

LANTERN TRIPS

# Lisbon, Slow and Beautiful

*Anniversary Lisbon with the right base, a smart Sintra day, and food worth planning around.*

OCTOBER 15-18, 2026

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# For This Trip

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Thank you for choosing Lantern Trips for your anniversary trip. This guide is built to make Lisbon feel intimate, beautiful, and easy for the two of you, with the kind of pacing, meals, and small moments that actually suit the occasion.

This version of Lisbon is shaped around a smart central base, one properly judged Sintra day, sunset stops worth pausing for, and meals that are good enough to anchor the trip. The aim is not to squeeze in every landmark. It is to help the city feel calm, special, and well spent while you are in it.

Use the guide as a confident default, not a rigid schedule. Follow the structure when you want the decisions made for you, then loosen it when a long lunch, a viewpoint, or an extra glass of wine deserves to win. The logistics are here to protect the mood, not dominate it.

Have a wonderful anniversary, and enjoy Lisbon.

# Before You Go

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Lisbon is easier than many European capitals, but it is not frictionless. The city runs on hills, judgment, and timing. Choose the right base, book only the things that genuinely deserve commitment, and the whole trip feels graceful. Choose badly, and you spend half the weekend hauling yourselves uphill or trying to sleep above bar noise.

## Entry and documents

If you are traveling on a U.S. passport or another visa-exempt passport, Portugal remains a straightforward Schengen trip. The official EU ETIAS site currently says ETIAS is expected to start in the **last quarter of 2026** and that no action is required yet. Because this trip falls on October 15-18, 2026, treat ETIAS as a live item and recheck the official site close to departure rather than assuming it will or will not apply. If you are traveling on another passport, check your consulate or the Portuguese visa rules directly rather than assuming a friend's situation applies to you.

Keep passport validity, travel insurance details, and your hotel confirmation easy to reach. This is not the kind of trip that needs a folder full of paperwork, but it is still a Schengen border crossing, so do not arrive relying on screenshots alone.

## What to book in advance

You do not need to prebook half of Lisbon. You do need to prebook the things that can actually shape the trip.

- Book the hotel as soon as you settle the base. On this trip, the base matters more than one extra restaurant.
- Book Pena first if Sintra is a must-do. It is the one timed ticket that can shape the entire day.
- Book Clube de Jornalistas if you want the strongest anniversary-dinner fit.
- Book Prado if you want one other high-confidence meal rather than improvising on the fly.
- Book Jerónimos only if you definitely want to go inside. If you are happy with the exterior, church, and Belém district, leave it flexible.

Book Ahead: Lisbon rewards selective reservations. One Sintra ticket, one anniversary dinner, and maybe one second strong meal is smart. Building the whole weekend around bookings is not.

## Money and budget

Cards are widely accepted, including for most restaurants and cafes. Still carry a little cash for kiosks, older pastry counters, or the occasional place that is running old systems or handling a rush badly.

This brief's budget works well in Lisbon if you structure the trip around a few standout moments instead of constant splurges. The expensive parts are obvious: a serious anniversary dinner, Pena entry, maybe Regaleira too, and any evening where wine keeps multiplying. The cheapest mistake is a pastry stop. The most expensive mistake is booking a weak restaurant because the view looked good online.

Useful anchors for this itinerary:

- support card: **€0.50**
- single preloaded **CARRIS/METRO** ticket: **€1.90**
- **24h CARRIS/METRO/CP** ticket for the Sintra day: **€11.40**
- Pena adult admission: **€20**
- Quinta da Regaleira adult admission: **€20**

## Weather and what to pack

Mid-October in Lisbon is pleasant, but not stable enough to pack as if it is guaranteed beach weather. The same date window in recent years has ranged from warm, dry days around 27 C to cooler, wetter stretches around 21 C with real rain.

Pack for layered early autumn:

- one light jacket or overshirt for evenings
- one compact rain layer
- shoes that handle hills and polished stone
- one slightly nicer outfit for dinner
- sunglasses, because Lisbon light is still Lisbon light even when the air cools down

Do not overpack. This trip gets better, not worse, when you can move easily up stairs, through stations, and over calçada without feeling like pack animals.

