, and it's a good place to hone your haggling skills. For a colourful array of fresh produce, the Mercado da Ribeira is a large daily market with fruit, flowers and more.

### Shopping Centres

The huge Centro Colombo (Avenida Lusíada) is one of the largest malls in Europe, also playing home to an array of places to eat and a multiplex cinema. Elsewhere, Amoreiras (Avenida Engenheiro Duarte Pacheco) is where to head for premium

brands.



## Restaurants

### Restaurants in Lisbon

The city's location means that seafood plays a starring role in local cuisine, but there are plenty of other local specialities to sample too. Tapas bar, taverna or Michelin-starred gastro-palace, you'll be well served.

#### Restaurante Eleven

A Michelin-starred restaurant with hillside views over the city.

Rua Marquês de Fronteira                      Price: Luxurious  
1070-051 Lisbon  
Portugal

#### Restaurante Tavares

An opulent choice, serving gourmet Portuguese cuisine.

Rua da Misericórdia 37                      Price: Luxurious  
1200-270 Lisbon  
Portugal

#### Enoteca de Belém

A wine bar with excellent, creative food at reasonable prices.

Travessa Marta Pinto 10                      Price: Moderate  
1300-390 Lisbon  
Portugal

#### Restaurante Tágide

A great place to try traditional local fare, in a charming historical house.

Largo da Academia Nacional de Belas    Price: Moderate  
Artes 18-20  
1200-005 Lisbon  
Portugal

#### Pastéis de Belém

Widely considered the best place in Lisbon to try Portugal's famous egg tarts.

Rua de Belém 84-92                      Price: Budget  
1300-085 Lisbon  
Portugal



## Nightlife

### Nightlife in Lisbon

Nightlife lives up to its name in Lisbon, with many places staying open until at least 2am (and often far longer) -take your pick from traditional fado clubs, quirkily fashionable bars and everything in between.

## Dona Maria II National Theatre

A gorgeous neoclassical arts venue with a diverse programme of events.

Praça Dom Pedro IV  
1100-201 Lisbon  
Portugal

## K Urban Beach

This smart club is located on Cais da Viscondessa quayside. The poolside lounge bar offers views out over the Tagus River and Ponte 25 de Abril bridge. The dance floors come alive mainly to electropop beats and in the summertime, the comfortably furnished chill-out zone makes a great place to relish the warm nights.

Av. Brasília  
1200-109 Lisbon  
Portugal

## Pavilhão Chinês

Stuffed full of curios, paintings and memorabilia, this trendy 1900s-style bar is one of Lisbon's most unique.

Rua Dom Pedro V 89  
1250-096 Lisbon  
Portugal

## Lux-Frágil

This club has long been seen as one of the hottest nights out in town.

Av. Infante D. Henrique, Armazém A  
Cais da Pedra a Sta. Apolónia  
1950-376 Lisbon  
Portugal

## Senhor Vinho

Among the best places in Lisbon to catch a quality fado performance.

Rua do Meio à Lapa 18  
1200-723 Lisbon  
Portugal



## Calendar of events Calendar of events

### Maratona de Lisboa

The Lisbon Half Marathon is one of the most famous races in Portugal. Up to 15,000 athletes set out along the picturesque route toward the finish line in Belém.

**March 22, 2020**

Route: Ponte 25 de Abril to Mosteiros dos Jerónimos, Belém

### IndieLisboa

The best independent Portuguese and international film productions as well as the best children's and young adult films are judged in this film festival's three competitions. The festival center is located at the Biblioteca Palácio Galveias; the films are shown at various movie theaters.

**April 30 - May 10, 2020**

Venues: different movie theaters and museums in Lisbon

### **Festas do Santo António**

The *Marchas Populares* parade that passes along Avenida da Liberdade on the evening of June 12 is the high point of this great street festival celebrating Saint Anthony, the city's patron saint. In the afternoon of June 13, too, processions wend their way through streets brilliant with colorful garlands, while all around, barbecue stands and music reinforce the festival atmosphere.

**June 12, 2020**

Venues: Avenida da Liberdade and other locations in Lisbon

### **Festival Verão Clássico**

Famous orchestras and outstanding soloists get together at this exceptional festival of classical music. Audiences can look forward to an excellent program presented in different categories – including piano, violin, cello, bass, flute and clarinet.

