

Lisbon & Porto in May

Seven nights of tiled streets, palaces in the hills, port cellars and the Douro Valley

Travellers 2 adults	Dates Sat 15 – Sat 22 May 2027	Flying from Manchester	Budget About £1,800 for two excluding flights
Pace Balanced	Staying in Mid-range hotels	Into Food, history, views	Passports British

This is a sample, written to show what a Pick My Trip itinerary looks like. Yours is planned from scratch around your own request, dates and budget. Look for the **hidden gem** notes: the places most visitors walk straight past.

Your trip at a glance

DAY	WHERE	HIGHLIGHTS	HIDDEN GEM
1 • Sat 15	Lisbon	Chiado, sunset over the city	Dinner in a Moorish palace
2 • Sun 16	Belém	Jerónimos, custard tarts, LX Factory	Ferry to the other bank for dinner
3 • Mon 17	Sintra	Pena Palace, Quinta da Regaleira	The forest path walkers use instead of the bus
4 • Tue 18	Alfama	Flea market, castle, tile museum	Lisbon's highest viewpoint and amateur fado
5 • Wed 19	To Porto	Fast train, Ribeira, Dom Luís I bridge	A gilded church most people skip
6 • Thu 20	Porto	Lello bookshop, Bolhão, port tasting	The locals' sunset terrace
7 • Fri 21	Douro Valley	Scenic train, vineyard lunch, river boat	The Casal de Loivos viewpoint
8 • Sat 22	Home	Fly Porto to Manchester	—

Flights

Book an **open jaw**: Manchester to Lisbon, then Porto back to Manchester. You don't backtrack, and two one-way fares usually cost no more than a return. At the time of writing, Lisbon is served direct from Manchester by easyJet, Ryanair and TAP, and Porto by easyJet, Jet2 and Ryanair. Each flight takes about 2½ to 3 hours. Aim to land in Lisbon by early afternoon.

Where to stay, and why

Lisbon: Baixa or Chiado (4 nights). They're the flattest part of a very hilly city, Metro and tram stops are on your doorstep, and Rossio station (for Sintra) is a short walk away. Expect about €140–180 a night for a good mid-range double in May.

Porto: Baixa, near São Bento (3 nights). You can walk down to the Ribeira, and Douro Valley trains leave from São Bento itself. About €110–150 a night. Ask for a room away from the street; Porto's centre is lively at night.

Day by day

Times are a guide to pace, not a timetable. Anything marked "book" is in the checklist at the end.

15 SAT · DAY 1 Arrive in Lisbon

An easy first afternoon: the elegant streets of Chiado, a viewpoint at sunset and dinner somewhere memorable.

14.00 Airport to hotel. A Bolt or taxi to the Baixa takes about 20 minutes (Bolt is usually cheaper). Or take the Metro: red line, change at Alameda for the green line, about 25 minutes. Buy a **navegante** card from the station machine and load it with "Zapping" credit. One card per person works on the Metro, trams, buses, funiculars and the Sintra train.

16.30 Chiado. Walk up Rua Garrett past the old cafés. Step inside the **Igreja de São Roque** (free): the plain front hides one of Europe's most lavish chapels.

HIDDEN GEM One of São Roque's side chapels, the Chapel of St John the Baptist, was built in Rome in the 1740s, blessed by the Pope, then taken apart and shipped to Lisbon. It is made of lapis lazuli, agate, marble and gilded bronze. Most people photograph the ceiling and miss it.

HIDDEN GEM On Rua do Alecrim, **Fábrica Sant'Anna** has hand-painted tiles in the traditional way since 1741. If you want a tile to take home, buy it here rather than a printed souvenir version.

19.45 Sunset (about 8.40pm in mid-May) at the **Miradouro de São Pedro de Alcântara**, looking across to the castle. There's a kiosk for a glass of wine.

20.45 Dinner at Casa do Alentejo, Rua das Portas de Santo Antão. Ignore the touts on this busy street; this is the unmarked doorway you want.

