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Gay Lisbon: A Gay Travel Guide to the
City of 7 Hills

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Overview

Lisbon is not necessarily the first city you think of visiting when planning a trip to Europe. It's no London, Paris or Rome with world class monuments or famous museums. Lisbon has never claimed to be this type of European capital city but it doesn't mean it has any less to offer. In fact, Lisbon has so much to offer, it's surprising it hasn't been popular for longer. Located on the western edge of southern Europe, this Portuguese capital sits just off the Atlantic Ocean and offers amazing landscapes, architecture, culture, beaches and more. The weather is mild year round and it's easily the least expensive capital city in Western Europe. While the gay scene is smaller than other major cities, it's still very developed and has a lot to offer for any LGBT traveler.



General Tips

The best area to stay in Lisbon is in one of the central neighborhoods like Baixa, Chiado, Principe Real, Bairro Alto or [the Alfama](#). Bairro Alto is where most of the nightlife is located including the popular gay street Rua Barroca. You'll also find many other gay owned businesses in Principe Real, just to the north. The Alfama is the oldest part of Lisbon with great views and entertainment options including fado, but it's a 10 minute trolley ride, or a 20 minute walk down and back up the hill to Barrio Alto area.

Lisbon is a fantastic destination and has enough attractions in and around the city to keep you busy for days. You should probably spend at least 3 days in Lisbon and perhaps more if you plan to make any day trips outside of the city, which is definitely recommended! Peak travel season is March through November but even winters are mild with average temps between 10-15C – much warmer than most European destinations this time of year.

Transportation & Airport transfer

Lisbon and its surrounding areas are very easy to get around. The public transport system consists of a metro, trains, trolleys, buses and funiculars. If you're staying in Lisbon for at least three days it's definitely worth buying the [Lisboa Card](#), which gives you unlimited access on all public transport routes. The card also gives you free entry to many of the popular museums, monuments and attractions throughout the city and costs just 39€ for 72 hours. A single trip on the metro only costs 1.40€ but riding the popular trolleys throughout the city are rather expensive at 2.85€ for each ride.

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The airport is located 7 kilometers (8 miles) from the city center and takes about 45 minutes via public transport. The most economical route is to take the metro red line and then transfer to the green line at stop Alameda. A one way ticket costs just 1.40€. Taxis are extremely cheap in Lisbon and should only cost you about 15€ from the airport to the city center.

Gay Hotels and Gay Friendly Accommodation in Lisbon

Luxury

Altis Avenida Hotel – A boutique hotel in Lisbon perfectly located in the city centre on the Praça dos Restauradores. The architecture and decoration is inspired by the Portuguese '40s and revolves around the concept of retro urban chic, where past and future meld in a unique atmosphere of charm and glamour. The property includes 70 rooms, with two suites and the panoramic Restaurant Rossio. Rooms start at 138€ per night. *Address: Rua 1º de Dezembro 120, 1200-360*

Bairro Alto Hotel – A 5-star boutique hotel in the heart of the historic downtown just between the bohemian Bairro Alto and the chic and cultural Chiado neighborhoods. The property is cosmopolitan and trendy with a blend of old and new. The hotel is within walking distance to major shops, theaters, museums, restaurants and bars. Rooms start at 215€ per night. *Address: Praça Luís de Camões 2, 1200-243*

Hotel Do Chiado – Located in Chiado, one of Lisbon's historic districts and near Bairro Alto. Chiado is the trendiest, elegant and chic meeting point of Lisbon. The property offers rooms with private terraces and panoramic views of the Castle and the Tagus River. The onsite bar Entretanto, located on the 7th floor is well-known for having the best view of Lisbon and it's the perfect place for a romantic dinner or having drinks with friends. Rooms start at 146€ per night. *Address: R. Nova do Almada 114, 1200-290*

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Mid Range

[H10 Duque de Loule](#) – this property just opened in March 2015 and is an exclusive and charming hotel, located in one of central Lisbon's historical buildings. It's been renovated maintaining the 18th-century architecture but its interior design blends traditional Portuguese features with modern and functional facilities. The hotel offers 89 rooms, free wi-fi, business center, Equestre library bar, 10th floor Limão Chill-Out Terrace and a gym. Room rates start at 80€ per night. *Address: Av. Duque de Loulé 81, 1050-088*

