



Not Just Any Port

Once the center of exploration and trade, Lisbon poises for rediscovery. BY ELYSE GLICKMAN

ARCHITECTURAL
LANDMARKS:
Lisbon city center
(left), and Belém
Tower (right)

PHOTOS: © TURISMO
LISBOA

THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT would be a different place if Portuguese explorers and merchants during the Age of Discovery had not made their mark around the world via the oceans, the Silk Road and the Spice Road. Lisbon became the ultimate point of origin for ships heading toward the Americas, Africa and Asia, later returning with goods, ideas and business practices that would lay the foundations for today's global economy.

Centuries later, Lisbon remains an important

port of call for trans-Atlantic cruises as well as those headed to the Atlantic coast of Europe, the western Mediterranean, the British Isles and Northern Africa. So much so, in fact, the Port Authority of Lisbon set out to increase calls and double the number of cruise passengers. This initiative, along with the maritime can-do spirit that defined the Age of Discovery, continued with the November 2017 opening of the Lisbon Cruise Port Terminal located on the banks of the Tagus estuary. Designed by noted Portuguese architect

OFFICIAL
LANGUAGE
Portuguese

COMING AND GOING

U.S. citizens must have a valid passport and an onward/return ticket for tourist/business visa-free stays of up to 90 days. Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond the intended day of departure and have at least two blank pages open for stamps.



João Luís Carrilho da Graça, it is projected to welcome more than 400,000 cruise passengers per year.

Although two other terminals remain in operation, the new addition was conceived with the 21st century in mind, factoring in sustainability and a smooth onward flow of tourists to avoid congestion elsewhere in the city. After two years of construction by Global Ports Holding and a \$28 million investment, the new terminal quickly assumed strong footing as a city-within-a-city, covering 148,542 square feet over three floors, according to trade publication *The Maritime Executive*. Other features include 4,900 feet of pier for docking a wide variety and size of ships; automated gangway systems; and on-site equipment to supply ships with check-in facilities, water supplies and other provisions while in port.

By the end of this year, the Port of Lisbon will have welcomed 14 ships: *Le Lyrial*, *Costa Mediterranea*, *MSC Magnifica*, *Saga Sapphire*, *Veendam*, *Balmoral*, *Ventura*, *Aurora*, *AIDAvida*, *Royal Clipper*, *Star Breeze*, *Oceana*, *MSC Preziosa* and *Viking Sun*. The successful execution of this marvel makes it all the more remarkable that Lisbon re-emerged in phoenix-like fashion after the global 2008 financial crash that hit Portugal particularly hard, with unemployment peaking at 18 percent at its worst point in 2012.

LODGING

HOTEL AVENIDA PALACE
Lisbon's first luxury hotel opened in 1892. With an intact Belle Époque exterior, interiors are judiciously adorned with velvet drapes, stained glass skylights, gold carvings, vintage furniture and other objets d'art.

Rua 1º de Dezembro 123
\$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$

MARTINHAL CHIADO
At this chic family-focused property, parents can do business and date night while Kids

Club staff look after the kids in a secure space with fun activities. Other amenities, like Martinhal Residences, are in development.

Rua das Flores 44
\$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$

OLISSIPPO LAPA PALACE
This 19th-century gem, one of Lisbon's most expensive luxury hotels, takes exclusivity to new levels. Its location within a labyrinth of narrow streets guarantees privacy and views as exquisite as the service, décor, pool and gardens.

Rua do Pau de Bandeira 4
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Other remedies helping cure Lisbon's economic woes included international investment and the restoration of homes and hotels that were clearly architectural diamonds in the rough. American professional services and investment management company Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated reinforced this philosophy, predicting Portugal could achieve a new investment record of \$2.5 billion in 2018, with foreign investors responsible for almost 80 percent of investment transactions last year, attracted by low interest rates, a wide variety of investment opportunities and an increase in both rents and tourism. The increase in investor commitment, in turn, is projected to propel further developments in the residential, retail and office markets, many taking over some of the most beautiful and unusual tile-covered structures in the city.