HIDDEN GEM Behind an ordinary door is a 17th-century palace with a Moorish-style courtyard and tiled dining rooms upstairs, serving Alentejo dishes such as *carne de porco à alentejana* (pork with clams). Even if you only have a drink in the courtyard, go up.

TIP Wear shoes with grip. Lisbon's polished limestone pavements (*calçada*) are beautiful and slippery, especially after rain.

16 SUN · DAY 2 Belém, then across the river

Lisbon's Age of Discovery monuments in the morning, and a dinner most visitors never find in the evening.

9.00 Tram 15E from Praça da Figueira to Belém (about 30 minutes). Go early: by mid-morning it's standing room only.

9.30 Jerónimos Monastery opens. Use a ticket bought online and go straight to the two-storey cloister before the tour groups arrive. The monastery church next door is free, and Vasco da Gama's tomb is just inside the door.

11.00 Pastéis de Belém, baking custard tarts to a secret recipe since 1837. Skip the takeaway queue: walk through to the large tiled rooms at the back for table service, and order them warm with cinnamon and icing sugar.

11.45 Walk the riverfront past the Padrão dos Descobrimentos to the **Belém Tower**. Then continue east to the **MAAT** museum.

HIDDEN GEM MAAT's wave-shaped roof is a free public walkway. It has the best view of the 25 de Abril bridge, and hardly anyone goes up.

13.30 LX Factory in Alcântara (a few stops back towards the centre on tram 15E, or a short Bolt): a former textile works full of shops, cafés and street art, with a market on Sundays. Have lunch here, then browse **Ler Devagar**, a bookshop in an old printing hall with a bicycle "flying" overhead.

15.30 Head back to the hotel for a rest. Lisbon's hills will tire you out.

18.30 **Ferry to Cacilhas** from Cais do Sodré: about 10 minutes, on your navegante card. From the ferry terminal, walk west along the **Cais do Ginjal**, a riverside path past old warehouses, to **Ponto Final** for dinner at a table on the jetty, looking back at Lisbon (book).

HIDDEN GEM Few visitors cross the river, but this is the classic view of Lisbon: the whole city glowing across the water at sunset. Ferries run back late into the evening; check the time of the last one.

IF IT RAINS Swap the afternoon for the **Gulbenkian Museum** (closed Tuesdays, so Sunday works). Its small, world-class collection runs from Egyptian pieces to Lalique jewellery, and its garden is one of the city's calmest.

17 MON · DAY 3 Sintra

Fairy-tale palaces in misty hills. Monday is the right day, because many Lisbon museums, including Jerónimos, close on Mondays.

8.30 **Train from Rossio station:** about 40 minutes, several an hour, on your navegante card. Sit on either side.

9.30 **Pena Palace** opens. Book the first time slot online at parquesdesintra.pt, and take a Bolt or taxi from the station (about 10 minutes) so you arrive on time. See the palace rooms first, then walk the terraces.

HIDDEN GEM Most visitors leave once they've seen the palace. Instead, walk 15 minutes through Pena Park to the **Cruz Alta**, the highest point of the Sintra hills. From there you get the view of the palace you see on postcards, plus the Atlantic on a clear day. On the way down, stop at the **Chalet of the Countess of Edla**, a little Alpine-style house with cork decoration.

12.30 Walk down past the walls of the **Moorish Castle** (entry optional). Then take the **Villa Sassetti path**, a free woodland trail down to the old town.

HIDDEN GEM The Villa Sassetti path is how locals avoid the queues for the crowded circuit bus. It takes about 25 minutes downhill, through mossy forest and past an Italianate villa.

13.30 **Lunch** in the old town's back lanes, away from the main square. Afterwards, have *travesseiros* (almond-cream puff pastries) at **Casa Piriquita**, open since 1862.

14.45 **Quinta da Regaleira** (book a time). Go straight to the **Initiation Well**, a spiral staircase that winds nine levels down into the earth. Follow the tunnels at the bottom out to the lake, then find the second, smaller "Unfinished Well".