## Getting there and away

Humberto Delgado Airport is unusually close to the center. The Red Line metro station is in the arrivals zone and the official Metro page currently shows station hours of **06:30-01:00**. If you are traveling light and staying near a Metro-connected base, that is a perfectly good arrival option. If you are carrying real luggage, landing tired, or staying in a hillier pocket of Chiado, Príncipe Real, or Alfama, take the easy win and use a taxi or Bolt.

The routing tool puts the airport at roughly 14-16 minutes by car from Rossio or Chiado in light conditions. Real traffic can make that longer, especially on the return. For your Sunday 18:30 departure, the safer move is to be heading airport-bound around 15:30 after lunch rather than trying to squeeze one more sight out of the day.

## Getting around

Lisbon is a walking city only if you respect the hills. The right strategy is mixed-mode: walk the beautiful downhill and riverside stretches, then use trams, Metro, or short car rides when the city starts turning every block into calf work.

For local transit, the current occasional-fare structure is clear:

- support card: **€0.50**
- preloaded **CARRIS/METRO** ticket: **€1.90**
- **24h CARRIS/METRO/CP** ticket: **€11.40**

That 24-hour Carris/Metro/CP ticket is the clean play for the Sintra day because it covers Lisbon transit and CP urban rail on the Sintra line. For the rest of the trip, just top up as needed instead of overthinking passes.

Worth Knowing: uphill taxis are not a planning failure in Lisbon. They are often the correct move, especially on arrival day, after dinner, or if you choose a more atmospheric base.

## Connectivity and useful apps

At least one of you should land with data already working. This is not because Lisbon is hard without it; it is because every smooth version of this trip depends on checking restaurant timing, calling a car uphill, and adjusting quickly if weather shifts your Sintra day.

Useful stack:

- Google Maps or Apple Maps for walking and transit
- Bolt or Uber for strategic uphill rides
- CP app or website for Sintra train times close to departure
- WhatsApp, because many hotels and restaurants still use it comfortably

One last practical note: this guide was checked carefully, but border systems, opening hours, fares, and reservation rules do move. Recheck entry requirements, timed tickets, and any key restaurant bookings close to departure so nothing important rests on stale information.

## Small practical notes

- Pickpocketing is the main low-level city nuisance, especially on crowded trams and at viewpoints. Keep phones and wallets out of back pockets.
- If you do stay in Alfama despite the base advice, ask the hotel exactly where cars can drop you; "nearby" can mean a lot of stairs.
- A few Portuguese basics go a long way. `Bom dia`, `boa tarde`, `obrigado` or `obrigada`, and `a conta, por favor` are enough to make the trip feel less extractive.

# Where to Stay

If you only want the answer: stay in **Chiado**. If you want the slightly quieter, slightly more design-forward version of the same idea, stay in **Príncipe Real**. For this exact trip, those two areas beat both Alfama and Bairro Alto.

The reason is simple. You are not coming to Lisbon to maximize nightlife or to cosplay in the oldest lane possible. You are coming for a relaxed anniversary weekend with good food, beautiful walks, smart route logic, and one Sintra day. That profile makes convenience part of the romance.

## The short ranking

Area	Verdict	Why it works	Why it does not
Chiado	Best overall	Beautiful, central, strong restaurant access, easy for Sintra and airport logistics	Not the cheapest option
Príncipe Real	Best quieter alternative	Boutique feel, elegant streets, calmer nights, good restaurants nearby	Hillier and less Metro-simple
Alfama	Best atmosphere, not best base	Old Lisbon magic, viewpoints, tiled streets, fado mood	Steep, awkward with luggage, slower resets between plans
Bairro Alto	Good to visit, not to sleep	Great for bars and sunset access	Noise, uneven footing, weaker sleep quality

## Why Chiado is the smartest anniversary base

Chiado gives you the version of Lisbon that feels effortless. You can walk to Baixa, drift up toward Bairro Alto, drop down toward Cais do Sodré, and still get back to your room without making every return a tactical exercise. It is also the cleanest base for a Friday Sintra departure because Rossio is close and easy.