The hotel and hospitality industries, meanwhile, inject a mighty dose of adrenaline and style into Lisbon's economy. Gonçalo Garcia, director of business advisory at Cushman & Wakefield's hospitality division in Lisbon, told hotelnewsnow.com Portuguese hotels experienced double-digit revenue growth since the recession's peak in 2013 and 2014. He also projected Portugal will have 115 new hotels by 2019 as real estate investments reach new heights. Of the 9,500 new rooms, 71 percent are in the upper segments, and approximately half will open in Lisbon and Porto.

Portugal's National Institute of Statistics documented hotel revenue rose approximately 18 percent in 2017 to \$3.6 billion, with a 12.1 percent year-over-year increase in overnight stays by international visitors to 37.2 million. New airline routes also contributed to the spike in tourism, business travel and investors. Foreign visitor numbers to Portugal rose by nearly 12 percent to 12.7 million last year, which also brought about a lively retail scene blending international chains, one-off independent boutiques and former homes and industrial space transformed into lifestyle-driven shopping experiences unique to Lisbon, showcasing Portugal's emerging furniture and fashion industries.

Patricia Araújo, head of retail, Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated, noted there's a focus on "high street" retail instead of shopping center development, which happens to be in tune with the existing flavor and character of Lisbon's colorful neighborhoods. She added the restaurant sector is seeing a high rate of new openings and innovation and observed



Lisbon's Cais do Sodré neighborhood is currently the city's hot spot for restaurants and nightlife. However, restoration and preservation across town has given way to fashionable, chef-driven restaurants and cocktail bars in Baixa, Barrio Alto and even long-established Praça do Comércio.

Lisbon also proves to be a destination for both startups and international corporations, including several tech giants. Buildings and warehouses in the Riverside neighborhoods are converted into office space to meet rising demand, especially from legal and financial service providers. Google recently announced it is opening a tech support center near Lisbon, while shared workspace businesses such as the Beato Creative Hub are blossoming in developing neighborhoods on the east side of the city.

The essence of what makes Lisbon a city of the future as well as one with a storied past can be summed up by AICEP Portugal Global, an independent public entity of the Government of Portugal. Besides its favorable location as the European country closest to the United States and Canada, the cost of living is one of the lowest in Europe (65 percent of the French cost of living). It is the second-safest capital in Europe behind Helsinki, while the *Financial Times* ranks Lisbon as Europe's second-best city for investment, and Portugal as a whole is ranked 15th out of 141 in the 2015 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report. Indeed, Vasco da Gama and Portugal's other pioneers of global travel would be proud to see what they started keeps Lisbon as relevant as ever.

LOOKING OUT:
Lisbon overview

PHOTO: © JOSÉ MANUEL

JUST THE FACTS

Time zone: GMT +9

Phone code:

Country code: 351

City code: 21

Currency: Euro

Key industries:

Clothing, textiles and footwear;
food processing;
wood pulp, paper and cork; metalworking;
oil refining;
chemicals; fish canning; wine; and tourism

CHECKING IN WITH CHITRA AND ROMAN STERN

Founders, Martinhal Family Hotels

As business conference and incentive travel expand to include the entire family, how do Lisbon's attractions add to this appeal?

Families with children often avoid cities because it is more difficult to get around with kids in tow. However, Lisbon is considered one of the safest in Europe, and locals are extremely welcoming of children. Practically every restaurant in town is child-friendly. The Oceanarium, Science Centre, Lisbon Story Museum and Lisbon Zoo are perfect examples of places to visit with kids. All of this makes Lisbon an ideal business conference destination where participants are encouraged to bring their families and extend their trips into vacations.

What other factors contribute to Lisbon's growing economy and popularity as a cruise and business destination?

In terms of geography, [compared to] other European capitals, Lisbon offers an unmatched ratio of price versus quality of service and, with centuries of different influences and cultures from around the world, it is famous for its hospitality and language abilities. Usually, younger generations in their 40s and below speak English fluently. Even people who don't speak English fluently make a huge effort to help. It's also located one to three hours from major European and North African cities, and six to eight hours from hubs in South America and North America. Direct flights from Asia and Oceania add to the accessibility.

What new developments going up around Lisbon do you find particularly exciting?

