

DBH GUIDES

Portugal



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Portugal Intro



Brief History

The Portuguese Republic is the westernmost country of mainland Europe and is situated on the Iberian Peninsula. Further to the west, the Azores and Madeira archipelagos also form part of the Portuguese Republic. Like its neighbor Spain to the east, Portugal has been inhabited for millennia since the Stone Age. Later on, Celtic tribes that migrated from central Europe came to control much of the Iberian Peninsula for more than six hundred years until the arrival of the Romans in the year 218 BC. The Romans were attracted to the fertile soil and Atlantic Ocean access that the western lands could provide them, thus the Latin title *Portus Cale* (Big Port) was born.

Fast forward to the Middle Ages, when an Islamic force from North Africa began conquering the peninsula then known as *Hispania* and establishing kingdoms collectively known as Al-Andalus. The Moors dominated the land until the centuries-long Reconquista movement (718-1492) eventually drove them out of Spain and Portugal for good. During the Reconquista,

several Christian kingdoms were able to emerge. At first, Portugal formed part of the Kingdom of Galicia, but eventually gained its independence. On June 25, 1139, Afonso Henriques proclaimed himself the first monarch of the land, becoming King Afonso I of Portugal.

Weather

Portugal has a temperate, Mediterranean climate with a particularly wet winter season. During the summer months, visitors enjoy 11 to 12 hours of sunshine and breezy conditions, especially in coastal cities like Lisbon and Porto. Areas north of the Tagus River are hilly while the land south of the Tagus is flat. Portugal is an ideal destination for Americans. In less than seven hours one could fly from New York City to Lisbon, and the country boasts hundreds of unforgettable experiences. With a host of stunning beaches, megalithic sites, energetic cities, wineries and medieval castles, who would ever want to leave?

Culture

Portuguese culture is a unique blend of folk traditions that vary by region. The arts, particularly music, form a huge part of the national identity. Fado music is by far the most iconic genre of Portuguese music. Characterized by passionate lyrics about love and loss, a melancholy tone and seductive guitar sounds, a live Fado show is a can't miss experience when in Portugal.

Cuisine

While largely influenced by its position in the Atlantic Ocean, Portuguese gastronomy varies significantly by region, giving foodie lovers reason to rejoice. While the Southeastern Alentejo region is known for its aromatic soups and pork dishes, the Centro region is known for its hearty goat recipes. Lisbon packs a punch with a remarkable selection of fresh seafood and scrumptious pastries like the famous Pastel de Belém tart. No trip to Portugal is complete without sampling some of the country's renowned wines. Few know that Portugal actually produces more types of wine than Spain. In recent years, wine tourism here has boomed due to the abundance and rich flavors of wines like Port, Bairrada, Verdelho, Verde, Bucelas, Ribatejo and Douro.

Extra Info

Hours of operation: Typical hours of operation are from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and from 3 p.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Museums are closed on Mondays.

Currency: Euro.

Currency converter: www.xe.com



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The city of Braga, located in northwestern Portugal, is the oldest Portuguese city in the country's verdant Minho region. Braga is home to more than thirty churches, but its religious significance is most certainly not a 21st century occurrence. In the 12th century, Braga was considered the religious capital of Portugal. Years of Christian influence undoubtedly have shaped Braga into what it is today; a charismatic combo of ancient and modern, with tons of baroque flair.

The ancient Romans took particular interest in the Minho province and used the area as the administrative center for their province *Gallaecia*, which included various cities along the northwestern Iberian Peninsula (modern day Spain and Portugal). Braga's history reads like that of so many other cities in the Iberian Peninsula. It was under Arab control during the 8th century before being seized in 1040 by Ferdinand I of León and Castile.

Beginning in the 16th century, Braga underwent several architectural modifications, expansions and improvements. The city was transformed from medieval town to baroque beauty in less than 200 years with the help of its affluent archbishops. For this, Braga has been nicknamed "the Rome of Portugal." It is a place where architecture enthusiasts can take in centuries of

urban growth and revival. Braga is the third largest city in Portugal after Lisbon and Porto. The city's animated street side cafés, art galleries and bars are the telltale signs that hundreds of students from Erasmus Minho University and The Catholic University of Portugal live, study and play in this city.

Only 195 miles from Porto, Braga makes the perfect weekend getaway for food, architecture and design enthusiasts alike. Not surprisingly, *Semana Santa*, or Holy Week has become a popular time to visit. The festivities provide a rare glimpse into the area's unique Christian traditions and storied past. If you plan on coming during this time, you should book accommodations well in advance. Also keep in mind that while most monuments remain open, many private businesses close during this time in observance of religious holidays.

Be warned: Braga's summers are hot, and I mean hot! Temperatures in May through September can reach the upper 90's, and it is not uncommon to experience triple digit temperatures during July, August and September.

In this guide, you will find all of the attractions I recommend for Braga. I experienced all of them during my visit to Portugal in November 2010. As part of a new feature in our 2012 DBH Guide series, at the end of this guide you will find a sample three-day itinerary for your trip.

The following websites are invaluable resources for first-time visitors:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.cm-braga.pt

Hotel Bracara Augusta



This hotel borrows its name from Braga's original name, *Bracara*, and Emperor Augustus,

who ruled the city around 20 BC.



Hotel Bracara Augusta is one of the only boutique hotels in the city center. Located in the main hub of Braga, it is near the pedestrian zone of Avenida Central and only a five-minute taxi ride from the Braga train station. There are several easily accessible shops and cafes in the vicinity. Despite being housed in a renovated 14th century building, the hotel provides all modern amenities. Granite walls, grand arches, hardwood floors and pristine gardens characterize Hotel Bracara Augusta's charm. The garden and pool areas are open to guests during the summer months and provide that special touch of serenity after a long day of touring the city's sites.

With 17 elegantly decorated rooms, Hotel Bracara Augusta features single, double, twin, and handicap rooms as well as two suites with in-house jacuzzis. Each room comes equipped with a direct telephone line, free Wi-Fi, satellite TV, free access to Internet, air conditioning, mini-bar, safe and a bathroom with hairdryer.



In the main area, guests have access to a living room, bar, laundry service, 24-hour front desk service and one of the city's most popular restaurants. Restaurant Centurium is open everyday except Sundays, and serves up delicious (and affordable) Portuguese cuisine. The hotel also has several meeting rooms for small or large gatherings, and has been known to host elegant parties, business events and romantic weddings in its banquet facilities.

Hotel Bracara Augusta is a charming and hospitable place with a warm staff ready to point you to the best attractions in towns as well as provide you directions and tips. The hotel is located just 650 feet (198 m) from the train station and about five minutes by car from the Nogueira da Silva Musuem.

Info:

Avenida Central, 134 4710-229 Braga, Portugal
+351 253206260

www.bracaraaugusta.com

See's and Do's

Braga Cathedral



The Braga Cathedral is one of the most significant monuments in the Minho region and in all of Portugal, not only because of its architectural features, but also because it is regarded as a symbol of the city's long-standing Christian tradition.

The Catholic Diocese of Braga is one of the oldest in Western Europe, and no monument illustrates the city's religious history quite like the Braga Cathedral. The building's exterior features a large statue of the Virgin Mary and child amongst Romanesque arches and reliefs of animals and people.

Visitors will also notice a gothic-style canopy entrance complete with on looking gargoyles. The interior of the Cathedral is rich with baroque and Romanesque design elements, an ornate high choir, and several chapels containing the tombs of Braga's archbishops and members of the Portuguese royal family. Entrance to the cathedral is free. Visit <http://www.geira.pt/Msebraga/> (Portuguese only) for more information.

Info:

Rua D. Paio Mendes, 10 4700 Braga, Portugal
+351 253263317

Cathedral Treasure (Sacred Art Museum)

This museum, also known as Cathedral Treasure, is located in the Braga Cathedral. Here, visitors can view clothing, religious objects, jewelry, tiles and more for an entrance fee of only €2. The collection also includes statues, treasures, carvings, ceramic tile work and bells. It is one of my favorite museums in Northern Portugal.

Particular items of interest include a pair of well-preserved gloves from over 1,000 years ago, 16th century manueline style chalice of Archbishop Diogo de Sousa and embroidered vestments.

Info:

Rua D. Paio Mendes, 10 4700 Braga, Portugal
+351 253263317

Archbishop's Palace



Located close to the Braga Cathedral, the Archbishop's Palace consists of three separate buildings, the eastern, western and southern wings, each of which is from a different period.

The eastern wing is in medieval gothic style, and dates back to the 15th century. It faces the beautifully manicured Santa Barbara Garden. The baroque-style west wing faces the Municipio Square of Braga, and was built in the 18th century. The southern wing is a collection of various buildings from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. There is a small plaza with a fountain located just outside this wing.

The palace houses the Public Library of Braga as well as the District Archive.

Info:

Praça Municipal

4700 Braga, Portugal

+351 253601135

Our Lady of the Tower Chapel (Capela de Nossa Senhora da Torre)



On the morning of November 1st, 1755, thousands of people in Lisbon and the surrounding cities awoke to the earth shaking violently beneath them. The Great Lisbon Earthquake

destroyed much of the city and killed nearly 70,000 people. Seismologists now believe that it was a 9.0 on the MMS scale, making it one of the most powerful earthquakes to ever hit Western Europe.

Lucky for the residents of Braga, the earthquake's impact was not felt in the north, and they thankfully were spared the destruction it brought to much of the country. Attributing their escape from disaster to the grace of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Tower Chapel was constructed in 1759 by architect André Soares. It is a charming, open-air, baroque-style sanctuary that features a bell tower.

Info:

Largo de São Paulo

4700-042 Braga, Portugal

Arco da Porta Nova (New City Gate)



Arco da Porta Nova is a 14th century triumphal arch located along the western medieval wall of the city. Once used as a symbol for and an entrance into the city, the arch now stands nestled between modern commercial buildings.

Architect André Soares, as per the request of Archbishop Gaspar de Bragança, redesigned the arch in baroque style. The western façade of the arch features the coat of arms of Archbishop de Bragança, while the eastern façade commemorates Our Lady of Nazareth in a recessed

depiction.

Info:

Rua Dom Diogo de Sousa City Center

Frigideiras do Cantinho



This family-owned bakery, dating back to 1796, is a great place to take a break from sightseeing and soak in some history. The bakery's glass floor allows visitors to see the remains of the old Roman wall, from a time when Braga was still known as *Bracara Augusta*.

Stop by to sample pastries, sip coffee and enjoy the history right under your feet.

Info:

Lg. S. João do Souto, a 4700-326 Braga, Portugal
+351 253263991

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Pópulo Church (Igreja do Pópulo)



Braga's Pópulo Church is a neoclassic structure designed to invoke the Virgin Mary glorified in Rome's Pópulo Church. It was originally part of a convent that was dedicated to the Virgin of Santa Maria del Pópulo in Rome. Commissioned by Archbishop Frei Agostinho de Jesus in 1596, Pópulo Church became a neoclassical landmark of the city when it was finished almost 300 years later with the help of architect, Carlos Amarante.

The church's interior is most exquisite and features architectural elements from various styles including mannerist, neoclassical and baroque. Dozens of delicate blue and white hand-painted Portuguese tiles adorn the walls of the church. The remains of Archbishop Frei Agostinho de Jesus were transferred here in 1628. His tomb is housed in the main chapel.

Info: Largo de Santo Agostinho 4700 Braga, Portugal
+351 253271982

Saint Vincent Church (Igreja de São Vicente)



The 16th century Saint Vincent Church is the oldest authentic Christian monument in Braga. It is a baroque-style Catholic Church that was built in 1565 in honor of Saint Vincent of Saragossa, the patron saint of Lisbon. It was built atop the site of a Visigoth temple. Inside the sacristy, there is a Visigoth inscription on an ancient headstone that reads, “Here lies Remistuera, since May 1 of 618 days from Monday, in peace, Amen.” The inscription is the first recorded

reference to Monday being named the first day of the week.

The façade of the church features a statue of St. Vincent, reliefs of Christ's baptism and a Papal cross. The interior features an altar from 1721, an organ from 1769 and choir balconies designed by Carlos Amarente. The Saint Vincent Church is located about a ten-minute walk from Hotel Bracara Augusta.

Info:

Rua de São Vicente 4700-361 Braga, Portugal

+351 253277354

Bom Jesus do Monte



Bom Jesus do Monte, or Shrine of Good Jesus of the Mountain, is a must-see attraction located on a hilltop just three miles (4.8 km) southeast of Braga. It has been a Catholic pilgrimage site since Archbishop Rodrigo do Moura Telles commissioned it in 1722 for the faithful to walk the Stations of the Cross. The site was completed in 1811, and is still used by the faithful and penitents alike for contemplation. Some people walk the stations on their knees during *Semana Santa* (Holy Week).

At the top of the hill, past the grottoes, fountains and gardens along Sacred Way (long double staircase) is the baroque-style basilica. From here, visitors can gain a captivating, sprawling view of Braga from 400 meters above sea level.

You can get to Bom Jesus do Monte by taking the four-minute funicular for €1 or by driving. The site is open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is free.

Info:

Estancia do Bom Jesus 4715 Braga, Portugal

+351 253676636

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Misericórdia Church (Igreja da Misericórdia de Braga)



According to the inscription at the entrance, the Misericórdia Church was built in 1562. It was commissioned by Archbishop Diogo de Sousa to be a chapel for the Brotherhood of Mercy. It is considered to be the most important structure from the Renaissance period in Braga, making it a popular site for history and art buffs.

The church was renovated several times during the 18th and 19th centuries due to the money paid forth by some of the Brothers of Mercy who wished to be buried there. They paid for elaborate remodeling projects by sculptors, painters, carpenters and tile-makers. Today, the church features a Renaissance-style north façade, gilded altarpieces, hand-painted tiles, vibrant stained glass windows and dozens of original works of art.

Info:

Rua Dom Diogo de Sousa 4700-422 Braga, Portugal

+351 253262550

Fountain of the Idol (Fonte do Idolo)



Did you think you would come to Braga and not see any sign of the ancient Romans who once inhabited the area? I hope not. The Fountain of the Idol was built during the era of Emperor Augustus sometime during the first century. Unfortunately, it is the last remaining monument of Braca Augustus, the ancient capital of Gallaecia. It is located in downtown Braga on historic Rua do Raio.

The fountain features a carved granite rock with inscriptions in ancient Celtic. It is thought to have been built as a shrine to the god, Tongoenabiago. The fountain was once part of an ancient temple complex located on the site.

Info:

Rua do Raio 4700-922 Braga, Portugal

Raio Street (Rua do Raio)



All roads lead to Asturica Augusta. Raio Street is the starting point of what was once the Roman road that led to Asturica Augusta (modern-day Astorga, Spain).

It begins at the Arco da Porta Nova, and winds its way through the entire historical center, all the way to Praça da República. Along the way are numerous shops, restaurants and cafes. Palácio do Raio, a mid-eighteenth century palace is also located along Rua do Raio. It is a baroque-style civil building commissioned by a wealthy merchant and designed by architect, André Soares.

Restaurants

Inácio Restaurant



Located on Campo das Hortas, just outside of Arco da Porta Nova, the town gate, Inácio is a well-known, friendly establishment that serves mouth-watering traditional cuisine from the Minho region.

Inácio is one of the most popular restaurants in town and since the 1930s, this eatery has succeeded at serving wine and food of the highest quality. The cellar is always well stocked to ensure your every whim is met with plenty of selection. The menu features home-style regional favorites, which means lots of meat and starches. This can be a nice break from the oodles of codfish being served at every eatery across the country. Portions are not big- they're *huge*, so come hungry or ready to share with another person.

The rustic walls, ceramics and charming fireplace that blazes during the colder months are what lure patrons in, but the incredible food is what keeps Inácio's customers coming back. Each of Inácio's dishes will cost you between €16 and €20. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner everyday except Tuesdays. It closes every year from September 14 to 29.

Best time: Dinner

Recs: Roast lamb ("cabrito") with potatoes, bife de cacarola (pot roast), roasted veal, rum omelet soufflé.

Info:

Campo das Hortas, 4, 4700-210 Braga, Portugal
+351 253613235

Café Astoria



A recently renovated two-story hotspot, Café Astoria, located in Praça da República, is known for its Italian food along with its Portuguese staples like codfish. Like Braga, Café Astoria is a study in contrasts, mixing modern design with an ancient Roman wall that dates back over 2,000 years. Astoria has become the place of choice for dozens of university students that flood the square during their study breaks.

The first floor features a café-terrace for guests seeking a more quiet and relaxed atmosphere. Outdoor seating is available for optimal people watching. The second floor houses a disco bar, where parties and house music energize the night. Café Astoria's contemporary style accents its rustic features, and creates a fun ambiance to eat and dance.

Café Astoria's menu is simple and delicious. Salads, pastas, grilled meats and seafood comprise the lunch and dinner choices. Prices range from €8 to €18. The second floor bar is open daily from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Best time: Lunch

Recs: Sandwiches and beer

Info:

Praça da República, 5, 4710 Braga, Portugal
+351 253273944

Cozinha da Se



Located in Braga's historical center, Cozinha da Se is just steps away from Arco da Porta Nova. With stone walls, modern tablescapes and super friendly service, it is no wonder why Cozinha da Se has attracted hundreds of patrons, each inevitably becoming a repeat customer.

Cozinha da Se only serves dishes made from the freshest local ingredients. Looking for lo-cal? No problem at all because the menu also features vegetarian choices for the meatless crowd. Local and international entrées take center stage, and every bite will light up your taste buds. Whether you order meat or fish, your meal will be a memorable one. Cozinha da Se is open for lunch and dinner everyday except Sundays and Mondays. Reservations are recommended for weekend dinners.

Best time: Lunch or dinner

Recs: Rice with *rape* (monkfish; pronounced *rap-ey*), codfish filet, açorda de marisco (seafood stew) in bread bowl, chocolate mousse dessert.

Info:

Rua Dom Frei Caetano Brandao, 95, 4700 Braga, Portugal

+351 253277343

www.cozinhadase.com

Solar do Arco (Guimarães)



Quaint, but unforgettable is how Solar do Arco stands out among other eateries in historic Guimarães. This rustic restaurant is situated in an antique house on the oldest street in the city, Rua da Santa Maria. You won't find modern furniture or over-the-top décor here; instead you will leave this cozy space with a culinary experience you won't soon forget.

Solar do Arco was founded in 1994, and prides itself on its fresh seafood dishes – not the unnecessary “fluff” found at other restaurants. With dozens of wines to choose from, let your waiter help you make the perfect choice to pair with your fish.

Like other traditional Portuguese venues, Solar do Arco serves codfish and other seafood staples such as shrimp, monkfish and clams. The best part is that these ingredients do not travel very far from the ocean to your plate. Local is best when it comes to Solar do Arco's commitment to freshness. Main courses will set you back about €20 to €30, but the memorable food is worth every last euro cent.

Best time: Lunch

Recs: Codfish stew, cream of marisco (shellfish) soup, lombo de boi (beef tenderloin), fruit tart, toucinho do ceu (custard) dessert

Info:

Rua da Santa Maria, 48-50, 4810-443 Guimarães, Portugal

+351 253513072

www.solardoarco.com

Day Trips

Guimarães



This city of Guimarães is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and one of the most popular tourist destinations in the region. Guimarães has been credited as the heart of Portuguese identity and the cradle of Portuguese nationality. Guimarães can be easily accessed by bus, car, or train from Braga.

Guimarães is the birthplace of Afonso Henriques I of Portugal, the country's first king. This is why the city has always been associated with the birth of Portugal as a nation. The historic town center features winding streets and colorful balconies. The 10th century Guimarães Castle is a medieval fortress that was once used to defend against attacks from the Vikings and Moors. It was eventually incorporated into the royal residence in 1140. Guimarães Castle is a short walk from the town center.

The Palace of the Dukes of Bragança is also located in the center of town in close proximity to the castle. As its moniker suggests, this 15th century stately structure served as the private residence for the Dukes of Bragança. The palace is open every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Entrance fee is €5, and free for children up to 14 years.

Between the Guimarães Castle and the Palace of the Dukes of Bragança sits the small, stone Church of Saint Michael. This modest, Romanesque-style structure is believed to be where King Afonso I was baptized. Like the two significant structures that flank it, the church is a national monument and is open everyday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Visit <http://pduques.imc-ip.pt/> for more information on these three attractions (Portuguese only). Also visit www.cm-guimaraes.pt for more information on the city.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Named after the town's ancient Roman bridge that stretches over the Lima River, Ponte de Lima is a small, but ideal day trip town to visit from Braga. There are just 17 miles (27 km) between the two.

Start your day at Praça da República, where you can pick up brochures about the town's history and attractions. The Roman bridge, or *Ponte Romana*, is Ponte de Lima's main attraction. It is a pedestrian-only bridge that features 31 arches. In reality, the Ponte Romana is only partially Roman. Most of it dates back to the 1500's, during which it was restored and extended. Many of the original arches are now underwater beneath the bridge.

While exploring Ponte de Lima, visit the 15th century Saint Anthony Convent across from the 18th century São Francisco Church. Don't forget to stop for a coffee or light snack in one of the pleasant outdoor cafés along the main square, Largo de Camões. From here, sunsets over the bridge are a sight to behold.

In early June, Ponte de Lima celebrates *Vaca das Cordas*, or the "Cow of the Ropes" festival that the ancient Egyptians brought to Iberia. In accordance with the Egyptian myth, locals

display images of cows, which symbolize fertility, throughout the town. Ponte de Lima also plays host to a large outdoor market every Monday where wine, bread, cheese and household items are sold – a tradition of the town since 1125.

Other places of interest in Ponte de Lima include the baroque-style Igreja de São Francisco, the Renaissance-style Igreja de Santo Antonio dos Frades, the Largo de Camões fountain and the antique manor houses around the town's historical center. These are called *solares*, and most are now used as hotels, restaurants, or apartments.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Viana do Castelo is a picturesque coastal fishing town situated in northern Portugal just 23 miles (37 km) from Braga. It has captivating architecture, verdant surroundings and stunning views of the Lima River. Viana do Castelo makes an ideal day trip for those looking to walk the historic city center, lunch at a quiet café, shop the alluring boutiques or lounge around the area's sandy beaches.

Viana do Castelo has a rich folklore, and is one of the last cities in the Minho region to host festivals where lively Portuguese traditions are displayed. Every year in mid-August, the town plays host to the Our Lady of Sorrows Festival. Members of the town participate fervently in parades, traditional dancing, feasts and firework displays.

When beginning a walking tour of the city center, visitors should start at the 16th century granite fountain at Praça da República. In the same plaza is the Consistory of Misericórdia, which was built by João Lopes and has a gorgeous Renaissance façade. The interior of the church features impressive tile work among gilded ornaments, crucifixes and animated frescos.