17.30 Train back to Lisbon. Have a simple dinner near the hotel tonight.

IF IT RAINS Sintra is often misty even when Lisbon is sunny, and the mist suits it. In heavy rain, swap the Regaleira for the **Monserate Palace**: its interiors are spectacular and it's far quieter.

18 TUE · DAY 4 Alfama, Graça and fado

The oldest quarter of Lisbon, the city's highest viewpoint and an evening of fado.

9.00 **Feira da Ladra**, the flea market on Campo de Santa Clara (Tuesdays and Saturdays only). It's best before 11, when the good stalls are still full: old tiles, vinyl, cork and brass.

10.30 **Panteão Nacional**, the white-domed church at the edge of the market.

HIDDEN GEM Take the stairs to the Panteão's **rooftop terrace**. It has a 360° view over the Alfama's red roofs and the river, for a fraction of the castle's crowds.

11.30 Get lost in the **Alfama** lanes on the way down to the **Miradouro de Santa Luzia** (tiled terraces, bougainvillea). Then climb to the **Castelo de São Jorge**.

- 13.30** **Lunch** at any small *tasca* with a handwritten **prato do dia** (dish of the day) board. It's the best-value meal in Lisbon, often with soup, a main and a drink.
- 15.00** **National Tile Museum** (Museu Nacional do Azulejo), 10 minutes away by Bolt. It's in a convent with a dazzling gilded church, and the long panorama of Lisbon in tiles shows the city before the 1755 earthquake.
- 18.30** **Miradouro da Senhora do Monte** in Graça for sunset.

HIDDEN GEM Senhora do Monte is Lisbon's highest viewpoint, and the one locals use: a pine-shaded terrace with the whole city laid out below. Bring a drink and arrive 30 minutes before sunset.

- 20.30** **Fado**. Either book a fado dinner in the Alfama (expect a set menu or minimum spend), or try the alternative below.

HIDDEN GEM **Fado vadio** ("vagabond fado") is amateur night: anyone can stand up and sing, from waiters to grandmothers. **Tasca do Chico** in the Bairro Alto is the best-known place for it. It's tiny, so arrive early and buy a drink. Finish with a cherry *ginjinha* at **A Ginjinha** on Largo de São Domingos, serving it since 1840.

TIP Tram 28 is famous but packed and a pickpocket hotspot. If you want to ride it, board early at the Martim Moniz terminus, or take the quieter tram 12E around the same hills.

19 WED · DAY 5 North to Porto

Three hours on the fast train, then Porto's riverside and a sunset from the bridge.

- 8.15** Pick up custard tarts for the train from **Manteigaria** in Chiado. Many Lisboetas rate them above Belém's.
- 9.00** **Alfa Pendular** from Santa Apolónia to Porto Campanhã: about 3 hours (book on cp.pt or the CP app; advance fares are cheaper). At Campanhã, change to a local train for the 5-minute hop to São Bento.
- 12.30** Drop your bags. Lunch at **Casa Guedes** near Praça dos Poveiros: a roast pork sandwich (*pernil*) with melted Serra da Estrela cheese. It's a Porto institution, and locals queue for it.
- 14.00** **São Bento station**: the entrance hall is covered with about 20,000 blue-and-white tiles showing Portuguese history (free). Then walk down **Rua das Flores** to the river.
- 15.00** **Igreja de São Francisco**, by the Ribeira.

HIDDEN GEM São Francisco looks austere outside, but inside almost every surface is carved and gilded. Your ticket includes the catacombs beneath, lined with old tomb slabs and an ossuary. Many visitors photograph the outside and walk on.

- 16.30** Wander the **Ribeira** quay. Then climb the steps beside the old city wall, the **Muralha Fernandina**, to the upper deck of the **Dom Luís I bridge**.
- 20.30** Cross the top deck to the **Jardim do Morro** and the **Serra do Pilar** terrace for sunset (around 9pm). Have dinner on the Gaia side or back in the Ribeira.