If you want one sentence to organize the hotel search, use this one: look around **Chiado, the Camões area, or the lower edge of Príncipe Real** before you even consider Alfama or Bairro Alto.

What to look for:

- a simple walk to Rossio or Baixa-Chiado
- enough restaurant density that dinner does not require a plan every night
- a calm street rather than a "lively" one
- a room you will still be happy returning to after hills, wine, and late afternoon walking

## When Príncipe Real is actually better

Príncipe Real wins if what you want is a more intimate, polished, less tourist-saturated evening feel. It suits a couple especially well: handsome streets, better boutique-hotel energy, and enough good food nearby that dinner does not need to be a production.

The tradeoff is that it is less plug-and-play than Chiado. The hills are more real and the transport rhythm is a little less obvious. That is why it works better as the second recommendation, not the first.

## Why Alfama should be a day, not your default bed

Alfama is the part of Lisbon you will remember most visually. It is also the part of Lisbon most likely to become charmingly inconvenient at the exact wrong moment: with suitcases, after dinner, or when you need to get across town efficiently.

For a longer stay, that tradeoff can be worth making. For a short anniversary trip with one Sintra day and a relaxed pace, it is smarter to visit Alfama beautifully than live inside its logistics.

## Why Bairro Alto loses this brief

Bairro Alto is useful, lively, and worth walking through. It is not the best place to sleep if you care more about atmosphere than bars, and more about waking up fresh than about being two minutes from the next drink.

That is the real distinction here. Bairro Alto is a good evening neighborhood. It is not the smartest anniversary base.

Best For: booking one hotel that makes the whole trip easier, not choosing the most photogenic address and regretting it on Day 2.

# Trip Cheatsheet

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**Arrival:** Thursday, October 15 at 10:30.

**Departure:** Sunday, October 18 at 18:30. Start airport-bound around 15:30.

**Best base:** Chiado first, Príncipe Real second. Stay in Alfama only if you actively want atmosphere over convenience; stay in Bairro Alto only if late-night bars matter more than sleep.

**Day 1:** Soft landing in Chiado, Camões, São Pedro de Alcântara, and an easy first-night meal.

**Day 2:** Sintra from Rossio, Pena first, old town second, Regaleira only if energy still feels good.

**Day 3:** Graça to Alfama downhill, Prado lunch, old-Lisbon viewpoints, sunset in Alfama.

**Day 4:** Belém before departure: Jerónimos, Pastéis de Belém, O Frade, then airport.

## Book first:

- Pena timed entry
- One anniversary dinner: Clube de Jornalistas
- Prado if you want one other high-confidence table
- Jerónimos only if you definitely want the interior

**Transit shortcut:** buy a [24h CARRIS/METRO/CP](#) ticket on the Sintra day. It currently costs **€11.40** plus the **€0.50** support card if you do not already have one.

**Critical numbers:** [112](#) for emergencies in Portugal.

**Budget snapshot:** keep the money for one real anniversary dinner, Sintra admissions, and a smart central hotel. Do not waste budget on weak view restaurants or constant uphill ride-hailing.

## Pastel de nata order of priority:

1. Pastéis de Belém if you are already in Belém.
2. Manteigaria for the best easy city-center stop.
3. Aloma only if it fits naturally.

**Best sunset bets:** São Pedro de Alcântara on Day 1, memmo Alfama terrace on Day 3, Santa Catarina only if you want something looser.

**Most important thing to remember:** do Sintra on the clearest day and keep the rest of Lisbon relaxed enough that the anniversary mood survives the logistics.

# Day 1: Chiado, Bica, and a Soft Landing Into Lisbon

**Theme or focus:** Arrive well, see the city early, and spend your first afternoon in the part of Lisbon that gives beauty without demanding athletic commitment.