**July 2020**

Venue: Academia Internacional de Música de Lisboa

### **Jazz em Agosto**

The Gulbenkian Foundation hosts the Jazz em Agosto festival every August. Highlights include concerts featuring internationally acclaimed artists, a Jazz in Portugal program and international music documentaries. The concerts are held in the foundation's auditoriums and on its open-air stage.

**July 30 – August 9, 2020**

Venue: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

### **Festival de Sintra**

The town of Sintra, situated some 30 kilometers west of Lisbon, hosts this annual festival of classical music and classical dance at the Centro Cultural Olga Cadaval.

**September - October 2020**

Venue: Centro Cultural Olga Cadaval, Sintra



## **Hotels Hotels in Lisbon**

The quality of Lisbon's hotel scene is indicative of the city's popularity, with a very strong range of luxury properties to choose from and a substantial spread of places to stay for those on a budget.

### **Altis Belem Hotel & Spa**

A five-star design property with a top-quality restaurant and a spa.

Doca do Bom Sucesso  
1400-038 Lisbon

Category: Luxurious

Portugal

### Castle Inn

This apartment hotel is tucked away amid the narrow streets of the Castelo de São Jorge district. The modern, air-conditioned apartments, some with a castle or sea view, are elegantly furnished. What's makes this place special: regional artists' works gracing the apartments.

Rua de Santa Cruz do Castelo 52      Category: Moderate  
1100-480 Lisbon  
Portugal

### LX Boutique Hotel

A great boutique stay with river views, close to the nightspots of Bairro Alto.

Rua do Alecrim 12      Category: Moderate  
1200-017 Lisbon  
Portugal

### Britania Hotel

A small but beautiful art deco property in the historic centre.

Rua Rodrigues Sampaio 17      Category: Moderate  
1150-278 Lisbon  
Portugal

### Pensao Estacao Central

A friendly, well-priced option near lots of restaurants and bars.

Calçada do Carmo 17      Category: Budget  
1200-090 Lisbon  
Portugal



### Crew Tip My Lisbon

In Lisbon I always feel drawn to Baixa, the old town district with its impressive tile facades and narrow medieval streets. There are lots of bars, clubs and concert halls there, including the Hot Clube de Portugal, one of the oldest surviving jazz clubs in Europe.

To the Hot Clube



© Deutsche Lufthansa AG



### Best of ... ... Lisbon's hidden treasures



© imago stock&amp;people

Surprise, surprise! There are lots of fantastic things to see in the area surrounding Lisbon's main boulevard, Rua Augusta. Trapeze artists land on restaurant terraces, the zeitgeist inhabits a by-the-hour hotel, and sardines perfect the art of squeezing into cans.

### Conserveira de Lisboa

Art or fish? The sardine cans packed into wooden cases at Conserveira de Lisboa look like ready-mades, but they are as genuine as this family business, which has been canning fish since 1930. In fact, the store has barely changed since that time; the wooden counter and shelves, and the cash register are all over 80 years old. The house brands Tricana, Minor and Prata do Mar may have a long tradition, but they move with the times, too, bringing out new flavors and designs.

Rua dos Bacalhoiros 34  
1100-071 Lisbon  
Portugal

[www.conserveiradelisboa.pt/](http://www.conserveiradelisboa.pt/)

### Casa Balthazar

The almond cookies taste divine, and at twilight especially, the view over the rooftops and the castle is heavenly! Casa Balthazar, an exquisite guesthouse with

nine rooms, a small pool and cozy sitting rooms, was bought by the founder of the old established Confeitaria Nacional in 1882 and is still owned by the confectionery family today.

Rua do Duque 26  
1200-159 Lisbon  
Portugal

[www.casabalthazarlisbon.com/hotel-overview.html](http://www.casabalthazarlisbon.com/hotel-overview.html)

## Pensão Amor

The red light district, Cais do Sodré, is a fascinating place for a night out. It was given a facelift in 2011, and now the facades of the main thoroughfare, Rua Nova do Carvalho, are pink, and it has a multitude of new restaurants and bars. A popular place to meet up for a cocktail is Pensão Amor, once a hotel that rented by the hour with lots of red plush and nude statues as a reminder of its past. The former hotel rooms are now occupied by a lingerie shop, a bookshop and are also used for activities, including a pole dance workshop.

