



Michele's Travel Digest

A Table for One: Exploring Portugal Solo

PART 1: Four Days in Lisbon - What to Do and Where to Go (includes 2025 Discounts)

DAY 1: ARRIVAL

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE LISBON AIRPORT, use the airport Wifi to order your Uber ride which should only cost €10-€12 Euro, or grab a taxi from out front, which could be significantly more costly.

ENJOY THE LOCAL ARCHITECTURE and incredible tile work on all the buildings while your driver manoeuvres through the labyrinth streets of Lisbon to land you at your first accommodation.

ACCOMMODATION: The first two nights, it is wise to stay in one place to allow yourself to get oriented to the location and allow for jet-lag adjustments. I chose an Airbnb room rental (€55/nt.) in a small guesthouse near the **Marques do Pombal** monument and large roundabout. Alternatively, there are some characteristic [guesthouses and hotels](#) along **Av. Duque de Loule**. (Fig. 1)



GET A SIM CARD: While walking within blocks of my accommodation, it was time to get mobile cell phone coverage so I could navigate around and communicate; this is for unlocked mobile phones. There are small locally owned newspaper mini-markets everywhere and they all sell SIM CARDS from local phone carriers. When swapping out SIM cards, place original SIM in a safe

location so you will find it at the end of your trip and not get stuck without service upon return. I chose the one with the most data for €10; by the way, this lasted my entire two week trip.

FOOD: After settling into the accommodation and connecting to the outside world, the craving for a much needed European coffee and the long awaited and anticipated '**Pasteis de Nata**'; this is Portugal's well-known pastry. This cream custard puffed handmade pastry was created in 1834 in order to assure the survival of the monks in the **Monastery of Jeronimos**. Within a few walking blocks from my room was the historic **Balcão do Marquês**; this is a locally owned and operated restaurant and pastelaria where I was able to indulge in this fine cultural confectionery. (Fig. 2)



TAKE IN THE VIEWS: After the satisfaction of officially eating Portuguese style, it was off to explore the Santo Antonio neighbourhood surrounding the Marques do Pombal plaza. The first eye-catching attraction is the most identified park in Lisbon, the **Parque Eduardo VII**, attributed to the English monarch who visited Lisbon in 1903 after five centuries of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance. A relaxing walk up the gentle one-mile hill to the top will do your body good after sitting through a long flight, an Uber car lift, and relaxing in a cafe drinking a delicately sweet *café com leite* and slowly savouring *Pasteis de Nata*. The views are spectacular, actually breathtaking on a clear day with Lisbon scenic city views. (Figure 3)



Image: <https://www.lisbonportugaltourism.com>

Along the **Av. Duque de Loule** there are several local neighbourhood restaurants serving cuisines from all over the globe. However, there was one that kept calling me each time I walked passed.



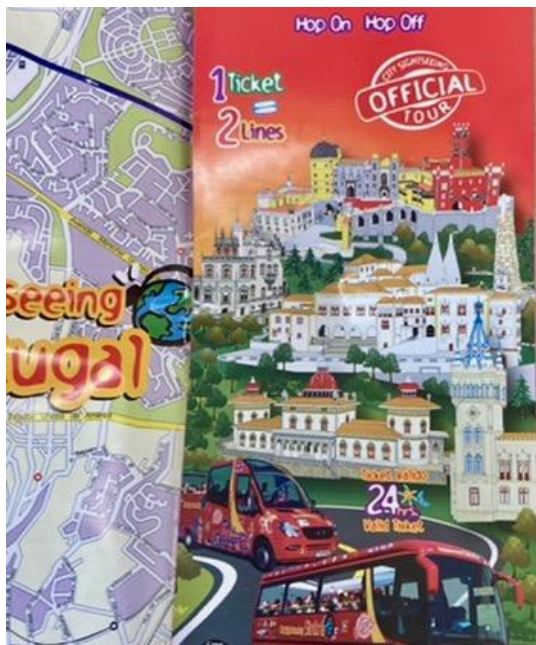
PURO Restaurant: 74a, Rua Luciano Cordeiro, Lisbon. **HIGHLY RECOMMEND.**



Portuguese traditional with a bit of spicy heat in the Francesinhas. One dish that is a must while in Lisbon is the **Bacalhau**; this is a naturally dried salted cod fish fillet that is cooked in so many ways in Portugal that you can have it at every restaurant and it will be served a different way each time. My version of **Bacalhau** was boiled. Yes, you read that right, “boiled”, and then it was lightly seared to lightly brown each side of the fish. Served with grilled Bok Choy, housemade scrumptious hummus, and potatoes lavished in a delicate garlic aioli sauce sprinkled in Francesinhas topped with spinach leaves and a savory crisp chickpea tort. I nearly died and went to heaven! Sublime. €17.00 = All inclusive with a carafe of rose wine and a bottle of still water.