With a 10:30 arrival, the right move is airport to hotel, bags down, quick reset, and then a west-central afternoon built around Chiado and the first big panoramic view. Do not make Day 1 about "covering Lisbon." Make it about entering the city properly. Save the heavier hills and the harder logistics for later.

**Chiado and Praça Luís de Camões** are the right opening move. Neighborhood: Chiado. Nearest useful stop: **Baixa-Chiado**. Why it matters: this is the part of Lisbon that lets you feel "in" the city quickly without asking too much of your legs or attention. Walk slowly, browse, get a coffee, and let the first afternoon be atmospheric rather than ambitious.

From Camões, the walk up to **Miradouro de São Pedro de Alcântara** is only about nine minutes, which is just enough effort to earn the first proper citywide view without turning the afternoon into a hill session. Neighborhood: Bairro Alto / Príncipe Real edge. Nearest useful stop: **Restauradores** on the lower side. Why it matters: it gives you the cleanest first read of the city, including the castle-facing skyline you will be moving through over the next two days.

If you still have curiosity left in the tank, drift through the edge of **Príncipe Real** before resetting at the hotel. This is not a "collect the landmarks" afternoon. It is a soft landing with enough beauty to feel like you arrived somewhere worth celebrating.

## Optional adds

- Walk the Bica streets for a first feel of the steep, photogenic side of central Lisbon without committing to a heavy route.
- If the day is hotter than expected, cut Príncipe Real and save the energy for dinner.

## Food for the day

**First pastry: Manteigaria Chiado.** Neighborhood: Chiado. What to order: one warm pastel de nata and a coffee. Price signal: cheap. Why it fits: it gives the trip a proper first bite without turning the afternoon into a food mission.

**Main meal: By the Wine.** Neighborhood: Chiado. What to order: a few glasses, charcuterie, and small Portuguese plates rather than a giant commitment dinner. Price signal: moderate. Why it fits: it sits exactly where you want to be and does not require the psychological energy of a grand event.

## Sunset and evening

Tonight is for a beautiful view and a low-pressure evening, not a maximalist dinner strategy. Watch the light change from São Pedro de Alcântara, then decide honestly how much dinner you still want. If you still feel fresh, turn the Chiado walk into an easy dinner and one last drink. If not, call it early and save the serious reservation energy for tomorrow.

Good Backup: if you are dressed up and unexpectedly full of energy, this is still a perfectly viable night for **Clube de Jornalistas**. Just do not force the anniversary dinner if the travel day is still in your body.

Best For: easing into Lisbon without wasting the day.

## Transit notes

Take the easy transfer from the airport if you are carrying bags. The city is close enough that a short taxi or Bolt often buys more energy than it costs. Once you are checked in, stay on foot for the rest of the day.

# Day 2: The Smart Sintra Day

**Theme or focus:** Do Sintra in the version that still feels romantic and manageable, not in the version that turns into competitive monument collecting.



Sintra is worth the effort on a short Lisbon trip only if you do it cleanly. That means starting early, going uphill by vehicle, and refusing the temptation to stack every famous site into one long blur. This day sits on **Friday, October 16, 2026** on purpose: Saturday is usually the worse crowd bet. Only swap this with Saturday if the weather clearly demands it.

Start from **Rossio** after an early coffee and take an early train to Sintra. Check the live departure time close to the day, but the right mindset is simple: leave early enough that Sintra still feels calm when you arrive. Once you get to **Sintra station**, take a taxi, Bolt, or the local bus uphill to **Pena**. Walking that climb is the wrong use of your legs for this trip.

**Pena Palace** is the one place here that deserves commitment. Neighborhood: São Pedro de Penaferrim hillside above Sintra. Useful transit: uphill vehicle from Sintra station. Current adult Palace + Park ticket: **€20**. Booking: yes, timed entry matters. What matters most is not ticking every room; it is getting the terraces, the setting, and the strange dreamlike quality of the whole hilltop.

After Pena, come back down into **Sintra old town** and slow the day down on purpose. This is where the day becomes enjoyable instead of performative. Walk the center, have a proper pause, and get a **travesseiro at Piriquita**. This is the part people often rush past on the way to the next monument, which is exactly why you should not.