The Basilica of Santa Luzia is a must-do while in Viana do Castelo. Inspired by the Sacré

Coeur in Paris, the basilica sits atop the hill of Sana Luzia, and provides stunning panoramic views of Viana do Castelo, the Lima River, and the lush countryside. The large structure was designed by architect, Miguel Ventura Terra, and completed in 1943. The Basilica of Santa Luzia can be accessed by the Santa Luzia Highway or the Santa Luzia funicular, which operates daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It costs €3 for a round trip.

Additional Travel Information

Time Zone: GMT +1

Getting around: The best way to get around Braga is by walking.

Shopping: Braga has a rich tradition in handicrafts. *Cavaquinhos*, or small guitars, embroidered linens, wicker basketry and folk costumes are typical items sold in Braga. They are sold in several small shops around town, including the tourism office (Avenida da Liberdade, 1).

Nightlife Overview: Braga is a town brimming with young adults who spend their days studying. On their nights off, they like to party, which is why the city boasts an active nightlife despite its conservative culture. Most choose to begin the night leisurely with a couple of beers at a café in the Praça da República, and then venture off on foot to the surrounding bars and clubs along Avenida Central.

Most places close between midnight and 2 a.m., and it is always a good idea to bring cash since many of the bars do not accept debit or credit cards. Some of the clubs are on the outskirts of the city center, so a taxi is recommended. Braga has some of the most exciting nightlife in Portugal and should not be missed. Dress up and head out.

Sabão Rosa (Rua Quinta da Armada Pavilhão, 5) is a nightclub where you'll experience exciting Latin, pop, hip-hop and house music blasting from the speakers. Sabão Rosa is always featuring Minho's hottest DJ's, and has a state of the art lighting system to liven the party each night. This club often hosts local jazz and Latin bands on its center stage.

Sardinha Biba (Praça Dr. Candido da Costa Pires) is a hot spot for the young crowd out partying in downtown Braga. Since opening in 1990, it has undergone several renovations to its interior. Now, it is a completely unique space that allows for intimate moments and frenzied nightclub atmosphere. The club's website speaks for the vibe in these simple terms, "Magic, madness, fun and good taste."

Sardinha Biba is located opposite the Caranda Health Center.

Populum (Praça Conde de Agrolongo, 115) is tucked away in a 17th century building. Open since November 1993, this club consists of two separate dance areas, each offering something different. The first area features a beat-pumping dance floor with neon lights streaming across the room where clubbers can dance to the best in pop and house music. The second area consists of a smaller dance floor, where Latin and modern dance classes are taught daily.

Populum is open Thursday through Saturday from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Taberna Inglesa (Rua do Taxa, 54) is an upscale British-style pub that features complete dining and bar service for a relaxing evening out in Braga. The rustic décor is highlighted by a Joan Miró mural, rich wooden accents and dozens of knickknacks adorning the up-lighted walls. Taberna Inglesa has friendly servers and a welcoming bar area where cocktails are served. I heard that some of the best franceschina sandwiches outside of Porto are made here. What's there not to love about this delicious heart attack on a plate? A grilled sandwich with ham, steak, fried eggs, sauce, and tons of cheese slathered with beer gravy... yes please! Taberna Inglesa also features an impressive selection of imported beer.

Y-Not (Rua Quinta da Armada, 124) is a karaoke bar that challenges the typical perception of a dingy, dodgy bar with its modern and chic orange décor. Whether you're looking to test out your vocal skills, or just have a fun night out with no qualms of belting out your favorite tunes, Y-Not is the perfect spot for lots of laughs and great music in a unique setting.

If you are thinking an artistic show is more your thing than dancing around a dark club full of sexy strangers (hey, we're all different), then get yourself to one of Portugal's cultural hubs, the Theatro Circo de Braga (Avenida da Liberdade, 697). It opened on April 21st, 1915, and has since featured hundreds of theater, cinema, circus and musical acts. The theatre cemented its reputation as a significant venue in the world of Portuguese performing arts in 1922, the year that Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Verdi's *Aida* were showcased.

Culture enthusiasts can still catch shows at this Braga landmark. There is something for everyone whether it's a Mozart concerto, children's book readings, independent film screenings, risqué cabaret shows, or ultra modern theatre presentations. Tickets can be purchased directly from the theatre's website within five business days prior to the show.

Best time to go: April through June

Nearest airport:

Porto Airport (OPO)

www.porto-airport.com

+351 0229 432400

Car rentals:

Avis +351253272520

Sixt (Porto) +351 223 439240

Train:

Alfa express and regional trains

www.cp.pt

+351 211 023000

Pass:

Braga Card

Offers discounts on archaeological sites, monuments, museums, accommodations, guided tours and the Braga tour bus. Cost per person is €5. Card is valid for two days and can be purchased at the tourism office (Avenida da Liberdade, 1).

Tours:

Bracara Bus Tour

The bus is a hop-on hop-off ride that goes on a one-hour long loop through the city, stopping at 17 points of interest. Tickets can be purchased once aboard the bus, which leaves from Avenida Central, or online at www.yellowbustours.com. Tickets cost €10 for adults and €5 for children 4-12 years.

Useful telephone numbers:

Country code	+35
Emergency Line	112
Tourism Office	+351253262550
Braga Taxis	+351253253253

List of helpful websites from this guide:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.cm-braga.pt

<http://www.geira.pt/Msebraga/>

<http://pduques.imc-ip.pt/>

www.cm-guimaraes.pt

Other recommended restaurants:

A Brasileira coffee and pastry shop

Centurium

Delicatum

O Alexandre

Other recommended accommodations:

\$\$\$ Meliá Braga Hotel & Spa

\$\$ Mercure Braga Centro

\$ Dom Vilas Hotel

Other places of interest:

Palácio do Raio

Palácio do Raio, or Casa do Mexicano, is an 18th century palace built by one of the city's wealthy merchants, João Duarte. Like other buildings in central Braga, the palace was designed by architect André Soares. It captures baroque elegance and class. The over-the-top residence was eventually sold to another wealthy businessman, Miguel José Raio, which is how it got its name. Palácio do Raio is considered one of André Soares' most important works.

Santa Bárbara Garden

A public garden with a fountain of Saint Barbara located near Paço Episcopal Bracarense.
Saint Frutuoso Chapel

A 7th century Visigothic temple. It is arguably the most significant pre-Roman structure on the Iberian Peninsula. Entering is prohibited.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Braga's Baroque Buildings

- Quick stop at tourism office to purchase Braga Card
- Sightseeing in Braga on foot
- Lunch at Café Astoria
- Continue sightseeing on foot or take the Bracara Bus Tour
- Dinner at Inácio Restaurant*

Day 2: Cradle of Birth

- Morning visit to Bom Jesus do Monte
- Drive to Guimarães for sightseeing (Guimarães Castle, Palace of the Dukes of Bragança and Church of Saint Michael)
- Lunch at Solar do Arco*
- Return to Braga
- Afternoon shopping and/or coffee break at A Brasileira
- Dinner at Conzinha da Se*

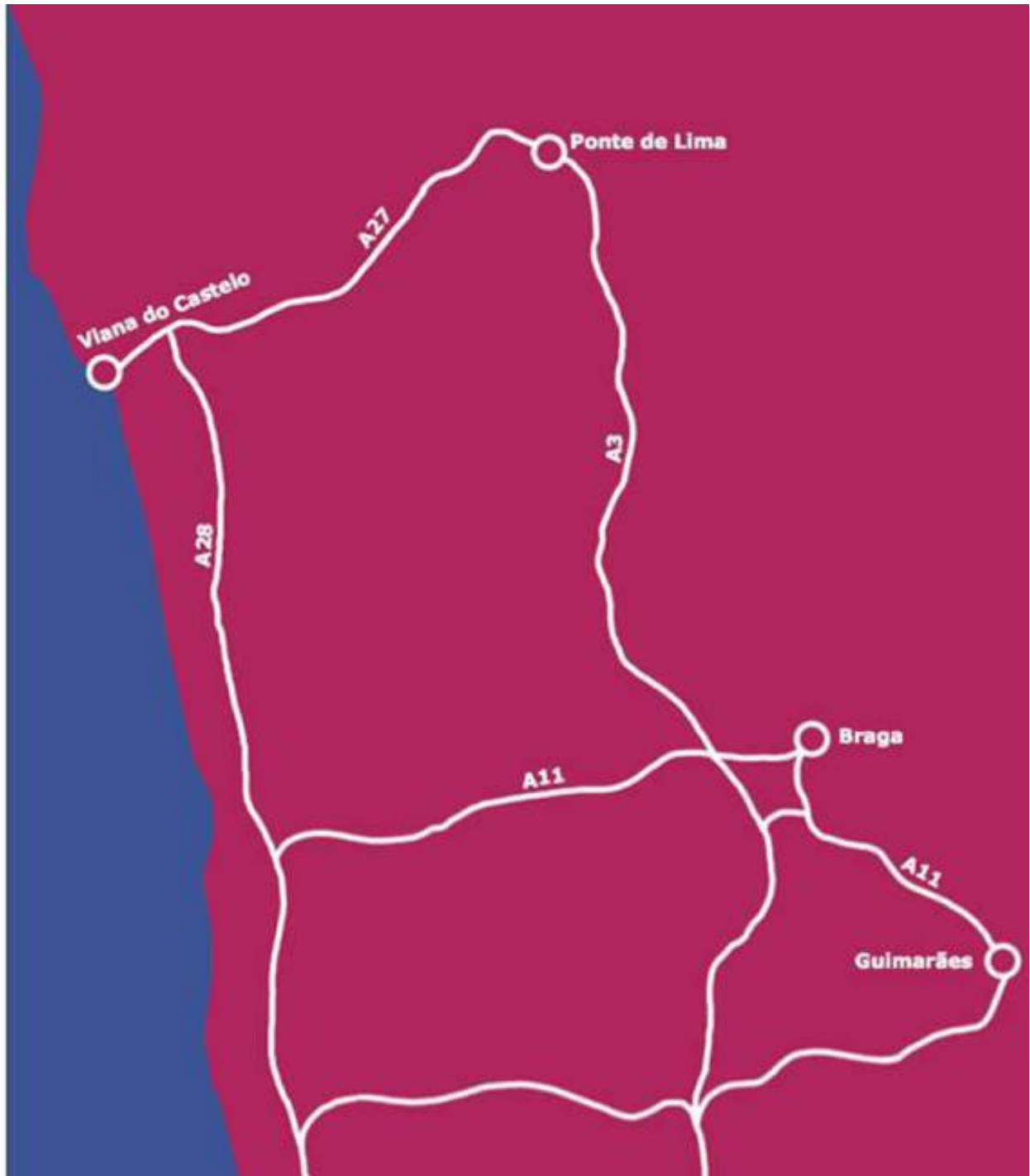
Day 3: Ponte de Lima and Viana do Castelo

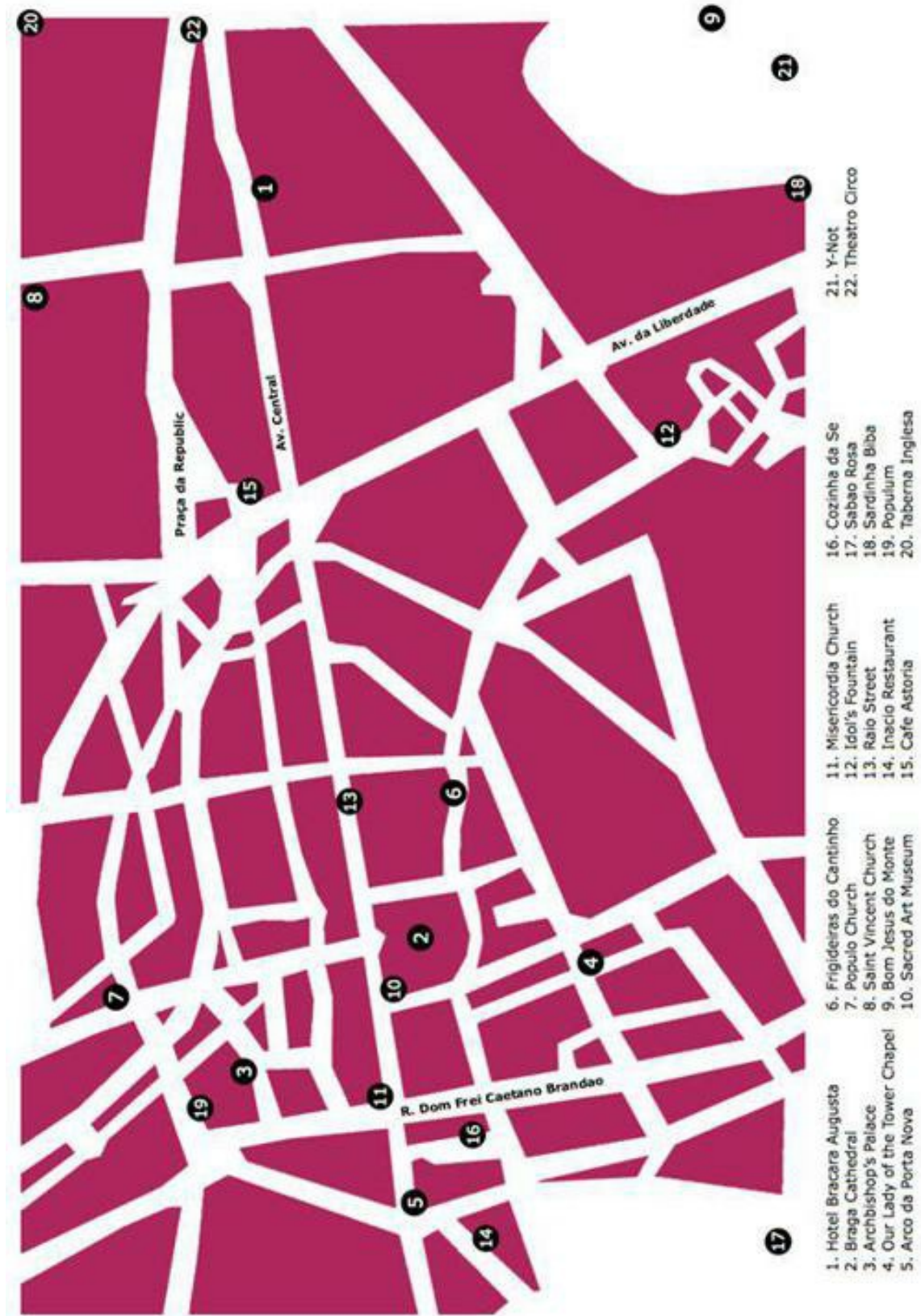
- Drive to Ponte de Lima for sightseeing. Stop at Praça da República to pick up brochures
- Mid-morning coffee in Largo de Camões square
- Continue to Viana do Castelo for sightseeing. Take Santa Luzia funicular to Basilica of Santa Luzia for photos.
- Return to Braga
- Dinner at Centurium*

Activities marked with an asterisk (*) require prior booking.



Area Map







Braga is the unofficial Catholic capital of the Iberian Peninsula, and a historical city worth visiting.

The numerous churches that dot Braga are all more than 1,000 years old and built from the remains of the Roman wall, which was torn down after the fall of the Roman Empire. It is history turned to captivating architecture, and one of the main reasons to visit Braga. Many visitors opt to ride bikes around the city instead of walking. These can be rented at local bike shops or through local hostels.

Another fact that makes Braga so unique is the Easter tradition that takes place there every year. One of Braga's priests takes a four-to-five day tour of the city to bless every house and everyone who lives inside. Houses must keep their doors open in order to receive the blessing and not be skipped over.

The Frigideiras do Cantinho bakery is also an absolute must because of its glass floor that conceals the remains of the Roman wall of Bracara Augusta. A visit is needed to appreciate Braga's past to the fullest, plus you can get a sugar high while you're there.

Another must-see is the Bom Jesus Church because of its incredible staircase. The beautiful view that awaits you at the top makes the excursion worth every minute.

As the cradle of Portugal's birth, Guimarães is only a 30-minute drive from Braga and should not be missed. Braga is the birthplace Portugal with a variety of treasures just waiting to be explored.



Coimbra is a charismatic Portuguese city located approximately 128 miles (205 km) north of Lisbon in the Centro region of Portugal. Coimbra and its surrounding towns were inhabited by several societies over the past 2,000 years. Celts, Romans, Barbarians, Moors, and Spanish each settled in Coimbra before King Afonso Henriques established Portugal as an independent kingdom in 1139. He declared Coimbra the capital of Portugal, a title that lasted only until 1225. King Afonso remains buried in Coimbra's Santa Cruz Monastery to this day.

The University of Coimbra was established in 1290, making it the oldest school of higher education on the Iberian Peninsula, and one of the oldest universities in the world. The school's 20,000-plus students drive Coimbra's dining and nightlife industries. Coimbra is divided into two sections: the *Cidade Alta* (upper city) and the lower city located by the Mondego River. In the middle ages, the distinction between the two sections of the city demonstrated division of the classes. Noble families and clergymen occupied the *Cidade Alta* while most industrial activities took place downtown. Today, this historical downtown area known as *Baixa* is a popular neighborhood featuring various restaurants and boutiques.

Coimbra has a rich history in the arts. Aside from the architectural landmarks scattered throughout the city, Coimbra boasts its own variety of *Fado*, a style of music often referred to as the "Portuguese blues." Coimbra Fado is a sub-genre that features more complex lyrics and

multiple guitars. Experiencing a traditional Coimbra Fado show is a true and rare delight, but luckily there are venues in the Baixa quarter that regularly host them.

Coimbra is a hilly city so visitors should sport comfortable shoes for walking to and from the different attractions. Notable points of interest include the Church of São Tiago, the Santa Cruz Monastery, Botanical Gardens, the Old and New Cathedral, and the Machado de Castro National Museum that houses an important collection of Gothic, Flemish, Portuguese and Roman works of art.

The nearby day trip towns of Conimbriga, Montemor-o-Velho and Figueira da Foz offer visitors the chance to experience ancient Roman ruins, an ancient century castle, and Portugal's scenic Atlantic coast beaches.

In this guide, you will find all of the attractions I recommend for Coimbra. I experienced all of them during my visit to Portugal in November 2010. As part of a new feature in our 2012 DBH Guide series, at the end of this guide you will find a sample three-day itinerary for your trip.

The following websites are invaluable resources for first-time visitors:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.turismodecoimbra.pt

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas



Who said history and luxury can't be one in the same? Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas is a 35-guestroom hotel situated in an elegantly restored 18th century palace. The hotel is named after the tears shed by Inês de Castro, the Galician noblewoman with whom King Pedro I of Portugal was enamored. Although Pedro's father Afonso IV did not sanction Inês and Pedro's love (perhaps because Pedro was already married), the couple had four children together. Outraged by the possibility of Spanish infiltration, King Afonso IV ordered Inês to be murdered. She was killed on the grounds of the hotel. After her death, King Pedro I declared Inês his lawful wife, and the two remain entombed side by side in the Alcobaça Monastery near Leiria.



Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas may have a solemn blip in its history, but now shines as one of Coimbra's premiere hotels. With a spa, pool, golf course, botanical garden, several courtyards, and world-class cuisine, what's not to love? Guests can choose from stately guestrooms in the renovated palace, garden rooms that overlook the luscious green property, or spa-style rooms with whirlpool tubs and gorgeous views.

Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas's restaurant, Arcades da Capela, has proudly earned itself a Michelin star. Guests can learn about techniques and recipes through the cooking classes offered by the hotel's head chef. The hotel's Bamboo Garden Spa features a stunning indoor pool, aromatherapeutic and exfoliation treatments, heavenly massages, sauna and fitness room. Twelve acres of verdant botanical garden should keep you occupied as you stroll the romantic trails. Golfers will be happy to know the hotel offers golf lessons and features a nine-hole course.



Hotel Quinta das Lagrimas is the ultimate couple's getaway. Its serene ambiance, elegant décor and award-winning dining will have you dreaming of it well after you've checked out. It is conveniently located close to the Mondego River, nearby dozens of restaurants and many of Coimbra's attractions.

Info:
Rua António Augusto Gonçalves
3041 Coimbra, Portugal
+351 239802380
www.quintalaslgrimas.pt

See's and Do's



Students from all over the world choose Universidade de Coimbra to fulfill their dreams of higher education. This Portuguese landmark was founded in 1290 by King Denis of Portugal – making it one of the oldest universities in Europe. Like other college cities, Coimbra’s service industries are fueled by the continuous presence of students during the school year, which spans from October to July.

The school boasts a baroque-style library, Biblioteca Joanina. This three-story building holds over 200,000 volumes including bibliographic collections. They must be approved before being checked out because they are held in a temperature and humidity-controlled “book house.” This process is utilized to preserve its collection of 16th, 17th and 18th century-old books. An interesting part of the “book house” is its inhabitants: bats. At night these flying mammals feed on insects that like to chomp away at the old texts. At the end of each day, workers cover the wooden surfaces with leather towels for their nocturnal friends, and then clean the area in the morning before the public arrives. Entrance to the library is free.

Once done rummaging through the antique books, be sure to check out the university’s 33-acre botanical garden located on Calçada Martim de Freitas. Founded in the 18th century, Jardim Botânico has delighted students and visitors for over 200 years with elegant fountains, rare plant specimens and breezy walkways. Because playing outside is so much more fun than

studying, right?

Info:

Rua José Falcão,
Coimbra, Portugal

Phone: +351 239 859 900

www.uc.pt

Old Cathedral (Sé Velha)



Coimbra's Old Cathedral was built during the second half of the 12th century and is a major Roman Catholic institution for the city as well as the country. It was built atop the foundation of an earlier Islamic mosque, and many of its architectural features, like the main door for instance, are reminiscent of Moorish design.

The Old Cathedral's significance began in 1139 when Afonso Henriques declared himself King of Portugal and Coimbra as his new capital. The structure is one of the few Portuguese Romanesque cathedrals still standing. Its fortress-like exterior is no accident. The years following the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula were perilous ones, which resulted in buildings having to be safeguarded against possible retaliation attempts from the land's previous residents.

The interior of the cathedral features later add-ons such as the gothic-style high altars and cloister, and 16th century Sevillian tiles. The Old Cathedral is open everyday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., but admission times are subject to change when mass is in session.

Info:
Largo da Sé Velha

3000 Coimbra, Portugal
+351 239825273

Rua Visconde da Luz



As the main pedestrian street in Coimbra, Rua Visconde da Luz runs through the center of town from the Mondego River until just past the Santa Cruz Monastery. Along the way there are dozens of local business offices, restaurants, tourist shops, cafés and boutiques.