[Inspira Santa Marta Hotel](#) – a 4-star boutique hotel and an oasis in the center of Lisbon. All services and rooms are designed based on the principles of feng shui. The onsite restaurant, Open Brasserie Mediterrânica, offers Mediterranean cuisine and has gluten-free options on a daily basis. Sustainability is part of the Inspira identity and the hotel prides itself on its policy of focusing on the environment. Room rates start at 122€ per night. *Address: R. de Santa Marta 48, 1150-297*

[Internacional Design Hotel](#) – this superior 4-star boutique hotel is located on one of Lisbon's main squares, the plaza D. Pedro IV. It's unique, trendy and cosmopolitan. It's a very comfortable hotel with personalized service. Just a few minutes away from the traditional districts of Bairro Alto, Chiado and St. George's Castle. Room rates start at 130€ per night. *Address: Rua da Betesga 3 1100-202*

[Lx Boutique Hotel](#) – a 4-star boutique hotel in the heart of historical Lisbon. The property is a renovated century-old hotel overlooking the Tagus River with elegant and contemporary style. Room rates start at 150€ per night. *Address: R. Alecrim 12, 1200-017*

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Guest Houses

[The Late Birds Lisbon](#) – this is easily our favorite place in Lisbon and one of the only gay hotels in the city. It's a relatively new property that just opened in the spring of 2015. This old building was recently gutted and converted into a small, 12-room hotel with an awesome staff and incredibly intimate feeling. The outdoor backyard is a social area and has a nice pool, grassy area for laying out and a lounging area where you can order snacks and cocktails. The breakfast buffet is delicious and slightly different each morning. The rooms are simple, clean and modern. It's located in the Bairro Alto in one of the best locations in the city. Room rates start at 150€ per night. *Address: Tv. André Valente 21, 1200-024*



Photo via Late Birds Lisbon – standard room

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Budget

[Hotel Anjo Azul](#) – a small gay hotel right at the center of Bairro Alto. The location is quite good and the staff are very friendly, however the rooms are a bit old and dated. Room rates start at 40€ per night. *Address: Rua Luz Soriano, 75, Bairro Alto, 1200-246*

[5 Sins Chiado Hostel](#) – If you're on a budget but still want to visit Lisbon, you can stay for less than 20€ per night in a dorm room in one of the nicest hostels in town. Ideally located in the Chiado neighborhood, it's walking distance to the nightlife area in Bairro Alto and many of the sites around town. The property is new and is actually owned by a gay couple. The hostel is not necessarily gay in any way, but it is gay friendly like most of the properties in town. *Address: Rua do Carmo 76 1andar, 1200-094*

Apartments

There are many sites for apartment rentals in Lisbon, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment.

There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterb&b](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment. Understanding Lisbon's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

Special offers: [sign up with AirBnB using this link](#) or [misterb&b using this link](#) you will receive a free \$25 credit to use on your first booking!



Photo Credit: misterb&b

Sightseeing & Activities in Lisbon

You could easily spend a week or two in Lisbon visiting the numerous monuments, lookout points, historic plazas, museums, beaches and parks. But we know, most people will just spend a few days here so we've narrowed down our top must-see places on any visit to Lisbon.

[Fashion and Design Museum](#) – one of the world's leading museums of 20th century design. One of the highlights includes Portuguese businessman Francisco Capelo's fashion collection made up of 1,200 couture pieces. The collection also includes works by more than 230 designers representing trends in design from around the world. Many pieces are on display by famous names such as Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood and Yves Saint Laurent.

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Miradouros – one of the most unique aspects of the city is the geographic location and topography. Lisbon is located at the mouth of the Tagus River which opens up to the Atlantic Ocean, just outside of the Lisbon city limits. The landscape is incredibly hilly which makes for some of the most stunning viewpoints of any European city. There are a series of “miradouros” or lookout points across the city on various hilltops that give you different views of the city and surrounding areas. Some of the best and most popular (for good reason!) lookout points worth visiting are Miradouro da Senhora do Monte, Miradouro Sao Pedro de Alcantara and Miradouro da Graca.



