

### Rating system:

**Go!** = You won't regret it.

**GoGo!** = You'll regret it if you miss it.

**GoGoGo!** = A bucket list travel opportunity.

*For more information on how I use research, planning, and certain apps to ensure we enjoy everything we do while on vacation, check out the "How to Plan a Trip" page on [www.gogogordons.com](http://www.gogogordons.com).*

**The Lisbon Card:** All the larger cities in Europe have some version of a consolidated travel card. These cards typically have different benefit tiers/options, as well as options for how many days they are effective. The benefits can include unlimited public transportation, entrance to attractions, and other discounts. Obviously, it depends on how many of what kind of activities you plan to do during your stay, and we've found that it's the best deal around for some cities and totally unneeded in others. For us, the Lisbon Card is one of those that is definitely worth it. In addition to being your ticket to any museum you'll want to attend, the coveted 28 cable car, the entire transportation network (which, for a city with this many hills can be useful), and most of the sites in Belem. Be sure to check what the Card does and does not include so you'll know if you need to buy separate tickets for other attractions, like the S Jorge Castle.

<https://www.lisboacard.org/>

**Hotel Recommendation:** The Palacete Chafariz D'El Rei. **Go!Go!Go!**

While Lisbon has a number of nice hotels, they have an unusual abundance of small, luxury hotels, many branded as a "B&B", located in former mansions and palaces. If you want a place to stay full of character and charm that really contributes to the entire vibe of Lisbon, but also has all the luxury and privacy of a true 5-star hotel, you are in luck in Lisbon.

The Palacete Chafariz D'El Rei is a fantastic, authentic, renovated palace that truly feels like you're staying in a museum or you're the personal guests of a dignitary from a time gone by... We absolutely loved our stay. We stayed in the "Lola" suite, and we would strongly recommend this room due to its size, décor, and a lovely view of the water. This is the type of hotel that is a tourist attraction in itself. From a location standpoint, it was also perfect for us, as it was just

beneath the Alfama district where we wanted to explore and only a 10-12-minute easy walk to the center square of the city – the Praça do Comercio.

We'd also recommend looking into the **Torel Palace**, where we almost stayed, the **Casa do Barao** which is currently #1 on TripAdvisor and located closer to the nightlife area but on a quiet street, or the **Casa Balthazar** for the views. If you want a more traditional hotel, the **Valverde** is relatively new and the highest rated on TripAdvisor, but the **Britania Hotel** and **Hotel Avenida Palace** are two of the historically coveted options for luxury-minded travelers.

### **Food and Wine Recommendations:**

**WHEN TO EAT:** Lunch is normally served between 12:30 and 3:00pm, but on weekdays, restaurants may close shop closer to 2:00pm. Dinner is served between 8:00 and 10:30pm, many until 11:00pm on the weekends (in the downtown areas). Like Barcelona, Lisboners also follow the same type of 6-meal schedule a day: 8am coffee with milk, bread with ham or cheese and orange juice; 10:30 coffee and a pastry, 13:00 lunch; 17:00 coffee and a pastry; 20:00 or 21:00 dinner.

### **WHAT TO EAT:**

Petiscos = Portugal's version of Spanish tapas

Pasteis de Belem – heaven on a plate, don't miss it, and only get it in Belem.

Francesinha – not for the faint of heart...both literally and figuratively due to the calorie count and size of this dish, but you're on vacation so go for it! I ate these mostly in Porto, where they are featured on most menus, but they can be found in Lisbon as well. This amazing sandwich construction of bread, steak, ham, sausage, cheese sauce and a fried egg is maybe the best end-of-night-drunk-food in the world, and the fact that there are no food trucks (of which I am currently aware) in Austin that make these is a crime. There's a million dollar idea!

Salted Cod (Bacalhau) is the specialty...the barbeque of Portugal. Most popular versions are:

1. Bacalhau a bras – fried with potatoes and onions
2. Bacalhau com natas – au gratin
3. Bacalhau a Gomes Sa – baked with potatoes, onions, boiled egg and olives
4. Pasties or pataniscas de bacalhau – two styles of salt cod fritters

Peixe Grelhado – grilled fish – dourada (bream) or robalo (seabass)

Bitoque – may look like a simple thin piece of steak with fried egg, but when done well, it's an ode to perfection... Try one at the Mercado da Ribeira.

Bifana or Prego – Pork sandwiches and steak sandwiches – main street food in Lisbon. Try one at the Mercado da Ribeira.