At almost any time of day there are dozens of people walking the street running errands or casually strolling. This is a great way to discover the Baixa quarter and pick up souvenirs for people back home.

Info:

Rua Visconde da Luz
3000 Coimbra, Portugal

Santa Cruz Monastery



Known as Coimbra's most important national monument, the Santa Cruz Monastery has been standing since being founded in 1131. It was dedicated to the order of St. Augustine and was used as a meeting place for clergymen and nobles alike, including Portugal's first king.

At the time it was built, the monastery established Coimbra as a legitimate capital and cemented its ties to the Roman Catholic Church. For this, the monastery was granted special privileges by Pope Innocent II, which resulted in a remarkable amassment of wealth for King Afonso Henriques' budding nation.

The monastery's design was dramatically altered in the 16th century by order of King Manuel I of Portugal. *Manueline*, or Portuguese late gothic style, is an architectural style named after

him. As king, he commissioned several exploratory voyages around the world (India, Brazil and Africa), and incorporated the architectural styles of conquered territories into hundreds of churches across Portugal.

The Santa Cruz Monastery was eventually named National Pantheon because the tombs of Portugal's first two kings, Afonso Henriques I and his son, King [Sancho I](#), are held there. Tourists come to visit from all over to view the tombs of the kings who loved the monastery so much that they decided it would be their final resting place. The Manga Gardens are located behind the monastery. This 16th century fountain complex is all that remains from an earlier cloister. The Santa Cruz Monastery is open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Sundays from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Entrance is free. To visit the sacristy, chapter house and exhibition hall is €2.50.

Info:

Praça 8 de Maio
Coimbra, Portugal
+351 239822941

Restaurants

Salao Brazil



Since 2004, Salao Brazil, or Brazil Room, has been the perfect place to satisfy taste buds while getting a jazz music fix. The exterior of the eatery is a give away that it is situated in a colonial-style, antique building. Salao Brazil is a popular spot for those out and about in downtown Coimbra.

This spacious restaurant, which doubles as a music hall, is located in the heart of downtown Coimbra. During the day, the sun shines through the tall windows and illuminates the dining room. By night, Salao Brazil boasts a sultry vibe as diners sip wine and listen to live music.

Salao Brazil has an economical lunch menu at about €5 for a light meal (small entrees, sandwiches and soups).

Best time: Lunch or Dinner

Rec's: daily specials

Info:

Largo do Poço nº3, 1º,
3000-335 Coimbra, Portugal
+351 239824217

Zé Manel Dos Ossos



This gem of a restaurant makes up for its peculiar décor with some must-try delicacies. Don't come expecting the works because what you see is what you get. And what you see are five tables, wooden stools, and walls covered in hand-written notes, poems and scribbles. The only thing that could make you forget you're eating in a hole in the wall is the food!

Zé Manel Dos Ossos does not take reservations, so timing is everything. Although it is unlikely you won't wait in line at all, getting here around 3 p.m. (after the lunchtime rush), or 7 p.m. are your safest bets. The food at Zé Manel is tavern fare; mostly meaty stews, hearty soups and fresh fish. Zé Manel also produces and serves its own wine, which is quite strong but goes well with the heavy food.

Meals cost between €7 and €10 per person. The restaurant is open Monday through Friday from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.. It is only open for lunch on Saturdays (closed Sundays).

Best time: Lunch or dinner

Recs: Pork and bean stew (feijoada), grilled sardines and carapau, wild boar stew with beans, pork with mushrooms

Info:
Beco do Forno, 12
3000 Coimbra, Portugal
+351 239823790

Restaurante A Taberna



Restaurante A Taberna is an ideal place to sample traditional Portuguese dishes prepared in a wood-burning oven. A Taberna's home-style dishes of meat, fish, and vegetables have been earning culinary awards and winning the hearts [and stomachs] of patrons since opening its doors in 1982.

A Taberna features a family friendly atmosphere, exemplary customer service and a well-rounded selection of food and wine. Diners are seated in a warm, inviting dining room that allows clear views of the food prep area and kitchen, which means there are no surprises here. The chef shops for ingredients daily, which means you can expect flavorful, fresh food.

A Taberna is located a 20-minute walk east of the University of Coimbra. Hours of operation are: Tuesday through Saturday 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Sundays lunch only (closed on Mondays).

Best time: Lunch

Recs: octopus vinaigrette, posta tras os montes (steak with potatoes), cod with potatoes, chocolate crepe

Info:

Rua dos Combatentes da Grande Guerra 86

3000 Coimbra, Portugal

+351 239716265

www.restauranteataberna.com

Day Trips

Conimbriga



Conimbriga is a town situated ten miles (17 km) south of Coimbra, and is home to the most well preserved Roman ruins in Portugal. For this, it is considered a national monument and receives thousands of visitors each year. A museum was established on the site in 1962. It contains several artifacts uncovered during excavations, and provides visitors a deeper sense of ancient life.

Although they are Conimbriga's most noteworthy inhabitants, the Romans weren't the first or the last to settle in this rocky spot in central Portugal. Celtic people established themselves here during the Iron Age in the 9th century B.C. It was not until the 2nd century A.D. that the Roman Empire expanded considerably west and brought a new culture to the Iberian Peninsula. The western empire eventually collapsed in 476 A.D. Conimbriga was eventually looted by Germanic Tribes and remained abandoned for centuries.

Years of excavating revealed the organized nature of the ancient Romans. City walls, a central forum (plaza), villas, *insula* (apartment buildings), fountains, temples, bathhouses, heating,

plumbing and an amphitheater have been uncovered. Several colorful mosaics have also been preserved throughout the site. They depict mythological and nature-inspired motifs. The most famous of the Conimbriga mosaics is the one depicting Perseus, the son of Zeus, holding the villainous Medusa's head.

Allow yourself at least one hour to explore the ruins, and another to browse the on-site museum, which features a small restaurant and gift shop. The museum and ruins are open all year Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission is €4 Visit www.conimbriga.pt for more information.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Montemor-o-Velho is a village situated 24 miles (38.5 km) west of Coimbra along the Mondego River. The main attraction of the town is the 16th century castle, a Portuguese national monument and a significant fortress from Portugal's early days. It was strategically built to protect against attacks from the Moors. It is comprised of a royal palace, citadel, keep and the Santa Maria da Alcáçova Church. The castle complex sits atop Moorish and Roman ruins. Fortunately, some of the towers can still be accessed.

The town itself holds other treasures from years past. Sites include the 12th century Igreja da Misericórdia, Convento de Nossa Senhora dos Anjos, and the 16th century Fonte dos Anjos (fountain).

The Montemor-o-Velho Castle is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. during summer and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during winter. Admission is free.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Figueira de Foz is an Atlantic casino beach town located approximately thirty minutes from Coimbra, two hours from Lisbon, and an hour and a half from Porto. The easiest way to reach Figueira da Foz is by taking the N-341 highway about 45 minutes west of Montemor-o-Velho.

Figueira da Foz is home to some of Portugal's finest beaches, and there are 13 of them to be exact. Praia de Buarcos is one of the most popular ones. It stretches from the Mondego River, all the way to the small fishing village of Buarcos. Because of its waterfront location, Figueira da Foz is very windy all year round.

On the other side of the river is Praia do Cabedelo, where towering waves roll in much to surfers' delight. The beaches in and around Figueira da Foz are distinctive in their fine, white sand and windy conditions. They are a great way for visitors to escape city life and relax in the Mediterranean climate.

In addition to its beaches, Figueira da Foz features plenty of gambling outlets. Visitors try their hands in Casino Figueira, which is one of the largest casinos on the Iberian Peninsula, and features upscale dining and regular shows. Grande Casino Peninsular is another large casino dating back to the 19th century.

One of the things you cannot miss is the Atlantic Walkway. You can experience it on foot, bike, skateboard or even roller skates. It is a bustling walkway where people come together to enjoy the fresh air.

On the corner of Avenue of Spain, in the south section of Figueira da Foz, is the old city. Here is where you will find most of the restaurants, nightlife and the casinos.

It's best to visit in the summer when the weather is warm, the surfing is good and the town is vibrant.

Additional Travel Information

Time Zone: GMT +1

Getting around: The best way to get around Coimbra is by walking. Parking can be a hassle, so if you have to park overnight, use one of the many underground garages. Free bicycle rentals are available on weekends in the Parque Verde do Mondego. The Funtastic bus is a hop-on hop-off ride that goes on a one-hour long loop through the city, stopping at several points of interest. Tickets can be purchased once aboard the bus, which leaves from Largo da Portagem, or online at www.yellowbustours.com. Tickets cost €10 for adults and €5 for children 4-12 years.

Shopping: Coimbra has great finds, if you don't mind looking. Praça do Comercio has small boutiques, as does the Baixa quarter. Dolce Vita is a large mall located close to the sporting arena on Rua General Humberto Delgado. It has over 65 stores, various restaurants and a cinema.

Nightlife Overview: Bar hopping is unquestionably a big part of nightlife in historic Coimbra. After a long day of academics, students and professors alike can be found unwinding at some of the local bars surrounding Praça da República. Along with the students, you will find throngs of locals and tourists who drink, gossip and laugh together in the city's welcoming environment.

Since Coimbra is a thriving college city, the large student population contributes to the bustling nightlife. The lively, and sometimes rowdy, students will make sure you know you're in a college town. Visitors will be pleased to know that there are many bars located around the Sé Velha and its square, Largo da Sé Velha. Most of Coimbra's bars remain open until 2 a.m.

A Capella (Rua Corpo de Deus-Largo da Vitoria Capela Nossa Sr da Victoria) is a lounge that features live Fado shows. The Fado group, Quinteto de Coimbra Fado House, opened the venue in 2003 as a way of introducing non-locals to Coimbra's distinctive sounds. It is one of the most popular venues for listening to Coimbra Fado music and has already attracted over 70,000 tourists.

Via Latina Nightclub (Rua Almeida Garrett) is a fun and lively club and a favorite spot for students. It features two sections; one that plays disco and house music, and a second in which guests can enjoy coffee. During the week, especially on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Via Latina is packed. Fridays feature live music, but make sure to call ahead for their schedule of DJ's and bands.

Quebra Costas (Rua do Quebra Costas, 45) has been open since May of 1984. It is located between the commercial downtown area of Coimbra and the medieval uptown. It is one of the oldest and most charming pubs in town. You'll find many generations of locals and tourists enjoying the laid back environment that this pub offers. Quebra Costas features an open-air terrace and modern décor. It is open Monday through Saturday from noon to 4 a.m.

Best time to go: The month of May during the “burning of the ribbons.” University students burn their gowns and ribbons to signal the end of the academic year.

Nearest airports:

Coimbra Airport (CBP)

Porto Airport (OPO)

www.porto-airport.com

+351 0229 432400

Car rentals:

Aluvia +351 239494186

Europcar +351 239723324

Turiscar +351 239494177

Train:

Alfa express and regional trains

www.cp.pt

+351 211 023000

Pass:

Centro Card

www.turismodocentro.pt

Gives discounts on select hotels and restaurants. Price for a single person is €5; price for a couple is €7; and €9 for a family of four with two children under 12 years old.

Tours:

Go! Walks offers various types of tours given by university students. Tours are two and half hours in length and cost €10 per person.

www.gowalksportugal.com

gowalks@gmail.com

+351 910163118

Basófias Mondego River Cruises and Tuk-tuk Tours
www.odabarca.com

Telephone numbers:

Country code	+35
Emergency Line	112
Largo de Portagem Tourism Office	+351239488120
Radio Taxi	+351239499090

List of helpful websites from this guide:

www.visitportugal.com
www.portugal.com
www.turismodecoimbra.pt
www.uc.pt
www.conimbriga.pt

Other recommended restaurants:

Café Santa Cruz
Guiseppe & Joaquin
Restaurante O Trovador

Other recommended accommodations:

\$\$ Hotel Astoria
\$\$ Meliá Palácio da Lousã Boutique Hotel
\$\$ Tivoli Coimbra
\$ Gran Hostal de Coimbra (hostel)

Other places of interest:

New Cathedral (Sé Nova)

15th century church built by the Jesuits located near the university. The seat of the bishop was moved here in 1772. The New Cathedral's façade features four Jesuit saints as well as baroque and Mannerist architectural styles. Admission to the New Cathedral is free.

San Sebastian Aqueduct
Calçada Martim de Freitas

A restored Roman aqueduct from the 16th century with a ceremonial arch. Features statues of

St. Sebastian and St. Roque. It is located in front of the university's Jardim Botânico.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Walk till you drop

- Explore Coimbra's historical sites on foot
- Lunch at A Taberna* or O Trovador*
- Continue seeing Coimbra on foot or with Funtastic bus
- Dinner at Zé Manel Dos Ossos*

Day 2: Morning in Conimbriga

- Drive to Conimbriga to explore Roman ruins and on-site museum
- Return to Coimbra for lunch at Salao Brazil*
- Afternoon Basólias Mondego River Cruise*
- Dinner and live Fado show*

Day 3: Montemor-o-Velho and Figueira da Foz

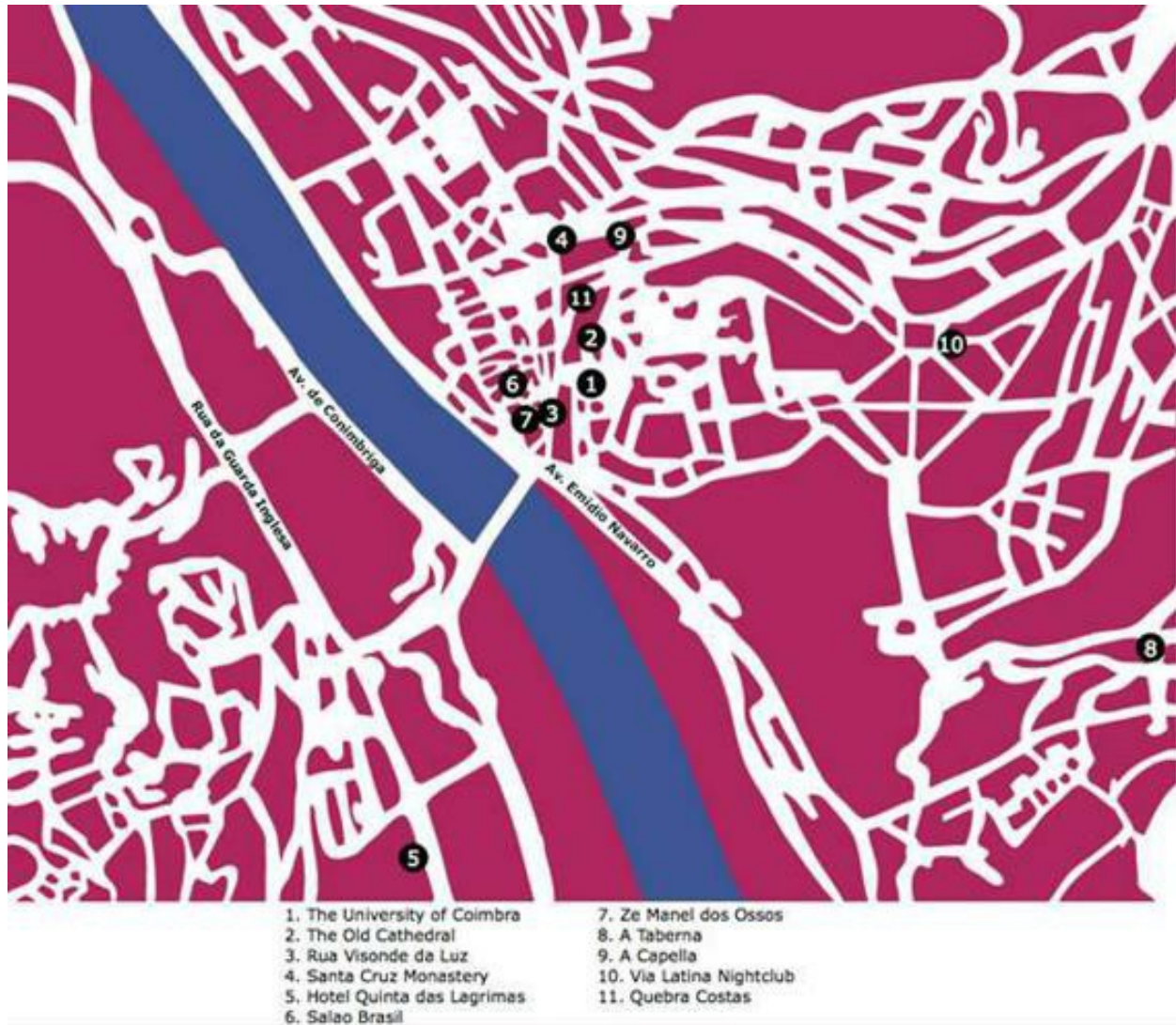
- Drive to Montemor-o-Velho for morning sightseeing
- Drive to Figueira da Foz for casual lunch and relaxation
- Beach day and/or casino fun in Figueira da Foz
- Return to Coimbra
- Dinner at Giuseppe & Joaquin*

Activities marked with an asterisk () require prior booking.*

Area Map



Coimbra Map





Coimbra, a university town, is one of Portugal's most beloved cities. There are two sides to the center of this enchanting city. The lower area consists of the Rua Visconde Luz that runs all the way to the river. Along this road you will find the commercial area of Coimbra made up of many cafés, restaurants and shops. If you're looking for a laid-back day of shopping make sure to add this section of the city to your schedule. A little known shopping opportunity is the Quebra Costas Flea Market, located on the street and close to the bar with the same name (see Nightlife section). This open-air market takes place every Saturday except during winter.

Heading north from Rua Visconde Luz, you will notice that every street's direction is uphill. This is because the University section of the city is located at the top and offers great views of Coimbra. The highly elevated part of town is where all three of the delightful restaurants I visited are located. Bring good walking shoes!

The site that really stood out in my mind was the Monastery of Santa Cruz. I enjoyed learning about its history and visiting the tombs of the first two kings of Portugal, Afonso I and his son Sancho I. It is an attraction that you can't miss. It will also please all lovers of architecture and royal history.

Since the city has a large population of students, it is good to know that the majority of them

return home on weekends. This leaves the city a bit quieter once the weeknight flurries are over.

Overall, I thought Coimbra was a town with many hidden surprises. The lively energy felt from the students resonates in the streets and in the air. I recommend visiting during the early summer months so that you can enjoy the beaches in Figueira da Foz, and still experience pleasant weather everywhere else.



Named a World Heritage City in 1986, Évora, Portugal stands as a blend of various cultures, empires and architecture. It dates back more than two millennia, and has been occupied by the Romans, Moors and Celts, among other peoples.

Évora is located south of the Tagus River in the south-central Alentejo Province of Portugal, which is known for its wide plains. Évora lies about 70 miles east of Lisboa, making for a relatively short drive to the capital city. Within Évora's walls lie an endless array of temples, cathedrals, museums and ruins that will have even non-history buffs amazed. Some sites include the Temple of Diana, the Silver Water Roman Aqueduct and the Chapel of Bones inside the Saint Francisco Church. The city's structures represent the golden age of Portugal, which began after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755.

The city of Évora was also an important site of education when the Jesuits founded the University of Évora in 1559. It is the second oldest university in Portugal, and a popular tourist destination. In Évora, travellers step inside a snapshot of different centuries and cultures. But history isn't the only charm that brings visitors from all over the world to Évora. The delectable cuisine available at traditional restaurants transports diners to another century (in a good way). The warm and welcoming people you will encounter in Évora want to share with you not only their antique architecture, but also their ways of life. Preservation is key to Évora's charm since the city prides itself in maintaining its tradition and rich history.

In this guide, you will find all of the attractions I recommend for Évora. I experienced all of them during my visit to Portugal in November 2010. As part of a new feature in our 2012 DBH Guide series, at the end of this guide you will find a sample three-day itinerary for your trip.

The following websites are invaluable resources for first-time visitors:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.visitalentejo.pt

M'AR De AR Aqueduto Hotel



This five-star contemporary boutique hotel, located in Évora's historic center, does not disappoint. It is not only beautiful, but offers a priceless view of the Roman Aqueduct from the outdoor pool area. It is this perfect meeting of new and old that makes the M'AR De AR Aqueduto Hotel unique.



The restaurant at this hotel is also noteworthy. Its space seats 80 guests, and features an extensive menu of Mediterranean cuisine with a Portuguese flair prepared by the distinguished Chef António Nobre.

There are luxurious amenities all around. The M'AR De AR Aqueducto Hotel also has two multipurpose rooms, two outdoor swimming pools and a garden area that offers a lovely view of the surrounding Évora landscape. Its meeting rooms, located in the main building, can hold up to 200 people for any occasion. Make sure to call in advance and reserve your spot for your special night. Guests can choose from four types of guestrooms: classic, superior, spa, or suite. Each room features swanky décor, and some feature outdoor balconies and terraces. The spa rooms are designed for ultimate relaxation and pampering. The hotel also offers guests private parking spaces for an extra fee.

The hotel hosts special events during certain times of the year. One is Mardi Gras in March, when guests can receive special promotions along with room and drink discounts. There are

also contests held during this time that allow guests to become involved in their hotel experience and compete in the chance to win prizes.



M'AR De AR Aqueducto's spa was the highlight of my hotel experience. The spa offers various types of treatments within a beautiful space that will surely tempt you to pamper yourself. The hotel offers two rooms for massages; one is indoors, and another located outside on the terrace surrounded by orange trees. Choose from one of the many types of massages and treatments, and let your tired feet be revived. The treatments include a hot stone massage, a mud bath, the aqueducto bath and many more. The spa facilities also include a sauna, Turkish-style baths and plenty of leisure areas to make your stay as relaxing and comfortable as possible.

Info:

Rua Candido dos Reis, 72

7000-782 Évora, Portugal

+351 2667407000

geral@mardearhotels.com

See's and Do's

Praça do Giraldo



Praça do Giraldo, or Giraldo Square, is considered the center of Évora. From here it is only a five-minute walk up the hill to the Temple of Diana and the Évora Cathedral. King [Duarte](#) erected the Estaus Palace that still stands in the square today in all its gothic glory. Visitors can also stop by the Renaissance fountain that dates back to the year 1570.

Saint Anton's Church, built in the 18th century, stands on the north side of the square. The [antependium](#) of the altar inside the church features a valuable 13th century Roman-Gothic [bas-relief](#). One intriguing fact about Giraldo Square is that Fernando II, [Duke of Bragança](#), was decapitated on site in 1483 as his brother-in-law King John II watched on. Giraldo Square also witnessed thousands of *autos-da-fe* (public condemnations and punishments) during the Spanish Inquisition.