Rua Alecrim 19  
Lisbon  
Portugal

[www.pensaoamor.pt/PT/](http://www.pensaoamor.pt/PT/)

## Fabrico Infinito

Brazilian-born Marcela Brunken celebrates the flower power era in her concept store Fabrico Infinito. She sells embroidered bags, jewelry, lamps and other hand-made hippie-chic accessories, as well as muffins and books. Visitors wishing to simply chill beneath her araucaria tree are just as welcome as customers.

Rua Doma Pedro v 74  
1250-092 Lisbon  
Portugal

[fabricoinfinito.wordpress.com/](http://fabricoinfinito.wordpress.com/)

## Mercado de Fusão

You can make a tour of the world on foot in the area around Martim Moniz square, where many Indians, Chinese and Africans live and run hot food stalls. On Saturdays and Sundays, the Mercado de Fusão culture center holds a market, where you can buy anything from arts and crafts to secondhand clothes and organic produce, as well as regular cultural events, including open-air cinema, concerts, exhibitions and roller discos.

Praça Martim Moniz  
1100-341 Lisbon  
Portugal

## Santini Chiado

At the Santini, pineapples from Costa Rica, locally grown apples and exotic dragon fruits all turn into deliciously creamy, fruity treats. The ice-cream parlor has been cult since 1949, and today sports a red-and-white striped look. The line at the counter often stretches out onto the street, but the ice cream is definitely worth waiting for. Indecisive customers can choose a scoop with two flavors.

Rua do Carmo 9  
1200-093 Lisbon  
Portugal

[www.santini.pt/](http://www.santini.pt/)

## Café Clara Clara

Aliens regularly get up to mischief beneath the jacaranda trees in tiny Jardim Botto Machado park, where an open-air cinema shows strictly sci-fi only. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, flea market stalls are set up all around the park for the Feira da Ladra (thieves' market). Visitors more interested in looking on than buying can grab a table in the Clara Clara pavilion café and enjoy a steaming cup of galão coffee and a delicious croissant. As the day draws to a close, the atmosphere here mellows and guests sip cool vinho verde or hot chocolate, often to the strains of live music – romantic.

Jardim Botto Machado, Campo de  
Santa Clara  
1100-471 Lisbon  
Portugal

## Chapitô

Colorful lanterns sway in the breeze above the tables, while the waters of the Tejo glitter far below. The roof terrace of the Chapitô is considered one of the loveliest in the city, and with a little luck, you may encounter trapeze princesses and clowns here because this tapas bar and fado club is run by the Lisbon circus school.

Costa do Castelo 1/7 [www.chapito.org/](http://www.chapito.org/)  
1149-079 Lisbon  
Portugal

## Cerâmica

Tiles with a story to tell, azulejos, can be seen on facades, and in entranceways and subway stations in nearly every neighborhood. Irish designer Aideen McCole sells her beautifully illustrated Tilewatch street maps ([aideenmccole.bigcartel.com](http://aideenmccole.bigcartel.com); starting at 5 euros), which show the way to the azulejos of Alfama and Mouraria, and from Campo Santa Clara to the azulejos factory Viuva Lamego, where the tiles were hand-painted until 1992. Also well worth a visit is the Cerâmica studio run by Elizabete Silva and Dina Nunes. © Text: Nathalie Schwaiger / GEO Saison

Calçadinha da Figueira 23  
1100-497 Lisbon  
Portugal



## The great journey Portugal – Route to romance



Gerhard Westrich

### Day 1 – Faro to Sagres: Ocean freedom

For a Portuguese man, it's not so common to do what your sister tells you. But if Luis Sousa hadn't listened to Sara he wouldn't be standing on a beach near Sagres on this fine sunny morning teaching what matters most to him in life: surfing. Luis Sousa is deeply tanned with sun-bleached streaks in his long, dark hair. In sunglasses, shorts and a colorful T-shirt, he looks the very cliché of a surf instructor on the Algarve coast. And yet he was once a fisherman in northern Portugal.