[Mercado Ribeira](#) – this market features some of Lisbon’s finest restaurants, best chocolatiers, wines, liqueurs and some of the best seafood in the country. It’s the perfect place for foodies to get a feel for Lisbon’s food culture and to grab a quick, gourmet bite and experience more than 30 establishments with nice terrace seating in an excellent location by the river.

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[Fado](#) – this is the folk music of Lisbon's old neighborhoods with the most popular places located in the Alfama and Bairro Alto. This is one of the typical touristic activities where you can find gimmicky places full of foreigners or stumble into a locals only place featuring amazing performers somewhat off the tourist path. [The Fado Museum](#) is an option to learn the history and stories behind fado. The museum is located at the base of the Alfama, the oldest and most colorful neighborhood in Lisbon. Two good restaurants to see fado in Lisbon are Tasca da Bela in Alfama and Mascote da Atalaia in Bairro Alto. You can even buy [tickets in advance for a live Fado show in Chiado](#).

[St. George Castle](#) – this landmark can be seen from almost everywhere in Lisbon and dates back to 6th century. It was originally a Moorish royal residence until the Portuguese captured it in the 12th century. The castle sits on top of one of the 7 hills in Lisbon overlooking the historic center and the Tagus River.



St George Castle

Gay Tours in Lisbon (by Lisbon Beach)

Lisbon Beach offers tours to the gay beach 19 plus full service city tours, day trips and nightlife tours. The tour guides are friendly and very knowledgeable about the city's history, architecture and gay life. We toured around with an awesome guide who knew just about everything there is to know about the city. Tours are well priced and it's easily the best option to visit the gay beach if you don't have your own rental car. Tours start at just 29€ per person and can be booked online. At just a few years old, Lisbon Beach has grown rapidly and boasts [5-star reviews on TripAdvisor](#)! Plus, we can personally vouch for them ourselves. Check out all their tours listed below.



Photo via Lisbon Beach

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[Beach 19 Day Trip](#) – Beach 19 is the gay section of Costa da Caparica, a long stretch of sand on the Atlantic located 30km from Lisbon's city center. It's officially a nude beach, but you can certainly choose to keep your swimming suit on. Relax with a drink at the bar or watch the sunset enjoying warm weather from May through October. Joining this tour is hassle-free and the best way to enjoy Beach 19 by avoiding the 2-hour bus ride or an expensive taxi or rental car. Starting at 29€ per person, the Beach 19 tour is a great value and a perfect Lisbon beach experience for any LGBT traveler. [Click here to book the Beach 19 tour.](#)

[Gay-Friendly Walking Tour of Lisbon](#) – you'll experience Lisbon's historic areas with a gay guide but also have plenty of time to sit and relax with a drink and chat about Lisbon's top attractions and gay life. It's an easy-going walk plus includes a shot of Ginginha (typical cherry liqueur) at the end. Tour price is 29€ per person. [Click here to book the walking tour.](#)

[Sintra, Cascais and Cabo de Roca Day Trip](#) – you'll enjoy a full day exploring Sintra, Cabo da Roca and Cascais. Visit the Sintra National Palace to learn about Portugal's history, enjoy a relaxed sea-view lunch, head to Cabo da Roca, Europe's westernmost point and lastly, see the Estoril Coast by visiting the village of Cascais. You'll enjoy a small LGBT group and a friendly environment during the trip. Tour price is 69€ per person. [Click here to book the day trip.](#)

[Taste of Lisbon Food Tours](#) – If you really want to experience the food culture of Lisbon with a knowledgeable guide, we highly recommend Taste of Lisbon Food Tours. The tour comes highly recommended and you can see the level of service from their [5-star reviews on TripAdvisor](#). It's not an LGBT tour but it's one of the best ways to enjoy the local gastronomy.

Shopping in Lisbon

Popular shopping areas in Lisbon include the Baixa district in central Lisbon. The Principe Real neighborhood is where you'll find designer shops and antiques and you can find luxury brands and shops along Avenida Liberdade. If you're looking for men-only or gay-oriented shops in Lisbon, check out some of these locations with popular men's and gay fashion brands.