Silver Water Roman Aqueduct



Outside of Évora's protective walls, you will find the famous Silver Water Roman Aqueduct. King João III commissioned the project and construction was completed in 1537. It was used to supply Évora with water and was the design of Francisco de Arruda, who also designed the Belém Tower in Lisbon. This aqueduct is a testament to Roman-inspired construction.

Visitors can reach the aqueduct by heading west from Giraldo Square and onto the Rua do Cano. At that point, the houses and shops built into the arches become visible. The view of these makes for great photo opportunities because their location on the aqueduct is so unexpected. This is an impressive example that demonstrates how the people of Évora have literally adapted and built around the ancient structures that have stood for thousands of years.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Roman Temple of Diana



The Roman Temple of Diana is located in Évora's historical city center. Diana was the ancient Roman goddess of the moon, and although the name of this temple alludes to the idea that it was named after her, historians have reason to believe that this structure was most likely dedicated to the cult of Emperor Augustus.

The temple was built in the 2nd century and would have been one of many Roman temples in the city. The temple was partially destroyed by Germanic invaders in the 5th century, and by the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake. Presently, the temple represents one of Évora's most famous historical attractions with its six columns in front and fourteen granite columns remaining, along with the ten-foot high stone platform. Unfortunately, the temple is not in great condition, but its columns still stand proud as a testament to Roman grandeur. The temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Admission is free.

Évora Cathedral



The Évora Cathedral sits in the center of the city and is located on the highest point in Évora, offering a prime view from its apex. I climbed its tallest tower and experienced an expansive view of Évora below me. Visitors can walk along the roof and take in the beautiful surrounding landscape of terracotta rooftops and blue skies. The front of the cathedral is made of granite and closely resembles the Lisbon Cathedral.

After Christians regained control of the city from Arabs in 1166, construction began on the cathedral less than 20 years later as a dedication to the Virgin Mary. The structure was changed, added to, and fortified throughout the years. The interior contains a 15th century statue of the pregnant Virgin Mary known as The Lady of Mothers. The cathedral also features an on-site museum and treasury with exhibits of precious stones and a portion of wood said to be from the cross used to crucify Jesus Christ. Admission to the museum is €3.50. The Évora Cathedral is one of the largest medieval cathedrals in Portugal and remains a significant Gothic structure in south-central Portugal. Admission is €2.

Info:

Largo do Marquês Marialva

7000 Évora, Portugal

+351 266759330

Capela dos Ossos (Chapel of Bones)



Chapel of Bones, or the Royal Church of St. Francis to be precise, is best known for what it contains – walls and pillars covered in human skulls and bones. This place wasn't always so morbid. It was built in Gothic style and completed in 1510. When the Franciscan monks had no place else to bury their own, bones were transferred from nearby cemeteries to Capela dos Ossos.

There is an eerie corpse figure that looks like the remnants of a human child off to one side of the chapel. A foreboding sign reads, "*Nós ossos que aqui estamos, pelos vossos esperamos*," meaning "We bones that are here, await yours." There is an estimated 5,000 skeletons in the chapel. Skulls and other bones are cemented onto the chapel walls and pillars, which make this chapel unsuitable for the faint of heart. Not everyone can stomach the scene, but one thing is certain; Capela dos Ossos is a rare and unforgettable sight. The chapel is open everyday until 5:45 pm. Admission is €2.

Info:
Praça 1 de Maio

Évora, Portugal

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

The Ancient Wall of Évora



The old city of Évora is completely surrounded by medieval walls. This is one of its unique characteristics that set this museum-city apart from others. These 14th century walls are some of the best preserved in all of Portugal and one of my favorite features of historic Évora. One can see them by simply walking around the old city.



Composed of about 95 engraved elliptical stones, and built in the late Neolithic Period (circa 4500 B.C.), Almendres Cromlech (*Cromeleque dos Almendres*) is believed to be older than Stonehenge in England. The Almendres Cromlech site can be found just west of Évora near Guadalupe. Like other megalithic structures, Alemendres Cromlech was originally built in a horseshoe pattern with an opening towards the east.

Its precise function is unknown, but historians believe it to have been an ancient place of worship of the sun. This is because some of the stones' positions are related to the cycles of the planets. This sacred site is an impressive testament to early European civilization and gives ambiguous, but fascinating insight into the early religious life of Europe's farming communities. It cannot be missed! Almendres Cromlech is located 3 miles (4 km) west of Évora along the N114 Highway, just past Guadalupe. The best time to visit is spring while the weather is pleasant and the wildflowers are in full bloom. Admission is free.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Almendres Menhir



The Almendres Menhir is a four-meter high megalithic structure from the late Neolithic Period. Its significance is unknown, but archeologists are certain that its position is directly related to the nearby larger Almendres Cromlech megalithic structure.

Visitors should take the time to see this single 6,000-year-old stone, and take pictures after exploring the larger site of Cromlech. The Almendres Menhir is located about a half-mile walk from the Almendres Cromlech site.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Restaurants



Upon entering this award-winning establishment, diners will feel the welcoming atmosphere of a restaurant that prides itself on great food quality. B.L. Lounge is mentioned in several culinary websites including Michelin Restaurants U.K.

Antonio Bravo, owner of B.L. Lounge, also manages the operations. His wife, Lucia, is also owner and head chef. One thing that sets this family establishment apart is its incredible, unforgettable chocolate cake. Lucia credits her notorious chocolate cake recipe to six months of dedication and trial and error, which finally resulted in the perfect recipe for all of the restaurant's patrons to enjoy.

This is just one example of the commitment B.L. Lounge puts forth to ensure all the food is fresh and cooked to perfection. This husband and wife duo serve up some of the best food in the center of Évora, just two blocks from the Temple of Diana. I tried the Al-Xam champagne and Casa de Zagalos red wine. I also had a brandy made by Antonio himself, served to me right out of an oak barrel. B.L. Lounge will leave you and your stomach smiling (yes, it's possible so try the chocolate cake and tell Lucia I told you so!)

Recs: Oven roasted cheese, fried quail eggs, roasted mushrooms with garlic, veal cutlets, chocolate cake

Best time: Dinner

Info:

Rua das Alcaçarias nº1
7000-587 Évora, Portugal
+351 266771323

Fialho



When you mention the city of Évora to people from Lisbon, it may take time for them to realize the exact place you are referring to. But if you mention the award-winning Fialho restaurant, they will catch your drift a little faster. It is one of the oldest and best-known restaurants in the region that serves up typical Portuguese cuisine. Manuel Fialho founded it as a chophouse in 1948.

Today, it is still a family affair with Manuel's children, Amor, Gabriel and Manual, running their father's labor of love. In the beginning, Fialho sold snacks and wine, but eventually it evolved into the iconic place it is today. They serve very traditional Alentejo cuisine, making it one of the best in the city. My favorite dish of the house was the black pork with asparagus. I was amazed at its tenderness, and how they managed to incorporate the asparagus where I least expected it.

Recs: Fish cilantro, black pork with asparagus, partridge, roast lamb

Best time: Lunch

Info:

Travessa dos Mascarenhas 16,

Évora, Portugal
+351 266703079
www.restaurantefialho.com

Restaurant Porfirio's (Redondo)



In the heart of the Alentejo region, in the center of the small town of Redondo, you will find one of the top restaurants preparing traditional Alentejan cuisine. Restaurant Porfirio's manages to keep tradition and quality its top priorities. The owner of Porfirio's is also the cook and a member of the wait staff (talk about multitasking, especially when you consider how good the food is). That's just one aspect that makes this restaurant unique and memorable.

The best dish of the house, and one of my favorites, was the red wine rabbit stew with rice and beans. This dish absolutely blew my taste buds away. It's definitely a dish for warming up on a cold day. Porfirio's serves traditional fare in enormous portions, so make sure to come hungry. A two-course meal for two will cost about €30 without wine.

Recs: Homemade sheep cheese, Alentejan ham, grilled sausage with vegetables, red wine rabbit stew, gamboa

Best time: Lunch

Info:

Rua de Montoito, nº 59 e 61

7200-040 Redondo, Portugal

+351 266 909 737; 963 336 675

pperdigao@vilagale.pt

Day Trips

Arraiolos



The small, ancient town of Arraiolos sits 12 miles (20 km) north of Évora along the N-370. It is a short day trip, but depending on the time of day you visit, it can either feel very congested or almost ghostly. It is completely comprised of typical southern white and blue Portuguese buildings. Arraiolos is known for the carpet-making tradition that the city's artisans have mastered, which is one passed down from the Moors. It incorporates a distinctive wool cross-stitch technique and vibrant colors. The carpets sold in Arraiolos make for fantastic home décor because of their distinctive style, which has existed in the region since the 17th century.

Another of the town's attractions is the circular Arraiolos Castle located on Monte de San Pedro (Saint Peter's Mount). King Denis built the castle in the 14th century. It served as a protective fortress until being abandoned during the 17th century. Repairs made in the 1960's have helped preserve the walls of this unique stronghold. Visitors can climb to the top and experience sweeping views of the surrounding plains. Arraiolos can easily be explored in one to two hours. Make sure to bring comfortable walking shoes if you are planning to visit the castle. Visit www.cm-arraiolos.pt for more information about cultural events, local news and contacts.



Estremoz is known as one of the Alentejo region's three marble towns. This place is all about marble, marble, and more marble. The stone is used all over Estremoz and is found in a variety of colors such as pink, grey, and black. The pink type, which is known as *Rosa Aurora*, is an extremely popular building material in Portugal and in other European countries. Estremoz's marbles have been in high demand for hundreds of years because of their rare quality. Even the ancient Romans exported the stone for architecture among their conquered lands. Later, Portuguese navigators exported the marble to other Portuguese territories like Africa and Brazil.

The old town features a 13th century castle founded by King Denis and his wife. There is now a *pousada* (luxury hotel) there, but visitors can still visit the room in which Queen Isabel died. Nearby attractions include the Municipal Museum, the 18th century Santa Isabel Chapel, the Rossio Marques de Pombal main square and the Rural Museum (*Museu Rural*) inside the 16th century Misericórdia Church.

On your way out of the city you can catch a glimpse of the marble quarries where workers use diamond saws to incise the marble out of the mountainsides. Approximately 87% of Portugal's marble comes from Estremoz. You can get to here by heading west on the N-18 from Évora, which is a rural road. You also have the option of taking the A-6, which will bring you to

Estremoz faster, but the N-18 affords you a more scenic route. Estremoz can be explored in less than a day's time.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Visitors can take the N-4 highway east of Arraiolos, and in ten minutes arrive in Montemor-o-Novo. If traveling from Évora, the N-114 should be taken east for 20 minutes to reach this town. Montemor-o-Novo is slightly larger than Arraiolos, but not nearly as beautiful. Montemor-o-Novo is as simple as the Alentejo region gets. There are, however, some architectural details that highlight this otherwise straightforward town.

The main attractions here are the manor houses and castle ruins at the top of the hill. Walking along the castle walls gives visitors a nice view of the towers, but be warned: the walls are deteriorated and for the most part, unsafe to traverse. This is the castle where Vasco de Gama planned his epic voyage to India.

Other attractions include the Manueline-style doorway of the Misericórdia Church, the 17th century Igreja do Cavalho, the Archaeological Museum in the Convent of St. Domingo, and the Convent of Salutation (*Saudação*). The Montemor-o-Novo tourism office is located at Largo Calouste Gulbenkian (Phone: +351 266877096). Visit www.cm-montemornovo.pt/en for more information about restaurants, lodging, and special events.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Heading east of Évora on the N-254 takes visitors to the small town of Redondo. Located on a hill in the Serra d'Ossa mountain range, Redondo is a picturesque town plucked out of medieval times. The buildings are white with terracotta roofs, which is typical of the Alentejo region. Like other towns in the area, Redondo has enjoyed a long-standing tradition in handicrafts. Pottery is a local specialty and tourists can find dozens of hand-painted pieces for sale throughout Redondo's shops.

M

any local workshops offer pottery lessons, which is a great way to enjoy a day in this scenic little slice of Portugal. Dining is also a favorite pastime of visitors. Porfirio's (see Restaurants section) is just one way to experience the culinary traditions of the area. In addition to hearty dishes, Redondo is known to produce some of the best wine in the region. Thanks to its hilly terrain, dozens of vineyards can absorb hours of sunshine to ripen their grapes. In 2011, the Redondo Wine Museum opened its doors to proud locals and thirsty tourists. Visitors can learn about Alentejan winemaking traditions, and buy wine in the museum shop. The Wine Museum is located at Praça da Republica (Phone: +351 266 909 100). It is closed on Mondays.

Also in Redondo, are ruins of a 14th century fortress and the nearby 12th century São Paulo Convent. It is now a tranquil upscale hotel featuring gorgeous architecture and sweeping views of the surrounding landscape.



Like Estremoz, Vila Viçosa is known for its marble production. Vila Viçosa is situated ten minutes south of Estremoz on a plateau nestled in the Borba Mountain range. Though small, Vila Viçosa is charming and elegant thanks to its rich tradition in stonework. This “white gold” can be found throughout Vila Viçosa. The marble is brought in from quarries located just outside of town.

Vila Viçosa has been a prized locale for royalty. King Afonso IV gave the town to his wife Dona Brites as a wedding gift. It is also recognized as the birthplace of Catherine of Bragança, who eventually became the Queen of England. She is credited with introducing the custom of drinking tea in England (a practice common among Portuguese nobles at the time), and also with introducing her court to the newest craze in flatware – the fork.

Vila Viçosa can easily be explored in an afternoon. The Paço Ducal Palace, which served as a long-time residence for the Bragança dynasty, is Vila Viçosa’s most popular attraction. The palace boasts intricate tapestries, exotic wooden furniture, royal portraits, an incredibly large kitchen, extensive library of rare books and even an armory. Tours are compulsory and are only available in Portuguese, but the opulence you’ll witness needs no translation.

The palace is closed on Mondays and does not open on Tuesdays until 2 p.m. Visit www.visitportugal.com and search “Vila Viçosa” for more information on seasonal schedules. The Vila Viçosa tourism office is located at Praça da Republica (Phone: +351 268881101). Around this plaza is where you will find several restaurants and cafés.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Additional Travel Information

Time Zone: GMT +1

Getting around: The best way to get around Évora is by walking. Half-hour horse drawn carriage rides are also available. They are usually stationed near the cathedral.

Shopping: Évora has many quaint boutiques in the area around the cathedral. Rua 5 de Outubro has plenty of artisanal charm with a variety of handmade knock-knacks for sale.

Nightlife Overview: As a small city, Évora has the advantage of its nightlife spots being in close proximity to one another. This makes it convenient to walk from place to place without worrying about motor transportation. There are many bars around town, but visitors should be aware that the majorities are open only on weekends.

Giraldo Square is a great place to kick off your night. It is where you will find most people out around 11:00 p.m. Here you can grab a few drinks with friends or meet some locals before venturing into the barhopping scene around town. My favorite bars were Amas do Cardeal and Oficina. Although small, they each offer a unique ambiance. Bar Amas do Cardeal (Rua Amas do Cardeal, 4A) is definitely a feast for the senses. With its avant-garde artwork and sculptures, this darkly-lit bar is a popular one for fans of funky house beats spun out by DJ's. As soon as you walk into the unassuming doorway of Rua Amas do Cardeal, you will be bombarded with an eclectic mix of mismatched décor in a dim, cavernous space. Amas do Cardeal is for the alternative late night crowd that likes to dance. Bar Oficina (Rua da Moeda, 27) is a laid-back bar not only popular with college students, but among individuals of all ages. At Oficina, you can read a newspaper or book, surf the Internet, or meet up with friends and gather before heading out to explore Évora by night. Located on Rua da Moeda, the chill music playing at Oficina adds to the place's relaxing atmosphere. A mix of jazz tunes, Caetano Veloso and Lou Reed will put you in the perfect mood. Small wooden tables fill the cave-like space in Oficina, creating a cozy and welcoming ambiance. Bar Oficina is closed Sundays and Mondays.

After barhopping, make your way to the most famous nightclub in the city, Praxis Club (Rua de Valdevinos, 21). Although there is a cover charge at this high-energy club, the cost covers your first two beers. The party doesn't really get started here until around two a.m. so make sure you're prepared for a long night. Need a break from dancing? Enjoy the Praxis chill out zone and two outdoor terraces to recover before putting your dancing shoes back on. It is open Monday through Saturday from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Best time to go: March through October. Summers are hot and dry and winters are wet and cold. December and January are the coldest months while July and August are the hottest.

Nearest airports:

Badajoz, Extremadura, Spain (BJZ)

www.aena-aeropuertos.es

+34 924210400

Lisbon Portela Airport (LIS)

www.lisbon-airport.com

+351 0218 413500

Car rentals:

Avis +351 266708791

Europcar +351 266742627

Hertz +351 266701767

Train:

Alfa express and regional trains

www.cp.pt

+351 211 023000

Tours:

Wine tasting, UNESCO sites and more (departing from Lisbon)

www.viator.com

4-hour private walking tour with licensed local guide

www.toursbylocals.com/EvoraHalfDayTour

1-866-844-6783 (toll-free in North America)

+1 604 7774141

Telephone numbers:

Country code +35

Emergency Line 112

Tourism Board +351266777071

Radio Taxi +351266734734

List of helpful websites from this guide:

www.visitportugal.com
www.portugal.com
www.visitalentejo.pt
www.cm-arraiolos.pt
www.cm-montemornovo.pt/en

Other recommended restaurants:

Botequim da Mouraria
Divinus - Convento do Espinheiro Hotel and Spa
Pasteleria Conventual
Restaurante Alemedina
Taskafina
Tasquinha do Oliveira

Other recommended accommodations:

\$\$\$ Convento do Espinheiro Hotel and Spa
\$\$ Pousada de Évora, Lóios
\$\$ M'AR De AR Muralhas
\$ Hotel Riviera
\$ Hotel Albergaria Solar De Monfa

Other places of interest:

Rua de Casas Pintadas

Literally, the name translates into the Street of Painted Houses. Also known as Rua Vasco de Gama, it is a courtyard surrounded with charming 16th century garden manors. A gallery within the courtyard exhibits vibrant paintings inspired by de Gama's travels through India.

Palace of Dom Manuel

Rua 24 de Julho
7000 Évora, Portugal

With the Jardim Público (public garden complex) there are the remains of the 16th century Palace of Dom Manuel. Here is where Vasco de Gama was officially commissioned to command a naval fleet to explore India. What remains of the original structure has been restored and is now used for special exhibitions and receptions.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Old school Évora

- Quick stop at tourism office
- Explore historical center of Évora on foot
- Lunch at Fialho *
- Continue tour of Évora's attractions
- Dinner at B.L. Lounge*
- Nightlife around Praça do Giraldo

Day 2: Road trip from ancient to modern

- Drive to Almendres Cromlech site
- Walk or drive to Almendres Menhir site for pictures
- Drive to Montemor-o-Novo for sightseeing
- Quick stop at the Montemor-o-Novo tourism office
- Light lunch in town
- Continue driving to Arraiolos for sightseeing
- Explore Arraiolos Castle
- Return to Évora
- Dinner at Divinus - Convento do Espinheiro Hotel and Spa*

Day 3: Alentejan countryside experience

- Depart around 7:30 – 8 a.m. for Estremoz
- Estremoz sightseeing
- Continue driving east to Vila Viçosa for sightseeing
- Drive south to Redondo
- Lunch at Porfirio's*
- Redondo sights
- Return to Évora

- Dinner at Botequim da Mouraria*

Activities marked with an asterisk () require prior booking.*





1. Hotel M'AR De AR
2. Giraldo Square
3. Silver Water Roman Aqueduct
4. Roman Temple of Diana
5. Évora Cathedral

6. Chapel of Bones
7. Ancient Wall
8. Almendres Cromlech
9. Almendres Menhir
10. Fialho

11. B.L. Lounge
12. Amas do Cardeal
13. Oficina
14. Praxis Club



The Alentejo region in Portugal is completely different from all other areas I experienced in the country; rural communities, a sprawling landscape, succulent cuisine and remarkable castles. By exploring Cromlech, the Aqueduct, Temple of Diana and the ancient wall, visitors quickly gain the sense of how old Évora really is. The Chapel of Bones impressed me. It was scary, shocking, disgusting and even made me question why I chose to visit in the first place. In the end, traveling is supposed to take you out of your comfort zone and shake you up a bit, so I don't regret the visit.

One of the great things about Évora is how close it is to other charming towns. You could stay in the region for a week or more exploring the different cities and towns. There are various wine routes that you can inquire about in Évora's tourism office, which is located at Praça do Giraldo (Phone: +351 266 777 071).

The cuisine in Évora is extraordinary. Make sure to go to B.L. Lounge and try Lucia's heavenly chocolate cake. I am tempted to say that it's the best chocolate cake on earth! The cuisine of the region is flavorful and hearty, so there's no shortage of tasty choices. Rabbit stews, Iberian ham, pork, sausage, olive oil and kidney beans are staples in Alentejan cuisine. There are also dozens of traditional desserts for the sweet-toothed like pão de rala, pão de lo, marzipan, palha, and imperiales.

Overall, Évora's storied history and rich culture makes it an alluring destination for anyone in search of captivating architecture, delicious food and friendly people.

Leiria Intro



Halfway between Lisbon and Porto lies the picturesque town of Leiria, filled with cobbled streets, terra cotta rooftops and friendly people. Overlooking the city from a nearby hilltop is the beautiful Leiria Castle. Leiria is an easily accessible destination. The closest airports are the Portela Airport in Lisbon and Sá Carneiro in Porto. For those in Lisbon, there are also several daily trains and buses that travel from the capital to Leiria.

The city is located in the Centro region of Portugal near the River Lis and the Atlantic Ocean, making it a great beach getaway. In the spring and summer, the city is known for its hot and sunny weather, while in the winter, temperatures usually stay above 40° F (4° C).

Leiria was first inhabited by the indigenous [Turduli](#) people and later by the Romans. In 1135, the city was captured by Afonso Henriques, the first king of Portugal. King Afonso built Leiria Castle, now the symbol of the town. Later, in the 15th century, King [João](#) I transformed the castle into a residence for the royal palace.

In the center of the city, you will find numerous shops and artisans selling Leiria's unique glass items. The glasswork has been a staple of the town for centuries. Shops featuring other local crafts, restaurants and the town's nightlife center around the Candido dos Reis Square. Be sure to sample the local favorite *bolo de pinhão*, a cake made with pine nuts.

In this guide, you will find all of the attractions I recommend for Leiria. I experienced all of them during my visit to Portugal in November 2010. As part of a new feature in our 2012 DBH Guide series, at the end of this guide you will find a sample three-day itinerary for your trip.