20 THU · DAY 6 Porto's tiles, books and port

The city's famous sights early, then gardens, port cellars and the locals' sunset spot.

- 9.00** **Livraria Lello**: book the first time slot of the day, when it's quietest. The ticket price comes off any book you buy there.
- 9.45** Around the corner, the side wall of the **Igreja do Carmo** is a vast tile panel.

HIDDEN GEM Look closely between the Carmo church and the Carmelitas church beside it. There's a house barely a metre wide squeezed between them, built so the two churches wouldn't share a wall.

- 10.15** Climb the **Clérigos Tower**, or get a similar view free from the **Miradouro da Vitória** in the old Jewish quarter, five minutes' walk away.

- 11.00** Walk up Rua de Santa Catarina to the **Capela das Almas**, a chapel tiled from top to bottom. Have coffee in the belle époque **Café Majestic** (pricey, but worth one coffee).
- 12.30** **Mercado do Bolhão**, the restored early-1900s market hall: sardine tins, cheese, and petiscos (small plates) at the market's food counters.
- 14.30** **Jardins do Palácio de Cristal**: shady gardens with peacocks and some of the best views of the Douro.
- 16.00** Cross to **Vila Nova de Gaia** for port (book a tasting).

HIDDEN GEM The big names (Sandeman, Taylor's, Graham's) are excellent but busy. For something more personal, book a tasting at a small family-run house such as **Quevedo**. The **Taylor's** lodge does have a lovely garden with peacocks if you'd rather go big. Afterwards, ride the Gaia cable car down to the riverfront.

- 19.30** **Passeio das Virtudes** for sunset.

HIDDEN GEM The Passeio das Virtudes is where young Portuguese gather at sunset: a sloping garden terrace with a view over rooftops to the river mouth. It isn't on most tourist maps.

- 21.00** Dinner: try the **francesinha** (Porto's steak, ham and cheese sandwich under a beer-and-tomato sauce) once. Or have spicy pork *bifanas* at **Conga**, a cheap, cheerful local favourite.

IF IT RAINS The **Serralves** museum has contemporary art, an art deco villa and 18 hectares of gardens to walk in when it clears. Or stay in Gaia longer: the lodges are all indoors.

21 FRI · DAY 7 The Douro Valley

One of Europe's most beautiful train rides, into the terraced vineyards where port comes from.

- 9.00** **Train from São Bento** up the Douro line to **Pinhão**: about 2½ hours, sometimes with a change at Peso da Régua (check times on cp.pt). After Régua the line runs right beside the river. Sit on the right-hand side.
- 11.30** **Pinhão station** is covered in azulejos of the grape harvest. Look before you leave the platform.
- 12.00** **Quinta do Bomfim**, a working port estate about 10 minutes' walk from the station. Book a tour and tasting with lunch on the terrace. **Quinta da Roêda** is a walkable alternative.
- 14.30** Take a taxi up to the **Miradouro de Casal de Loivos** (about 15 minutes).

HIDDEN GEM Casal de Loivos is the view of the Douro: terraced vineyards falling to a great bend in the river, with Pinhão far below. Most day-tour groups don't stop here. Ask the driver to wait 20 minutes.

- 16.00** A one-hour **river boat** trip from Pinhão quay, then a late-afternoon train back to Porto.

EASIER OPTION If a long day on trains doesn't appeal, take tram 1 along the river to **Foz do Douro**, where the river meets the Atlantic. Walk the seafront to the **Pérgola da Foz**, then have grilled fish on Rua Heróis de França in Matosinhos, where the restaurants grill on the pavement.

22 SAT · DAY 8 Home

- 10.00** If your flight is late in the day, buy tinned fish, port or cheese at the Bolhão to take home (port must go in checked luggage). **Metro line E** (violet) runs from Trindade to the airport in about 30 minutes. Allow 2 hours at the airport: exit checks under the EU's Entry/Exit System can add time at passport control.