If the weather is still good and your energy still feels strong, add **Quinta da Regaleira** in the afternoon. Current adult admission is **€20**. Booking: timed entry. Operational detail: the site currently allows up to one hour of delay after the slot time, which is genuinely useful on a day with moving parts. The route logic is sensible here: Pena to Regaleira is a short car ride, and Regaleira back toward the station is a manageable downhill finish.

**Skip If:** you are only adding Regaleira because the internet told you Sintra is incomplete without it. The smarter move is one major monument done well, not two done irritably.

## Food for the day

**Pastry stop: Piriquita.** Neighborhood: Sintra old town. What to order: the travesseiro. Price signal: cheap. Why it fits: this is the one sweet stop that actually belongs to the place and the day.

**Lunch: keep it simple in the historic center.** What to aim for: a real sit-down lunch, not a scattered snack round. Order something straightforward and Portuguese, then protect the afternoon. The mistake in Sintra is spending forty-five minutes chasing the perfect table when the actual goal is to keep the day gentle.

**Dinner back in Lisbon: Clube de Jornalistas.** Neighborhood: Príncipe Real area. What to order: this is the night for a full dinner, not just petiscos. Price signal: splurge. Why it fits: Sintra gives you the grand scenery; Clube de Jornalistas gives you the quieter, candlelit payoff.

## Transit notes

Go uphill by vehicle. Work downhill afterward. That is the single biggest route decision that keeps this day civilized. If the weather looks poor, switch this day with Saturday instead of trying to out-stubborn cloud and rain.

# Day 3: Graça, Alfama, and the Old Lisbon Day

**Theme or focus:** Spend one full day inside Lisbon's oldest and most beautiful terrain, but do it downhill and with food logic instead of brute force.



This is the day for old Lisbon, but not in the punishing version where you spend the morning proving you can climb. Start with a taxi or Bolt up to **Graça**, then let the city slope downward through its best old neighborhoods.

Begin at **Miradouro da Graça**, officially Miradouro Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen. Neighborhood: Graça. Why it matters: it has one of the best balances in the city, high enough to feel dramatic and lived-in enough not to feel staged. From here, work your way toward **Portas do Sol** and **Miradouro de Santa Luzia**, which remain beautiful even when they are busy because the underlying urban theatre is so strong.

The move from Santa Luzia into lunch is one of the neatest pieces of route logic in the trip. **Prado** is only about an eight-minute walk away, which means you can have your old-streets morning and still land at one of Lisbon's best central tables without wasting half the day crossing town. That is exactly the kind of transition this city rewards.

After lunch, take the afternoon more lightly than guidebooks often suggest. You do not need to force another museum or stack one more church just because you are already here. Wander a little through the lower Alfama or Sé side, then go back for a reset before sunset.

For sunset, try the **memmo Alfama terrace** if you can get a table. Neighborhood: Alfama. Price signal: moderate-to-splurge drinks stop. Why it fits: it is special enough to remember, but still rooted in the city around it rather than floating above it as a generic rooftop exercise.

## Food for the day

**Morning stop: keep breakfast light near Graça or Portas do Sol.** Coffee and something small is enough. This is not the day for a grand breakfast; save the appetite for lunch.

**Lunch: Prado.** Neighborhood: central old-city edge near Baixa/Mouraria side. What to order: let this be one of the more serious meals of the trip. Price signal: moderate-to-splurge. Why it fits: it feels contemporary and precise without losing touch with Portuguese ingredients or the city around it.

**Dinner: keep it light on purpose.** After a proper lunch and a sunset drink, this is the right night either for a simple wine-and-petiscos meal near your base or, if you want one last famous casual blowout, an optional seafood night at **Ramiro**. If you choose Ramiro, go because you want the loud, high-energy shellfish experience, not because you think every Lisbon trip is obliged to do it.

Local Trick: on Lisbon's hilliest day, spend money on the uphill start, not on the exhausted finish.