The following websites are invaluable resources for first-time visitors:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.rt-leiriaFátima.pt

www.golisbon.com/portugal/cities/leiria

Villa Batalha



Located just 15 minutes from the center of Leiria, in the town of Batalha, is the amazing Villa Batalha, a four-star, business spa style hotel. Set along the mountains and the Lena River, its serene surroundings make for a relaxing stay. It is also close to the Monastery of Batalha, a World Heritage Site and one of the seven wonders of Portugal.

Upon entering, guests are welcomed with elegant, earthy décor. The hotel has 93 rooms, with 51 standard rooms and 42 suites. All feature wide windows that offer either a panoramic view of the Monastery of Batalha, or a glimpse of the stunning mountains.

During the day, Villa Batalha is enveloped with sunlight. Enjoy the spacious public areas of this hotel and use the balconies to access incredible views of the landscape.

During my stay, I had a suite on the second floor. The room came with a living room, bedroom and terrific amenities, including a pillow menu, a telephone in both the room and bathroom, air conditioning, satellite TV, internet cable, mini bar, safe and 24-hour room service.

With five spa rooms, this hotel will pamper you with its multitude of treatments, including a sauna, Turkish baths, a footbath, Vichy showers, an exercise room, ice fountain and a swimming pool for your enjoyment. The spa offers a variety of treatments tailored to different types of guests, including couples, teens, golfers and those looking to detoxify. There are also extended programs consisting of three or four days of treatments. Not relaxing is impossible.

Residing inside the Villa Batalha is the Adega dos Frades restaurant and O Claustro Bar. Adega dos Frades is open daily for lunch and dinner, and offers a traditional menu as well as an excellent wine selection. The bar, also known as Abbey Bar, serves light meals, drinks and juices made from local fruits throughout the day.

The eight meeting rooms within the hotel's two wings also include bar service and different sized spaces for a variety of needs. Be sure to make reservations in advance.

The golf course at Villa Batalha Silver Coast complies with national and international standards for golf and has a six-hole pitch and putt field. There is also a golf academy for everyone from veterans to first-timers. Lessons are available for individuals, groups and various skill sets.



Completing the stay were the kind and welcoming staff at Villa Batalha, who provided detailed information and suggestions about what local areas to visit.

Info:

Rua D. Duarte I

248 □ 2440-415 Batalha, Portugal

+351 244240400

www.hotelvillabatalha.com

geral@hotelvillabatalha.pt

See's and Do's

Leiria Castle



Founded by D. Afonso Henriques in 1135, Leiria's *castelo* is the main attraction of the town and has been listed as a national monument since 1910.

Since Leiria was a vital defensive city in the 12th century during the time of the Portuguese monarchy, the castle was built to guard against Moorish attacks. It has since been rebuilt and renovated several times throughout its history. In the 14th century, King Denis restored the *castelo*'s keep during his reign while King João I (John I) added the gothic features that visitors see today.

Inside, guests can view the lovely garden and the remains of Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Pena, which date back to the 12th century. Traversing to this high point in Leiria will reward visitors with sweeping views of the city and its countryside.

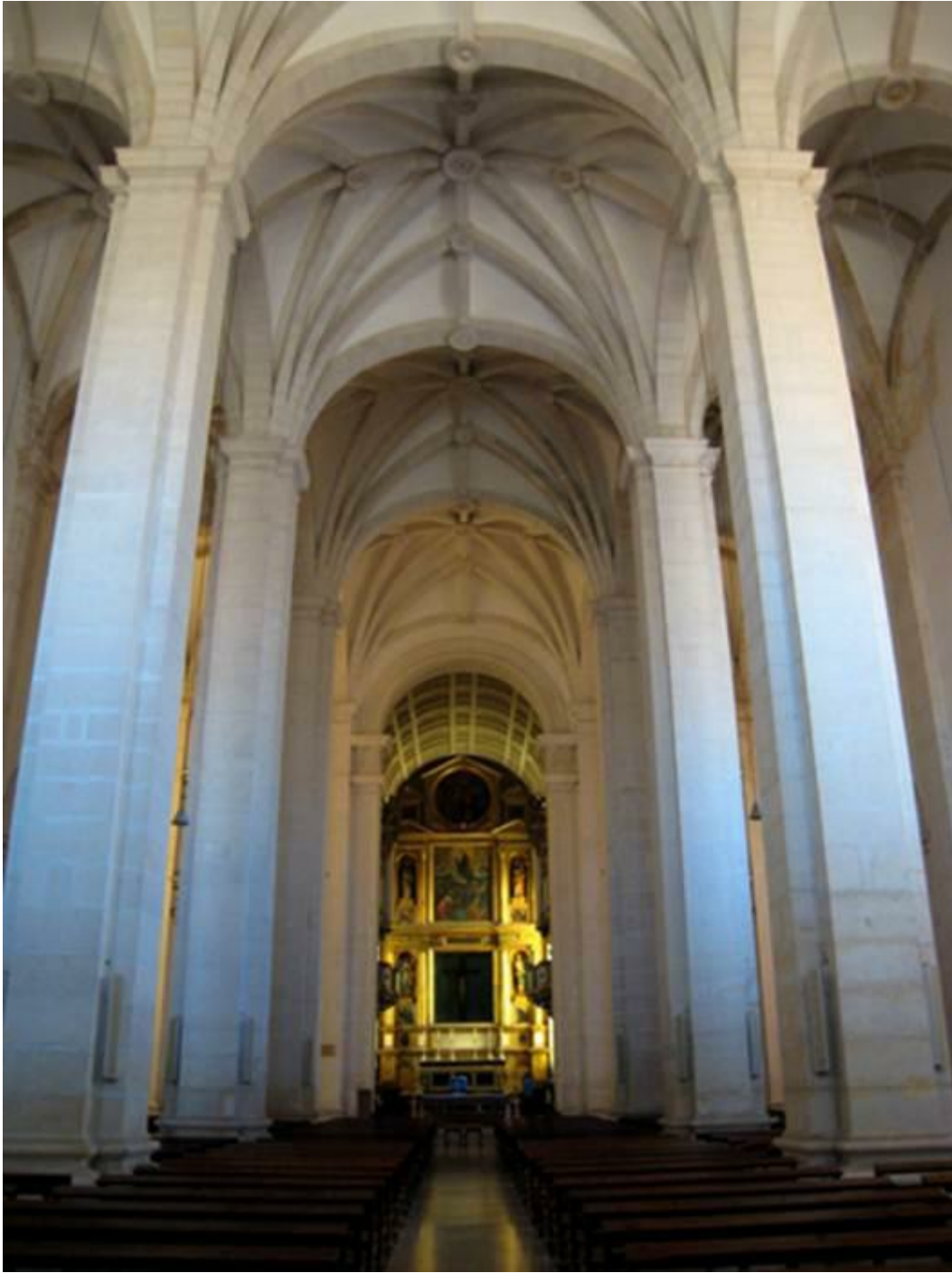
Admission to the castle is €2. It is open from April to September on Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. From October to March, it is open Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Info:
Largo Camilo Castelo Branco

Nº 2400-006 Leiria, Portugal
+351 244813982

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

Leiria Cathedral



The Leiria Cathedral is located in Rodriguense Lobo Square in the town's center. Construction of this cathedral began in 1546 under architect Alfonso Álvares. Originally built in Mannerist-style, the Leiria Cathedral has since been through many changes. In the early 17th century, the cloister, sacristy and chapter houses were added and after the 1755 earthquake, the façade of the cathedral was drastically changed. Currently, only three of the original doors remain and it is known for its simple exterior and interior. Guests can still see some interesting 17th century artwork depicting the life of the Virgin Mary around the altar, which was done by Simão Rodrigues.

Across from the cathedral is Pharmacy Leonardo Paiva where you will find *azulejos*, hand-painted tiles depicting Greek scholars and philosophers.

Info:

Largo da Sé

2400-236 Leiria, Portugal

+351 244832366

The Church of Saint Peter



Until 1574, this was one of only two churches in Leiria. Originally constructed at the end of the 12th century and expanded in the 14th century, this small Romanic church features impressive baroque windows and three altars. Located near Leiria castle, it was built to serve the parish located outside of the castle walls.

After 1834, it was used as a theater and as a warehouse. It was established as a national monument in 1896 and restoration work began in the 1930s.

Info:
Largo de São Pedro
2400-235, Leiria, Portugal

Historical Center



One of the most charming aspects of Leiria is its collection of ancient streets and alleys where visitors can stroll alongside antique houses, medieval stone works and traditional balconies.

In the historical center, guests can enjoy a mix of small coffee shops, grocery stands and craft merchants. Other local marvels include the blue and white 19th century tiled arch on Afonso de Albuquerque Street, and the 17th century arches and statue in Rodriguese Lobo Square.

Praça Rodrigues Lobo



This relaxing square is the perfect place to go and grab a cup of coffee after a long day of sightseeing. Surrounding the square are fine, arcaded buildings with shops and restaurants, one of which, Praça Caffè. This coffee house hosts an amazing *bica*, or Portuguese espresso. Come sundown, the square comes alive with Leiria's diverse nightlife.

Rua Direita



This is the main pedestrian street in the historical center of Leiria. Its popularity has spawned a nursery rhyme that is commonly sung by locals. The name Rua Direita literally means Straight Street, but this crooked avenue winds through the city center and passes numerous shops and restaurants before ending in Praça Rodrigues Lobo.

Restaurants

O Pipo Velho



Hidden about eight minutes north of Leiria in the town of Marrazes is O Pipo Velho. This family owned-and-operated restaurant features regional Portuguese cuisine and is a must for any seafood lover. With a name literally meaning “old barrel,” O Pipo Velho exudes a rustic, low-key feel, with wine corks and wooden barrels decorating the interior. This safe bet is worth your time to experience a traditional Portuguese restaurant. O Pipo Velho is open every day of the week except Sunday evenings and Mondays.

Recs

Bacalhau (codfish), filet mignon, *francesinha*; a traditional Portuguese sandwich originally from Porto made with bread, meat, thick layer of tomato sauce and covered with cheese, cod fish pie, and grilled meat platter.

Best Time: Lunch or dinner.

O Pipo Velho is open daily from noon to 3 p.m. and from 7 to 10 p.m.

Info:

Marrazes Rua Vale Verde
2415-555 Leiria, Portugal
+351 244813814
geral@pipovelho.com

Malagueta Afrodisiaca



This small and modern restaurant, located in the heart of Leiria, has even been recommended in the Portugal Michelin Guide. With only 35 seats, it received the gold award in 2010 in the Confraria Pinhal do Rei contest.

Interestingly, the Malagueta Afrodisiaca focuses on non-traditional Portuguese food, one of the few such restaurants in Leiria. Instead, a fusion of Latin American, Mediterranean, Scandinavian and Asian cuisine is served. Enjoy your meal on their outdoor terrace and you get a magical view of the castle.

Recs: Chili and meat, chicken with korma (a favorite), curry chicken with spinach, tenderloin with chili anxo, prawns with soy sauce and mango, and Mexican prawns.

Best Time: Dinner

Malagueta Afrodisiaca is open daily from 7 p.m. to midnight. It is closed Dec. 24 and 25.

Info:

R. Gago Coutinho 17

2400 Leiria, Portugal

+351 244831607

www.malaguetaafrodisiaca.pt



This restaurant is just a short eight-minute ride east of Leiria in the small town of Cortez. Sitting up on a small stream and next to an old wooden water mill, Casa da Nora gives a warm, antique feeling. With lush vegetation covering the outside of the restaurant, patrons feel as they have been transported to a quaint, medieval town and invited to dinner. Once inside, diners will enjoy the stonewalls, wooden décor and low ceiling that add to the homey experience. Dining with a view of the Lis River is one of the perks of grabbing a table outside.

Casa da Nora is famous for its savory grilled octopus and its incredibly friendly staff that complete the old-world experience.

Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, Casa de Nora is open daily from 8 to 10:30 a.m., midday to 3 p.m. and 7 to 11 p.m. The kitchen closes at 10 p.m.

Recs: Grilled octopus, sausages and root vegetables.

Best Time: Lunch or dinner

Info:

Largo Poeta José Marques da Cruz 8

2410-506 Leiria, Portugal

+351 244891189

www.casadanora.com
geral@casadanora.com

A Tasquinha (Nazaré)



A 20-minute drive south of Leiria will bring you to the town of Nazaré and A Tasquinha. Known by locals for its great seafood, the restaurant is in the city center but walking distance from the beach. A Tasquinha charms visitors with its resemblance to a fisherman's tavern and its detailed interior. Gracing the tiled walls are various nautical knickknacks that delight the eye and complete the cozy atmosphere. You may encounter long lines during the summer.

Recs: Any shrimp plate, codfish with peppers and potatoes, and the fish stew.

Open for lunch and dinner Tuesdays through Sundays.

Best time: Lunch

Info:

Rua Adrião Batalha, 58

Nazaré, Portugal

+351 262551945

Day Trips

Fátima



About 25 minutes southeast of Leiria along the A-1 highway is the historic town of Fátima. Known as the town where three young children reportedly witnessed apparitions of the Virgin Mary, Fátima is visited every year by both religiously affiliated groups and nonbelievers. Fátima has been one of the largest Marian sites since 1937, when the children, tending sheep, said they saw the Virgin Mary. She appeared to them every 13th of the month from May to October of that year. The children said they were told three secrets, which foretold World War II and Russian communism. They told the third secret only to the pope, and this secret was revealed in 2000 by Pope John Paul II, saying this one foretold his assassination attempt in 1981. Many of Fátima's pilgrims visit on May 13th and October 13th.

Be sure to visit the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, built in 1953, to commemorate the 1917 events. Located in a square twice the size of St. Peter's Square in Rome, it can hold a million people. The Chapel of the Apparitions sits in a corner of the square and houses a figure of the Virgin Mary holding the bullet extracted from Pope John Paul II after his assassination attempt in 1981. Fátima is one of three towns in Portugal's Holy Triangle; the other two are Batalha and Alcobaça.

Fátima holds a daily torchlight procession at dusk.



About 20 minutes southwest of Leiria and of the A-8 highway exit is the fishing village of Nazaré, one of Portugal's most charming villages. Fishermen sail in Phoenician-style vessels, many painted in bright colors with eyes, supposedly to ward off storms. Nazaré is home to one of the recommended restaurants, A Tasquina.

While in the quaint town, be sure to amble along the boardwalk and swing by the beach to watch local women dry out the freshly caught fish. To get the best view, take the funicular railway to the small town Sitio, which sits atop a mountain and looks down onto Nazaré.

For souvenirs, women can purchase the traditional skirts worn by locals, while men can buy the traditional fisherman's hat.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch Drying Fish! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



About an hour south of Leiria on the A-8 highway is Obidos, the most well preserved medieval town in all of Portugal, and one of my personal favorites.

Obidos is the best representation of what medieval Portugal looked like. Visitors can walk along the fortified wall that surrounds the town as well as explore the inside of the town. A popular local drink is *ginja de Obidos*, which is similar to Port wine but somewhat lighter in flavor.

Obidos is known as the “wedding present town” because King Denis gave the city to Queen Isabel on their wedding day in 1282. Even so, almost every nook and cranny exudes romance here; from its cobblestone streets to whitewashed churches and gothic homes dotted with colorful blooming flowers.

Visit in July for the town’s annual medieval fair recreating the Middle Ages, or in November for the International Chocolate Festival.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/ Tablets/ Smartphones\)](#)



Founded by [King D. João I of Portugal](#), the town of Batalha is the second member of the Holy Triangle of Portuguese towns and is chiefly known for the Monastery Santa Maria da Vitória, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The monastery was founded by King John I and is renowned for its elaborate architecture. Statues of the apostles decorate the front portal of the gothic cathedral. The vaulting of the chapter house is 60 feet high —without intermediary supports, and was built by condemned prisoners.

The historical center of Batalha is very small, with the monastery taking up most of it. Restaurants and shops fill the surrounding area.

Batalha is known for its amazing craftsmanship with masonry, tapestry and work with pyrotechnics. Visitors can purchase these types of items in the Loja do Mundo Rural shop in the tourism office of Batalha. Just outside Batalha lie two winemaking regions, Serra d'Aire and Candeeiro.



A half-hour south of Leiria on the A-8 highway is the third member of the Holy Triangle of Portuguese towns, Alcobaça. A small town, the main attraction is a large monastery that was founded in 1153 by Afonso Henriques after he won the battle at Santarém and promised God that he would build a monastery. The living quarters and huge kitchen are must-see areas. Another spectacular site is the royal tomb of star-crossed lovers King Pedro I and Inês de Castro. The story goes that Pedro, heir to the throne, was in love with noblewoman Inês, but his father disapproved and had her murdered.

The Abbey of Santa Maria is Europe's largest Cistercian temple and Portugal's biggest church. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it holds five cloisters, seven dormitories, a library and a spectacle of a kitchen. Inside, huge pillars and columns support the 347-foot long nave of the church. UNESCO has honored the site because of "Its size, the purity of its architectural style, the beauty of the materials and the care with which it was built...a masterpiece of Cistercian Gothic art."



Tomar sits on the banks of the Nabão River, less than an hour southeast from Leiria. The 12th century Templar Castle dominates the town. The Templar Castle was the national headquarters for the Templar Knights during the Middle Ages. Tomar is home to another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Convent of Christ. "Originally designed as a monument symbolizing the Reconquest, the Convent of the Knights Templar of Tomar (transferred in 1344 to the Knights of the Order of Christ) came to symbolize just the opposite during the Manueline period — the opening up of Portugal to other civilizations."

Tomar also boasts one of Portugal's oldest synagogues, built in 1430 and located on Rua Dr. Joaquim Jacinto. Home to many other historical religious sites, the main shopping street, Rua Serpa Pinto, leads to the gothic Church of São João Baptista. Seventeenth-century buildings surround the town's main square, on Praça da República.

Additional Travel Information:

Time Zone: GMT +1

Getting around: Leiria is a walkable city, however, some sites like Leiria Castle are located at the top of steep hills. Not all of Leiria's buses can access the highest points of Leiria.

Shopping: The center of town has some shops and a municipal market.

Nightlife Overview: At first glance, Leiria does not appear to have a throbbing nightlife scene like Lisbon but don't be mistaken. If you're looking for a fun night out, Leiria will not disappoint.

To start out your night, meet up with friends at the Rodriguese Lobo Square in the center of town. This square is where you'll find most of the discos and bars, along with lots of small cafes where you can grab a coffee to get amped up for a night out. Most places open around 9 p.m. and get into full swing by midnight. For a smaller town, Leiria features a diverse nightlife that includes bars, clubs, lounges and live music, as well as a variety of music to satisfy all tastes.

One place to try is the Suite, where the party is always happening. Located on Rua Machado dos Santos, this club has two dance floors for two generations. On Rua Tecnologia e Gesta, the trendy and futuristic club Sushi Electronic offers a spot for electronic music lovers. If you're more in the mood for a coffee bar, try Chico Lobo, named after the same man who gave his name to the most important and emblematic square in Leiria — the Praça Rodriguese Lobo. Chico Lobo transcends the typical coffee bar to become a place where diners can grab a quick meal, savor some ice cream or pancakes or peruse the daily paper.

Best time to go: March through October.

Nearest airports:

Lisbon Portela Airport (LIS)

www.lisbon-airport.com

+351 0218413500

Porto Airport (OPO)

www.porto-airport.com

+351 0229432400

Train:

Alfa express and regional trains

www.cp.pt

+351 211 023000

Car rentals:

Avis +351 244 827 131

Europcar +351 244 831 641

Tours:

Half-Day Fátima Tour (from Lisbon)

www.yellowbustours.com

Telephone numbers:

Country code +35

Emergency Line 112

Tourism Board + 351 244 848 771

Táxis Antral De Leiria +244 831 925

List of helpful websites from this guide:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.golisbon.com/portugal/cities/leiria

www.rt-leiriaFátima.pt

Other recommended restaurants:

Cardamomo

Matilde Noca

O Casarao

Taberna d'Adelia

Other recommended accommodations:

\$ Ibis Leiria

\$ Eurosol Leiria and Jardim Hotel

\$\$ Eurosol Residence Hotel

For a complete list of historic pousadas throughout Portugal, visit www.pousadas.pt.

Another place of interest:

Mira de Aire Caves

Av. Dr. Luciano Justo Ramos

2485-050 Mira de Aire

www.grutasmiradaire.com

Less than 15 km from Fátima lies this cave complex, also known as *grutas*. The caves were discovered in 1947 and are known for their unique geological characteristics. Visitors can tour these limestone caverns, stroll around the surrounding gardens and enjoy the animals at the on-site zoo, which houses rabbits, pigs, badgers, sheep, foxes, peacocks and more. The Mira de Aire Park also features a restaurant, restored windmills and a fascinating large sun dial. It even has a water park that is great for families. Combined tickets for the caves and water park cost €11.65 for adults and €8.50 for children. For more information, visit www.grutasmiradaire.com (Portuguese only).

