

LISBON See & Do from Signature Travel Network

Share by Cynthia

Sightseeing

Much of Lisbon is still relatively free of tourist traps. You can go inside lots of churches without being asked for an admission fee. In fact, among the dozens of churches scattered throughout the city, a few are authentic jewels. Igreja de Sao Roque, for example, is decorated with precious stones, and Igreja de Sao Vicente de Fora has extraordinary azulejos (painted tiles) in its cloister. If you find an open church, peek inside—you may find a pleasant surprise.

Today very little remains of Lisbon's pre-earthquake Manueline architecture—exceptions include the Torre de Belem and the Mosteiro dos Jeronimos.

The best way to visit the sites and to get a real sense of Lisbon is to walk. In fact, old neighborhoods, such as the Alfama and the Bairro Alto, are the proverbial mazes of twisting streets—sometimes so narrow that no car could possibly get through. Most tourist maps don't name all the streets, so relax and enjoy getting lost for a while.

If you are planning on covering a lot of ground, consider the Lisboa Card, a multipass that can save you money on transportation. It provides access to most public transportation, as well as discounted admission at various attractions.

Casinos

You must be 18 to enter casinos and gamble. No beachwear, long coats, helmets, hats or uniforms are allowed. Leave photographic equipment in the cloakrooms and be prepared to show ID.

If you don't look as though you're likely to spend any money there, you may be refused entry. You'll also be shown the door if your behavior or appearance is annoying other clients.

Casino Estoril

One of the largest casinos in Europe, Casino Estoril offers the usual gaming attractions and lots of entertainment. It is popular for conventions, and also features an art gallery and 10 restaurants and bars. Daily 2:30 pm-3 am. Proper attire is required (no shorts,

sandals or athletic shoes). Avenida Dr. Stanley Ho (about 12 mi/20 km west of Lisbon), Estoril. Phone 21-466-7700. <https://casino-estoril.pt>.

Casino Lisboa

Opened by the group behind the famous Casino Estoril west of the city, Casino Lisboa offers entertainment, dining and gambling that attracts a younger crowd than that of Estoril. Daily 2:30 pm-3 am. Proper attire is required (no shorts, sandals or athletic shoes). Alameda dos Oceanos 45, Lisbon. Phone 21-892-9000. <http://www.casino-lisboa.pt>.

Historic Sites

Castelo de Sao Jorge

St. George's Castle sits on one of Lisbon's highest hills. It was occupied by the Romans in 205 BC, settled by Visigoths in the fifth century and later captured from the Moors by the Portuguese king Dom Afonso Henriques in 1147. After King Manuel I left the castle in the early 16th century, the place fell into ruins. It was extensively rebuilt in the 20th century on the remains of older fortifications.

Though it feels more touristy than ancient, there are breathtaking views of Lisbon from several of its 10 towers and its viewing terrace. You can relax on stone benches in the shadow of mighty trees after the hike up. Do not miss the periscope installed in the Ulysses Tower that offers a 360-degree view of Lisbon when weather conditions are right—sunny mornings are best. Check the timetable for guided tours in your language. There is also a small museum showing the archaeological finds from the site. A gift shop, restaurant and coffee shop are also on-site. Daily 9 am-6 pm. 8.50 euros adults. Rua de Santa Cruz do Castelo, Lisbon. Phone 21-880-0620. <http://www.castelodesaojorge.pt>.

Elevador de Santa Justa

Also called Elevador do Carmo, this eclectic, neo-Gothic iron lift was constructed between 1898 and 1901 by a student of Gustave Eiffel. Its two wooden cabins, which can carry 25 people, connect the Lower and Upper City. There is a great view (and cafe) over the Baixa from its platform, which you can access for free from Largo do Carmo. October-May daily 7 am-9:45 pm, June-September daily 7 am-10:45 pm. The lift costs 5 euros (free with Lisbon Card) and the upper viewpoint is an additional 1.50 euros. Largo do Carmo, Rua do Ouro, Lisbon. Phone 21-361-3000. <http://www.carris.pt/en/elevators>.

