
A night out in Lisbon

ABOUT



Photo: Turismo de Lisboa

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Lisbon is one of those European capitals where you can enjoy one of the greatest freedoms of city life: walking its streets at night in safety and with pleasure.

For those keen on a bit of buzz, the nights start early and end late. Where? Preferably in the old quarters, with the River Tagus for company. Relaxing on a terrace, in a garden or a viewpoint are always very popular ways of spending the late afternoon.

Bairro Alto and Cais do Sodré are the most traditional quarters, but new places keep opening up by the river, breathing new life into the Lisbon night.

Evenings are always lively and weekends are the busiest, but regulars who like more relaxed atmospheres start their night out on the town on Thursdays.

Bairro Alto

The night starts in Bairro Alto, either on one of the vibrant terraces in Largo do Camões and Chiado or watching the sunset from the São Pedro de Alcântara viewpoint with the city spreading at your feet, or from the Santa Catarina viewpoint with the river down below. Then just carry on along one of the quarter's narrow streets, where you will also find trendy late-night shops, and choose a restaurant for dinner. You will be spoilt for choice, and a fado house can be a good option. But there's much more. The wide range of bars with their mixed clientele, and the street bustle in Bairro Alto make a good start for night owls.

As you go up Bairro Alto, you will find Príncipe Real to the north. This residential area, also known for its antique and design shops, has a number of bars well-established in Lisbon's nightlife, and is a popular meeting point for the gay community.

Cais do Sodré

If you want to dance the night away, Cais do Sodré is currently one of the trendiest spots. This area of bars bearing the names of the Northern European capitals and faraway countries that provided the fun for sailors who arrived in the port of Lisbon decades ago, is now one of the most relaxed in the Lisbon night scene, with cultural venues, restaurants, bars, clubs and discos. The music on offer is varied, from reggae through to African music, new wave, indie and Gothic rock, the club programmes are appealing and the atmosphere eclectic. For the more energetic, the excitement lasts throughout the night, until the sun comes up.



Terreiro do Paço

Considered to be the gateway to Lisbon from the river, Praça do Comércio, or Terreiro do Paço, is an iconic square for its history, symbolism and size, and until a few years ago was the seat of government, housing various Portuguese ministries. Today, one of the oldest cafes in Lisbon, formerly frequented by the poet Fernando Pessoa, can still be seen under its historic arcades, and a number of terraces and restaurants with innovative menus have sprung up, as have a minimal techno/house disco and a private club in the former premises of the Ministry of Finance.

Santa Apolónia / Jardim do Tabaco

As you go down the hill in Alfama, you will find Santa Apolónia and Jardim do Tabaco by the river. These have always been associated with the mainline railway station and the port of embarkation, where cruise ships dock today, but recently have been given a new lease of life. Landmark restaurants and one of the most popular and busiest discos in the city now occupy the former warehouses that provided support to the port.

Parque das Nações

The vast riverfront area in the eastern part of town was completely converted to accommodate the 1998 Universal Exhibition, and developed into a modern quarter with many commercial and leisure spaces. With promenades along the riverbank, it has other attractions such as the Teatro Camões, the headquarters of the National Ballet Company, the Pavilhão Atlântico, where many of the capital's concerts are held, and the Lisbon Casino which, besides the usual gambling rooms, has multicultural musical and exhibition venues.



Photo: Lx Factory, Alcântara

Santos / 24 Julho / Docks

Santos, Avenida 24 de Julho and the Docks were formerly Lisbon's port area, where there used to be old, derelict warehouses, but it went through glorious times in the 1990s, featuring at the top of Lisbon's nightlife. Frequented by a young public into pop and mainstream music, and some of the key restaurants, bars and discos still survive. In the Docks, the riverfront terraces and restaurants overlooking the small marina close to the 25 de Abril Bridge, are also patronised at lunch time and in the afternoons.