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Exploring Leiria

- Quick stop at tourism office (Jardim Luis de Camões-Apartado 1115) to pick up brochures and city map
- Mid-morning coffee break at Praça Caffé
- Sightseeing in Leiria on foot
- Lunch at Casa de Nora*
- Continue sightseeing in Leiria
- Dinner at O Pipo Velho (in Marrazes)*

Day 2: Picturesque Portugal

- Drive to Obidos for morning sightseeing
- Continue to Nazaré
- Stroll boardwalk and beach
- Lunch at A Tasquinha*
- Funicular railway to Sítio for photos of Nazaré
- Drive to Alcobaça to visit the Abbey of Santa Maria

- Return to Leiria for dinner at Malagueta Afrodisiaca

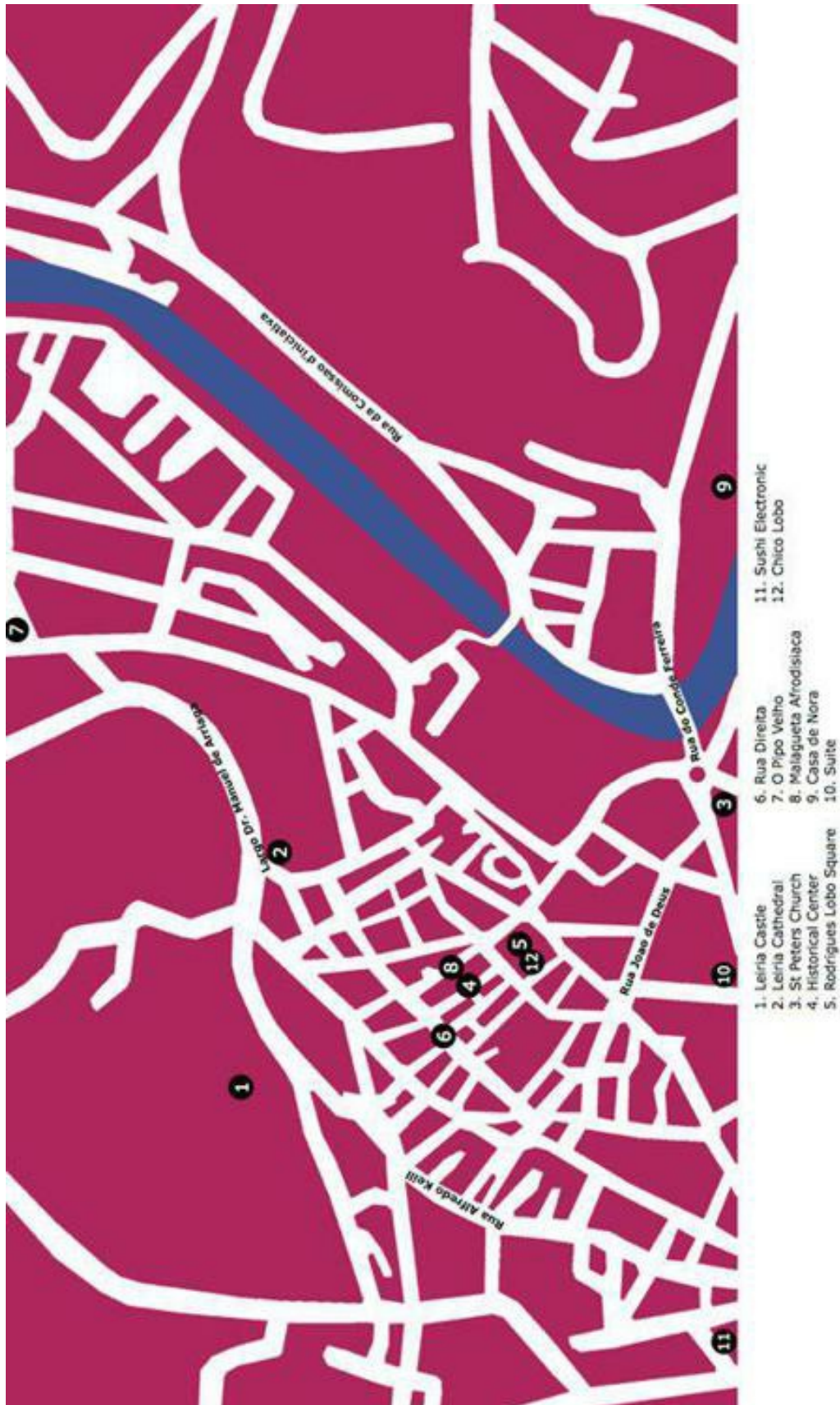
Day 3: Heading West for the Day

- Drive to Batalha for sightseeing (historical center and Monastery Santa Maria da Vitória)
- Drive to Fátima to visit Marian shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary
- Lunch in Fatima
- Continue to Tomar for sightseeing (Templar Castle, stroll along Rua Serpa Pinto and walking around Praça da República) or visit to Mira de Aire Caves and water park
- Return to Leiria
- Dinner at Matilde Noca*

Activities marked with an asterisk () require prior booking.*

Area Map







This area is considered to be the Golden Triangle because of all the religious treasures that are housed in Leiria and its neighboring towns.

The main reason to visit this city is all the amazing day trips that can be taken to surrounding towns, which include Nazaré, Fátima, Alcobaça, Batalha, Obidos and Tomar. These towns also present numerous options for dining out. The best codfish can only be found at O Pipo Velho, while the picturesque Casa Nora features an amazing grilled octopus.

During my stay, the luxurious Villa Batalha proved to be an incredibly central location that allowed me to drive around and visit all the must-sees in the area. On that note, a car is a must since it offers much more flexibility than the local buses.

When in Leiria, be sure to visit the majestic castle. Overlooking the town, the castle radiates a medieval feeling that is felt in very few places on earth.



Legend has it that Lisboa's name came from a Portuguese word for safe harbor. Nestled at the western edge of Europe and featuring multiple architectural styles, many travelers find Lisboa an ideal location to drop anchor, explore history and sample regional cuisine along its many cobblestone streets. Ranked as the world's 10th oldest city, Lisboa traces its roots back to the Phoenicians, who settled it approximately 3,000 years ago. Over the centuries, the Greeks, Romans, Moors and Christians moved in, each leaving their own cultural marks upon the city the western world refers to as Lisbon. When Phoenicians settled Lisboa about 3,000 years ago, they named the city Alis Ubbo or, Delightful Shore. Three major earthquakes struck the city in 1755, and afterward, city leaders rebuilt and restored Lisboa.

Today, Lisboa is Portugal's capital as well as its largest city. Located on the north banks of the River Tagus with the Atlantic Ocean to its west, Lisboa is known as a hub of finance, international trade, tourism, and the arts.

Even though Lisboa sits atop seven hills, the city is simple to navigate. Its streets are laid out on a simple grid, and public transportation includes buses, trams (easy to spot in their eye-popping yellow shells), trains and an international airport. Local transportation is efficient and allows for convenient travel across the city and to surrounding areas. If you choose to walk, Lisboa's steep and narrow streets will give your legs a workout, so pack comfortable walking

shoes.

The city, with a population of almost 550,000, has several distinct neighborhoods to explore. Alfama is the historic section of town, the central area of Alcântara hosts much of its nightlife, and Bairro Alto is the residential, entertainment and shopping district.

The many museums, parks and gardens make Lisboa a European must-see. It is also the perfect destination for the nocturnal-loving tourist seeking a lively nightlife scene. The weather in Lisboa makes for an ideal vacation spot with its mild winters and hot summers. For instance, December temperatures average a low of 48 degrees F (9° C) and a high of 58° F (15° C), with June averaging a low of 60° F (16° C) and a high of 76° F (25° C).

Make sure you visit a local spot to experience a bit of Fado. We recommend several day trips in this guide that are ideal to soak up the regional Portuguese scenery and quaint little towns, as well as music.

In this guide, you will find all of the attractions I recommend for Lisboa. I experienced all of them during my visit to Portugal in November 2010. As part of a new feature in our 2012 DBH Guide series, at the end of this guide you will find a sample 5-day itinerary for your trip.

The following websites are invaluable resources for first time visitors:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.golisbon.com

LX Boutique Hotel



Upon entering the LX Boutique hotel, you will see how it has earned its four stars. Every floor has original painted wall murals that capture the hotel's modern vibe.

The LX Boutique has five distinct floors with very different themes, but each represents an aspect of the city. The first floor, Tejo, incorporates elements of the Tagus River, making guests feel as though they are relaxing on the shore. The second floor, Bairro Alto, has a theme of the old district. 7 Colinas floor, or the third floor, symbolizes the seven hills that Lisboa lies on. The fourth floor, Pessoa, is decorated with books dedicated to the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa. My room was on the fourth floor and was an incredible experience. The bed was enormous and instead of a headboard there was a mural of a life-sized library full of

books. They looked so real I thought I could touch them and I actually had to do a double take when I first noticed it. The backdrop of the faux bookshelves gives a warm and homey feel that makes the LX Boutique distinctive from other hotels where I have stayed. The fifth floor is named Fado, and is named after the typical Portuguese music. The walls on this floor are decorated with musical instruments. All of the rooms offer the décor and comfort of home, but with conveniences of a four-star hotel.



Within each floor at the LX Boutique Hotel, there are three types of rooms that visitors can choose from. The smallest is the XSSENTIAL room followed by the XPANDED, and finally the XPLENDID suite. The XPLENDID features a work area that is perfect for guests who come to Lisboa but who also want to take care of some business. The breakfast they serve is filling and offers a wide assortment of oatmeal, croissants, coffees, fruit salads, eggs, and cheeses.



The staff at the LX Boutique Hotel helped me with everything I needed and were extremely friendly. They are knowledgeable and always ready to assist guests with any requests that they may have during their stays. LX Boutique is located on Rua do Alecrim, in the Baixa district, which is one of the main streets in the center of Lisboa. This area of the city is known for its elegance and contemporary air. From here visitors are in the perfect location to take in the old and new cities, and are only a few minutes walk away from many of Lisboa's major attractions. The Bairro Alto is also only a five-minute walk from the hotel. Overall the hotel is in an ideal place within the city and exactly the type of place I would want to stay at again.

Info:

Rua do Alecrim nº 12 □ 1200-017 Lisboa, Portugal

+351 213 474 394

www.lxboutiquehotel.pt

info@lxboutiquehotel.com

See's and Do's

Commerce Square



The Commerce Square, or Praça do Comércio, is conveniently located in the center of the city. Visitors will enjoy this beautiful square nestled against the Tagus River, offering a striking view of the water. A bronze statue of King José I, by Machado de Castro, stands proudly in the center of the square. Commerce Square also has historical significance to the Portuguese people because in 1908 King Carlos I was assassinated here.

Elevator of Santa Justa



Raúl Mesnier du Ponsard, apprentice of Gustave Eiffel (architect of the Eiffel tower), engineered this iconic lift in 1902. It measures 45 meters in height and can carry a maximum of 20 passengers up from the Baixa (lower) quarter to the Barrio Alto quarter. It is constantly on the move within the Gothic tower that it is housed in. From the top, visitors have great views of the old city of Alfama and the Castle of São Jorge. The “carmo lift” as it is called, was declared a national monument in 2002. Although not necessary, it is the most popular way for first-time visitors to get to the Carmo Convent. A ride costs €5 per person.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Carmo Convent, Lisboa



Once you get off the elevator of Santa Justa at Carmo Square, you will find yourself just steps away from Carmo Convent. It was founded by Knight Nuno Álvares Pereira for the Carmelite Order in 1389. Presently no sisters of the Carmelite Order reside in Carmo Convent, but the site is open for tourists. The convent was damaged in the earthquake of 1755, but was later partially rebuilt and served as a military quarter. Much of the church was left untouched after the disaster and so you will find some sections still in ruin. Inside there is an archaeological museum housing tombs and other relics of Portuguese history.

Belém Tower



This impressive tower is located at the mouth of the Tagus River and is known as the symbol of the city. It was built in 1515 as a fortress with the purpose of protecting the city's harbor. It was commissioned by King John II and was constructed out of limestone mined from local areas. Belém Tower served as a starting point for sailors leaving for voyages into the deep blue. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the tower's impressive stonework and intricate detail are definitely worth the visit to the Avenida da Índia in Belém.

The tower is open October to May from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (last admission at 5 p.m.) and May through September from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (last admission at 6 p.m.) It is closed on Mondays. Admission is €5 per person, but free on Sundays until 2 p.m.

Brasileira



Opened in 1905, this coffee shop is more than just a daily stop for locals. The Portuguese take their coffee quite seriously, and no café could be more iconic than Brasileira, serving genuine Brazilian ground. Located in the old quarter of Lisboa, this café was frequented by Portuguese poets and writers such as Fernando Pessoa, Alfredo Pimenta and Aquilino Ribeiro. It makes for a fun visit, especially for caffeine addicts who enjoy sitting in cafés where some great minds of the past got their fixes.

Pasteis de Belém



While here, taste the original Pastel de Belém with a bica, Lisboa's version of espresso. This place is known for having invented the original pastel, or pastry. The original building of the bakery is an old school house, which gives Pateis de Belém an authentic old-world Portuguese feel. They also make other delicious products such as jam, English cake, King and Queen cake, and marmalade. Delicious is the best word to describe the delicacies you can buy at Pateis de Belém.

Pateis de Belém is open October 1st to May 31st from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and June 1st to September 30th from 8 a.m. to midnight. Open every day.

Rua de Belém, 84
1300 Lisboa, Portugal
www.pasteisdebelem.pt

Jerónimos Monastery



The Jerónimos Monastery, also called Hieronymites Monastery, is another iconic site in Lisboa that is a must-see for every traveler. It took 50 years of construction to complete the monastery that was originally intended to commemorate Vasco da Gama's roundtrip voyage to India. This is another UNESCO World Heritage Site, and consists of the Church of Santa Maria and the monastery itself. Surprisingly, the monastery was left relatively unharmed after the 1755 earthquake, making it a true testament of longstanding Portuguese history.

The monastery is open October to May from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (last admission at 5 p.m.) and May through September from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (last admission at 6 p.m.) It is closed on Mondays. Admission is €7 per person, but free on Sundays until 2 p.m.

Castle of São Jorge



Perched on the highest hill is the Castle of São Jorge, which dates back to medieval times and overlooks the city of Lisboa. The castle was used to protect the city from the Moors toward the end of the 12th century. Guests can explore the terrace, gardens, and cannons on site. The Castle of São Jorge is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the city.

The castle open March through October 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and November through February 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is €7.50.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Rua Augusta



Known as the most famous pedestrian walkway in Lisboa, the Rua Augusta is a perfect one-stop locale to grab a quick bite to eat or pick up any postcards or souvenirs. Here visitors will find merchandise including flowers, handbags, shoes, musical instruments and much more. The street vendors are known for having interesting knickknacks that make the Rua Augusta a fun detour from the historic sites.

Cathedral of Lisboa



Another beautiful highlight of Lisboa is the cathedral that dates back to 1150. Its Romanesque façade features a large, circular window and porch. Legend has it that the cathedral was originally a mosque, converted in 1147 when Crusaders conquered Lisboa. The 14th century sacristy inside the cathedral holds relics and religious arts that history buffs will surely enjoy. There is no admission fee, but to visit the cloister costs €1.50.



This modern aquarium is only a 15-minute taxi ride from central Lisboa. Situated along the shoreline, it is a popular destination with more than one million international visitors per year! The Oceanario has one colossal tank in its center, symbolizing the union of all oceans. It also houses various smaller tanks that contain different sea creatures such as sharks, barracudas, schooling fish and stingrays. Make sure to experience the modern design and incredible animals at this popular Lisboa destination. This is a great spot to bring the kids or the kid in you.

The Oceanario is open every day from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in summer and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in winter. Admission is €16.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Cristo Rei



Cristo Rei, or Monument to Christ, was built to thank God for having helped Portugal avoid entering World War II. It is located in the town of Almada, about a 25-minute drive from Lisboa. Visitors of Cristo Rei may notice that the 90-foot-tall monument looks very familiar. That's because it was inspired by the one built in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The highest point of the structure, the pedestal at about 270 feet in the air, can be reached by elevator and offers an incredible view of the city and the 25 de Abril Bridge. A quick ferry ride from the Cais do Sodre Station will take visitors to buses that will escort them to this impressive monument.

Restaurants



This small Lisboa restaurant is known for its prominent Portuguese chef, Henrique Sá Pessoa. Designer Catarina Ventura and architect Eduardo Malhado conceived Alma's all-white interior and décor. Alma means soul, so the pallid décor fits in with the concept of the restaurant. The cotton lamps and clean design give a comforting feel for an enjoyable and memorable dining experience. From the moment that visitors receive their first plate, they will be awed by the presentations born in the kitchen. Diners can choose from two menus: the Alma menu of starters, main dishes and desserts, and from the Degustação (tasting) menu for a la carte options. My favorite plate was the black pork dish with yellow sauce. Alma is a popular dining destination in Lisboa and so calling ahead for a reservation is highly recommended.

Alma is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Info:

Calçada Marquês de Abrantes 92 1200-720 Lisboa, Portugal

+351 213 963 527

www.alma.co.pt

Best Time: Dinner

Recommendations: Grilled octopus, cod fish, black pork

Baiuca Fado House



Baiuca Fado House restaurant is located in the Alfama area, which is the old Arab quarters of Lisboa. Its distinguishing element is its live shows of Fado music, which is a typical Portuguese style of music that has been played for centuries, and is known for its melancholy-sounding notes. I was fortunate enough to have been seated with the owner's family and I had a wonderful time eating traditional Portuguese food and listening to the live guitars and singing.

The Baiuca Fado House is a great spot for visitors who love live music; anyone can get up and belt out a tune. On top of the lively atmosphere that this cozy restaurant offered, the food here was beyond excellent. I ordered the seafood soup as an entrée. Although the Baiuca Fado House restaurant is small, it is bursting at the seams with life, entertainment and delicious food. The restaurant's owner also waits guests' tables and participates in the live Fado music shows. She's a triple threat of food, hospitality, and talent. Make sure you tell her that David sent you! Book ahead, there are only six tables.

Info:

Rua de São Miguel, 20 [Alfama](#)

Lisboa, Portugal

+351 218 867 284

www.golisbon.com/night-life/Fado/baiuca.html

Best Time: Dinner

Recommendations: Seafood soup

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Fortaleza do Guincho (Cascais)



At the far end of the town of Cascais, in the Hotel do Guincho, visitors will find the Fortaleza do Guincho restaurant. The restaurant was formerly a military fortress in the 17th century. It opened in 1998 and has earned a Michelin Star since 2001, as well as having been awarded the "Best of Award of Excellence" from Wine Spectator. Its Portuguese cuisine is of excellent quality as are the wines paired with every course. Chef Antoine Westermann and executive chef Vincent Farges definitely know how to add a French "haute cuisine" element to the Portuguese flavors. I especially loved the homemade duck liver. The amazing flavors are complemented by the restaurant's welcoming atmosphere, which offers a delightful view of Guincho Beach and Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point in all of continental Europe.

The restaurant is open daily from 12:30 to 3 p.m. for lunch and from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. for dinner.

Info:

Estrada do Guincho
2750-642 Cascais, Portugal
+351 214 870 491
www.hotelfortalezadoguincho.com

Recommendations

- Homemade duck liver from the Landes region; wine from Douro.
- Steamed sea bass with seaweed flavor, oyster tartar; wine from Ribatejo.

- Roasted venison with preserved quince, stewed red cabbage with spices; wine from Douro.
- Preserved crispy quince tart, vanilla Bourbon ice cream and quince juice; Moscatel from [Setúbal](#).

Best Time: Lunch for a great view; dinner will be packed!

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Largo



Largo is located in the historic, cosmopolitan Chiado area. Its architectural design offers a mix of distinct concepts. Designed by Miguel Cândia Martins, the bare stone domes and columns of this restaurant link the traditional to the modern. Dutch lighting and imported furniture give the space a unique vibe. The black, white and green colors balance well with the sea anemone and jellyfish tanks. The wait staff at Largo is professional and friendly and in addition to the restaurant's design and service, I very much enjoyed the codfish risotto I ordered. The only downside to this restaurant is that it gets full fast, but visitors should be sure to reserve a table, which can be done by any hotel concierge. Overall, dining at Largo is an enjoyable experience in itself and should not be missed.

Open every day, Largo serves dinner from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Info:

Rua Serpa Pinto 10
1200-445 Lisboa, Portugal
+351 213 477 225
www.largo.pt

Recommendations

- Fresh coriander cream soup with goat cheese and braised tomato
- Sole filets with scallops on leek sauce

- Roasted black pork with chickpeas with wild mushroom stew

Best Time: Dinner

Tasca da Esquina



Located on a corner just outside of Lisboa's city center and just a 15-minute walk from the Bairro Alto, this gourmet restaurant houses an incredible menu of seafood plates. Tasca da Esquina is a small and informal venue, but packs a powerful punch with its sophisticated cuisine. Vitor Sobral opened the restaurant in 2009 and Tasca da Esquina has since been welcoming diners with large luminous windows, red concrete floors, and its upbeat staff. Its small plates allow diners to order a wide selection for sharing with one another. My two favorite dishes were the clams in white sauce and the codfish. One of Tasca da Esquina's most popular desserts is the *abbot priscos*, a hearty wine pudding that provides the perfect ending to a satisfying meal.

Tasca da Esquina is open Mondays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 11:30 p.m. It is closed on Sundays.

Info:

Rua Domingos Sequeria 41 1350-119

Lisboa, Portugal

+351 919 837 255

www.tascadaesquina.com/en

Best Time: Lunch



The walls of this restaurant literally appear as if they are coated in gold and the ceilings feature immense chandeliers throughout. Dating back to 1784, Tavares is the oldest restaurant in Portugal as well as one of the oldest restaurants on the planet! It also has some of the priciest appetizers I've encountered while traveling. Every plate is delectable and the attention to detail makes it a rich man's culinary paradise. Every plate I tried was amazing, but my absolute favorite dish was the baby lamb. Did I mention the port wine selection is seriously amazing? The dessert presentations are extravagant and will surely delight you and your guests with amazement. Tavares has mastered the art of food presentation hands down!

Tavares serves lunch from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, and dinner from 7:30 to 11 p.m. The restaurant is closed Sundays and Mondays.

Info:

Rua da Misericórdia, 35
1200-270 Lisboa, Portugal
+351 213 421 112

www.restaurantetavares.net

Recommendations

- Chestnuts and crab
- The Garden of "The Hen that Laid Golden Eggs," egg with earthy aromas

- Poached sea bass with shellfish, seaweed and glasswort in lemony seawater
- Baby lamb with carrots in puree
- Chocolate cigars, pear parfaits and hot chocolate

Best Time: Dinner



Overview

Lisboa nightlife has something for everyone. If you and your friends are looking to bar hop, this is a perfect city to do so. There are numerous bars where you can kick back, or mingle and meet new locals and tourists alike. The live entertainment scene is also buzzing in Lisboa; it is ideal for those who want to take in local live performances. And don't worry all you nightclub lovers! There is a long list of places to satisfy your late-night, fast-paced music cravings. Lisboa is known as one of Europe's best clubbing cities.

As far as when to start heading out to the clubs, locals in Lisboa usually eat a late dinner, do some bar hopping, and then hit the club around 2 a.m. And don't plan on leaving early — most clubs keep the party going until dawn. Visitors will find most club destinations by the river, between downtown Lisboa and Belém, and across from Santa Apolonia train station heading east. One advantage to Lisboa's nightclub scene is that during weeknights there is no cover charge to enter. On weekends, however, clubbers can expect to pay anywhere from €10 to €20 for admission. Another downside to clubs in Lisboa is that some have doormen who are very selective of people who are allowed to enter, such as at the popular Lux. I recommend that you dress to impress and skip the casual clothes to better your chances of getting into the club(s) you want. Overall, the nightlife scene in Lisboa offers unique venues that will make visitors want to return.



On Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, you'll find Lisboa's prime club spot. Lux is known as the hottest club, frequented by celebrities and other beautiful people who enjoy the modern décor and its spacious dance floor. The main floor offers a fast-paced set of music mixed by some of the world's top DJs, while the second floor has a more laid-back alternative vibe.