Igreja de Sao Roque

This 16th-century church with an adjoining museum is a work of art hidden behind a rather modest facade. It survived the earthquake of 1755 almost unscathed. One of its most beautiful chapels, the baroque Chapel of St. John the Baptist, commissioned by King Joao V, was lavishly decorated with precious stones, exotic woods and richly painted tiles during the country's most opulent period. The entire chapel was constructed in Rome, and then disassembled and shipped to Lisbon in 1747. Guided tours in English take place April-September Thursday and Sunday at 3 pm, Friday at 11:30 am and 4:30 pm, Saturday at 10 am. 2.50 euros. Largo Trindade Coelho, Bairro Alto, Lisbon. Phone 21-323-5065. <http://www.museudesao Roque.com>.

Mosteiro dos Jeronimos

King Manuel commissioned this monastery at the peak of Portuguese prosperity and power in 1501, but it was completed only in the late 1500s. It's one of the best examples of Portuguese architecture anywhere in the country, a mix of late flamboyant Gothic and early Renaissance style, embellished with exotic decorative elements found in India. Some of the interior columns are 82 ft/25 m tall, look like palm trunks and are decorated with nautical motifs, fantastic creatures and signs of the zodiac.

Beneath the gallery, it houses the elaborate tombs of Vasco da Gama, the first Portuguese navigator to reach India, and Luis de Camoes, Portugal's most famous poet (who was actually buried impoverished in an unknown mass grave). The royal tombs next to the ornate high altar are supported by marble elephants.

The monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is perhaps the best-known and most-visited landmark of the city. October-April Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5:30 pm; May-September 10 am-6:30 pm. Admission to the church is free; admission to the cloisters is 10 euros. Praca do Imperio, Belem. Phone 21-362-0034. <http://www.mosteirojeronimos.gov.pt>.

Mosteiro e Igreja de Sao Vicente de Fora

This church and monastery, built between 1582 and 1629 under the guidance of Italian master Filippo Terzi, is clad in white marble and decorated with precious paintings and sculptures. The cloister has some of the best azulejos (blue and white painted tiles) in the city. You can climb the church roof for a great view over Lisbon. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 5 euros adults. Largo de Sao Vicente, Lisbon. Phone 21-810-559. <https://mosteirosao vicentedefora.com/en/inicio-english>.

Padrao dos Descobrimentos

This monument from 1960, evoking a ship's bow, is a lesson in Portuguese history—along its sides are statues of some of the most important Portuguese

explorers. You can take an elevator to the top of the monument, which provides a great view of the neighborhood and the river. March-September daily 10 am-7 pm, October-February Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 3 euros. Avenida de Brasília, Belem. Phone 21-303-1950. <https://padraodosdescobrimentos.pt>.

Se Cathedral

Lisbon's cathedral (*Se* is short for *sedes episcopalis*, the bishop's seat), the oldest church in the city, dates from 1147, and most likely was built on the site of an ancient mosque. Its original Romanesque design was transformed over the centuries, incorporating elements of various architectural and decorative styles. St. Anthony of Lisbon was baptized there, and members of the Portuguese nobility were buried there.

Visit the cloister and the adjacent museum, which details the cathedral's past. The prime object of the treasure is a golden ostensorium dating from 1760. Under the garden of the cloister are remains of a street and canal from Roman times. There are occasional organ concerts—check locally for a schedule. 2.50 euros to enter the cloister, 2.50 euros to enter the treasury museum. Largo da Se, Alfama, Lisbon. Phone 21-887-6628.

Torre de Belem

Built between 1514 and 1520 as a lighthouse and a defense against pirates, the Tower of Belem was originally one of two towers flanking the Tagus River (it once stood on an island before the river silted up). The other tower was lost to the 1755 earthquake. The surviving tower is a beautiful example of the Manueline architectural style, with Moorish influences. It's a UNESCO World Heritage site. From the terrace on the fourth floor (at 115 ft/35 m) there is a good view of the river and the surrounding suburbs. October-April Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5:30 pm, May-September Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6:30 pm. 6 euros (free Sunday until 2 pm). Torre de Belem, Belem. Phone 21-362-0034. <http://www.torrebelem.gov.pt>.

Museums

Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva Foundation

This museum is a small gem for those who are interested in modern Portuguese art and culture. Vieira da Silva was one of the most acclaimed modern painters in Portugal. She and her husband, Arpad Szenes, produced an impressive collection of work that's displayed there, along with the art of many of their contemporaries. Tuesday-Sunday 10

am-6 pm. 5 euros. Praca das Amoreiras 56, Lisbon. Phone 21-388-0044.
<https://fasvs.pt>.

