



Welcome to Portugal!

”Jardim da Europa à beira-mar plantado”

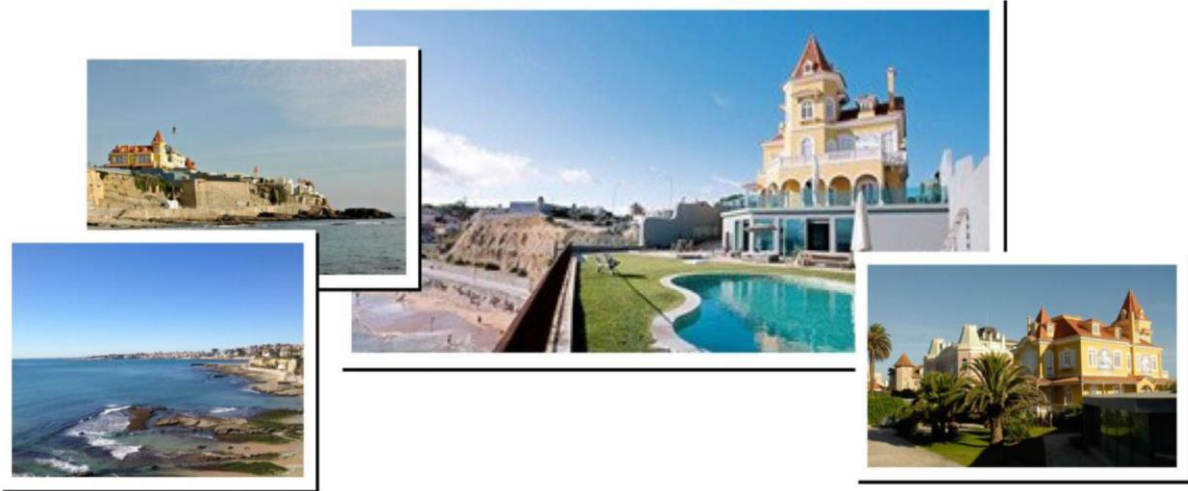
Tomás Ribeiro (1831-1901)

Meet the Capital: Lisbon

You will be landing in Lisbon, one of the oldest cities in the world.

Julius Caesar made it a municipium called Felicitas Julia, adding to the name Olissipo. Ruled by a series of Germanic tribes from the fifth century, it was captured by the Moors in the eighth century. In 1147, the Crusaders under Afonso Henriques (1st Portuguese king) reconquered the city for the Christians and since then it has been a major political, economic, and cultural centre of Portugal. Unlike most capital cities, Lisbon's status as the capital of Portugal has never been granted or confirmed officially – by statute or in written form. Its position as the capital was formed through constitutional convention, making its position as de facto capital a part of the Constitution of Portugal.

Welcome to Villa Sao Paulo!



Villa São Paulo was built in 1911 by Benedita Alves de Mello - a Portuguese lady who made her fortune in Brazil, in the coffee trade. The Villa has several antique tile panels depicting the Portuguese discovery of Brazil, including its first catholic service in the year 1500.

The name of the Villa was inspired by both the city of São Paulo (biggest metropolis of Brazil) and St. Paul (the city's patron saint), to whom the Lady was very devoted. Benedita built the Villa for her large Family Summer gatherings and the choice of Estoril wasn't a coincidence.

At the end of the 19th century King Luís made the town of Cascais his summer home, completely changing the infrastructure of the area, as many more palaces and chalets were built along the coastline. In 1870 Estoril became the place to be for the royal family, aristocrats and high society, and the coastline was soon referred to as the Portuguese Riviera. In 1905 laws changed to allow for grand hotels, casinos, spa resorts, parks and gardens which further increased the coastline's already impressive status. In 1910, when Villa de Sao Paulo were built, a revolution overthrew the Portuguese monarchy and established Portugal as republic for the first time. Over the next decades Estoril became a place for the wealthy to build their summer homes and still today is one of the best places to live in the world!

Villa Sao Paulo is located in the heart of Estoril Coast in S.Joao. The Villa is walking distance from most local attractions including five stunning white sand beaches, shopping area, several supermarkets, the railway station to Lisbon and the Casino Estoril, world famous both for its elegant gambling area, shows, and fine restaurants.

In a few minutes you can go to Estoril (5 min walk), Cascais (20 min walk or 5 min train), Sintra (10 min drive) and Lisbon city center (30 min drive or train).

Estoril Coast

Villa Sao Paulo is located in the heart of the Estoril Coast in Sao Joao do Estoril

In a few minutes you can walk to Estoril (5 min), and Cascais (20 min). Right outside the Villa you will find a boardwalk that will lead you along beautiful beaches connecting the Villa to the center of Cascais. We highly recommend that everyone take this beautiful walk at some point during the stay. The terrain is flat and comfortable to walk on.