The balcony that surrounds the outside of the building makes for the perfect photo opportunity. You can stand there to take in the view, catch your breath after dancing, or watch the sun come up after a long night of achy feet and shots. If you make it past the highly selective doormen, you will find yourself in one of Europe's most exclusive clubs, and might even rub elbows with Cameron Diaz or Prince. Lux is currently rated Lisbon's No. 1 option for nighttime entertainment by the website, <http://www.golisbon.com>. Lux is open 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Info:

Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, [Doca do Jardim do Tabaco Alfama](#)

Lisboa, Portugal

+351 21 882 08 90

Cinco Lounge



With a sophisticated and swanky feel, Cinco Lounge makes for one of Lisboa's coolest clubs. The experienced staff here has worked at Michelin-starred restaurants and Relais & Chateaux hotels, making for a very professional and intuitive team. The lounge serves unique cocktails mixed with mouth-watering fresh fruits. It's one of the pricier spots in the city, but highly recommended by locals.

Cinco lounge is open from every day from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Info:

Rua Ruben A Leitão 17A
1200-392 Lisboa, Portugal
+351 213 424 033
www.cincolounge.com

BedRoom Bar



Catering to the electro and hip-hop crown, BedRoom Bar is a trendy and fun, themed venue. Located in the Bairro Alto, this spot is perfect for a young, edgier crowd. The DJ bar is decorated with multiple beds and sofas for guests to lounge around. The wallpaper and intimate lighting also will make you feel as though you are in someone's room. This nightclub also serves a great selection of wine. Make sure to try the Vinho Verde, "green wine," that gets its name from the freshness of the grapes used and not its color. Their caipirinha cocktail is also an excellent choice and is made with Cachaça liquor (fermented sugarcane).

Bedroom Bar is open Mondays through Saturdays from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Info:

Rua do Norte, 86

Bairro Alto

Lisboa, Portugal

+351 213 431 631

Incognito



Talk about undercover — you have to ring a doorbell to get into this place. Looking for a sign with the name of the place on it? Don't bother. It's a secret hideaway for those seeking to dance the night away to 80's tunes, and alternative pop and techno sounds. The first level of the club houses the main dance floor, while the upstairs features a more laid-back loft bar.

Incognito is open Wednesdays through Saturdays from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Info:

Rua dos Polais de São Bento, 37

[Bairro Alto](#)

Lisboa, Portugal

+351 213 908 755

www.incognitobar.com

Kremlin



Known as one of the most eccentric clubs in Lisboa, this is definitely a spot where you will want to go looking your best. Kremlin has been voted one of the top 10 clubs in Europe was once named the best club in Europe for house music and is renowned for the attractive people who attend. Kremlin's patrons go to hear world-famous DJs spinning house music on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The jacked-up oriental décor and house beats tantalize the senses and will send you spinning into a musical vortex. The recommended time to get there is around midnight.

Info:

Escadinhas da Praia, 5 Santos

1200-869 Lisboa, Portugal

www.grupo-k.pt

Silk Club



This simply elegant nightclub opened in 2008 and has been dazzling Lisboa's club scene with its rooftop bar that offers a 360-degree view from the penthouse on Rua Misericórdia, 14. Known for its exclusivity, visitors of Silk should be warned that it is quite difficult to enter, especially if no bottle service is requested. Once inside, however, the modern décor, chic atmosphere and sexy lighting become a playground for the young and beautiful. This is definitely a Lisboa hotspot.

Silk Club is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:30 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Info:

Da Misericórdia 14
1249 Lisboa, Portugal
+351 913 009 193
www.silk-club.com

Day Trips



About 40 minutes northwest of Lisboa sits the town of Cabo da Roca. It is the westernmost point on the European continent, not including the island nations of United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland. This scenic cape area has a rocky pathway for visitors to walk, and a large sign describes that you are standing on the westernmost point of the continent. It is the perfect place for a photo documenting your visit while overlooking the turquoise waters. Swimmers and surfers alike will find ample opportunity at Praia Grande, one of the most popular beaches in the coastal Lisboa area.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)



After seeing Cabo da Roca, continue north to the quiet town of Azenhas do Mar. Before getting there, you will encounter a lookout spot, or *mirador*, where you can park your car and walk along to catch the best views of the town. The town of Azenhas do Mar does not have much for visitors other than a few restaurants. I didn't hear or see one person while I was there, which gave me the feeling it is like a ghost town during winter. Any time of year, however, this jutting peninsula provides a striking panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean from Europe's west coast. Sun-bleached white houses perch atop a rocky hill overlooking waves crashing below. The restaurant by the same name, Azenhas do Mar, received the nod of "best seafront dining in the world" by Monocle Magazine in 2010. Visit www.azenhasdomar.com for more information.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)



This picturesque town is only 20 minutes west from Lisboa and doesn't require driving on a highway. The best way to get to Cascais is by taking Marginal de Cascais (Av Marginal). By driving down this road you will get the chance to experience the beautiful coastline, which is especially pleasant around sunset. There are also many beaches along the way for visitors who desire a refreshing swim during the warmer months. The quaint town of Cascais reminds me of an Italian fishing village, but with more brilliant colors. The Fortaleza do Guincho restaurant is located west of Cascais almost at Cabo do Roca.

Cascais offers shopping and restaurants, but if you would rather soak up some local culture, spy on the robust auction of the day's catch held every afternoon by the main beach. Or add sailing, surfing and golfing to your more active itinerary while in Cascais. Points of interest in Cascais include the *farol*, or lighthouse, Tamariz and Carcavelos beaches and several delectable eateries along the Atlantic coast.

Visit www.cascais-travel.com for more information.



Mafra is an old-world town that attracts travelers interested in the Mafra National Palace. You can reach the town by driving 30 minutes northwest of Lisboa. Mafra itself is petite in size, and is overwhelmed by the giant Baroque-style palace. King John V built it for his wife Queen Mary Anne of Austria. One would think that a grand construction such as this would be fit for a king, but the royal couple only used it as a secondary residence. The property went on to serve as a Franciscan monastery during 18th century, and was officially declared a national monument in 1907. The palace features an impressive 880 halls, 1,200 rooms, 29 courtyards, 4,700 windows, a massive Rococo-style library and 154 staircases. There are also two bell towers, a royal basilica, and a former royal hunting ground. Massive and opulent are the two best words that describe this site. A guided tour is a convenient and informative way to experience the palace. The tour takes guests through the king and queen's separate apartments on the second floor and through the library, which holds an impressive 35,000 volumes.

In 2012, the Mafra National Palace won the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage for the restoration of its basilica's six historical organs. The prize recognizes excellence in cultural heritage conservation. The palace is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (last entrance at 4:30 p.m.) every day except Tuesday. The Basilica is open every day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and

from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is €6, but is free on Sundays and public holidays until 2 p.m.



A 25-minute drive west through the Sintra mountains will bring visitors to the tiny, but regal town of Sintra. The town is known for its 8th and 9th century royal retreats, estates and palaces, all of which landed sleepy Sintra on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. The Castelos dos Mouros (Moorish castle), Sintra National Palace and Pena National Palace are three of the town's jewels. Visitors can walk along the entire length of the wall surrounding the Moorish castle. I was amazed at the fact that it was built more than 1,000 years ago. It is definitely one of my favorite castles that I was able to see in Portugal. Sintra National Palace is the best-preserved medieval palace in the country. This 15th century beauty is open every day from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Admission is €9.



Pena National Palace, built in the 1840s, sits proudly on a peak and boasts many Romantic architectural elements, such as a drawbridge, turrets, ramparts and intricate, dramatic stonework throughout. It is one of Europe's most iconic castles - a must-see ranked up there with Germany's Bavarian fairytale fortresses. It is also considered to be one of Portugal's seven wonders. It is surrounded by Pena Park, a 500-acre plot of dense vegetation that has several plant species including the North American sequoia and magnolia trees. The palace is open daily from 9:45 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (last entrance at 6:15 p.m.). Admission for the interior of the palace is €13.50. Tickets for the exterior, park and palace terraces are also available.

Visit www.parquesdesintra.pt/en for more information on Sintra's palaces and combined ticket prices for many of Sintra's attractions.

Additional Travel Information

Time zone: GMT +1

Getting around: While Lisboa is a walking city, there is also the reliable Lisboa Metro subway system. It is comprised of four lines and has 55 stations around Lisboa and its outskirts. The Metro operates from 6:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. daily, with some trains ending service at 1 a.m. A Metro ride will run you about €.90 to €2, depending where you would like to go. Metro cards cost €.50, are rechargeable and are available at each of the stations. Lisboa also has bus and street tram services. Figueira Square, Marques de Pombal Square and Sete Rios are the city's three major bus terminals.

See below for information about trains for travel to/from other parts of Portugal.

Shopping: Baixa (downtown district) features boutiques and small shops. Rua [Áurea](#) (gold street), Rua Augusta and Rua da Prata (silver street) are the city's main shopping streets. There are many charming specialty shops in the area like *Luvaria Ulisses* (gloves) and *Confeitaria Nacional* (bakery/café) that are over 100 years old and worth a visit. Avenida da Liberdade has designer stores such as Burberry and Louis Vuitton. Feira da Ladra is Lisbon's flea market. It is held all day Tuesdays and Saturdays in the Alfama quarter.

Nightlife: The Bairro Alto quarter has numerous bars and Fado venues. The dock area of Santo Amaro has restaurants, cafés, bars and late-night nightclubs overlooking the marina. Most nightlife venues close between 2am and 4am.

Best time to go: March through October.

Nearest airport:

Lisbon Portela Airport (LIS)

www.lisbon-airport.com

+351 0218 413500

Train:

Alfa express and regional trains

www.cp.pt

+351 211 023000

Car rentals:

Avis: +351 218 435550

Europcar: +351 218 401176

Sixt: +351 218 407927

Tours:

9-hour Lisbon Sightseeing Tour plus day trips

www.viator.com

Yellow Bus Tours (hop on hop off).

<http://www.yellowbustours.com/en>

Pass:

Lisboa Card

www.neoturismo.com

The Lisboa Card offers free or discounted admission to more than 80 Lisboa museums and sights. Cardholders also receive free transportation on the Metro, public buses, trams and *elevadores*. This city pass is valid for one year from the time of purchase and is available for different lengths of time: €18.50 for 24 hours; €31.50 for 48 hours and €39 for 72 hours.

Telephone numbers:

Country Code: +351

Emergency Line: 112

Tourism Board: +351 210312700

Metro Lisboa: +351 217980600

Radio Taxi: +351218119000

List of helpful websites from this guide:|

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.golisbon.com

www.visitlisboa.com

www.azenhasdomar.com

www.cascais-travel.com

www.parquesdesintra.pt/en

Other recommended accommodations:

\$ Hotel Residencial Florescente

\$\$ Lisboa Plaza

\$\$\$ Hotel Heritage Av Liberdade

Other places of interest:

Discoveries Monument
Avenida de Brasília, Belém

This monument, built in 1960, honors the anniversary of the death of Prince Henry the Navigator. Sculptures depict famous Portuguese explorers, only one of whom is female. The monument is located on the north bank of the Tagus River.

National Coach Museum
Praça Afonso de Albuquerque, Belém
<http://en.museudoscoches.pt>

Royalty need to get around too, and this museum shows how stylish travel by coach can be. The museum shelters the world's largest collection of ceremonial vehicles and is Lisboa's most-visited museum. It is in the former Royal Riding School at the Royal Palace of Belém. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday. Admission is €5; free admission on Sundays and bank holidays until 2 p.m.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Exploring old Lisbon

- Visit Commerce Square
- Stroll Rua Augusta
- Visit Castle of São Jorge
- Lunch at Tasca da Esquina*
- Ride elevator Santa Justa
- Visit Carmo Convent
- Coffee at Brasileira
- Head to Chiamo area for dinner at Largo*

Day 2: Belém

- Head to Belém quarter
- Jerónimos Monastery
- Visit Belém Tower
- Snack or lunch at Pasteis de Belém
- Visit Oceanario
- Dinner at Alma*

Day 3: Day of day trips

- Drive to Cascais for sightseeing
- Lunch at Fortaleza do Guincho*
- Drive to Cabo da Roca for sightseeing in the cape area
- Drive to Azenhas do Mar for a visit to the mirador
- Head back to Lisboa
- Dinner at Baiuca Fado House*

Day 4: Cristo Rei

- Drive to Almada or take ferry ride from Cais do Sodre station to see Cristo Rei monument
- Return to Lisboa for lunch at Tavares*
- Shopping in the Baixa district

Day 5: Mafra, Sintra or both

- Drive to either Mafra or Sintra for the day
- If in Sintra, eat lunch at Gspot
- Drive back Lisboa
- Go to Feira da Ladra flea market (Tuesday and Saturday only)
- Dinner anywhere in Alfama quarter

Area Map



Lisbon Map

1. LX Boutique Hotel
2. Commerce Square
3. Elevator of Santa Justa
4. Carmo Convent
5. Belém Tower
6. Brasileira
7. Pasteis de Belém
8. The Jeronimos Monastery
9. Castle of São Jorge
10. Rua Augusta
11. Cathedral of Lisbon
12. Oceanario
13. Cristo Rei
14. Beluça "Fado House"
15. Tavares
16. Tasca da Esquina
17. Manifesto
18. Largo
19. Alma
20. LUX
21. Cinco
22. Bed Room
23. Incognito
24. Kremlin
25. Silk Club





As the capital city of Portugal, Lisboa is an enormous place that has so much to do and see. Every restaurant in Lisboa served incredible plates that changed my gastronomic education forever. You can't go to Lisboa and not go to Pastéis de Belém. Try their famous pastries and amazing coffee. Dieters beware of the temptation in Portugal!

After visiting, I also realized that this is one of the hilliest cities in Portugal, very similar to the hills in Porto, Portugal. As far as nightlife, Bairro Alto is an incredible place to go out and has something for everyone. The architecture in Lisboa is very striking. So many distinctive cultures have existed here before, and have left their marks on the buildings, roads, and monuments that still stand today. The mix of vivid colors with the modern tram system flying through the streets was especially memorable. Another must-see is the Baiuca Fado House, an entertaining place featuring the typical music of Portugal. The owner is a real testament to loving one's job.

Overall, it is very easy to get around on foot in Lisboa, making it a pedestrian's dream come true. If you must leave the center of the city, you can take the metro, or grab a taxi. Lisboa is situated right smack in the center of Portugal, making it a short distance from surrounding areas featured in this issue. I recommend renting a car if you have the opportunity so that you can escape the bustling city and enjoy nearby quiet towns where you will catch some beautiful

scenery and have your taste buds explode. Whether it is architecture, nightlife, attractions or food, Lisboa proves to offer the very best of it all.



Gilded cathedrals, old buildings clinging to hillsides, angular modern architecture and of course, sweet Port wine all greet you in Porto, Portugal's second largest city. Overlooking the Douro River, Oporto, as it is known in English, was founded as an important port city between Lisbon and Braga.

With its hilly streets and medieval flair, the city serves as a link between the modern day and the more ancient traditions. In the last twenty years, improvements to the Metro and bridge systems have modernized the city but the historical churches, squares and monuments still retain their old-world charm. One of the most ancient European cities, its city center was classified as a World Heritage site in 1996. The center consists of the outer "Protected Area," a 14th-century Romanesque wall, and the inner "Classified Area," a medieval borough.

On every street corner, visitors will find numerous monuments, including the She Changes sculpture by [Janet Echelman](#) on the Waterfront Plaza of [Matosinhos](#), that prove Porto's reputation as an artsy and architectural city.

The city is also well known for its biggest export, Port wine. Produced exclusively in the Douro Valley, this sweet, fortified wine is typically served with dessert, and can be found at many of the restaurants in town.

Walking is the best way to explore the city and its historic stone buildings. Public

transportation makes it easy to get around Porto. The city's Metro network has five lines and is complimented by a network of buses, trams and trolleys. Another option is to take a cruise along the Douro River and see central Porto from another perspective while taking in its six bridges.

Nestled along the Mediterranean, Porto's climate features warm, dry summers and cool, rainy winters. During the summer, the nearby beaches provide a refreshing escape from the heat of the city. In winter, high temperatures average 57°F (14°C) and it rarely reaches freezing. During the summer, highs hover around 74°F (23°C) on average, with lots of sunshine.

In this guide, you will find all of the attractions I recommend for Porto. I experienced all of them during my visit to Portugal in November 2010. As part of a new feature in our 2012 DBH Guide series, at the end of this guide you will find a sample itinerary for your trip.

The following websites are invaluable resources for first-time visitors:

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.portoturismo.pt

www.gooporto.com

Hotel Infante Sagres



In the center of Porto is Hotel Infante Sagres, an icon of design and the city's leading boutique hotel. Located meters away from City Hall, this five-star hotel offers all the usual amenities while being located in the middle of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Hotel Infante Sagres is also just a short walk from the stellar art district, the river and numerous bars and shops.



The hotel was built in 1951 as a guesthouse for a textile manufacturer's clients. Since then, it has hosted the Dalai Lama, Prince Edward of England, the Queen of the Netherlands and the music legend, Bob Dylan. It was completely refurbished in the 1990s and was brought up to modern hotel standards.

The interior is reminiscent of an elaborate palace with polished stone, stained glass, tile work and baroque design. The 73 elegant European-style rooms feature large living spaces, antique furniture and warm accent colors. Rooms also have large en-suite bathrooms, double glazed windows, and local and satellite TV.

The hotel's amenities include breakfast, safe deposit boxes inside each of the rooms, baby sitting services, children's facilities, concierge, banquet halls, a doctor on call, dry cleaning, a gift shop, internet access including WiFi, laundry service, elevator, non-smoking rooms, and 24-hour room service.



The hotel houses the Boca do Lobo (Wolf's Mouth) restaurant featuring the cuisine of renowned Chef Albano Lourenco, an incredible Port wine list and a menu of several original cocktails. Boca do Lobo is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Hotel Infante Sagres also boasts a delightful courtyard, bar, sun terrace and covered parking. The restaurant offers an outdoor terrace for alfresco dining.

For those who need some extra help relaxing, the Angkor Wat Spa Room offers hot stone massages, facials, sea salt massages, reflexology, shiatsu massages and other treatments in an lovely oriental-style room.

Info:

Praça Dona Filipa de Lencastre
nº 62 4050-259 Oporto, Portugal
+351 223 398 500

www.hotelinfantesagres.pt

bookings@hotelinfantesagres.pt

See's and Do's

Palácio da Bolsa



A designated UNESCO World Heritage Site, Palácio da Bolsa is located in the Infante D. Henrique Square in the center of Porto. It was built in the 19th century by Porto's Commercial Association and features a neoclassical design by several artists. Classified as a national monument, it took three generations of artists and craftsmen to complete.

While the inside could be mistaken for a royal palace, it was originally built as a national stock exchange to impress European investors. Inside, visitors will find a spectacular glass dome in the center covering the Hall of Nations, an elaborate staircase, numerous paintings and waiting room, as well as some very elegant décor. The palace regularly hosts debates, auctions, exhibitions, shows, and business meetings.

Rua Santa Catarina



Rua Santa Catarina is the main pedestrian walkway in Porto and is a hot spot for stores, cafés and boutiques. Wander down this path to soak in the stunning local architecture and window shop at your leisure. Locals and tourists alike frequent this main Porto street. Most shops are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Bolhão Market



Bustling and colorful, the Bolhão Market is the best known of Porto's markets. Located on Rua Sá da Bandeira in the center of Porto, this two-story market was originally built in the 19th century. It currently features vendors selling fruit, cheese, bread and other baked goods. It is also a great place to see the latest fresh catch from the ocean and sample some typical Porto snacks. Conveniently located near Porto's central train station, Sao Bento, it is also close to Rua Santa Catarina.

Porto Se Cathedral



Porto's largest church features paintings, ornate carvings and a Romanesque rose window. Completed in the 12th century, the cathedral has been remodeled and added on to over time. It houses a special collection of 150 liturgical ornaments, hangings, books and silverware from the 15th to 19th century. Don't miss the gorgeous 18th century blue and white Portuguese tiles on the outside of the cloisters. The Canticle of Canticles, which is a Bible story from the book of Solomon, inspired their design.

During the baroque period, Porto Se Cathedral was completely remodeled, but visitors can

still see the façade of a more primitive fortress church along with the old battlements. Inside the cathedral, visitors will find gothic cloisters and religious sculptures from the 14th and 18th centuries. An admission fee is required to see the cloisters. The church's terrace offers nice views of old Porto's rooftops.

Clérigos Tower



Standing tall at 76 meters, this 18th century tower was Portugal's highest when completed in 1763. Designed by architect Nicolau Nasoni, Clérigos Tower has six floors and a 225-step stairway leading up to the balconies. The top offers a spectacular view of Porto and some amazing photo opportunities.

Because of the baroque bell tower's prominence along Porto's skyline, sailors often used it as a guide when entering Cais da Ribeira. Next door, you can find a fine example of baroque and rococo architectural styles at the oval-shaped Igreja dos Clérigos. The church features a pipe organ from 1774 and elaborate engravings.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Church of San Francisco



While not the largest cathedral in town, the Church of San Francisco is considered by many to be Porto's most beautiful. The church's simple 14th century gothic and baroque shell belies its lavish, gilded interior. Pure gold — reportedly 400 grams of it — covers arches, cherubs and columns inside. The Church of San Francisco is one of the few remaining medieval structures in Porto and its only gothic church.

Its interior was remodeled with baroque features in the 17th and 18th centuries. Elegant carvings create a beautiful golden box design. Another interesting feature is the church's catacombs, which still hold bodies to this day. The small museum across the square is also

worth a visit to see artifacts from the former monastery.

Riviera of Porto



The Riviera is one of the most recognizable areas of Porto and is filled with restaurants, hotels and nightlife. This is a great spot to find souvenirs. Board a river cruise to experience Porto from the water and watch a spectacular sunset. Nighttime brings bustling bars and restaurants filled with locals.

River Cruise Douroacima



To see a different side of Porto, take a boat ride along the Douro River. Two different tours are offered – a 50-minute tour that highlights Porto's six bridges and an all-day cruise that tours the countryside and valley.

For those looking to maximize their time in Porto, the 50-minute tour is a great way to get the experience and sights in a short time.

Graham's Port Lodge



Graham's Port Lodge is one of the oldest Port wine producers and should be your first stop in Vila Nova de Gaia. Brothers William and John Graham founded W & J Graham's in 1820 as an independent family business. In 1890, the lodge was built to store and mature wine under the best possible conditions, inside its cool tunnels.

Today, guests can choose from one of four tours of the Lodge and sample their wines, which are some of the best on Portugal. The Lodge's granite walls house more than 3,500 casks of port as well as many large oak tunnels, vats and an extensive vintage port cellar. The location also offers grand views of Porto across the Douro River. Visitors may sample wine and ports at the Lodge's wine bar.