Day 2: LISBON SIGHTSEEING TOUR

TRANSPORTATION: City Sightseeing Official Tour is totally worth €28 for a three day bus pass. This will take you everywhere you would want to go in the city. I suggest taking the entire day to enjoy Lisbon by ‘Hopping On and Hopping Off’ these buses as you please. **HIGHLY RECOMMEND.**



An easy walk to the entrance of the **Parque Eduardo VII** at the roundabout **Marques do Pombal** you will find several bright red double-decker open top buses going on different routes throughout the city. In addition, you will also receive this handy-dandy map of the entire City. Trust me, this will come in handy!

If you look closely at the image in the Parque Eduardo VII above, you can see the red buses located in the car park (Figure 3).

Which bus should you take?

The Purple, Green, or Red?

Take all three in 3-days.

PURPLE LINE:

If you fancy a bit of lunch, a coffee stop to people watch, or some high street shopping along Avenida da Liberdade, then take the Purple Line.

GREEN LINE: This is **the culture bus**, which will take you to the oldest sections of the city including climbing up and around many narrow streets surround the Castelo de Sao Jorge while being captivated by Lisbon's ornate tiled houses and street cable cars all around.

The Alama is a neighbourhood one must see and experience while in Lisbon. There are Airbnb rooms available for an experience in the **Castelo de Sao Jorge** for a decent price per night, but one would have to look to see if it's available on Airbnb for the time you would be visiting. The neighbourhood is well-known for featuring live **FADO music** in its locally owned family restaurants during both lunch and dinner.

HIGHLY RECOMMEND



The Chiado/Baixa neighbourhoods is also a very lively area full of bars and restaurants AND rich in live street entertainment culture. The most well-known monument in the Baixa district is the **Elevador de Santa Justa**, which was completed in 1902 by Raoul Mesnier du Ponsard, a student of Gustav Eiffel, the architect behind the Eiffel Tower.

RED LINE: The RED LINE is featured below and saved for touring on **Day 3:**

CABLE CARS: Alternatively, there are the antique street cable cars; these are some of Lisbon's main featured attractions in regard to transportation around the city. The reason for not suggesting the cable cars is due to these normally being packed (chock-a-block) full of tourists in very tight quarters with their digital cameras spilling out of each window and has a high pickpocket crime scene. This cable car is in front of the **Triumphal Arch in the Plaza de Comercio**. (Fig. 4)

However, if you enjoy riding in old cable cars and are not scared off by pickpocketers in cramped spaces, then this might be a perfect alternative for seeing the city. And yes, this goes without saying, these are very cool!



DAY 3: BELEM

Take the **RED LINE**. This is your first choice to see most of the city in one go and allows you to get your bearings and see some incredible architecture, people, and historical sites using the City Sightseeing bus ticket to get on and off at your leisure to eat, take pictures, or just stroll around the neighborhoods. What you will see throughout the day is all consuming, so be prepared with good walking shoes. **HIGHLY RECOMMEND**



PONTE 25 de ABRIL BRIDGE: While taking in the warmth of the sun and the smell of the sea, you will have 180-degree views of the spectacular **Torre de Belem** to your right and the magnificent **Ponte 25 de Abril Suspension Bridge** to your left. This exact replica was built in 1966 to be identically modeled after the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California. The Ponte 25 de Abril bridge is one of the most iconic landmarks in Lisbon and crosses the River Tagus to land you at the feet of Christ the King, the [Cristo Rei](#) historic monument.