[Much Underwear](#) – much is a recently opened company and with it brings a different look to the world of exclusively male underwear. Much is 100% thought, designed and produced in Portugal. They don't currently have their own physical store yet, but you can find their products in local stores like UP!Town Lisboa or buy them online.



Photo via Much Underwear

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Uptown Lisboa – men's clothing store with shoes and accessories including popular gay brands like ES Collection, Diesel, Addicted, Bjorn Borg and Andrew Christian. *Address: Rua da Misericórdia 68 1200-385*

Vicri – The Portuguese fashion brand, VICRI, was created 17 years ago. Initially a collection of ties and shirts, the brand evolved to create a complete look for the modern man. VICRI has established itself as an internationally renowned men's fashion brand. *Address: Espaço Chiado Factory, Rua da Misericórdia 79 1200-385*

Restaurants and Cafes in Lisbon

Depending on the time of day, there are several restaurants in Lisbon worth a visit. Breakfast in Portugal is light usually including just a pastry and coffee. Lunch is around 1 or 2pm and dinner time is around 9pm.



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Gayloa – this is a fun steakhouse and bar in the Príncipe Real neighborhood, just next to Trumps, one of the most popular gay clubs in Lisbon. The atmosphere is cozy and they offer late night dining until 3am from Tuesday through Sunday. *Address: Rua da Imprensa Nacional 116B 1200-257*



Louro & Sal – enjoy a fusion of traditional Portuguese and modern cuisine with great wines. It's a friendly, romantic and relaxed space where the modern and the rustic combine. Closed Tuesdays. *Address: Rua da Atalaia 53 1200-043*

Manteigaria – small bakery and café in Camões Square that only sells pastéis de nata, a classic Portuguese custard tart. These are some of the best you'll find in all of Lisbon . The tarts are continuously made in front of you throughout the day and the guy behind the counter is deliciously handsome. Standing room only. *Address: Rua do Loreto 2, 1200-242*



Hotness at Manteigaria (the tarts are good too!)

Lisbon Gay Bars and Lounges

Nightlife in Lisbon starts very late. People start going out to bars around midnight and clubs around 2 to 3am. The popular gay nightlife spots in Lisbon are located in both Principe Real and Bairro Alto. You can still drink on the streets in Lisbon and many locals crowd the streets in this popular area. The gays tend to hang out on Rua Barraco between Rua das Salgadeiras and Travessa dos Fiéis de Deus.

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Purex – mixed crowd with both gays and lesbians and the occasional straight couples or friends. It's a great spot in Lisbon to go for a few drinks and perhaps a quick dance on the small dance floor. The interior has an edgy decor, yet still very cosy and laid-back. It's technically a gay-friendly bar and very popular with the artistic, alternative and fashionable crowd. Probably the most popular bar for lesbians. *Address: Rua das Salgadeiras 28 1200-241*

Tr3s – probably the most popular bear bar in Lisbon with happy hour from 4pm to 10pm. They offer a variety of drinks including both Portuguese and Belgian beers. There's outdoor seating and it opens as early as 4pm. *Address: Rua Ruben A. Leitão 2A, 1200-392*

Gay Clubs and Parties in Lisbon

Clubs

Trumps – this is the largest gay club in Lisbon and one of the most popular. There are two separate dance floors – one plays house while the other pop. All ages and types go and are welcome but it tends to trend on the younger side. Trumps is the creator of Hot Season and the Hot Season Festival, the first international gay festival in Portugal. Entrance costs 10€ which includes one drink ticket. Open Fridays, Saturdays and any night before a bank holiday from 11:45pm until 6am. *Address: Rua da Imprensa Nacional, 104 B, 1250-127*

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Photo by Sam Andres via Hot Season Lisbon

Construction – a large club located in the Principe Real neighborhood. This space is very popular with bears, masculine guys and older crowds. You'll find three different floors with the top floor occupied by a very cruisy dark room. It gets busy around 2 or 3am and plays house music. Open Friday and Saturdays – midnight to 06:00am. *Address: Rua Cecílio de Sousa, 84, 1200-277*