## Transit notes

This is a walking day only because the route is shaped correctly. Start high, drift lower, and use a short ride again if your legs are done after sunset.

# Day 4: Belém Before Departure

**Theme or focus:** Use the late Sunday departure for one final district that feels open, handsome, and easy, then leave Lisbon without an anxious last sprint.



Belém is the right final-half-day neighborhood because it gives you river air, major landmarks, and one last good lunch without demanding that you navigate the old city's hardest terrain on checkout day. With an 18:30 flight, this is still a real half-day, but not a day to get clever. Keep the luggage plan simple: either leave bags at the hotel and return once, or move through Belém cleanly before heading airport-bound.

Start with **Jerónimos Monastery**. Neighborhood: Belém. If you booked the interior, go early and do it first. If not, that is fine. The exterior, church, and setting still carry enormous weight, and this trip does not need another line simply for the sake of completeness. If you are going inside, morning remains the cleanest move.

From Jerónimos, **Pastéis de Belém** is only a three- to four-minute walk, which is exactly why this stop belongs here and not as some random detour elsewhere. This is the right moment to settle the original-vs-copy question properly. Go warm, eat one standing up if the line is heavy, then decide whether you need another.

The obvious caution in Belém is **Belém Tower**. Treat it as an exterior landmark unless you recheck close to departure and see a clear reopening notice. This is not the day to gamble on a maybe-open interior and lose an hour to it.

For lunch, walk the short stretch over to **O Frade**. This is the fix for Belém's biggest weakness, which is that too many visitors settle for pretty but forgettable riverside food. O Frade gives you a proper final meal before you head back for bags and the airport.

## Food for the day

**Pastry: Pastéis de Belém.** Neighborhood: Belém. What to order: the classic pastel de nata, warm. Price signal: cheap. Why it fits: this is the one place where the original status actually matters.

**Lunch: O Frade.** Neighborhood: Belém / Ajuda edge. What to order: let this be a proper final lunch, not just a convenience stop. Price signal: moderate. Why it fits: it is stronger than staying trapped on the postcard strip and close enough to keep the final day tidy.

## Departure notes

Do not cut this too fine. For an 18:30 flight, being back on airport logistics by about 15:30 is the safer move. Lisbon airport is close, but close is not the same as risk-free.

# Restaurants, Food & Dining

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Lisbon is not a city where you need ten bookmarked restaurants to eat well. It is a city where one or two badly chosen meals can waste your best slots, and one or two well-chosen ones can make the whole trip feel more intimate and more intelligent. The move here is to anchor a few meals properly and let the rest stay light.

## The meals worth planning around

**Clube de Jornalistas** is the strongest anniversary dinner in this guide. Price signal: splurge. What to expect: a proper seated dinner in a room that feels tucked away, warm, and adult without slipping into stiff luxury. If you want one meal that actually honors the occasion, make it this one.

**Prado** is the best central meal to build around if you want modern Lisbon at a high level without anything showy. Price signal: moderate-to-splurge. It works because it still feels grounded in Portugal while being sharper and more considered than a classic *tasca*.

**O Frade** is the best tactical Belém lunch in this plan. Price signal: moderate. That matters more than it sounds. Belém is one of the easiest places in Lisbon to end up eating weakly because the setting does so much of the selling for mediocre places.

## The easy, useful, actually good option

**By the Wine** is not the grandest restaurant in the city. It is one of the most useful. For a first afternoon in Chiado, or a night when you want good wine and a low-friction meal, it fits the trip beautifully. Think of it as the smoothest opening-night answer, not the emotional centerpiece.

## If you want one famous casual Lisbon meal

**Ramiro** is still the obvious shellfish classic. The catch is that it is not romantic in the way this guide usually means romantic. It is loud, energetic, and about appetite. Go if you want that. Skip it if what you really want is a beautiful evening.

## What to order in Lisbon

Do not treat the city as only a *pastel de nata* machine. The real pleasure is the mix: clams in garlic and coriander, *pica-pau*, grilled fish, rice dishes, cured pork, good bread, sharp olive oil, and wine that costs less than it should.

