

Lisbon: the city with golden sands

From its rich history to award-winning Atlantic beaches, Lisbon offers the perfect blend of city break and coastal escape



From L-R: Alfama, Arrábida, Rua Augusta Arch

Travellers seeking the buzz of a city break and the relaxation of a beach escape don't have to make a choice when visiting Lisbon. With its World Heritage listed sites, sparkling nightlife and renowned food scene along with a glorious coastline, world class surfing and watersports, travellers can enjoy the best of city and coast in one trip. Here the Lisbon Tourism Association highlights some of the options:

The city – ancient past and vibrant present

As one of Europe's oldest cities, visitors to Lisbon are surrounded by history, from the World Heritage listed Jerónimos Monastery to the grand 19th century buildings of Príncipe Real and the atmospheric cobbled streets of Alfama. The newly-opened Royal Treasure Museum is the latest addition to Lisbon's extensive choice of historical attractions. Located in the Palácio Nacional da Ajuda in the pretty riverside district of Belem, it displays over 1000 precious and rare pieces, including Portugal's Crown Jewels which are on permanent display for the first time.

From old favourites to Michelin-star restaurants serving cutting edge cuisine, Lisbon is fast becoming a "go to" destination for foodies. Seafood plays a major part in most menus from freshly grilled sardines, a Lisbon icon, to Portugal's national dish – bacalhau (salt cod). Another Lisbon classic is the irresistible pastel de nata, a creamy custard tart dusted with cinnamon. Meanwhile, visitors seeking Lisbon's latest eateries will enjoy the hip restaurants of Bairro Alto, and the waterfront restaurants of Cais do Sodré and the Docas de Santo Amaro.

Lisbon has something to offer even the most dedicated shopper. Tree-lined Avenida da Liberdade is the place for elegant stores and designer labels while arty Chiado is home to fashionable galleries and more avant-garde shops. In Príncipe Real there are independent shops selling artisanal and gourmet products and bargain hunters will enjoy the Feira da Ladra flea market and the popular Sunday market at the trendy LX Market, which sells handmade and vintage items, as well as being a popular brunch spot.



When the sun goes down, Lisbon's nightlife is legendary. Bairro Alto comes alive with people spilling out into the streets from the local bars while in lively Cais do Sodré – home to the famous “Pink Street” - many of the clubs do not close until dawn. Two of the newest nightlife districts are Marvila and Beato, their warehouses and industrial buildings now converted into fashionable spaces to party. For a different pace, the cobbled lanes and alleys of Alfama are the place to discover the haunting sound of Lisbon – Fado – while enjoying dinner and a glass or two at one of the many fado houses.

The shore - golden sands and perfect waves

When the coast calls, visitors can choose from an extensive range of beaches, from quiet coves perfect for relaxation to family-friendly sands and some of the best surfing beaches in the world.

Many of Lisbon's most famous and visited beaches are on the coast leading to Cascais. The Santo Amaro de Oeiras and Conceição beaches are popular with families, while Praia do Tamariz beach attracts visitors for its golden sand and an Atlantic saltwater bay that creates the illusion of a natural swimming pool. Lined with bars and restaurants, Praia de Carcavelos is one of Lisbon's liveliest beaches, where active travellers can enjoy anything from beach volleyball to surfing.

Popular with local Lisboaetas are the 15 km of beaches at Costa da Caparica, south of the Tagus River. There are dozens to choose from, from lively beaches lined with restaurants and bars in the central area, to quieter dune-backed coves in the south.

With its turquoise waters and towering cliffs, travellers seeking more remote relaxation will find some of the most picturesque beaches in the Arrábida Natural Park, like the beautiful and secluded Praia dos Galapinhos, a past winner of the Best Beach in Europe*. Another untouched beach is Praia da Ursa in the Sintra-Cascais Nature Park, just a short distance from Cabo da Roca, Europe's most westerly point. With dramatic rock formations, it is challenging to reach via a steep and twisting path, so is ideal for more adventurous travellers.

For surfers, the choices are endless for both experts and those wanting to try the sport for the first time. Ericeira, Lisbon's surf spot, is the first World Surfing Resort in Europe and its spectacular ocean vistas and beaches flanked by towering sandstone cliffs attract surfers from around the globe. Foz do Lizandro beach is great for beginners while the powerful waves of Coxos are more suited to experienced surfers.

Close to the Sintra-Cascais natural park, Praia do Guincho, is one of Lisbon's largest, and most beautiful beaches. With over 800 metres of windy shoreline backed by sand dunes, it's a paradise for windsurfers and surfers alike.

For more information, ideas and inspiration on visiting Lisbon, please go to www.visitlisboa.com

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* 2017's Best Beach in Europe, European Best Destinations

About Turismo de Lisboa

Turismo de Lisboa is a non-profit organisation established through an alliance of public and private bodies operating in the tourist sector. It has around 900 associated members. Since its inception in 1998, the main objective of this association is to improve and increase the promotion of Lisbon as a tourist destination and therefore enhance the quality and competitiveness of the city.

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