

48 hours in Lisbon

The view over to the city's Alfama quarter

WHAT'S THE DEAL?

- TAP, Portugal's airline, flies from Heathrow and Gatwick to Lisbon with return fares from £100. Details: 0845 601 0932 or www.flytap.com
- THE Hotel Tivoli Jardim, Av Julio Cesar Machado, has double rooms for two from £67 a night. Details: 00351 213 591 100, www.tivolihotels.com.
- FOR info call the Portuguese National Tourist Office on 0845 355 1212 (local rate charges) or visit www.visitlisboa.com
- A ONE-DAY travel pass on metro and trams costs just £2.

best fado houses is O Faia (Rua da Barroca 54-56; 00351 21 342 6742; www.ofaia.com), founded in 1947 by a fado singer in a cellar-style restaurant in the heart of the Bairro Alto. Four fado singers sang their hearts out as we dined on monkfish cream soup, grilled cod fish and a pear in syrup, washed down by some fine white Portuguese wine (£66 for two but worth every penny).

SUNDAY MORNING

CATCH a fast supertram (No 15) to Belem where so many of Portugal's explorers set sail to explore the New World.

The stunning Mosteiro dos Jeronimos dates back to the 1500s. Close to the monastery are some pretty gardens as well as several museums (admission is free on a Sunday). A definite must-see is the Maritime Museum.

A ten-minute walk away is the turreted Torre de Belem, a 500-year-old tower which is one of Lisbon's most recognisable landmarks

But there is another reason why so many people make the trek out to Belem...the famous Antiga Confeitaria de Belem (90 Rua de Belem), a cavernous tiled cafe-bar famous for its hot pastel de natas (custard cream tarts) which are liberally sprinkled with cinnamon.

LISBON is one of the hippest cities in Europe with both Madonna and Robbie Williams strutting their stuff there at the recent MTV awards. The Portuguese capital has loads of clubs and bars – but there's also plenty to see and do as **YORK MEMBERY** found out on a 48-hour break...

FRIDAY EVENING

CATCH one of Lisbon's funicular trains up to the Bairro Alto (the upper town) – heart of the city's nightlife. The rustic Alfaia Restaurante, Travessa da Queimada 22 (00351 213 461 232) is slap in the middle, and popular, so do book ahead. After feasting on nibbles of olives, bread, sliced meat and cheeses, we

settled for small sardines and rice and grilled sea bass. The total bill with drinks was just £24.

SATURDAY MORNING

STOP off for a coffee and a coco branco, a sugary coconut snack, at Baltazar Castanheiro on the Praca da Figueira, a good starting point for a city tour. Next head south along the Rua Augusta, the pedestrianised street, at the heart of the Baixa, the imposing grid of 18th Century streets that make up the lower town.

Lisbon is famous for its century-old trams so catch the No 28 on Conceicao for a rollercoaster-style ride up and down the city's narrow, steep

streets. At times you can almost reach out and touch the passing shop fronts as you climb up to Castelo de Sao Jorge. It was built by the Moors and commands some of the best views of Lisbon, while Alfama, a village within a city, is the oldest part of the capital with narrow, car-free streets.

A great place for a quick snack is one of

the restaurante and cervejaria (food and beer) snack bars, which offer fast-food Portuguese-style. One of the best is Beira Gare (Rua 1st Dezembro 116), a minute's walk north-west from the Rossio (Lisbon's main square). A prego (beef roll) smothered in mustard and a small beer costs less than £2.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

CHIADO, on the west side of the Baixa, is the heart of Lisbon's downtown shopping district. It's best reached via Rua do Carmo, home to the plush Armazens do Chiado centre. On Rua Garrett there is the old-fashioned Casa Pereira which stocks a huge range of ports – a box of five drink miniatures costs £10. If you're looking for some classy shoes, pop into Orion 1.

Stop for coffee at the ornate Cafe A Brasileira (Rua Garrett 120) where generations of Portugal's literary greats have put the world to rights.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

YOU can't leave Lisbon without visiting a fado club. Fado (literally meaning fate) is best described as Portuguese blues and has changed little in the last 150 years. One of the



Lisbon's magnificent Torre de Belem is 500 years old



One of the stylish suites with views of the London Eye

HOTEL OF THE WEEK

SWISSOTEL THE HOWARD, LONDON'S WEST END

WHERE AND WHY: The best view in London from the completely refurbished Swissotel The Howard right on the river. You can watch the London Eye go round and see riverboats chug along towards Tower Bridge. And it is just a 10-minute walk away from West End theatres.

COMFORT FACTOR Modern deco and very stylish. If you want a real treat such as for an anniversary, book one of the mini-suites high above London which have their own roof terraces. It has all the trimmings of an upmarket city hotel

but with family touches such as special children's rooms with toys, play areas and DVDs. The hotel will also supply cots, tiny bathrobes, nappies and bottles if you're travelling with tots.

GRUB OR GOURMET Hotel restaurant JAAN is definitely gourmet, blending French with Asian cooking styles. The restaurant opens out into a private dining courtyard which is suitable for weddings or celebrations, as well as a quiet retreat for afternoon tea on a fine day. The hotel is associated with the legendary

Raffles in Singapore, so treat yourself to a Singapore Sling in the Temple Bar. **WHILE YOU'RE THERE:** Walk along the Thames Path, shop in Covent Garden – just a few minutes' stroll away – or take in the West End. The hotel is also just across the river from Waterloo if you want to stay in London the night before taking the Eurostar to Paris and beyond. **WAKE-UP CALL:** Rooms from £130 for two (£65pp per night) www.london.swissotel.com or 020 7836 3555

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