He'd likely still be one if his sister had found a job in Sagres after qualifying in her trade. But unlike her brother, she didn't want to leave the place where they grew up because she loved the glittering light, the salty air and the broad sandy beaches beneath towering cliffs. So Sara called her brother up north and told him she thought they should open a surf school in Sagres, because surfing was what Luis loved best and he had taught himself to surf at 14. Luis, the compliant brother, narrows his eyes, digs his toes into the warm sand and watches his students practice keeping their balance in the shallow water. "Carry on like that and you'll be out in the deep water this afternoon!" he shouts, struggling to make himself heard above the waves. Perhaps one or two of his students will fall in love with surfing the way Luis did. "When I can feel the power of the ocean, I feel liberated. Any problems I have no longer trouble me," he says. The moment his students settle down on the beach for their lunch break, Sousa grabs his board and paddles out to sea to find the big waves.

### Day 2 – Sagres to Vila Fresca de Azeitão: A cheesy tale

The long beaches and the deep blue ocean, its waves crested with dancing white horses, gradually grow smaller in the rearview mirror. We head north, past grasses, shrubs and tall eucalyptus trees. If we start missing the sea, all we need to do is take the next road to the left and a couple of kilometers later, we will see the white sands and blue waters stretching out before us. We eventually reach the Azeitão region roughly 50 kilometers south of Lisbon, which abounds with cork and holm oak forests and is famous more than anything for its Queijo de Azeitão sheep's cheese. Suse Macheta set up her cheese making business in the village of Vila Fresca de Azeitão in the midst of Portugal's economic crisis. "It was a unique opportunity," she explains, standing in her cheese factory surrounded by white tiles and stainless steel equipment. It almost sounds as though she wants to apologize for the timing. Producing sheep's cheese had become too much for the owners of the Quinta de Camarate farm and Suse Macheta, who was raised on a nearby farm, knew what she was doing because she had worked for a cheese making company after studying agriculture. Her business is now thriving thanks to her

contacts to old cheese makers – and to her family. Into a tub, Suse Macheta pours fresh, raw milk from the cows her husband milked that same morning. Then her mother-in-law stirs in the rennet and thistle flower extract that gives the Portuguese mountain cheese its distinctive flavor. Every day her father-in-law sells the soft and creamy cheese in its yellow rind at Lisbon's main market.

### Day 3 – Vila Fresca de Azeitão to Lisbon: Sweet melancholy

The Cristo-Rei statue of Jesus welcomes all who approach Lisbon from the southwest across the red steel Ponte 25 de Abril bridge. From this miniature version of the famous Golden Gate Bridge, there's a fantastic view of the labyrinth of narrow streets and colorful city palaces on the banks of the Tagus and also of the modern high-rises with their mirror glass facades further to the north. First stop in the Portuguese capital: Belém, a neighborhood where many buildings are still adorned with tiles. Over a hundred people jostle for position outside a building with a colorfully tiled facade, all drawn by the mouthwatering Pastéis de Belém – the little custard-filled, flaky-pastry tartlets that are served in every café. But only the Clarinha family, which owns the Antiga Confeitaria pastry shop, bakes them according to the original recipe – hence the crowds.

The recipe originated in the nearby Monastério dos Jerónimo monastery. After the liberal revolution in 1820 the monks were no longer allowed to do business, and so they asked a sympathetic grocer, the great-great-great-great-grandfather of the Clarinhas, to sell their pastries – Pastéis de Belém for them. The Clarinhas have had the recipe ever since and all Portuguese bakers have tried to reproduce it. But the Clarinhas guard it like a precious jewel, and it is known by four bakers only. Even Penélope Clarinha, who runs the family business with her cousin and uncle, says she doesn't know what makes the Pastéis de Belém so special – even though she always comes down to the kitchen from her office to help put the pastry rounds into their tiny pans when the cafe gets really busy. Meanwhile, Lisbon housewives jog around Jardim de Estrela park, perhaps in an attempt to work off their daily pastéis. The fado singer Aldina Duarte, who is very much a celebrity in Portugal, no longer turns heads here. Dressed in jeans, T-shirt and sneakers, her hair loose and wearing no makeup, she looks shy and terribly normal. Is that her intention? "I don't like being the center of attention, I'm happiest on my own," she says, sitting on the terrace of a café on the edge of the park. She speaks softly, we have to listen closely to make out what she's saying. The little park at the heart of Lisbon with its palms, pines and luscious bougainvilleas is her favorite place to be. When she's not touring, she spends her days there, reading, walking, writing lyrics.