Centro de Arte Moderna Jose de Azeredo Perdigao

This museum, located in an old silk factory, houses part of the collection assembled by oil magnate and philanthropist Calouste Gulbenkian, who found asylum in Portugal during World War II. It is devoted to 20th-century and contemporary art, particularly the works of Portuguese artists. Excellent cafeteria and gardens. Wednesday-Monday 10 am-6 pm. 5 euros adults. Rua Marques de Fronteira, No.2, Lisbon. Phone 21-782-3474.
<https://gulbenkian.pt/cam>.

Lisbon Story Centre

This multimedia space provides visitors with a deeper understanding of Lisbon's history, from the Phoenecians to the present day. An audioguide talks you through the major influences on the city over the centuries. The museum's highlight is a reconstruction of the day of the earthquake in 1755. Daily 10 am-8 pm. 7 euros adults. Terreiro do Paco 78-81, Lisbon. Phone 21-194-1099. <http://www.lisboastorycentre.pt>.

Museu Berardo

The biggest names of international contemporary and modern art such as Warhol and Picasso are represented at this 21st-century museum. It presents major temporary exhibitions together with the permanent collection belonging to Portuguese millionaire businessman Joe Berardo. Daily 10 am-7 pm. 5 euros adults. Praca do Imperio, Lisbon. Phone 21-361-2878. <http://www.museuberardo.pt>.

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian

The once-private collection in this museum includes artwork from ancient Egypt, the Islamic East and the Far East. The European galleries display art and decorative arts of the 14th-19th centuries; illuminated manuscripts; paintings by Rembrandt and Rubens; works by impressionists such as Turner, Monet, Degas and Renoir; French Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture; and Lalique glassware and jewelry. Wednesday-Monday 10 am-6 pm. 10 euros adults. Ave. de Berna 45-A, Lisbon. Phone 21-782-3000.
<https://gulbenkian.pt/museu>.

Museu da Marioneta

Even if you have no special interest in puppets, this museum, housed in an old convent, is worth a visit. Its collection includes puppets from every continent and an in-depth history of puppetry in Portugal. You can put on your own Punch and Judy show or practice manipulating the frames and strings. There are often professional puppet shows held at the museum (check the website for details). Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6

pm. 5 euros adults. Rua da Esperanca 146, Lisbon. Phone 21-394-2810.
<http://www.museudamarioneta.pt>.

Museu de Sao Roque

At the entrance of the Bairro Alto, this small museum displays paintings and religious articles connected to Igreja de Sao Roque. Of special interest are objects from the church's elaborate Chapel of St. John the Baptist. April-September Monday 2-7 pm; Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday-Sunday 9 am-7 pm; Thursday 9 am-8 pm. 2.50 euros general admission. Largo Trindade Coelho, Bairro Alto, Lisbon. Phone 21-323-5444.
<https://mais.scml.pt/museu-saoroque>.

Museu do Chiado-Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporanea

This museum exhibits art from the 1850s to the 1950s, tracing the development from romanticism to modernism. Look for works by the Portuguese artist Almada Negreiros and fine sculptures by Auguste Rodin. There is a nice terrace cafe on site.
Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 4.50 euros adults. Rua Serpa Pinto 4, Chiado, Lisbon. Phone 21-343-2148. <http://www.museuartecontemporanea.gov.pt>.

Museu do Design e da Moda

This museum is devoted to design and fashion, and it displays approximately 350 objects from a private collection. There you will find items by Alvar Aalto, Philippe Starck, Christian Dior and Versace. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm in winter (till 8 pm in summer). Free admission. Rua Augusta 24, Belem. Phone 21-888-6117.
<http://www.mude.pt>.

Museu do Fado

This museum documents the history and development of the traditional music known as fado. It includes audiovisual displays, costumes and a wonderful collection of Portuguese guitars. There is a re-creation of the Casa da Mariquinhas, a house of ill-repute made famous by a fado song. There's also a shop with books and recordings. There are concerts some Thursday evenings. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 5 euros. Largo do Chafariz de Dentro 1, Alfama, Lisbon. Phone 21-882-3470.
<http://www.museudofado.pt>.

