

The Lisbon Belvederes

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Lisbon is, due to its topography, a city of 'points of view', in other words, belvederes. Whether it's during the day, late afternoon or even during the night, they generously demonstrate their treasures, some plain to see and which we easily photograph, others more secret, for those who know how to appreciate Lisbon. Some are very well known, others are more discrete. We will show you a small selection that will allow you to enjoy all the beauty of Lisbon and its outskirts.

Each one with its charm and its advantages:

The S. Jorge Castle offers one of the best views, thanks to its promenade, as well as a 360° view over Lisbon when you walk on its walls. From up there, Lisbon fades into the distance. It is the ideal place to get a notion of Lisbon's topography.

From the paved terrace, covered in shade from its many pine trees, we take time in locating the Praça do Comércio (square), the ruins of the Convent of Carmo, the Belvedere of S. Pedro de Alcântara (see further ahead) and also the Avenida (avenue) da Liberdade, the Eduardo VII park and the great green patch – the botanical garden!

As we walk along the walls we can also discover the Campo (field) de Santa Clara (every Tuesday and Saturday the famous Thieves market takes place here), the Dome of the National Pantheon and Santa Apolónia train station. We also uncover hidden aspects of Lisbon like luxuriant gardens in private terraces or orange groves right there on the castle slope.

Santa Luzia (Alfama) , at a lower altitude than the castle and on the route of the number 28 tramline, Santa Luzia is visited by many tourists. Easily recognised by its big palmtree which hangs over the roofs, this belvedere

overlooks the streets of Alfama. We are stunned by the sight of the Mar da Palha (sea of straw) which stretches from the Vasco da Gama Bridge to the 25 de Abril bridge, as well as that of the south bank of the Tagus. At night it's wonderful. All these eyes, these cameras, these binoculars, telescopes and video cameras, enthralled with Lisbon's beauty, see only that she, as if observing the sightseers, lends her eyes onto a stage.

Saint Luzia, who preferred to go blind than give herself to someone she didn't love, gave her name, her presence, her church to this beloved place, to those who like to behold her and to those who love each other.

After all the tourists dazzled by the sun have left, tired from steps, run out of clichés, the roofs of Alfama offer themselves to sweethearts at sunset.

Graça , just a little higher up, on the route of number 28 tram (Largo da Graça) you will find another perspective. From this belvedere where one can quietly sip a coffee, away from the hustle of the city. Nossa Senhora do Monte: A few blocks from the Graça belvedere, also reachable by number 28 tram, one arrives at Nossa Senhora do Monte belvedere, the highest with the old Moorish quarter below, Mouraria. Because the access is not so noticeable, the crowd doesn't rush...to breathe the calmness in this pleasant place besides the Chapel of Our Lady...of Benevolence. In her glass clock, she watches the city from the steep hill where she is: naive, caring and benevolent, she receives with modesty the promises, prayers and flower offerings every new day in a bluish haze.

Torel belvedere: less well known than the other belvederes because it is well hidden, the Torel belvedere in the charming Braancamp Freire garden (just two steps from the Campo dos Mártires da Pátria) deserves a detour. From there you will be seduced by the magnificent view over the Avenida da Liberdade, the São Pedro de Alcântara belvedere as well over the Tagus. It is a peaceful hideout where you can take a break to admire Lisbon.

Santa Catarina, also known as Adamastor, in honour of the impressive statue that evokes the dangers the sailor encountered during the Discoveries.

Right under Bairro Alto and a short distance from the Bica elevator, this very animated belvedere has a Woodstock attitude, at least in music. There rasta, dogs and tourists mingle. A promenade with a view over the sparkling Tagus also offers a fabulous view of the 25 de Abril bridge.

São Pedro de Alcântara: (Bairro Alto) when you get off the Glória elevator at the top of the hill, you cannot help being seduced by the view. From downtown, to the castle hill, passing through Graça and a small corner of the Tagus, it is undoubtedly one of the best views, if not the prettiest, specially at the end of the day when the city acquires golden reflections. After two years being remodeled – please admire the arabesques of the pavement – it is a pleasure to rediscover this place with fountains, benches and a map in painted tiles.

After viewing Lisbon from all these angles, you will not have (by far) run out of treasures this city has to offer...Let yourself be amazed when walking down a street along the Tagus, or the sight of a freight ship which looks trapped between two streets, or the Lisbon roofs. Try going to the top of Park Eduardo VII, the Santa Justa elevator, or if you still have time, the statue of Cristo Rei, on the other side of the river!



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