Duarte heard fado for the first time at the age of 24, quite by accident, in the nightlife district Bairro Alto. She was immediately enthralled – and felt ashamed to be discovering Portugal's traditional music so late. From that moment on she spent all her time in fado houses, and a short while later met the well-known fado singer Camané, who would later become her husband. He and other singers encouraged her to start singing herself. "If it hadn't been for my friends, I would never have dared to step on stage," she says. "Today, it's my life. I only feel good when I'm singing fado. It's the interaction with the audience that makes the music come alive." Every night for more than 20 years now, she has been overcoming her shyness in Sr. Vinho, in the Lapa district of the city. This evening, we sit – fado is not for dancing – and watch a fado singer who takes pride in what she does. Striking, in a long black dress, her lips red, black liner accentuating her eyes and flanked by two guitarists, Aldina Duarte fills the room with her sonorous voice – singing of her love for Lisbon.

### Day 4 – Lisbon to Coimbra: Isabel and the bats

We pass suburbs full of colorful high-rise buildings, then through eucalyptus groves and finally arrive in Coimbra, Portugal's oldest university town. The faculty

buildings and the library stand atop the tallest hill. This is Isabel Cardoso's domain. In Coimbra they say that the librarian is responsible for the survival of the ancient books – along with the bats, which live behind the shelves and eat the pests that damage them. The library contains more than 9000 leather-bound volumes, and Cardoso cleans the pages with a soft brush. "Biblioteca Joanina has come to mean as much to me as my two children," she explains. Cardoso left her job in a sugar factory ten years ago to work in the library, which, along with the Faculties of Law and Medicine, forms the heart of the university and the old town of Coimbra. "The university is almost like Coimbra's biggest club," she says, "if you're not studying here, you work here." Cardoso opens the heavy door to a group of tourists eager to see the library's main hall with the tall, gilt wooden shelves and handwritten books. At once, the sound of music enters through the open door. Outside, on the sunny main quadrangle, students dressed in long, black cloaks are singing and playing guitar and flute. They are trying to raise money for the Queima das Fitas student festival. Walk down through the labyrinth of stone buildings to the new town, and you will soon understand why Isabel Cardoso is so happy to belong to the university club. Students sit engrossed in books in bars and cafés on the cobblestone squares, or chat together in the Botanical Garden, spreading that carefree mood so typical of the young.

## Day 5 – Coimbra to Porto: Wine valley

In the Douro river valley the weak morning sun battles the swathes of fog obstinately clinging to the vines. You can barely discern the terraced vineyards that make growing wine on steep slopes possible, and which were listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001. Dominic Symington parks his off-roader on the edge of the vineyard, pops a grape into his mouth and reaches for his phone. "Bom dia, José, Zimbro vineyard is ready for picking." When he drives home to his whitewashed farmhouse Quinta do Malvedos on the banks of the Douro, his foreman, José, drives ten pickers to the vineyard.

Grape harvest time would be almost a holiday for Symington if he didn't have to get up so early to check the slopes to see which grapes were ripe. His role in the family business in Porto usually just consists of marketing the port that is produced from the grapes, but tradition dictates that a member of the family always give the command to pick the grapes. When the British went out searching for new wine regions more than three hundred years ago, the Symingtons, a Scottish family, began shipping port from the Douro valley to Great Britain. In the late 19th century, the company bought its first vineyards, and today, roughly one third of the port produced around the world carries the Symington label.

We return along winding country roads to Porto, where the Douro flows into the Atlantic and where, in September, wine tastings are held to celebrate the new harvest. On the other side of the river, in Vila Nova da Gaia, the major port producers host tastings all year round in their wine cellars.