Finalmente Club – one of the most popular and classic clubs in Lisbon and the only one open during the week. It's a small dance club and institution in town open for more than 35 years featuring popular drag shows. Open every day starting at 12:30am until 6am with shows starting at 3am. *Address: R. da Palmeira, 38 r/c – 1200-313*

Cruising & Men Only

[Trombeta Bath](#) – this is by far the most popular sauna in Lisbon. It's located in Bairro Alto near many of the other gay bars. Clean place, newly expanded and comes highly recommended by locals. Entrance costs 14€ and 9€ for students. *Address: Rua do Trombeta, 1C, Bairro Alto, 1200-471*

Gay Hangouts

[Beach 19](#) – this is a large, clothing optional gay beach just outside of Lisbon. It's 30 km south of Lisbon so you'll need to drive, take a bus or take a tour, which coincidentally by its name, is [offered by Lisbon Beach Tours](#). If you don't have a car, taking the bus is long and you need to transfer to the small beach train to get there. It will easily take you almost two hours, so for the price and experience, it's worthwhile going with Lisbon Beach.



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Rua Barraco – this is the gay street, or rather “gay corner” in the Bairro Alto in Lisbon. In Lisbon, it’s popular (and legal!) to drink on the streets. This stretch is full of bars with people spilling out onto the street with drinks from local bars or cheap beers from nearby kiosks. Just the southern portion of the street is the gay hangout, near a collection of small gay bars between Rua das Salgadeiras and Travessa dos Fiéis de Deus.

Popular Events in Lisbon

[Lisbon Gay Pride](#) – each year Lisbon hosts a gay pride march during the summer. This event is definitely more of a march than it is a parade. On a separate weekend from the march, the city hosts a [pride village](#) or festival, generally within two weeks of the pride march, with food, drinks, various booths and concerts.



[Queer Lisboa](#) – a Portuguese Film Festival dedicated exclusively to screening gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and transsexual themed films. Held each year in September.

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Lisbon Pool Party

Day Trips from Lisbon

Belem – this is one of Lisbon’s most historical areas with plenty of monuments, landmarks and impressive buildings. It’s located just alongside the Tagus River at the mouth where it meets the Atlantic Ocean. Popular attractions in Belem include the Tower of Belem and Jeronimos Monastery just to name a few. Belem is located just outside of Lisbon so it’s easily reachable by taking Lisbon’s public transport. The most enjoyable route is to take the tram 15 or 127 from Figueira Square or Comercio Square along the coast, roughly 25 minutes. Since it’s not far, you might [consider taking a bike tour from central Lisbon to Belem.](#)

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Cascais – formerly a quaint fishing village that has now become a popular resort town. It's a colorful little coastal town with elegant pedestrian streets, luxurious villas, fashionable shops, restaurants and bars. The historic center has lots of great architecture, museums and monuments as well as a beautiful sandy beach. To reach Cascais, take the train from the Cais do Sodre train station in Lisbon which takes about 35 minutes and costs 4€ for a round trip. You can also take Bus 403 from [Sintra to Cascais](#) and visit both places on the same day, if you have the energy.

[Sintra](#) – the entire city is considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is well worth spending at least half a day. If you're adventurous, you could easily spend a couple days exploring this little town with all the sites and attractions they offer. While it's a small town, many of the sites are spread out and far apart or on the top of giant hills. They offer a bus service in town for just 5€ that offers you a return journey to several of the most popular attractions in the area. To reach Sintra, take the train from the Rossio train station in Lisbon which takes about 40 minutes and costs 5€ for a round trip.

Lisbon Beach offers guided tours to [Sintra, Cascais and Cabo de Roca](#). You'll enjoy a full day exploring Sintra, Cabo da Roca and Cascais. Visit the Sintra National Palace to learn about Portugal's history, enjoy a relaxed sea-view lunch, head to Cabo da Roca, Europe's westernmost point and lastly, see the Estoril Coast by visiting the village of Cascais. You'll enjoy a small LGBT group and a friendly environment during the trip. Tour price is 69€ per person. [Click here to book the day trip](#).

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