Estoril



Right after Sao Joao do Estoril where the Villa is located, you can find the village of Estoril.

Estoril used to be a significant fishing port, and due to the vision of Fausto Cardoso de Figueiredo and his business partner Augusto Carreira de Sousa, it became an international tourist destination both during and after the WWII. During this time a high number of globe trotting spies and dignitaries in exile came to Estoril and frequented the Casino Estoril; the inspiration for the original Casino Royal.

You can walk from Villa Sao Paulo to Casino Estoril in under 10 minutes if you can resist the beach or sitting outside on the boardwalk in one of the many small cafes serving delicious treats and libations. Sometimes those 10 minutes can take a very fun half or even full day!

Cascais



Further down the boardwalk you'll find Cascais, a coastal town 30 km west of Lisbon, with about 35,000 residents. It is a cosmopolitan suburb of the Portuguese capital and one of the richest municipalities in Portugal. The former fishing village gained fame as a resort for Portugal's royal family in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Nowadays, it is a popular vacation spot for both Portuguese and foreign tourists. Cascais has a multitude of restaurants, bars, cafes, and shops as well as a very quaint city center. Just a few minutes from Cascais is Guincho, a beautiful beach made famous by James Bond. You can rent bicycles, scooters, or simply take the boardwalk and stroll along side the Atlantic ocean.

Sintra: Royal Summer Residence

Sintra

Sintra is a town located in the Greater Lisboa subregion. The town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site on account of its 19th century Romantic architecture. In 1809 Lord Byron wrote to his friend Francis Hodgson, "I must just observe that the village of Cintra in Estremadura is the most beautiful in the world."

Landmarks include the fabulous Pena Palace (19th c.), and the castle Castelo dos Mouros (8th or 9th c. and reconstructed in the 19th c.) with a breath-taking view of the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park. It also includes the summer residence of the kings of Portugal, the Palácio Nacional de Sintra (largely 15th/16th c.), in the town center. The Sintra Mountain Range (Serra de Sintra), one of the largest parks in the Lisbon area, is also a major tourist attraction.

If you are interested in antiques, Sintra holds coveted treasures from 16-19th c. from hand painted tiles to furniture in its many antique stores.

On a gastronomical note, make sure to stop by Piriquita the most well known pastry shop in town, and ask for one, or both, of the famous local pastries: travesseiro and queijada.



Palácio Quinta da Regaleira

This interesting landmark is classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO within the "Cultural Landscape of Sintra". A fascinating palace with exquisite architectural details, it consists of a romantic palace and chapel, and a luxurious park featuring lakes, grottoes, wells, benches, fountains, and a vast array of amazing constructions. The palace is also known as "Palace of Monteiro the Millionaire", from the nickname of its first owner,

António Augusto Carvalho Monteiro. Monteiro wished to build a bewildering place where he could gather symbols that would reflect his interests and ideologies. With the assistance of the Italian architect Luigi Manini, he designed the 4-hectare estate with its enigmatic buildings, believed to hide symbols related to alchemy, Masonry, the Knights Templar, and the Rosicrucians. The architecture of the estate evokes Roman, Gothic, Renaissance and Manueline architectural styles. The construction of the current estate commenced in 1904 and most of it was concluded by 1910.



Sintra: Royal Summer Residence

Palácio Nacional da Pena



The Pena National Palace constitutes one of the major expressions of 19th century Romanticism in the world. It stands on the top of a hill above the town, and on a clear day it can be easily seen from Lisbon. The palace is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and one of the Seven Wonders of Portugal. The palace's history started in the Middle Ages when a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Pena was built on the top of the hill above Sintra. For centuries Pena was a small, quiet place for meditation, housing a maximum of 18 monks. In the 18th century the monastery was severely damaged by lightning, however, it was the Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755, that took the heaviest toll on the monastery, reducing it to ruins. Nonetheless, the chapel escaped without significant damage. The ruins astonished young prince Ferdinand and in 1838, as King consort, he decided to acquire the old monastery. He then set out to transform the remains of the monastery into a palace that would serve as a summer residence for the Portuguese royal family. The commission for the Romantic style rebuilding was given to Lieutenant-General and mining engineer Baron Wilhelm Ludwig von Eschwege, a German amateur architect, much traveled and whom likely had knowledge of several castles along the Rhine river. The construction of the Pena palace took place between 1842–1854, although it was almost finished in 1847.