The Kiosks throughout the city painted green that look like they could be newspaper stands are actually good cheap options for fresh juice or a sandwich to go...most neighborhoods have them.

Pao do Lo – delicate sponge cake – highly recommended.

Lisbon wines – Best red wines are from Colares, best white from Bucelas. However, most of the wine you drink will be from Dao or Douro.

**WHERE TO EAT IN LISBON (Remember, in Europe, most places require reservations. So, check the opening hours and if you definitely don't want to miss it, make a reservation.)**

**Be sure to double check opening hours before going to any of the below!**

- **Go!Go!Go! Mercado da Ribeira (Also known as the Time Out Market)** –One of my favorite things about Europe is the markets. This one is one of the very best in Europe in terms of food stalls and dining options. We fortunately ate here the first night and came back twice as it afforded us the opportunity to try all the local fare in one place, as well as pick-up some incredible ham, cheese and wine to take back with us to the hotel. The hours are a little non-American, meaning varied, so be sure to check what their latest opening times are online before going!
- **Go!Go!Go! BA Wine Bar do Bairro Alto** –When we visited, they were #1 rated on TripAdvisor out of 2251 restaurants in Lisbon. This bar became one of my favorite wine tasting experiences in all of our travels. We recommend making reservations, then doing what we did...simply ask the friendly and knowledgeable staff to bring you whatever they recommend. Rue Rosa, 107, Bairro Alto. Tue-Sun 6pm-11pm.
- **Ginjinha shots at A Ginjinha Registada:** If you've seen any tourist shows about Lisbon, you've seen this place. It's near the center of town and seems to be the go-to tourist spot to try a local Ginjinha shot, although the shots are everywhere. Evidently the Portuguese drink these like bloody mary's throughout the day, but I didn't much care for it. It's worth doing just to say you did, but I wouldn't go out of my way to get one here and don't get your hopes too high! GinjinhaLargo São Domingos 8

**Since we ate at the Mercado da Ribeira so often, we didn't get to try that many of the places on our restaurant list. Here are the other options that we can't personally vouch for but that passed my research test. I have them broken out by neighborhood.**

- ALFAMA
  - Wine Bar do Castelo – They weren't far behind BA Wine Bar when we visited, as they were ranked #3 on TripAdvisor with 600 reviews, and 4.5 circle average. If you can't make it to one, try the other, or try both and make me super jealous! Rua Bartolomeu de Gusmao 13.
  - Maruto Bar & Bistro – Traditional Portuguese food and wine bar. Very highly rated and reviewed. Tapas.
  - Estamine Art Food Drink - A little north of the Alfama area, but worth the walk. Currently #1 rated on TA for all restaurants. Cheap, fresh bar/pub with coffee, tapas, and a casual, cute atmosphere.
  - Pois Café – 3 minute walk towards downtown from our hotel. #98 on TA, 4.5 circles 300 reviews. Small daily changing menu. Open Tues – Sunday 11am – 10pm. Cute, casual, cheap café.
  - Claras em Castelo – High quality mom and pop restaurant right nearby S Jorge castle. Very cute...entrance right by castle walls.
  - Restaurante Ti Natércia - Very small mom and pop place with traditional Portuguese food... grandma cooking, very small, might need reservations.
  
- CENTRAL/BARRIO/CHIADO
  - Belcanto – This is the best option for the fine dining crowd. This restaurant is currently #85 of the Pellingrino World's Best 100 Restaurants list.
  - Restaurante Moma – right downtown. Rua Sao Nicolau 49. Safe choice.
  - Sol e Pesca is where all the canned fish is... canned fish in Lisbon is supposed to be really good and not an indication of quality like in the US. This is Lisbon takeout...cheap, fast, fresh...Rua Nova do Carvalho 44
  - Laurentina – “king of the cod” – all cod menu, high quality cod. Open noon – 4pm, Dinner 7pm – 11pm. On Thursdays they have fado singing at 8pm. Avenue Conde Valbom 71.
  - Salgadeiras – Highly rated fine dining in great atmosphere.
  - Santini – Rua Do Carmo, 9. Gelato store, packed, always a line.

## WHERE TO EAT IN BELEM

- **Go!Go!Go! Pasteis de Belem** –An amazing bakery with all kinds of tempting treats, but save room and only eat their namesake: The Pasteis de Belem. Their recipe is the stuff of legend, passed down by generation and only known by a few. We tried a few of these at other places and, while delicious, there was no comparison. Everything about them is perfect. We ordered one each, but ended up having 3 each before we left.

