
Lisbon Gastronomy

ABOUT



Photo: Arq. Turismo de Portugal

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From grilled sardines to pastéis de Belém (custard tarts), the food in Lisbon is as appealing as the city and the region.

Grilled sardines are popular throughout Portugal, but in Lisbon they are particularly traditional during the Popular Saints festivities in June. They are mandatory fare in any typical restaurant or beach terrace, particularly in the summer, accompanied by grilled peppers and seasoned with the excellent Portuguese olive oil.

However, the boats that lend colour to the region's fishing ports - Ericeira, Cascais, Sesimbra and Setúbal - bring many other fish and seafood for scrumptious bouillabaisse, fish soups or simple grilled fish, such as the red mullet from Setúbal and the fried cuttlefish. In Portugal, we really do have the best fish in the world!

As for sweets, the temptations around the capital are many and by themselves justify the trip: walnuts in Cascais, at the end of the attractive Estoril Coast; queijadas (cheese tarts) and travesseiros (egg and almond pastries) in Sintra, and fofos (cream-filled sponge cakes) in Belas, the green Cultural Landscape of Sintra, dotted with palaces and classified as World Heritage by UNESCO; when you cross the Tagus to the south, you will find the Azeitão tortas (egg cream-filled rolls). Our sweets are endless, but there is one that no-one can miss when visiting Lisbon: in the monumental area of Belém, where two World Heritage landmarks are located, the mouth-watering pastéis de Belém are a must, a highlight of convent sweet making that is a trademark of Portuguese gastronomy.

Incidentally, we have another suggestion to start or end a meal: Azeitão cheese, from the beautiful landscape of the Arrábida Natural Park, is one of Portugal's best, with the added bonus of some of the region's best wines, notably muscatel from Setúbal. Besides these, there are also the excellent Colares table wines, mostly red, but if your preference goes for a white, then Bucelas is a very good choice.

A good meal, naturally, is not only based on the quality of the produce used, but also on the skills and talent of the chefs who prepare it. You will find some of Portugal's Michelin-starred restaurants in Lisbon, and some of the country's most prestigious chefs. The list includes names like Bertílio Gomes, Henrique Sá Pessoa, José Avillez, José Cordeiro, Leonel Pereira, Luís Baena and Vitor Sobral, to mention just a few who have excelled for their innovation and creativity in developing a modern Portuguese cuisine.

However, in Lisbon and its surroundings, the haven of good gourmets is within everyone's reach. Simple grilled fish can provide a divine meal, savoured under the sun on a terrace and accompanied by a nice, cool white wine, with the sea as a backdrop.

USEFUL INFORMATION

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