

Getting Around Lisbon: Guide to Public Transportation

BY
MARLA CIMINI



Gautier Houba / TripSavvy

Lisbon is home to an extensive and convenient public transportation system that's budget-friendly and relatively easy to navigate. This small city offers many options for getting around, including busses, trams, underground subway trains (called the metro) and ferries, which bring passengers across the river.

Generally speaking, if you are planning to remain in the city during your trip, it's easier to take public transportation than renting a car. And depending on where you need to go outside of Lisbon, the train or bus will be much easier (and stress-free) than attempting to drive and potentially be faced with heavy traffic. Ideally, it's best to familiarize

yourself with at least the basics of Lisbon’s public transportation system before your visit, as it will save you time and money.



Getty Images

How to Ride the Tram

Lisbon has nearly 60 trams (also called streetcars or trollies) rolling along five different routes throughout the city. Locals and visitors take the tram every day, and they can often be crowded during peak times. It’s easy to spot the tram stops around the city, as they are marked by a small yellow (*paragem*) sign hanging from lamp posts.

Many of the city’s trams are vintage streetcars, and considered a fun tourist activity, especially the famous “nostalgic” number 28 tram. Popular among visitors, this wooden yellow tram is a must for visitors who wish to relax and admire the city sights, as it runs through a number of picturesque neighborhoods along the city’s narrow, twisting streets. It connects the famous São Jorge Castle and Bairro Alto, a ride that’s about 6 miles. It passes through several areas of the city, including Alfama, Baixa, Chiado, and others.

For tram 28, the best place to get on board is by Miradouro das Portas do Sol (and take it through to [Estrela Basilica](#)). This tram is very popular and it’s usually standing room only for most of the day.

Tram number 15 offers an easy way to reach the Belem neighborhood from downtown. You can start your trip either at [Figueira Square](#) or [Comercio Square](#) (and get off by [Jeronimos Monastery](#)).

Tram Fares

A single ticket purchased onboard the tram costs 3 euros, cash only.

Other Ticket Options

You can also choose to buy the 24-hour public transport ticket, which is a combination ticket that also includes metro and bus services (along with the funiculars and the Elevador de Santa Justa, a major tourist spot in the city). This ticket costs 6.40 euros and must be purchased from the metro stations.



Getty Images

Riding the Metro

Lisbon's metro (Metropolitano de Lisboa) is a great choice for getting around the city, as it's usually the quickest option to reach your destination. It's a popular choice among locals and visitors all hours of the day and night. Entrances are marked with a large "M,"

and the stations themselves are air-conditioned, clean and known for their modern art displays.

There are four metro lines that reach 55 area stations. It's efficient, clean and runs from 6:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. daily (with some smaller stations closing at 9:30 p.m.).

Fares and Types of Tickets

There are two fare zones for Lisbon's metro, but all of the main tourist areas and the airport are within zone one. Lisbon metro fare tickets can be purchased with a credit card or cash. The prices are 1.50 euros for a single fare and 6.40 euros for 24-hours of unlimited travel. This fare includes all Lisbon buses and trams.

It's more expensive to buy your ticket onboard instead of purchasing a prepaid card. Onboard one-way prices are 2 euros for buses and 3 euros for trams. There are no official "round-trip" tickets, but multiple single tickets can be purchased for return journeys

When taking the metro, you will see signs such as "*correspondência*" (which indicates the way to transfer between lines) and *saída* (the exit to the street).

Day Passes

Day passes for Lisbon's public transportation are 6.40 euros and offer unlimited travel over a 24-hour period on all the entire bus, tram, and metro system. If you're planning to take more than five trips on the bus or metro on a single day, this is the best and easiest choice.

Viva Viagem

In Lisbon, another transportation payment option is the "Viva Viagem," a reusable transportation card. It costs 50 cents for the initial purchase and can be used to store a range of metro tickets including multiple single fares, the 24-hour pass or "zapping" credit. It's important to note that unlike other cities, each passenger requires an individual Viva Viagem ticket.

For each journey the card is used twice: place your card on the sensor to enter the metro station and then again when you exit out the destination metro station.

Zapping

If you're planning to use public transportation, but don't need a 24-hour ticket, you can purchase a "zapping" ticket, which allows credit to be charged to the Viva Viagem card, which can be used to pay for all public transport. The zapping fares are slightly less expensive than regular tickets; the metro is 1.40 euros (instead of 1.50 euros), the tram costs 1.25 euros (instead of 2.85 euros).

Also, zapping tickets can be used for the suburban trains or ferries (without the need to purchase another Viva Viagem card). This helps to avoid the long queues at the train stations. The Viva Viagem card can be charged with 3 euros to 40 euros at any metro ticket machine.