Chitra: Since I arrived in Lisbon years ago, it has been seriously spruced up and redeveloped. However, it still charms with its beauty, history and luminosity. That said, there are several interesting evolutionary trends on the fronts of food, culture and art, as well as many new hotels that can host meetings and events of different sizes. The most interesting but underplayed area is the Parque das Nações (Park of Nations) — site of the World Expo 1998 — which is a case study in urban regeneration. Its Altice Arena and exhibition center can host a great diversity of [business and trade] events. Its innovative urban framework includes seven kilometers of waterfront with safe pedestrian areas, bike paths, kids' play areas, water sports center, concert hall, new residences and an oceanarium.



EXPLORATIONS:
Lisbon Oceanarium
(top), and *Parque das Nações*

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What neighborhoods or areas are not “in” right now but are poised for a comeback?

The riverside neighborhoods between Parque das Nações and Cais do Sodré (Matinha, Prata, Marvila, Xabregas, Beato and Poço do Bispo) are not yet “in” but are already starting to show signs of dynamism. This development is encouraged by some private initiatives, public policy, cultural activities and a bohemian atmosphere, and it is expected to become a trendy area with startups, cafés, bars, restaurants, art galleries, concert halls and much more. This area (along with lifestyle developments such as LXFactory) proves Lisbon City is great at urban remodeling. The recent years of foreign direct investment and subsequent growth are helping bring a new spirit into these areas.

CULTURAL HERITAGE:

Belém Tower (top), and LXFactory (bottom)

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DINING

CAN THE CAN

Chandeliers and fixtures constructed from fish tins pay tribute to Portugal's canned fish industry. However, Michelin-starred executive chef Miguel Laffan reinterprets Portugal's gastronomic legacy by combining tinned fish with exotic spices, tropical fruits and local produce.

Terreiro do Paço 82/83
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PALÁCIO CHIADO

Even with several distinctive dining rooms, Palácio Chiado rethinks the food court with a walk-in kitchen divided into stations dedicated to meats, seafood, traditional Portuguese recipes and vegetarian items with global spins.

Rua do Alecrim 70
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PESCA

Chef Diogo Noronha continues to trailblaze at this cozy venue, building dishes from local and foraged components to reflect "the ocean in its purest state." Cocktails by bartender Fernao Goncalves would make Jules Verne proud.

Rua da Escola Politécnica 27
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DIVERSIONS

Widely known as the historic district of the Age of Discovery, Belém boasts an embarrassment of riches showcasing the ways Portuguese commerce, religion and culture shaped the modern world. After all, it's where Vasco da Gama and fellow explorers departed for their journeys, Belém Tower anchored the city's defense system, and the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos set architectural standards with its late-Gothic Manueline style. And if those landmarks — or lines for the original *pastéis de Belém* egg tarts — get too crazy, you'll find plenty of interesting museums dedicated to archaeology, coaches and maritime interests, as well as the Belém Cultural Centre, to check out.

The LXFactory, built into repurposed industrial space, shows how other cultures touched by Portuguese exploration continue to influence today's Portuguese food, fashion and interior design. While



the complex boasts excellent bars, creative casual dining and cool home retail shops, its Sunday flea market delivers even more local color. The Barrio Alto and Chiado districts are awash in concept stores. These self-contained mini-malls built into former residences offer eclectic mixes of fashion, home accessories and conversation-starting souvenirs.

Soccer enthusiasts should not miss the chance to tour Benfica Stadium. Even casual fans will get a thrill walking through the field, visiting the locker rooms and press room, getting a selfie with the eagle mascot of Sports Lisboa and Benfica or buying brag-worthy souvenirs for the kids from the pro shop.

INFO TO GO

Lisbon hosts five major cruise ship docks. Santa Apolonia, Santa Apolonia Jusante and Jardim do Tabaco lie within walking distance or a short metro ride to city center. Alcântara and Da Rocha are located closer to the Ponte 25 de Abril bridge and Belém, the city's historic and cultural hub. Consult your cruise company to find out where your ship will dock.

Lisbon Portela Airport serves as the main international air travel gateway to Portugal and the hub for TAP Air Portugal, the country's flagship airline. The most convenient transfer from Portela or the cruise ports to town is via metro trains, running every few minutes 6–1 a.m. daily and costing €1.40 one way (about \$1.65). A €6 (\$7) daily pass covers the metro, buses and trams. Options include taxis (one way €10–20, or about \$11–23) and the Yellow Bus Aerobus outfitted with luggage racks (€3.15, or about \$3.65)