
Beach-going in Lisbon

ABOUT



Photo: Turismo do Estoril

Beach-going in Lisbon

Situated at the mouth of the River Tagus where it meets the Ocean, Lisbon is a city with a strong connection to the sea, and is the only European capital with Atlantic beaches.

It's essential, therefore, to take a walk along the coast or spend a few days on the beach.

With more than two dozen Blue Flag beaches to choose from, the coast has excellent conditions for water sports and attracts surfers and bodyboarders from around the world, with all levels of experience.

The experts say that the best waves in Europe are here, with a great diversity of types of wave and beach or rock breaks.

Don't miss

- > stroll along the beach
- > dive into the Atlantic Ocean
- > have dinner at sunset, overlooking the sea
- > taste the seafood

THE NORTH COAST

Simply catch the train and follow the Tagus estuary to be surprised by the succession of sandy beaches so close to the city.

The beaches, quite crowded on summer days, alternate between large sandy stretches such as Praia de Carcavelos, and small coves such as Praia da Azarujinha. At the end of the line are the beaches of Estoril and Cascais, with beautiful mansions that recall the time when the Portuguese Kings spent their summers here at the end of the 19th century.

While surfers and bodyboarders prefer Carcavelos or São Pedro do Estoril, those who prefer windsurfing go to Guincho Beach. Taking the road along the Sintra Mountain, the extensive beach here is in a more rocky area that is windier, ideal for sailing sports, and several national and international competitions are held here.

The coastal area of the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park starts at Praia da Cresmina, before Guincho, and passes through sandy and rocky sections, ideal for evenings watching the sun disappear into the Atlantic.

Past Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point on the continent of Europe, and the small beaches hidden under the cliffs, like Adraga and Ursa, you get to Praia das Maças and Praia Grande. Families prefer these, because they are spacious sandy beaches and the salt water pools are a good solution for days when the sea is a little rough. Another plus point is the varied range of restaurants and cafes overlooking the sea.

Past the viewpoint at Azenhas do Mar, with its whitewashed houses on the hillside and bathing pool carved into the rock, you have to travel inland in order to get back to the sea near Ericeira, a fishing village and well-known seaside resort. A succession of beaches stretches for 8km, with excellent waves and conditions, making this coast a World Surfing Reserve and a favourite destination in Portugal. Praia dos Coxos, Baía dos Dois Irmãos and the mythical Ribeira d'Ilhas, which has hosted an event in the World Qualifying Series since 1985, are now internationally famous.

Ericeira, Ribamar and Praia de São Lourenço are also renowned for their restaurants that specialise in fresh fish and seafood.

THE SOUTHERN BEACHES

You don't have to go very far to find one of the greatest beaches in Europe. South of the River Tagus, only half an hour from Lisbon, you will find almost 30 kilometres of sand, sea and sky.

The stunning Fossil Cliffs of Costa da Caparica frame the beach and today mark the point where the sea reached many millions of years ago. At the top lies the charming 16th century Capuchin Convent. This provides an excellent viewpoint surrounded by gardens.

To the south of the protected landscape, separated from the beach by a cordon of dunes, the Albufeira Lagoon has fine conditions for windsurfing, kitesurfing and paragliding. The stretch of golden sandy beaches is only interrupted by the majestic Cabo Espichel, which is worth visiting for the views of the coast and the isolated Shrine dedicated to Our Lady.

To the north bank of the mouth of the river Sado, passing through Sesimbra and quite close to Setúbal, the beaches are south-facing. They are smaller and some have rocky outcrops, but they have, on one side, the immense blue of the water, and on the other, the magnificence of the Serra da Arrábida Natural Park.

Like a wall of green sticking out of over the Atlantic, the hills shelter small coves of white sand with waters of many shades. Portinho da Arrábida is one of the most beautiful, surrounded by the green of the hills, but it's hard to choose between this and Figueirinha or Galapos. Scuba diving enthusiasts can find an undiscovered marine reserve in the clear waters of Anicha Rock, with many unique species of flora and fauna.

And at the end of the day, when the sun begins to disappear behind the hills, there's nothing like a good fish stew, a subtly flavoured red mullet or a dish of fried cuttlefish from Setúbal, accompanied by a fine white wine from the region.

GETTING HERE

In Lisbon, the train to the beaches of Cascais and Estoril runs from Cais do Sodré, close to the city centre, or from Belém. Cais do Sodré is also the last stop on the Green Lisbon Metro Line.

Comboios de Portugal - Tourist Travelcard + Beach Ticket

In addition to normal train ticket prices, Comboios de Portugal - CP (Portuguese Rail Services) is offering discounts on day or leisure trips with the Tourist Travelcard (Bilhete Turístico) which allows you unlimited travel on suburban trains from Lisbon (on the Sintra/Azambuja, Cascais and Sado lines), Porto (on the Aveiro, Braga, Guimarães and

Marco de Canaveses lines) and on regional trains on the Algarve line, and the Beach Ticket (Bilhete Praia) for trips from Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra to the nearest beaches.

There are several ways to get to Costa da Caparica, by bus from Lisbon. Alternatively, you can take a ferry from Lisbon to the other side and then the bus to Costa da Caparica. Here, there is a small train, Transpraia, which runs during the bathing season along the various beaches the length of the Fossil Cliffs, to Praia da Fonte da Telha.

Fares and timetables for public transport in Almada are available at <http://transportesalmada.ageneal.pt> (Only in Portuguese).

Although there is a train to Setúbal (www.fertagus.pt), the best way of exploring the south coast is by car, stopping off at various beaches and viewpoints.