If a menu offers **amêijoas à Bulhão Pato**, that is one of the dishes most likely to make the table happy. If you see **pica-pau**, it is one of the easiest high-signal things to order with drinks. And if you are at a place that takes seafood seriously, do not default automatically to cod just because it is the most famous.

## Pastel de nata ranking

### 1. PASTÉIS DE BELÉM

This is the one worth crossing town for, but only if you are already making a proper Belém morning of it. The value is not just "the original." It is the texture and temperature when you catch them right: warm, flaky, and just distinct enough from the standard Lisbon style to justify the pilgrimage.

### 2. MANTEIGARIA

This is the best everyday answer. If someone asks where to get one strong pastel de nata in central Lisbon without turning the day into a quest, the answer is Manteigaria. It fits real itineraries better than almost anyone else.

### 3. ALOMA

Aloma is the connoisseur pick, not the essential detour on a trip this short. If you are already near one of its branches, absolutely stop. If not, keep your feet and your time for the city itself.

Worth Knowing: the smartest pastel strategy is not finding ten versions. It is eating two or three in the right contexts and knowing why each one is there.

## Sunset drinks that actually fit this trip

The best sunset choices here are the ones that feel tied to the neighborhoods you are already in.

- **memmo Alfama terrace** if you want the most quietly romantic option and are happy to pay a little for the setting.
- **São Pedro de Alcântara** if you want the easiest first-evening panorama without building the whole night around it.
- **Santa Catarina / Adamastor** if you want the loosest, least committal version.

## The one food mistake to avoid

Do not confuse a view with a meal. Lisbon is full of places that sell the first and coast on the second. On a trip this short, the better pattern is simple: choose the view deliberately, then choose the food deliberately.

# Possible Swaps

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This guide has a preferred order, but it is not rigid. Lisbon improves when you make one or two smart adjustments instead of obeying a plan that the weather or your legs have already disproved.

## If the weather turns on Sintra

Sintra belongs on the clearest day, not on the most virtuous spreadsheet day. It sits on Friday because that is the better crowd move, but if Friday looks wet and Saturday looks bright, swap Days 2 and 3 without guilt.

What not to do is drag yourselves to Pena in low cloud simply because the plan said Friday.

## If arrival day feels heavier than expected

Cut the Day 1 climb first, not the whole afternoon. Stay around Chiado, let the first meal do more of the work, and save São Pedro de Alcântara for another moment. The trip does not get better because you forced one more viewpoint while tired.

## If Sintra energy starts fading

Drop Regaleira. That is the cleanest concession. Pena plus old town is still a successful day. A tired second monument is not better than a satisfying first one.

## If Sintra gets cancelled altogether

Do not panic-book another day trip. Use the extra day to make Lisbon itself more generous: keep Graça and Alfama, add a longer lunch, and give yourselves more time for a sunset drink and dinner. On a trip this short, a beautifully paced city day is better than a forced substitute excursion.

## If you want one museum after all

Make it **CAM at Gulbenkian**, not a random obligation stop. It is the cleaner current indoor-art backup while Lisbon's heavier classic-museum slate is still partly disrupted by renovation works.

## If you stayed in Alfama anyway

Front-load your uphill transport. Do not try to be purist about walking back every night just because the area is beautiful. The prettiest way to ruin the mood in Lisbon is to pretend the hills are charming every single time.

## If you want a bigger sunset meal

Upgrade one evening to a real sunset mission only if that feels genuinely exciting. If not, keep the sunset as a drink or miradouro moment and let the dinner stand on its own food. This trip does not need a dramatic river-crossing every night to feel romantic.

# Enjoy Lisbon

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Lantern Trips built this guide to keep the logistics light and the trip itself front and center: good meals, old streets, strong viewpoints, and enough breathing room for Lisbon to feel special instead of overmanaged.

Use the structure when it helps, then loosen it when the city gives you a better moment. If lunch runs long, let it. If one miradouro deserves an extra pause, take it. The best version of this trip should still feel lived, not performed.

Boa viagem, e feliz aniversário.

