

48 Hours in Lisbon: The Ultimate Itinerary

BY
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Stephen Knowles Photography / Getty Images

The city of Lisbon is one of Europe's most incredibly picturesque destinations, with an intriguing history, world-class restaurants, lovely outdoor spaces, fascinating sights, and stunning views at every turn. With hilly, cobblestone streets, this charming, compact town is ideal for weekend visits, as it's a walkable city and easy to move around town. Many of the main sights and museums are within a short distance of each other, as well. Overall, it's an optimal city for those who wish to enjoy culture as well as delectable food options and a fun nightlife.

01 of 06

Day 1: Morning



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10 a.m.: After arriving at the [Lisbon airport](#), check-in at your centrally-located hotel, [Pousada de Lisboa](#). This stylish boutique property on the waterfront is situated in a historic building that's been transformed into a modern hotel with an indoor swimming pool. The lobby itself is striking and worth a look. If your room isn't ready yet, no worries! Just and drop your bags at the front desk and wander across the street for a stroll around the banks of the beautiful Tagus river and spend a few hours exploring the sunny city on foot.

11 a.m.: The Alfama neighborhood, where the hotel is located, is the city's oldest and is filled with beautiful fountains and historical monuments, such as the bright yellow Praça do Comércio, which is the historical commercial hub of the city. You'll see a multitude of tourists photographing the Arco da Rua Augusta—the magnificent arch that stretches from the Praça do Comércio to central Lisbon. Journey to the top of the monument for wonderful panoramic views. A few streets away, take a ride on the Elevador de Santa Justa, an industrial-age lift, that will transport you to the top of one of city's steepest hills.

02 of 06

Day 1: Afternoon



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1 p.m.: For a traditional seafood lunch, head to [Cervejaria Ramiro](#), a two-story casual restaurant that serves up delectable dishes featuring local, fresh-caught fish prepared with house-made seasonings. Here you will enjoy an array of specialties such as clams, sardines, and octopus. Depending on the size, some of the plates are certainly shareable. Be sure to arrive early, as there is often a line of hungry locals and tourists waiting for a table at this busy eatery. (Note: they are closed on Mondays).

3 p.m.: By now, you've probably noticed and admired the city's stunning architecture and the colorful ceramic tiles that cover many of the area's homes and commercial buildings. To learn more about these exquisitely-designed tiles, visit the [National Azulejo Museum](#), which showcases over five centuries of this type of decorative artwork. Here you can learn about the history of these tiles that are unique to Lisbon and find a new appreciation for this style of art. Be sure to leave time to peruse the museum's noteworthy gift shop, and stock up on locally-made souvenirs.



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7 p.m.: Head to the [Skybar](#) for a cocktail and dinner with beautiful sunset views. Located in the Tivoli Avenida Liberdade Hotel in the city center, this sprawling, multi-level restaurant and bar is *the* place to enjoy a few drinks, snacks, or a great dinner.

They have a wide selection of modern specialties, including steaks, pasta, seafood dishes, and even sushi. This indoor-outdoor venue is spacious, with several bars, plenty of comfortable seating, cool views and often features a DJ or live music. This chic bar is truly a hotspot, so it's best to have a reservation during busy times.

9 p.m.: Afterward, check out some traditional Fado music that's performed at small bars and restaurants around town. Fado is a musical style that's slow, melancholic, and unique to Portugal, so it's an exceptional experience that's unique to this country. Although you can find fado music being performed in a variety of venues, a fan favorite is [O Povo](#), which has free weeknight shows featuring a number of up-and-coming performers late into the evening. Depending on where you go, drinks and food are often offered as well.



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9 a.m.: Wake up early and head to the ancient São Jorge castle that overlooks the city. It's close by, but it's situated on a hilltop. Depending on your energy level, you can either walk (wear flat, comfortable shoes), take a taxi (there are stations across the street from the hotel), or jump on the #28 tram car to experience an authentic Lisbon mode of transportation. São Jorge castle is situated in a pedestrian-only area, so even if you ride in a taxi or tram, you'll still have a short uphill walk to reach the entrance. The castle dates back to the 10th century and its history is fascinating, but it's also a tourist attraction, so it's best to arrive early in the day or you might find yourself in a long ticket line. The area around the castle is lovely, and ideal for enjoying wonderful panoramic views and taking advantage of photo opportunities.

11 a.m.: Afterward, take some time to enjoy this part of the lovely Alfama neighborhood, which also offers jaw-dropping views from terraces adjacent to the main streets. It's a fun area for shopping and people-watching, too. As you make your way back downhill, simply meander around this busy area's eclectic boutiques and purchase locally-made cork or other crafts. There are also a number of shops selling items such as clothing, local specialties and souvenirs, sardines, and other tinned foods.



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Noon: Lisbon offers a multitude of casual restaurants for lunch but we especially enjoy the ambiance at [Café No Chiado](#). This historic dining spot happens to be owned by the National Centre of Culture and is considered by locals to be one of Lisbon's most picturesque cafes. The interior features a stone ceiling with high bookshelves bursting with classics. With a spacious outdoor terrace and a robust menu of Portuguese classics featuring seafood and meat specialties, the restaurant is a local favorite. Keep in mind this cafe may be busy at lunch, but it's worth it to show up a bit early to score a table outside if the weather is warm.

3 p.m.: So you're seeking an added dose of culture while visiting Lisbon? No problem! Visit the world-class [Calouste Gulbenkian art museum](#) that showcases a permanent collection with thousands of paintings, artifacts, and sculptures. Here you will find everything from Islamic art and ancient Egyptian works as well as modern-day masterpieces at one of the best museums in Portugal.

Or, if you prefer to learn more about music, check out the [Fado Museum](#) in the Alfama neighborhood and immerse yourself in the history of this unique soulful sound.



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8 p.m.: If you're a foodie, then you're in luck. Award-winning chef Jose Avillez owns a number of stylish, exceptional restaurants, including the Michelin-starred [Belcanto](#), which features a gastronomic odyssey and requires an advance reservation. For something less formal, check out a few of Avillez's other restaurants, including [Café Lisboa](#) and [Mini Bar](#).

Each one of his dining destinations offers a unique menu, impressive (and often whimsical) design and unexpected culinary concepts celebrating traditional Portuguese recipes that are blended with the modern European styles. And when dining in any of chef Avillez's restaurants, be sure to expect the unexpected. His eateries are known for their secret rooms, unique decor, and surprising menu items.

10 p.m.: Stroll around the lively Bairro Alto neighborhood, home of many trendy bars, cool cafes, and traditional live music spots. When the sun goes down, it's a fun area to bar hop and check out the local nightlife scene. Weekends tend to get crowded in this area, with tourists and locals checking out the many venues—so be prepared to hang out with the enthusiastic revelers who are ready for some late-night partying. It's also enjoyable to walk around the city's Alfama area, which is also very lively in the evening. Especially in warmer weather, locals spend the evenings congregating in the main square and soaking in the ambiance. After all, it's an ideal spot to reminisce about your adventures over the last two days and plan your return visit to this magical city.