***TIP For Pastéis de Belem: You will see a long line out front, that's just the line for to go orders. Go past the line inside and in all likelihood you can get a table as the restaurant is deceptively gigantic and goes way back with additional rooms. When we went there was a line around the block but we were seated immediately and were able to order a coffee along with our (3) pastries (each). I can't remember if there is a small surcharge for a table, but if there is, it's worth it!***

- **Go!Go! Enoteca De Belum** –#8 on TA, 347 reviews, 4.5 COE Open noon - 10pm. What is it about a nice restaurant located in a non-descript alleyway that is so appealing to me? Maybe it's the diamond in the rough kind of thing, but regardless, if you're in Belem for lunch or dinner seek out this place for an inventive menu, artfully plated, with a great wine list and helpful service. Travessa Marto Pinto 10.
- Although we didn't go, if you're looking for a place to relax and have a drink with a view while in Belem, there are several nice wine bars and restaurants right on the water in between the Terre de Belem and the Padrao dos Descobrimentos. Try Bar 38, Feitoria Restaurante and Wine Bar, or Vela Latina. All look like great options for a drink, a snack, or even a meal depending on how much time you want to spend in Belem.

#### WHERE TO EAT IN SINTRA

- **Go! Café A Piriquita** in the center of town: Another place famous for their pastries. While we were a little jaded after our experience in Belem, Café A Piriquita was fantastic and a great place to grab a snack to help fuel all the steps you will take while in Sintra.
- Fabrica das Verdadeiras Queijadas da Sapa: You got it...another pastry place. This one has been making same pastry since 1700s. Small menu with croquetes and ham...good view. Volta do Duche 12.
- Xentra Restaurant and Bar – recommended for decent fast, cheap lunch to optimize time for sight seeing. 8 euro buffet. 4 circles 33 reviews. Rue Consiglieri Pedroso 2A
- The best food in Sintra is probably at Saudade, but it is back at the train station (10-12 minute walk). You could stop here to eat before your train back to Lisbon.

#### WHAT TO DO IN LISBON

- **Go!Go!Go! Day trips to Belem and Sintra** –As mentioned earlier, Lisbon is as picturesque and aesthetically pleasing a city as you can find in Europe, with great food, plenty of historical monuments to explore, and an epic nightlife, but if you have time to make ½ day or full day trips to Belem or Sintra, do it!
- **Go!Go! Explore the Alfama district** –Whether it's called Altstadt, old town, Albaicin, Alfama, or anything else, we LOVE the time-warp, cobblestone, maze of streets found in the oldest areas of European cities. While the Alfama has a few renovated buildings and

areas that have been restored beautifully, much of it is fairly “gritty”, but not in a way that makes you think you’re in a bad neighborhood. I loved exploring this district and it was a fun area to photograph. **Be SURE to stop at the Miradouro das Portas do Sol viewpoint...**find it on Google Maps!

- **Go!Go! Castelo de S Jorge** –This is an easy one. Basically, everyone that goes to Lisbon goes to the castle, and it’s worth it as the views are amazing and the castle is in good condition.
- **Go!Go! Santa Justa Lift** –\_Yet Another incredible viewpoint. Since the elevator can only take so many people at a time, there is usually a bit of a line, so go early if you can. You buy your tickets in the elevator, or if you have a Lisbon Card I believe you can use it to ride for free.
- **Go!Go! Miradouro de Sao** –Stop me if you’ve heard this.... go here for incredible views of Lisbon! Seriously though, this is where you want to be for the sunset. Also, Lisbon’s second oldest trolley starts/stops right next to Miradouro de Sao, so it’s a perfect plan to see the sunset and then get your trolley experience back to the center of town.
- **Go! Explore Birro Alto and Chiado neighborhoods** –Both of these neighborhoods look different during the day than they do at night, but that’s especially true of Birro Alto. It’s an interesting place, as it objectively has some dirty alleyway ambiance to it but somehow also has some charm and even romance. As the sun sets, the narrow streets are lined with tables and it begins to feel like one large backyard patio. There are cafes with tables resting on stairways and the overhead streamers and small balconies give the entire area a festive feel.
- **Go!Go! Praco do Comercio** –Every European city has its main square, and this is a good one! Enormous, open, with the water on one side and the city on the other. All roads lead here so you’ll likely see it whether you like it or not, but it’s size and the colors and architecture are truly fantastic. The only frustrating part is pictures don’t come close to showing just how grand and majestic it is to stand in the middle of this square.
- **Ride the 28 cable car** – We didn’t do this but it’s in most of the guidebooks as a great way to see a lot of the city. It’s also notorious for being crowded.
- **The Aquarium** – We didn’t do this, as we argued that the US has aquariums and most fish look the same no matter where you see them. However, that might be a blind spot for us, as this is the #1 rated activity in all of Lisbon on TripAdvisor. Up to you!
- **Calouste Gulbenkian Museum** – We didn’t do this either, but it’s rated top 5 on TripAdvisor and has almost a perfect rating with over 6000 reviews, so it’s definitely worth prioritizing if you like the kind of art displayed at this museum.
- **See a Fado show** – We didn’t get to do this, but we would seek this out if we were ever back in Lisbon.