Taking the Bus

There are several bus options in Lisbon. As a visitor, it's important to know that the [Aerobus](#) is a shuttle service travels between Lisbon and the airport. (You can purchase the ticket on board). A one-way ticket is 4 euros (2 euros for children ages 4 to 10) and 5.40 euros for a return ticket (3 euros for children).

The city's Carris bus provides service buses between the airport and downtown (number 744) as well as some destinations within the city. Bus stops are located throughout the city and they usually have timetables posted. In Lisbon, it's normal practice to wave down the bus as it approaches to ensure that it stops for you.

For Carris buses, you can pay your fare using the Viva Viagem card or cash as you board the bus. Most buses run until 11:00 p.m. and there are night buses that run along certain routes as well, so it's best to do a bit of research if you are planning to use the bus as your main source of transportation.

Several popular bus routes in Lisbon include:

- #727 - Passes by Marquês de Pombal Square and goes to Belem through the Santos neighborhood.
- #737 – Takes passengers from Figueira Square to Saint George's Castle through the Alfama neighborhood.
- #744 – Goes from the airport via Saldanha to Marquês de Pombal (through Avenida da Liberdade).



Getty Images

Taking the Ferry

Lisbon locals take ferries frequently for commuting and everyday transportation. Currently, there are five ferry routes, with three terminals in Lisbon and four terminals on the southern banks. In Lisbon, Terreiro do Paço and Cais do Sodré are major ferry terminals close to the city center, while Belem is a terminal located west of the city.

Ferries are a great way to explore the city if you are heading to specific neighborhoods, but for tourists who wish to use the ferry to simply admire the area from the water, the two most scenic routes are Belem to Porto Brandão; and Cais do Sodré to Cacilhas routes. The Belem ferry offers fantastic views of the coastline and the stunning Ponte 25 de Abril suspension bridge.

If you choose to take the ferry, the cost of a crossing varies, depending on your starting point and destination. The prices range from 1.25 euros (Belem to Porto Brandão and Trafaria); and 2.80 euros (from Cais do Sodré to Montijo). There are no “round trip” tickets available so two single tickets must be purchased.

When riding the ferry, you can purchase tickets at the ferry stations, and / or use your Viva Viagem reusable transport card. Keep in mind that this card can only hold one type

of ticket at a time. For example, if it holds a metro ticket, you cannot add a ferry ticket to it.

Taking Taxis

Taxis are plentiful in Lisbon and found at a number of taxi stations around the city. They can also be hailed on just about any street. Since the Metro stops running at 1 PM, Taxis (or Uber) are your best option if you need to get around late at night. Generally speaking, it should not cost more than 10 euros to travel by taxi to anywhere within the city.

Accessibility

In Lisbon, the city buses and metro trains are wheelchair accessible. Many of the metro stops have ramps and elevators, but it is advisable to check the metro map to ensure the stops you need are wheelchair friendly.

Unfortunately, the historic trams in Lisbon are not accessible, but the modern trams are.

Taxis are an excellent choice for those who require an accessible mode of transportation. Most drivers are helpful and provide added assistance with their deep knowledge of the city. However, keep in mind that their cars are not usually equipped with electronic ramps or lifts.

Tips for Getting Around

- You can purchase metro, bus and train tickets from either from ticket offices or automated machines. The ticket machines are easy to use, as they offer instructions in multiple languages, aside from such Portuguese including English, French, and Spanish. (Be aware that the ticket offices are often busy at the popular metro stations, such as the airport.)
- You can use credit cards or cash (euros) to purchase transportation tickets, although cash is needed when you buy the tickets on the bus or tram.
- Be aware of your surroundings and keep belongings in front of you at all times. Crowds on trams, trains, and buses often attract pickpockets.
- Passengers enter the buses and trams from the front and exit the rear. (One exception is the number 15 tram, where people get on and off at any doorway.)
- Be sure to keep your receipt when you purchase a transportation ticket or card, just in case there is an issue.
- If you're taking the metro, be aware that it closes at 1 a.m. daily, but smaller stations may close earlier.
- Lisbon has several funiculars around the city. If you take a funicular ride while in Lisbon, keep in mind that one-way tickets are not sold; these are only 3.80 euros for a round-trip ticket.

- A car is not required to get around Lisbon, but if you want to visit the surrounding beaches and other areas, it may be an ideal option.
- For traveling outside of Lisbon, there are four commuter trains that operate from Rossio Station and usually run from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m.
- If you're having trouble finding a taxi, try catching one in front of a hotel (the busier, the better).