Museu do Oriente

This museum, located by the river, is home to an extensive collection of Asian art and artifacts. Part of the collection is based around Portugal's presence and sphere of influence in the Far East, with exceptional pieces from China and Japan. The remaining exhibition was donated by the Kwok On Museum Association in Paris and covers religious and performing arts from countries spanning from Turkey to Japan. The museum has regular temporary exhibitions, talks and shows. There is also a cafe,

restaurant and shop. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-10 pm. 6 euros adults. Avenida Brasilia, Doca de Alcantara, Lisbon. Phone 21-394-0531. <https://www.foriente.pt>.

Museu Nacional de Arqueologia

This is the country's main archaeological museum, with exhibits pertaining to the Iron Age and Portugal's Visigoth, Roman and Muslim cultures. It also has rooms devoted to ancient Egyptian and Greco-Roman art, coins and jewelry. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 5 euros. Praca do Imperio (in the west wing of the Mosteiro dos Jeronimos), Belem. Phone 21-362-0000. <http://www.museunacionalarqueologia.gov.pt>.

Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga

Housed in a 17th-century palace, this is perhaps the city's best museum. The gallery displays art from the 14th-19th centuries, including works by Cranach, Bosch, Holbein, Velasquez and Durer. The masterpiece of the collection is one of the most famous pieces of Portuguese art: The *Paneis de Sao Vicente*, built between 1467 and 1470 by Nuno Goncalves. The painted panels of this altarpiece depict the late medieval Portuguese aristocracy and society. There are some ancient objects from Japan, Africa and China as well. On-site is a cafe with a lovely garden. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 6 euros. Rua das Janelas Verdes, Lapa, Lisbon. Phone 21-391-2800. <http://www.museudearteantiga.pt>.

Museu Nacional do Azulejo

The blue-and-white azulejos have a special place in Portuguese culture. You'll find unmistakable Arabic influences in the many tiled panels, which were used both as decoration and as a way of moderating the temperature of houses. The museum features a 65-ft-/20-m-long cityscape of Lisbon as it looked before the earthquake of 1755. It occupies a former convent that is one of the most attractive buildings in the city. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 5 euros adults. Rua da Madre de Deus 4, Lisbon. Phone 21-810-0340. <http://www.museudoazulejo.gov.pt>.

Museu Nacional dos Coches

The wonderful collection at this museum, housed in the former equestrian school of the Palacio de Belem, includes richly decorated coaches from the 17th and 18th centuries—many of which are still in working condition. They all look as if they've just driven out of a fairy tale. Most fascinating are the three triumphal coaches of the Portuguese ambassador in Rome, dating from 1716. You can look down on them from the gallery. Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 8 euros adults. Avenida da India 136, Belem. Phone 21-361-0850. <http://museudoscoches.gov.pt>.

Planetario Calouste Gulbenkian

This planetarium offers 45-minute programs that explain some of the mysteries of the sky. Visitors who do not understand Portuguese can hear a translation of the program through special headphones. 5 euros. Praca do Imperio, Belem. Phone 21-362-0002. <https://ccm.marinha.pt/pt/planetario>.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Alfama

Spreading downhill toward the river from Castelo de Sao Jorge, the Alfama evokes medieval Lisbon. This old Arab neighborhood is one of the most attractive parts of the city—be sure to walk its narrow streets, peeking into its many alleys, courtyards and traditional shops. If you're lucky, you'll end up discovering an *arraial*, a spontaneous party in the middle of the street. On 13 June, the streets are full of people enjoying grilled sardines, wine and music as groups representing different neighborhoods parade along Avenida Liberdade in colorful costumes. The party is a citywide event in honor of Saint Anthony.

Bairro Alto

This colorful neighborhood of bars, restaurants and fado houses has preserved some of old Lisbon in its architecture and narrow streets. In the evenings, the area comes alive with night owls of all ages and persuasions. Hold on to your wallet—pickpockets are fond of this area, too. The Bairro Alto is just northwest of Chiado.

Baixa

At the base of hilly Alfama you'll find the flat, gridlike streets that characterize the area behind Praca do Comercio. The Baixa is full of banks, shops, cafes and restaurants. Some have been there for decades, while new shops and cafes are revitalizing what was becoming a rather neglected area. It's a popular spot for street performers.

