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### **PORTUGAL FACTFILE**

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**TIME:** GMT. Summer Time GMT+1

**INTERNATIONAL DIAL CODE:** 00 351

**LANGUAGE:** The official language is Portuguese. English is widely spoken in shops, restaurants and museums within the capital's main tourist areas.

**GETTING THERE:** There are many daily flights connecting Lisbon International Airport (LIS) to the UK. As well as British Airways, TAP (Air Portugal) and PGA (Portugália Airlines), low cost airlines Airberlin, Monarch and EasyJet fly daily between Lisbon and London airports.

**AVERAGE FLIGHT TIME:** 2h30m from London

**WHEN TO GO?** The weather is mild most of the year round. The cool Atlantic breezes help to moderate the summer heat. Winters are gentle, but due to its proximity to the sea, it can get mist and drizzly at times. Lisbon is the Portuguese party-capital throughout June, celebrating vibrant fiestas. July to September are the busiest months.

**GETTING AROUND:** Buses, trams, lifts, underground, river-boats, taxis...Lisbon offers the whole range of public transports. Services are generally reliable and cheap by British standards.

The LisbonCard (24hrs/€13.50; 48hrs/€23.00; 72hrs/€28.00) gets you free access on public transportation (including trains to Sintra and Cascais) plus free access to Museums and Monuments and discounts in other places of tourism interest.

Táxi Vouchers for pre-paid transportation at fixed rates are available at the airport.

ICEP Portugal - Portuguese Trade & Tourism Office

Portuguese Embassy

11, Belgrave Square

London

SW1X 8PP

Tel: 0845 355 1212

[www.vistportugal.com](http://www.vistportugal.com)

[www.visitlisbon.com](http://www.visitlisbon.com)

In 2006 a 12 million euro advertising budget (32% more than 2005) helped to boost Lisbon's international profile as a tourist destination and centre of a region that boasts 'diverse and complimentary attractions.' The main targets were Spain, UK, Germany France and Italy (the nationalities that have traditionally occupied the most Lisbon hotel-rooms)

Spreading along the mouth of the River Tejo, Lisbon is one of the few European capitals with both a river *and* a coastline. The Baixa district (hub of tourist activity) lies between Praça do Comércio and Rossio plaza, the city's main 'meeting points.' Familiarise yourself with the city's magnificently rolling urban landscapes from the viewpoints on one of Lisbon's seven hills.

### **Rooms in Lisbon**

From evocatively decadent (and refreshingly inexpensive) pensions to the splendour and unbridled luxury of magnificently renovated palaces (also at prices that compare favourably with northern Europe), there are no shortage of choices in the heart of the Portuguese capital.

#### **Palácio Belmonte**

Described by Condé Nast as 'one of the coolest hotels in the world,' the Belmonte is simply legendary. (Suites from £200 to £825 a night).

Tel: +351 218 816 600 / [www.palaciobelmonte.com](http://www.palaciobelmonte.com)

#### **Hotel Lisbon Plaza**

Charming central hotel, with refined taste and special attention to detail. (£107 for a double room).

Tel: +351 213 218 218 / [www.heritage.pt](http://www.heritage.pt)

#### **Hotel Métropole**

In the Rossio plaza, the very heart of classic Lisbon, the Métropole preserves the charms of the 'belle époque.' (£65 for a double room).

Tel: +351 213 219 030 / [www.almeidahotels.com](http://www.almeidahotels.com)

#### **Hotel AC Lisbon**

Conveniently located for both business and tourism, offers sharp design and good service. (£62 for a double room).

Tel: +351 210 050 930 / [www.ac-hotels.com](http://www.ac-hotels.com)

#### **Hotel Mundial**

Central, efficient and with a penthouse restaurant with panoramic views. (£60 for double room)

Tel: +351 218 842 000 / [www.hotel-mundial.pt](http://www.hotel-mundial.pt)

## **Eating Out in Lisbon**

Lisbon is literally packed with sunny terraces, lively local bars and cosy restaurants. Whether you choose to dine on hearty traditional meals or eat tapas-style, servings are typically well-prepared and generous. Romantic Lisbon evenings invariably feature sundowners on a terrace followed by a candlelit dinner in a *fado* venue.

### **Taverna del Rey**

Tel: +351 218 876 754 / [www.tavernadelrey.com](http://www.tavernadelrey.com)

This Alfama restaurant offers good meals in the spellbinding atmosphere of one of Lisbon's most traditional *fado* bars. Owner-singer Maria Jô-Jô has been the life-and-soul at Taverna del Rey for 36 years and the famous Angolan *fadista* Ana Maria (who recently made a private appearance for Bill Gates) is also a regular fixture here.

### **Restô do Chapitô**

Tel: +351 218 855 550 / [www.chapito.org](http://www.chapito.org)

In Alfama quarter close to the castle, the lovely terrace and the restaurant's sweeping views definitely make this a Lisbon favourite.

### **Martinho da Arcada**

Tel: +351 218 866 213

Poet Fernando Pessoa's favourite, a long-established, local Lisbon haunt in Praça do Comércio...still serving traditional food at reasonable prices.

### **Cervejaria Trindade**

Tel: +351 213 423 506 / [www.centralcervejas.pt](http://www.centralcervejas.pt)

The oldest beer-house in town, covered in magnificent tiles (featuring mysterious Masonic symbolism). This bar has officially been declared 'a monument of special interest'.

### **SAMPLE:**

Lastminute.com ([www.lastminute.com](http://www.lastminute.com) / Tel. 0871 222 5969) offers a 4-night break at Dom Pedro Palace Hotel, a deluxe hotel located in the heart of Lisbon. This is a stylish hotel, with luxuriously classic décor and sweeping views over the city and across the Rio Tejo. (£527.39 per person includes room for 4 nights & return flight from Luton).

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**THE END**