Palácio de Monserrate

Is an exotic palatial villa located near Sintra, the traditional summer resort of the Portuguese court. It was built in 1858 for Sir Francis Cook, an English baronet created visconde de Monserrate by King Luís. Monserrate turned to an English architect, James Knowles Jr., for designs. Though its Moghul-inspired details are unique in Portugal, its eclecticism is a fine example of the Sintra Romanticism



Sintra: Royal Summer Residence

Castelo dos Mouros (Moors' Castle)



Is located on a high hill overlooking Sintra. As implied by its name, the castle, is of Moorish origin, but the current building is the result of a romantic renovation carried out in the 19th century. The views from its walls and towers are breathtaking.

Originally, the castle was built by the Moors, possibly between the 9th and 10th centuries. Arab chronicles depict the Sintra region as being very rich in cultivated fields. Its castle was one of the most important in the surroundings.

In 1147, after the conquest of Lisbon by King Afonso Henriques, the Moorish garrison of the castle surrendered without resistance. Afonso Henriques promoted the development of the region by granting a foral (letter of feudal rights) to the inhabitants of Sintra and its castle in 1154. The decline of the castle began in the 15th century, when most of the population settled downhill, in today's old quarter of Sintra. In the 16th century, the castle lost all military relevance and was abandoned by its last inhabitants.



Palacio dos Seteais

The Seteais Palace is a neoclassical palace and since 1954 a luxury hotel, restaurant and tourist attraction.

The Seteais Palace was built between 1783 and 1787 for the Dutch consul Daniel Gildemeester, on lands granted by the Marquis of Pombal (prime minister to King Joseph). The consul chose to build his house on the border of an elevation, from which the vast landscape around the Sintra hills could be admired. The palace was surrounded with a large garden with fruit trees which was later remodeled following romantic trends. The old and the new wings were connected in 1802 by a neoclassical arch, built in honour of Prince regent John VI and Princess Carlota Joaquina, who visited the palace that year. The monumental arch is decorated with the bronze effigies of the royal pair and a commemorative Latin inscription. The walls of several inner rooms of the palace were decorated with frescos attributed to French painter Jean Pillement and his followers. Painted motifs include exotic vegetation and mythological characters, typical of the neoclassical taste. After changing hands several times, the palace was acquired by the Portuguese government in 1946 and its original characteristics have been preserved.

Cabo da Roca & Guincho: Most Western Point in Europe

Cabo da Roca - Most Western Point in Europe

The cape is located within the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park. In fact, it is an extension of the Sintra mountains into the Atlantic Ocean. It forms on the westernmost extent of mainland Portugal and continental Europe (and by definition the Eurasian land mass). Its location (38°47'N 9°30'W) is inscribed on a stone plaque, located on a monument at the site.



Guincho Beach

This beach was famously featured in the pre-titles sequence of the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, wherein James Bond rescues Contessa Teresa de Vicenzo from a suicide attempt and foils off two attackers in the surf.

The beach still looks as it did in 1969. In the 90's, Guincho was one of the locations for the windsurfing world cup. Today, several sporting events are held here regularly. It's also a very popular beach with the locals and often crowded on Summer weekends.



Boca do Inferno

Portuguese for Hell's Mouth, Boca do Inferno, is a chasm located in the seaside cliffs connecting Guincho to Cascais. The sea water has access to the deep bottom of the chasm and vigorously strikes its rocky walls, making it a popular tourist attraction.

Guincho is also home to a number of fantastic seafood restaurants where you can enjoy the view of the majestic Atlantic ocean.



Belem



Belém

Belém is a parish of Lisbon, located 6km west of the present city centre. Its name is derived from the Portuguese for Bethlehem. Belém is famous as the place from which many of the great Portuguese explorers set off on their voyages of discovery. In particular, it is the place from which Vasco da Gama departed for India in 1497.

It is also a former royal residence and features the 17th-18th century Belém Palace, former royal residence and now occupied by the President of Portugal. Also nearby, in the Ajuda Parish, you can find the Ajuda Palace. Although construction begun in 1802 the palace was never completed.



Torre de Belém

Perhaps Belém's most famous feature is its tower, Torre de Belém, whose image is much used by Lisbon's tourist board. The tower was built as a fortified lighthouse late in the reign of King Manuel (1515-1520) to guard the entrance to the port at Belém. It stood on a little island on right side of the Tagus river, surrounded by water.