Chiado

Gradually climbing uphill to the west of the Baixa is the trendy shopping and restaurant district of Chiado. Home to the iconic Cafe a Brasileira, the Armazens do Chiado shopping center, and many design shops and familiar high street brands, this area is always busy with shoppers and restaurantgoers.

Parks & Gardens

Estufa Fria

The name translates to "cold greenhouse," and it's one of the most pleasant and most visited gardens in Lisbon. Visitors enjoy walks among a rich variety of plants, ponds, streams, waterfalls and statuary. April-October daily 10 am-7 pm, November-March daily 9 am-5 pm. Parquet Eduardo VII, Lisbon.

Jardim Amalia Rodrigues

This landscaped garden sits atop Parque Eduardo VII and pays homage to Lisbon's most famous fado singer, Amalia Rodrigues. It also rewards visitors with sculptures and views over the city and the river. The glass-fronted lakeside cafe-restaurant Linha d'Agua is a perfect spot for refreshments, whatever the weather. Daily 24 hours. Free. Rua Marques Fronteira 18-28, Lisbon.

<https://informacoeseservicos.lisboa.pt/contactos/diretorio-da-cidade/jardim-amalia-rodriques>.

Jardim Botanico da Universidade de Lisboa

Lisbon's main botanical garden, which spreads across 10 acres/4 hectares, lies close to the heart of the city. It's one of the most beautiful of its kind in Europe and has a butterfly garden. April-October Tuesday-Sunday 9 am-8 pm; November-March daily 9 am-6 pm. Butterfly garden late March to mid-November Tuesday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. 2 euros adults. Rua da Escola Politecnica, Principe Real, Lisbon. Phone 21-392-1800.

<https://museus.ulisboa.pt/pt-pt/jardim-botanico-lisboa>.

Jardim Botanico Tropical

Opposite the Jeronimos' Monastery in Belem, you can escape the crowds and take a stroll through the exotic tropical and subtropical foliage of this botanical garden. Art exhibitions are often held in the Palacio dos Condes da Calheta within the grounds. November-January daily 10 am-5 pm, February, March and October daily 10 am-6 pm, April and September daily 10 am-7 pm, May-August daily 10 am-8 pm. 2 euros adults. Largo dos Jeronimos, Belem, Lisbon. Phone 21-392-1808.

<https://museus.ulisboa.pt/jardim-botanico-tropical>.

Jardim da Estrela

You'll find this family-friendly park opposite the Basilica da Estrela. With shaded walkways, ponds, beautiful bandstands and several exercise posts, as well as a children's play area, this is a great place to grab a bench for a bit of people-watching.

Daily 7 am-midnight. Free. Praca da Estrela, Lapa, Lisbon.
<https://visitar.lisboa.pt/explorar/locais-de-interesse/jardim-guerra-junqueiro>.

Jardim da Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian

The gardens of this museum and art gallery are a peaceful haven and a perfect place to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the city, even if you're not visiting the collections. With duck ponds and streams, grassy banks and a wide variety of plants and spaces, it's hard to drag yourself away. Birdwatchers can spot moorhen as well as white wagtail and some serins. Free. Ave. de Berna 45-A, Lisbon. Phone 21-782-3000.
<https://gulbenkian.pt/jardim>.

Zoos & Wildlife

Jardim Zoologico de Lisboa

This zoo features both land and sea creatures and hosts a number of animal presentations and feedings. It also has several places to eat and an amusement park. Mid-March to mid-September daily 10 am-8 pm; mid-September to mid-March daily 10 am-6 pm. 30.50 euros adults. Praca Marechal Humberto Delgado, Sete-Rios (main entrance), Lisbon. Phone 21-723-2900. <https://www.zoo.pt>.

Oceanario de Lisboa

Designed by aquarium guru Peter Chermayeff, the Oceanarium is an absolute must for all who love the sea. It has separate areas with habitats representing the four oceans, as well as smaller tanks for specific species of sea animals. Daily 10 am-7 pm in winter, 10 am-8 pm in summer. 16 euros adults. Esplanada D. Carlos I, Doca dos Olivais, Parque das Nacoes, Lisbon. Phone 21-891-7000. <http://www.oceanario.pt>.