Another must-see port maker is Croft. Founded more than three hundred years ago, the House of Croft was originally known as Phayre & Bradley but was renamed in 1736 after John Croft, a member of a distinguished wine merchant family, joined the company. In the 19th century, Croft returned to England, but left a strong mark on the business. Today, the company is owned and operated by the descendants of two Port wine families, the Yeatmans and the Fladgates.

The Croft Port wine Lodge is open all year for tours and tastings except for on December 25th and January 1st. Admission for the tour is €3. It begins at 10 a.m., and offered about every 35 minutes throughout the day. After touring the wine lodges, visitors may taste three Croft ports. Along with a remarkable wine tasting experience, they also offer delicious chocolate pairings.

Taylor's Port wine Lodges



Taylor's Port wine Lodges, another of the 50 or so Port makers in Porto, is one of the finest Port shippers. Taylor's wine cellars lodge in the heart of the historic area of Vila Nova de Gaia, across the river from the old city centre of Porto, and house most of the company's extensive reserves of wood-aged Port as well its vintage Port cellars. Taylor's established in Porto in 1692.

The €3 tour takes visitors into the history of the company and offers a taste of their products. At the end of the tour, visitors will be able to sample three different wines, Chip Dry – Extra Dry White, Late Bottled Vintage (LBV) and Tawny 10 year old in the elegant Library Room. Taylor's also offers chocolate pairings with the wine and olive oil from Quinta de Vargellas, as well as partake in workshops. Tours begin every 35 to 40 minutes. For non-drinkers, a gorgeous garden and terrace offer a spectacular view of Porto.



Located in the historic center of Porto, this special Port wine bar has been operating since 2000. Inside a welcoming brick and wooden tasting room, visitors can sample more than 240 different bottles of Port. The bar hosts a wide variety, from the most basic (white-Ruby Tawny) to the most sophisticated (Tawnies 30 and 40 years old vintages). The majority of Vinologia's Ports come from small, independent producers. The store and tasting room allow for easy conversation with fellow visitors and total immersion into the wine. The tasting room also offers plates of cheese, dried fruit, nuts and chocolate desserts.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Restaurants

Café Guarany



Established in 1933, the amazing Café Guarany is located in the center of the city, only two blocks away from the Hotel Infante Sagres. It has always been known as the musicians' coffee shop. The café restaurant consists of one large room with multiple seating areas for diners. One some nights, patrons can enjoy live Fado music or energetic Cuban musical acts.

Upon arrival, the friendly wait staff may offer White Port and show visitors how to properly drink it. Highlights included the codfish, filet mignon and their version of the Francesinha topped with shrimp.

Café Guarany is open daily from 9 a.m. to midnight.

Info:

Avenida dos Aliados
nº 89/85, Porto, Portugal
+351 223 321 272

www.cafeguarany.com

Recs: *Bacalhau* (codfish), filet mignon, *francesinha*; a traditional Portuguese sandwich originally from Porto made with bread, meat, thick layer of tomato sauce and covered with cheese.

Best Time: Lunch or dinner.

Café Majestic



One of Porto's more interesting spots is Café Majestic, which opened in 1921 under the name Café Elite. Located on Rua de Santa Catarina, this luxurious café features wooden furnishings and an ornate ceiling that echo times past; when the location was a 19th century fixture of the city, Café Lusitano. It was a place where the upper crust of Porto could mingle over coffee and board games in the mornings; and Port wine during dinner. With its chandeliers and private concerts, Café Lusitano was one of the city's "it" spots during the 1850s.

More than 160 years later, under the name of Café Majestic, this historical restaurant is restored to its original splendor. Guests can experience a piece of history when they enter through the grand glass doors. Even the exterior of the building has been restored to showcase the original craftsmanship of the time. Menu items include traditional plates of codfish and duck, but most people stop by for their mid-morning caffeine fixes. Guests can dine inside, out on the sidewalk terrace or the winter garden courtyard. Inside, there is also a special exhibition room for visitors to explore.

The café is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as tea and coffee all day long. Prices are on the expensive side because of its historical and architectural significance.

Café Majestic is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to midnight.

Info:
Rua Santa Catarina

nº 112 4000-442 Porto, Portugal

+351 222 003 887

www.cafemajestic.com

Best time: Anytime.

O Paparico



O Paparico is a traditional restaurant with a modern twist. The main concept revolves around enjoying mouth-watering food the way it is meant to be eaten; without too much garnish or sauce to mask the natural flavors of fresh ingredients. Owner and manager, Jose Cambas, puts his soul into creating unique dishes and an intimate ambiance for his guests. The dining room, housed within antique stone walls, features crisp white linens, elegant wooden furnishings and traditional Portuguese tile work. A relaxing ambiance and mood lighting make it the perfect spot for a romantic dinner for two.

The feeling of hospitality that Jose Cambas brings to O Paparico is unmatched. Staff members will put you at ease as you enjoy the essence of new age Portuguese cuisine. This upscale eatery is a great way to experience the uninterrupted flavors of Portuguese gastronomy. Do order a bottle of house red wine and save room for O Paparico's exquisite desserts.

O Paparico is open Tuesday through Saturday 7:30 p.m. to midnight.

Info

Rua de Costa Cabral

nº 2343 4200 Porto, Portugal

+351 225 400 548

www.opaparico.com

geral@opaparico.com

Best time: Dinner

Recs: Duck tartar, raw codfish, octopus tartar, grilled octopus, lamb with wild mushrooms,

tangerine sorbet ice with potato vodka, homemade ice cream with pop rocks.



Yuko Tavern is a chilled out, rustic eatery and bar owned and managed by Sergio Cambas. Its laid-back ambiance and old-fashioned dishes make this a great choice for those in the mood for no-fuss, no-frills food and drinks. This is where locals and tourists converge to get their carnivorous francesinha sandwich fixes. The hallmark ingredients of a traditional francesinha are: cured ham, fresh sausage, Iberian ham, steak, cheese and tomato between slices of freshly baked white bread. Each mountainous sandwich is layered with several layers of sliced cheese before it is melted to perfection in the oven. Once hot and toasty, it is smothered in a tomato sauce and topped with a fried egg. These sandwiches are not for vegans or the faint of heart (or stomach); each one packs a whopping 1,500 calories! Forget about your diet and order a cold, crisp beer with your savory francesinha. You can work off the calories later.

Yuko Tavern is open Monday through Saturday 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Info:

Rua de Costa Cabral

nº 2331 4200 Porto, Portugal

+351 225 482 291

www.yuko.com.pt

Recs: francesinha

Best time: Dinner

O Pai Ramiro



O Pai Ramiro literally translates into My Father Ramiro. It is a family-owned restaurant dedicated to its founder, Ramiro. His portrait hangs on the wall overlooking the minimal, yet contemporary dining room. Longer than it is wide, O Pai Ramiro seats 35 people and serves up traditional and international fare. The specialty of the house, however, is seafood. Try it grilled, baked, fried or raw; you won't be able to resist the seductive smells emanating from the kitchen. Every plate is made with love from Ramiro's family to yours.

O Pai Ramiro is closed Sunday evenings and Mondays.

The restaurant is closed on Mondays and for dinner on Sundays.

Info:

Rua Nova de S. Crispim 286

nº 4000 363 Porto, Portugal

+351 220 994 815

Recs: Seafood empanada, octopus tartar, linguini with clams, homemade chocolate cake with dessert wine.

Best time: Lunch

Foz Velha



The old town of Foz, where the Douro River intercepts the Atlantic Ocean, is home to the boutique restaurant, Foz Velha. Foz Velha is considered one of the best in Portugal because of its remarkable Port wine selection and the many culinary talents of Chef Marco Gomes. Inside Foz Velha, guests are greeted with a chic dining room of vibrant pinks and purples and intimate lighting provided by handsome chandeliers. Every dish is expertly crafted and beautifully plated, giving Foz Velha its signature approach to dining.

For those with cash to burn, sample one of the oldest Port wines in the house; a 1942 bottle. There are also bottles from the 1960s and 1990s to satisfy your inner sommelier. Here is where traditional Portuguese food gets a new look and where your taste buds will explode.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner: Monday 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Tuesday through Thursday 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. to midnight.

Info:

Esplanada do Castelo

nº 141 4150 Porto, Portugal

+351 226 154 178

www.fozvelha.com

mail@fozvelha.com

Recs: Fried Quail Egg, meat roll, seared codfish filet, rack of lamb

Best time: Dinner

Zé Da Calçada (Amarante)



This is a timeless authentic Portuguese restaurant located in the old part of the town of Amarante, one block east of the main bridge that connects both sides of town. Zé Da Calçada is housed in one of the few buildings that survived Napoleon's rampage in 1809 and serves amazing codfish dishes.

Amarante's location, nestled between the Minho and Douro Rivers and halfway between Porto and Tras-os-Montes, allows Zé Da Calçada access to several of the area's specialty ingredients like veal, chicken and lamb. The restaurant prides itself on its hearty, satisfying dishes and sizeable wine list. Zé Da Calçada also features a great deal of natural charm. Diners who choose to sit out on the terrace overlooking Tamega River can enjoy the mild breeze and collective rustling of the trees on the property. Indoors, diners can also relax in the spacious contemporary dining room. Last and certainly not least, service is stellar! If you are in Amarante, you must dine here.

Info:

Rua 31 de Janeiro

nº 4600-043 Amarante

+351 255 426 814

www.zedacalcada.com

geral@zedacalcada.com

Best time: Lunch

Recs: Codfish, baked lamb, homemade sausage, grilled octopus, pork loin and homemade

sweets.

Marisqueira Mare Cheia (Aveiro)



Marisqueira Mare Cheia is considered one of the best seafood restaurants in the area. It is located one block south of Aveiro's main canal in the center of town, just before the first bridge.

Inside, diners will be greeted by an old-tavern vibe and the rare opportunity to watch their chef prepare each meal. Décor is simple and the atmosphere is laid back, but the real show stopper here is the fresh seafood. Ask any local and they will surely refer you to Marisqueira Mare Cheia. The menu is short and sweet so that only the freshest catch is served. This restaurant is a tasty and affordable place that you will surely want to return to.

Info:

Rua Jose Rabumba

nº 10 Aveiro, Portugal

+351 234 384 030

Recs: Oysters, sea bass, seafood with rice

Best time: Lunch

Day Trips

Aveiro



Aveiro is the Venice of Portugal. Located 40 minutes south of Porto, this small town is known for its salt production, seaweed harvest, and algae exports. Visitors can enjoy rides along the winding canals and waterways on the same boats that were used to harvest algae. When in town, be sure to sample the local pastry Aveiro is known for: *Ovos Moles*, a small almond-shaped creation with a sweet filling.

Several day cruises offer dinner, a walking tour or other excursions. The Douroacima tour went down the Ria, short for Small River, and was a wonderful experience, thanks to the very knowledgeable guides. Douroacima offers several different tours in the Porto area. After the tour, be sure to visit Marisqueria Mare Cheia, which serves a wonderful grilled fish and mussels.

www.portugal-info.net/costaprata/aveiro.htm
www.douroacima.pt

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)



Amarante is a charming valley town located along the river, one hour east of Porto. The town was destroyed by Napoleon's troops in 1809. The only building that survived currently houses the Ze Da Calçada restaurant, which features amazing appetizers and seafood.

The most popular site is the granite São Gonçalo Bridge, which was built in 1790 and spans the River Tâmega.

The church and former monastery of São Gonçalo is another must-see location. The stunning interior features columns and a high altar under which St. Gonçalo, the patron saint of marriage, is buried. According to legend, St. Gonçalo organized matchmaking festivals for women, a tradition that continues to this day. On the first weekend of every June, the Festa de São Gonçalo springs up in Amarante and singles can share heart-shaped cakes. In fact, love is an integral part of the town, since the first part of the city's name, Amar, means love.

Another site to see is a museum dedicated to the life and work of locally-born Cubist artist Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso (1887-1918), one of Portugal's leading 20th-century artists. Visit www.amarante.pt/museu for more information.

[VIDEO: Click Here to Watch! \(Kindle Fire/Tablets/Smartphones\)](#)

Additional Travel Information (Porto)

Time zone: GMT +1

Getting around: Although there are plentiful taxis, buses and trolleys shuttling people all over the city, the Metro do Porto system is a cost effective way to move about. Porto's Metro has five lines and services both the city as well as other towns in the outskirts. A Metro ride will run you about €.90 to €2, depending where you would like to go. Metro cards cost €.50, are rechargeable and are available at each of the stations. The Metro runs daily from 6:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.

See below for information about trains for travel to/from Lisbon and other parts of Portugal.

Shopping: For Europe's big brand stores like H&M and Mango, head to Rua de Santa Catarina. There you will also find a small shopping mall. Rua do Boavista is the longest avenue in the city and is home to fine fashion boutiques and stately homes. For a one-of-a-kind shopping experience, head to A Vida Portuguesa (Rua Galeria de Paris, 20). Housed on the second floor of a 19th century fabric shop, this store is filled with charming, vintage-inspired souvenirs, toiletries, fashion accessories and ceramics. To satisfy the designer in you, there is the Bombarda Mall (CCB) for furniture, interior accents and art shops.

Hours of operation: Typical hours of operation are from 9am-1pm and from 3pm-7pm Monday through Friday and Saturdays from 9am-1pm. Museums are closed on Mondays.

Nightlife:

Overview of Nightlife



Porto charms visitors during the day and entertains them at night. With its wide array of clubs and bars, this city will not disappoint those looking for a great night out.

The hub of nightlife is the [Ribeira](#) district in the old downtown area of the city. This district is filled with a large selection of small cafés, bars and clubs, all within walking distance of each other. If one gets too crowded, simply move on to the next. Rua Galeria de Paris and Rua Candido dos Reis are two of the area's liveliest streets, and the same is true when the sun goes down and everyone's in the mood to be sipping at local bars and lounges. The Ribeira district also features live fado music venues and casual bars.

Like other Portuguese, the locals of Porto enjoy a late dinner and usually hit the town after 11 p.m. Dress to impress and be prepared for a long night of fun because many parties will last until sunrise.

For those looking for an intense clubbing experience, the [Foz](#) district and the Matosinhos suburb are it. The two best clubs in Porto, Estado Novo and Industria, can be found here. Estado Novo, located in Matosinhos, is near the ocean and is one of the most popular clubs in the area. Enjoy a mix of house and pop music in the large dance area and five bars or catch your breath on the chairs and sofas on the upper level, overlooking the dance floor. Industria boasts a world-renowned DJ throwing down a mix of reggae, house, and electro music. Partygoers can dance until sunrise with a crowd of over a thousand in this fast-paced, intense club.

Two local favorites are Twin's and Act. Twin's, one of the first clubs in Portugal, caters to Porto's elite with its chic interior and super modern ambiance. Act, located on Rua de Manuel Pinto de Azevedo, is known for its fashion and art events as well as its mix of house, pop, and hip-hop music.

Best time to go: March through October. The Festa de São João, or Saint John Festival, takes place on June 23rd or 24th. It is a religious feast day widely celebrated throughout Portugal during last week of June, but in Porto the festivities are citywide. Everyone crowds the streets for lively block parties, outdoor music concerts, barbecues, firework shows and of course, wine drinking. If you want to behave particularly like a local, be sure to also wave a strand of garlic bulbs. The festival is a tribute to St. John the Baptist and has been a tradition here for over 600 years!

Nearest airport:

Porto Airport (OPO)

www.porto-airport.com

+351 0229 432400

Lisbon Portela Airport (LIS)

www.lisbon-airport.com

+351 0218 413500

Train:

Alfa express and regional trains

www.cp.pt

+351 211 023000

Car rentals:

Europcar +351 229 482452

Hertz +351 223 395300

Sixt +351 223 439240

Tours:

Panoramic Porto Tour

www.viator.com

Yellow Bus Tours (hop on hop off).

<http://www.yellowbustours.com/en>

Douro River Cruises, Wine Tours, Cultural Experiences and more.

www.portotours.com

Pass:

Porto Card

www.portoturismo.pt

Porto's discount card offers discounts to museums, monuments, shops and restaurants. The price of the card depends on how long it lasts; cost ranges from €5 for 24 hours to €21.50 for three days. The card is available at the Porto Tourist Information Offices, several railway stations and the airport.

Telephone numbers:

Country code +35

Emergency Line 112

Tourism Board +351 2239 3470

Metro do Porto +351 22501000

Radio Taxi +351 225021132

List of helpful websites from this guide:

www.portoturismo.pt

www.visitportugal.com

www.portugal.com

www.gooporto.com

www.hotelinfantessagres.pt

www.amarante.pt/museu

Other recommended accommodations:

\$ Star Inn Porto Design Hotel

\$\$ AC Hotel Porto by Marriott

\$\$\$ Pousada do Porto – Palacio do Freixo

For a complete list of historic pousadas throughout Portugal, visit www.pousadas.pt.

Other places of interest:

Casa de Musica

Avenida da Boavista, 604-610
4149-071 Porto, Portugal
www.casadamusica.com

This building, designed by renowned architect Rem Koolhaas, is dedicated to music culture. Concerts, workshops and experimental projects are always being held here. The space is innovative and truly original in that it is 100% devoted to musical arts. Visit the website for concert schedules and to purchase tickets.

Crystal Palace Gardens

Rua D. Manuel II

This elegant landscaped park has the iconic domed pavilion known as the Crystal Palace. The original dome was built in 1956 by landscape designer Emilio David, but has since been replaced by the Pavilhao Rosa Mota, which is used as a sports arena. The garden complex is comprised of multiple distinct gardens including Jardim de Sentimentos (garden of feelings) and Jardim do Roseiral (garden of roses). The Crystal Palace Gardens offer sweeping views of the Douro River.

Foz District

West Porto

The Foz District is an oceanfront neighborhood known for its palm-lined promenades, scenic views and numerous sculptures. Although not a popular area for swimming because of the rocky shore, it is a great area for a stroll or a visit to a stylish café. The Foz District is home to the 1661 Castelo do Queigo fort and Parque de Cidade, which is Porto's largest park.

Lello Bookshop

Rua das Carmelitas 144
4050-161 Porto, Portugal

Bibliophiles, and those who simply appreciate striking architecture, must stop by Lello Livraria, a spot many call the most beautiful bookstore in the world. Its focal point is an ornate wooden winding staircase bathed in red carpeting. A five-minute walk from downtown Porto, old and new books in Portuguese and English fill its shelves.

Romantic Museum of Quinta da Macieirinha

220 Rua de Entre quintas
Porto, Portugal

Immerse yourself in the 19th century at the Romantic Museum. Its exhibits attempt to recreate aristocratic life city during the age of romanticism. Housed in a 19th century mansion, the museum reproduces the interior of a 19th century house with decorative art of the period. The museum, which opened in 1972, is located in one of the most stunning gardens of the city, the Crystal Palace Gardens (Jardins do Palacio de Cristal).

Serralves Museum

Rua D. Joao Castro, 210

www.serralves.pt

The Serralves Museum, housed in a striking building designed by architect Alvaro Siza Vieira, has multiple galleries exhibiting contemporary art. The museum grounds also feature a pink art deco building and 44 acres of manicured gardens. The complex is considered to be one of Porto's top cultural centers. The Serralves Museum is open April to September from Tuesday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. During winter (October to March) it is open Tuesday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission to the museum and park is 7. Those 18 years and under enter free of charge.

Suggested Itinerary

Day 1: Touring old Porto

- Visit Porto Cathedral
- Visit to Clérigos Tower
- Walk down Rua Santa Catarina
- Visit to Bolhão Market
- Coffee break at Café Majestic
- Lunch at Café Guaranay

- Visit to San Francisco Church and afternoon walk around medieval quarter

- Dinner at O Papparico*

Day 2: Wining around

- Head to Vila Nova de Gaia for Port wine tasting. Choose from Graham's Port Lodge, Croft Porto, Vinologia and Taylor's Port for an unforgettable morning sampling Porto wines
- Lunch anywhere in the Vila Nova de Gaia area
- Visit to Church of San Francisco and visit to Palácio da Bolsa or stroll through the Foz District
- Dinner at Yuko Tavern*

Day 3: By the water

- Drive to Aveiro for sightseeing and/or beach day
- Lunch at Marisqueira Mare Cheis*
- Return to Porto for a Douro River cruise
- Dinner at O Pai Ramiro*

Day 4: A day in Amarente

- Drive to Amarante for sightseeing
- Lunch at Ze Da Calcada*
- Return to Porto
- Dinner at Foz Velha*

Activities marked with an asterisk () require prior booking.*

Area Map



Porto Map



- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Hotel Infante Sagres | 6. Clerigos Tower | 11. Croft VC | 16. O Paparico | 21. Industria | 26. Club 3c |
| 2. Palacio da Bolsa | 7. Church of San Francisco | 12. Taylor's Port Wine Lodges | 17. Yuko Tavern | 22. Twins | 27. Villa Community |
| 3. Rua Santa Catarina | 8. Riviera of Porto | 13. Vinologia | 18. O Pai Ramiro | 23. Act | 28. Plan B |
| 4. Bolhao Market | 9. River Cruise Duoroacima | 14. Cafe Guarany | 19. Foz Velha | 24. Via Rapida | |
| 5. Porto Se Cathedral | 10. Graham's Port Lodge | 15. Cafe Majestic | 20. Estado Novo | 25. Bazaar | |



For me, Porto is the most incredible city in all of Portugal. A simple stroll will showcase the city's beautiful architecture and comforting atmosphere.

Portuguese food is a huge aspect of the city, with the national culture and flair reverberating throughout the flavor and texture of the food. The restaurants were all amazing. O Papparico was memorable for its traditional “no sauce” rule. Yuko Tavern is a great place to learn how locals drink traditional Super Bock beer and how an authentic francesinha should taste. Both restaurants are owned by the Cambas brothers and share a kitchen. A short taxi ride from the city center can take you to either O Papparico or Yuko Tavern. O Pai Ramiro had the best clam pasta I have ever had. At Café Guarany, visitors can sample several types of francesinhas; each given its own special touch. Foz Velha stood out as having an extensive collection of Port wines.

The day trips in this guide offer visitors the opportunity to see the surrounding areas. Vila Nova de Gaia contains numerous wineries, where visitors can learn about the bottling process and sample the wine.

Porto has one of Europe's most picturesque riverias. Only two blocks away is Vinologia bar, where you can sample wines from some of the smaller independent local wine producers. The

owner of the bar is well versed in wine and can give you pallet a lesson of a lifetime.
Porto is the type of city that surprises and enchants. It is one of Western Europe's best-kept secrets and a city that cannot be fully understood in just one visit.

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