## WHAT TO DO: BELEM

Belem is an easy trip from Lisbon whether you take the train or, as we did, hopped in a cab and got there in no time from Central Lisbon. You can leave at 10am, grab the mandatory Pasteis at Pasteis de Belem, explore the Monastery and then take the elevator up Padrao dos Descobrimentos. After that, grab lunch at the Enoteca de Belem and then decide if you want to go down to the Torre de Belem, enjoy a drink at one of the seaside places mentioned above, or head back to Lisbon. It's a perfect ½ day and leaves you plenty of time to be in Lisbon as well.

- **Go!Go! Monastery of Jeronimos:** A no-brainer. 16,000+ people have rated this place on TripAdvisor and there is not a single poor or terrible review. Amazing. Don't miss it!
- **Go!Go! (Particularly if the weather is nice). Padrao dos Descobrimentos:** Pictures of this monument do not do it justice. You have to stand next to this grand sculpture/tower to get the full effect. Once you're done appreciating the imposing size from the ground, take the elevator up for some of the best views in the area.
- **Go! Coach Museum:** Although we are not big museum fans, we truly enjoyed taking a 45-minute stroll through this museum and would highly recommend it to anyone visiting Belem. It's not far at all from the Monastery and the rest of Belem's activities, and they are much more impressive in person.
- **National Tile Museum** – We only had time for one stop and chose the Coach Museum, but this museum also gets great reviews and looked interesting.
- **Torre De Belem:** Statue/monument: We didn't go, because we saw it from the Padrao dos Descobrimentos and didn't have time to walk down. It gets great reviews.

**TIP: Always buy entrance tickets and skip the line tickets before you arrive, no matter where you're visiting in Europe. For Belem, the Lisbon Card gets you into pretty much everything in Belem, even the Coach Museum. As mentioned earlier, not every city travel card is worth it, but the Lisbon Card is a good one.**

**TIP2: They have free admission to most attractions on the first Sunday of each month, so AVOID going on that day to avoid the crowds!**

## WHAT TO DO: SINTRA

Sintra is the real-world embodiment of a Dr. Seuss book. It's where you would film a movie like "Lemony Snicket's: A Series of Unfortunate Events", or "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children". It is fantasy, it is absurd, and it is amazing. Sintra has 4 "must do" attractions that you cannot miss, and a couple of other great options if you have time.

Although it ended up not making sense to stay the night in Sintra given the time we had, I really wanted to stay a night at the **Chalet Saudade** in the **Superior Suite**...look it up!

**Go!Go!Go! Quinta da Regaleira:** If Hugh Hefner lived in Southern Portugal in the late 1800s he would've lived here. This place screams hidden passages, secret society, and secret hero layer.

**Go!Go!Go! Pena Castle:** Unfortunately, as we ascended to Pena Castle on top of the mountain, the fog rolled in and we had a very somber and gloomy backdrop mixing in with the flamboyant and colorful castle.

**Go!Go!Go! Moors Castle:** While this castle isn't as vibrant as Pena or as whimsically artistic as Quinta da Regaleira, this is what you think of when you hear "castle" and the type of place where you'd film a medieval battle! This castle is EPIC, we loved it.

**Go!Go! Sintra:** The last area of Sintra you just have to see is the little village itself. If you like romantic, fairy tale Europe then this is one of those towns you dream about.

The two other places in Sintra that get great reviews are the National Palace of Sintra and the Park and Palace of Montserrat. I don't know how they could be any more wondrous than the four places listed above, but if we ever go back we'll have them on our list.

If you want to see pictures of most of what is described here, go to [www.gogogordons.com](http://www.gogogordons.com) and click on the Lisbon link.

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