Mosteiro dos Jerónimos

Belém's other major historical building is the Jerónimos Monastery, which the Torre de Belém was built partly to defend. The building of the monastery, an example of Manueline architecture, was begun in 1502 by King and took 50 years to complete. It was built as a monument to Vasco da Gama's successful voyage to India and was funded by a tax on eastern spices. The monastery contains the tomb of Vasco da Gama. This magnificent monastery can be considered one of the most prominent monuments in Lisbon and is certainly one of the most successful achievements of the Manueline style (Portuguese late-Gothic). In 1983, it was classified by the UNESCO, with nearby Belém Tower, as a World Heritage Site.



Belem

Padrao dos Descobrimentos



Belém's most notable modern feature is the Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument to the Discoveries). This is a 52m high slab of concrete, erected in 1960 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of Henry the Navigator. The monument is carved into the shape of the prow of a ship in which statues of various explorers stand led by Henry himself. Adjacent to the monument is a square into whose surface is set a map showing the routes of various Portuguese explorers.

Pasteis de Belem



It is believed that pastéis de natas were created before the 18th century by Catholic nuns at the Jerónimos Monastery. The "Casa Pastéis de Belém" in Belém was the first place outside the convent selling the original creamy dessert, after the monastery was closed in the 1820s. Here, pastéis de natas are called pastéis de Belém, after the name of the area and its famous bakery. Since 1837, locals have come here to get them warm, out of the oven, and waiting for you to sprinkle them with cinnamon and powdered sugar to taste.

Ponte sobre o Tejo



The 25 de Abril Bridge, is the 20th largest suspension bridge in the world and connects the city of Lisbon, to the municipality of Almada on the left (south) bank of the Tejo river. It was inaugurated on August 6, 1966. Originally named after António Salazar, Portuguese dictator, the bridge was renamed in 1974 after the Carnation Revolution. In 1999 a train platform was added. Because of its similar coloring, it is often compared to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, USA. When in fact, it was built by the same company (American Bridge Company) that constructed the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and not the Golden Gate. With a total length of 2,277 m, the upper platform carries six car lanes, the lower platform two train tracks.

Chiado

Located in the heart of downtown, Chiado is surrounded by the oldest and most typical neighborhoods of this ancient city.

Brasileira is one of most famous coffee shops in Lisbon, and where poets and artists have been gathering for decades. Fernando Pessoa, one of the most significant literary figures of the 20th century and one of the greatest poets in the Portuguese language was Brasileira's most notorious client and is immortalized with a statue of his likeness outside this Portuguese landmark.



Livraria Bertrand, the longest operating book store in the world open since 1732.

Cervejaria da Trindade is the oldest ale house in Portugal. The order that founded the convent dates back to 1294 and in 1840 the ale house opened directly to the public. In less than 15 years Cerveja da Trindade received the royal seal and the Cervejaria became a supplier to the Royal house. Here in addition to the beer, you can select from a variety of seafood and don't forget to try the house specialty Bife a Trindade (steak & fries).

Convento do Carmo

The Carmo Convent, is a mediaeval convent, was ruined in the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake, and the ruins of its Gothic church (the Carmo Church or Igreja do Carmo) are the main trace of the great earthquake still visible in the city. The Carmo Convent is located in the Chiado neighbourhood, on a hill overlooking the Rossio square and facing the Lisbon Castle hill. Nowadays the ruined Carmo Church is used as an archaeological museum.



Elevador de Santa Justa

The hills of Lisbon have always presented a problem for accessibility. In 1874, in order to facilitate the movement between the main Baixa and the Carmo Square, the Santa Justa Lift was designed by Raul Mesnier de Ponsard, an engineer born in Porto to French parents and an apprentice of Gustave Eiffel. Since its construction and then inauguration in 1901 by King Carlos, the Lift has become a tourist attraction and is the only remaining vertical lift in Lisbon.

Lisbon: The Capital

Bairro Alto

Adjacent to Chiado is Bairro Alto which literally means Higher Neighborhood in Portuguese.

The first terrain division occurred around 1500, when the court of King Manuel moved from the castle (Saint George's Castle) to the royal palace in Terreiro do Paço down the hill. The need for housing led the king to force farmers to resign their lands. Nowadays, it functions as a residential, shopping and entertainment district. Bairro Alto is one of the oldest districts in Lisbon. Dozens of fado singing clubs animate the area. All major Portuguese newspapers once had their offices in here. Since the 1990s, Bairro Alto went through major changes. Lisbon's city council made extensive repairs, and dozens of new restaurants, clubs and trendy shops were opened. Many young people moved into the area. Cars were banned (except for residents and emergency vehicles). Today, Bairro Alto (or just Bairro) is the heart of Lisbon's youth culture and nightlife. Lisbon's punk, gay, heavy metal music, goth, hip hop and reggae scenes all have the Bairro as their home, due to the number of clubs and bars dedicated to each of them. During daytime, the Bairro is a traditional district where older people shop for groceries, and the younger generations visit art galleries like Zé dos Bois, bookshops like Ler Devagar or arty gift shops like Hold Me.