TORRE DE BELEM: At the very touristic site of the **Tower of Belem**, you will find several food and souvenir vendors. The one to choose is **'Wine With A View'**; this wine cart is owned by a local



woman who speaks English and for €5 you can sit in a director's chair overlooking a 'river with a view' while holding a luscious glass of Portuguese wine of your choice. The Tower of Belem is a 16th Century Portuguese style Gothic fortification that was built in 1519 to guard the Monastery of Jeronimos and the Port of Lisbon. It honors the expedition led by navigator Vasco da Gama, who established a maritime trade from Portugal to India in 1497 and during the so-called Age of Exploration.

While in Belem, there is so much to see and do that it will take the entire day. Here are four more historic visits that are walking distance from one another and are a must see while in the area. A very brief history of each below; this is to entice you to visit and explore more of the fascinating history on your own.

- 1) [Pasteis de Belem](#): In the early 19th century, there was a sugar cane refinery near the Monastery of Jeronimos where the monks would make and sell these sweet custard pastries to survive the closing of all the convents and monasteries during the Liberal Revolution from 1820 to 1837 when the *Pasteis de Belem* was established. *Pasteis de Belém*"



- 2) [Monastery of Jeronimos](#): A UNESCO World Heritage site, this was the former monastery for the Order of Saint Jerome, and was a symbol of Portuguese power and wealth during the Age of Discovery.



It is not only a historic site, but also a cultural and artistic masterpiece of Portuguese architecture dating back to its conception in 1501.

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- 3) [Maritime Museum & Cafe](#) : The 'Marinha' hosts several educational and historical exhibits inducted by the Portugal Navy Cultural Commission, such as an aquarium, an expansive library and historical archive, a navy museum, a marine planetarium, and impressively, a walking tour of the last Portuguese sailing naval ship, The Frigate, which was first launched in 1843.



- 4) [National Coaches Museum](#): Do not be fooled by the contemporary facade of the building; this “Royal Coach Museum” was inaugurated by Queen Amelia, Princess of France and her husband, King Carlos I of Portugal in 1886, and exists on the former Royal Palace, which hosts some of the most ornate and prominent horse drawn carriages in the world. It also houses a unique collection of coaches, berlins, sedan chairs, and carriages from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.



Maritime Museum Cafe and Gift Shop is the mid-afternoon stop and drop to get some food, rest your feet, and pick up a few souvenirs such as ornate tiles, cork made handbags, tinned sardines and **Bacalhau pate**.



Day 4: Ferry Crossing the Tagus River



ALMADA: A day not to ignore would be to take the ferry across the Tagus River to the mysterious and magical municipality of Almada.

Take an Uber to Cais do Sobre harbour station and purchase a €6 ferry ticket to Almada. The ferry boats depart every 20 minutes for a 15 minute crossing.

Restaurante Ponto Final: Take a walk along the harbour walls and down a long series of steps to the [Ponte Final Restaurant](#); it is not only famous for its memorable sunsets, exquisite seafood platters, but its identifiable



waterfront yellow table settings on the harbours edge, literally! After a delightful lunch, keep walking along the waterfront wall to the gardens of **Quinta da Arealva**.



[Jardim Botânico O Chão das Artes](#) at the Casa da Cerca.

The “O Chão das Artes” botanical garden is located in the space surrounding Casa da Cerca, one of the main cultural hubs in Almada. As you walk through the flowered garden, you can enjoy the magnificent views that the various viewpoints provide. In addition to the themed gardens - *Pomar das Gomas*, *Jardim das Telas* or *Jardim dos Pintores* - there is also a Greenhouse that frequently hosts exhibitions, and an open-air amphitheater.



Cristo Rei (Christ the King)

Crossing the **PONTE 25 de ABRIL BRIDGE** you cannot miss the enormous statue across the river known as the [CRISTO REI \(Christ the King\)](#); this renown monument is modeled after Rio de Janeiro’s gigantic statue “Christ the Redeemer” in Brazil. The monument was completed and unveiled in 1959 and opens its arms to Lisbon. The Cristo Rei was a way for Catholics to demonstrate their gratitude to God for saving Lisbon from the bombings that destroyed other European cities during WWII.



Image: Cristo Rei (LisbonPortugalTourism.com)

Lisbon 2025 Deals!

**For more trip planning ideas and information, please visit the [Lisbon Portugal Tourism](https://www.lisbonportugaltourism.com) website:
Find discounts of 10% to 70% on accommodation in Lisbon!**

Look for deals here:

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Before you travel: <https://www.lisbonportugaltourism.com>

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