Instituto Vinho do Porto

The Port and Douro Wines Institute is an official body belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture of Portugal, and is a key institution in promoting the industry and knowledge of making Port wine. It was previously known as the Instituto do Vinho do Porto. In Lisbon, the Solar do Vinho do Porto is celebrating its 65th anniversary. Located in the Palácio de Ludovice, the Solar is classified as a "Luxury Bar" and it's a wonderful place to taste over 300 Port wines.



Elevador da Glória

The Glória Funicular links Baixa with Bairro Alto. It was opened to the public on October 24, 1885. At first it was designed as a water-powered system, then in 1886 it was replaced by a steam-power, and finally in 1915 it was electrified. In 2002 it was designated a National Monument.



Lisbon: The Capital

Baixa Pombalina (aka Baixa)



The Pombaline Lower Town area covers about 235,620 square metres of central Lisbon. It comprises the grid of streets north of the Praça do Comércio, roughly between the Cais do Sodré and the Alfama district beneath the Lisbon Castle, and extends northwards towards the Rossio and Figueira squares and the Avenida da Liberdade, a tree-lined boulevard noted for its tailoring shops and cafes.

This elegant district, primarily constructed after the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, takes its name from the 1st Marques of Pombal, the Prime Minister to King Joseph and key figure of The Enlightenment in Portugal, who took the lead in ordering the rebuilding of Lisbon. He imposed strict conditions on rebuilding the city, and the current grid pattern strongly differs from the organic street plan that characterized the district before the Earthquake. This is one of the first examples of earthquake-resistant construction. Architectural models were tested by having troops march around them to simulate an earthquake.

On a more contemporary note, the Baixa is a wonderful shopping area and when you need a break there are dozens of cafes with outdoor tables and sun umbrellas that invite you to sit and recharge while watching the busy pace of downtown Lisbon. One of the most famous, Pastelaria Suica, is located in the Rossio square.



Miradouro Santa Luzia

In the slopes of Alfama there are terraces (miradouros) from which to see the city, like the Miradouro de Santa Luzia, near the church of the same name and over remnants of the Moorish city walls, and the Miradouro das Portas do Sol (Gates of the Sun). Near Miradouro of Santa Luzia is located the Museum of Decorative Arts (Museu de Artes Decorativas), a 17th century mansion with magnificent interiors.



Lisbon: The Capital

Saint George's Castle



The Castle of São Jorge, also known as Lisbon's Castle, is a Moorish castle that occupies a commanding position overlooking the city and the broad Tejo River. The strongly fortified citadel, which, in its present configuration, dates from medieval times, is located atop the highest hill in the historic center of the city.

In the context of the Christian Reconquista, the castle and the city of Lisbon were won from the Moors by King Afonso Henriques with the help of northern-European crusaders associated with the Second Crusade. (The Siege of Lisbon, which took place in 1147, was the only notable success of that failed crusade.) According to an oft-repeated legend, the knight, Martim Moniz, noticing that one of the doors to the castle was open, prevented the Moors from closing the door again by throwing his own body into the breach. He sacrificed his life but, in doing so, allowed Christian soldiers to enter. Ownership of the castle helped Lisbon to protect itself from the return of the Moors during the last years of the twelfth century. When Lisbon became the capital of the kingdom, in 1255, the castle became the royal palace, the Alcáçova.

Alfama



Alfama is the oldest district of Lisbon, spreading on the slope between the Castle of Lisbon and the Tejo river. Its name comes from the Arabic Al-hamma, meaning fountains or baths. It contains many important historical attractions, with many Fado bars and restaurants. During the times of Moorish domination, Alfama constituted the whole of the city, which later spread to the West (Baixa). Alfama became inhabited by the fishermen and the poor, and its status as the neighborhood of the poor continues to this day. The great 1755 Lisbon Earthquake did not destroy Alfama, which has remained a picturesque labyrinth of narrow streets and small squares. Lately Alfama has been invigorated with the renovation of the old houses and new restaurants where Fado - Portuguese typical melancholy music - can be enjoyed. Among the churches of Alfama are Lisbon Cathedral (12th-14th centuries), the oldest of the city and located to the West of the neighborhood, the Convent of the Grace (Convento da Graça, 18th century), near the Castle, the mannerist Monastery of São Vicente de Fora (late 16th-18th century), where the Kings of the House of Braganca are buried, and the baroque Church of Santa Engrácia (17th century), now converted into a National Pantheon for Portuguese personalities.