Local knowledge

Ordering coffee

An espresso is *uma bica* in Lisbon and *um cimbalino* in Porto. A *galão* is a milky coffee in a glass. Standing at the counter is cheaper than sitting down.

The couvert

Bread, olives and cheese put on your table are charged if you eat them. Send them back if you don't want them.

Tipping

It's modest: round up, or leave 5–10% for good restaurant service.

Safety

Both cities are safe, but pickpockets work tram 28, the Santa Justa lift queue and Porto's Ribeira. Ignore street sellers offering "sunglasses" (they mean drugs) in the Baixa.

Ordering beer

A small draught is an *imperial* in Lisbon and a *fino* in Porto. Using the local word gets a smile.

Eat like a local

Lunch is 1–3pm, and the *prato do dia* is the best value. Dinner rarely starts before 8pm. Tascas with paper tablecloths are usually the best value.

Getting around

Bolt and Uber are cheap and quick, especially uphill. In Lisbon, the navegante card covers almost everything. In Porto, the Metro and your feet are enough.

Language

Obrigado (if you're male) or *obrigada* (if you're female) means thank you. Don't open in Spanish; English usually goes down better.

Weather and packing

Lisbon in May: highs around 22°C, lows of 14°C, mostly sunny with the odd shower. **Porto** is a few degrees cooler and wetter, with highs around 20°C, and the Douro Valley is warmer and drier than the coast. The Atlantic is still cold (about 17°C).

- Comfortable shoes with grip: both cities are steep and cobbled
- A light rain jacket, plus a jumper for evenings and Sintra's mist
- Sunglasses, sun cream and a hat for the Douro
- A plug adapter: Portugal uses two-pin type C/F sockets (230V)
- A smart-casual outfit for fado and nicer restaurants

Food checklist

- **Pastel de nata:** compare Belém and Manteigaria
- **Bacalhau à Brás:** salt cod with egg and matchstick fries
- **Bifana** in Lisbon, **pernil com queijo** in Porto
- **Francesinha** once, **tripas à moda do Porto** if you're brave
- Grilled sardines, octopus (*polvo à lagareiro*) and clams
- **Port** in Gaia, **vinho verde** with seafood, **ginjinha** in Lisbon

Budget estimate

For two people, 7 nights, mid-range, excluding flights. Prices are typical for May 2027.

Hotels: 4 nights in Lisbon, 3 in Porto	£920
Food and drink (about £85 a day)	£600
Trains, Metro, trams, ferry and taxis	£140
Sights, tastings, quinta lunch and fado	£240
Total	about £1,900

That's a little over your £1,800. To save about £150, choose fado vadio instead of a fado dinner, picnic at the Douro viewpoint instead of the quinta lunch, and stay in a guesthouse in Porto.

Flights: two one-way fares from Manchester typically total about £120–200 per person in mid-May, before the late-May half-term.

Book before you go

- ☐ Flights (open jaw) and hotels: now
- ☐ Lisbon to Porto train: up to 2 months ahead for the best fares
- ☐ Pena Palace (9.30 slot) and Quinta da Regaleira: 1–2 weeks ahead
- ☐ Quinta do Bomfim visit and lunch: 2 weeks ahead
- ☐ Ponto Final dinner, fado dinner, port tasting: a week ahead
- ☐ Jerónimos and Livraria Lello (first slot): a few days ahead

Entry, health and practical checklist

- ☐ **No visa needed.** British passport holders can visit Portugal and the rest of the Schengen area for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.
- ☐ **Passport:** issued less than 10 years before you arrive, and valid for at least 3 months after the day you leave.
- ☐ **Entry/Exit System:** on your first visit since it started, you'll give fingerprints and a photo at the border. Allow extra time.
- ☐ **ETIAS,** the EU's planned online travel authorisation, wasn't needed at the time of writing. Check the FCDO entry requirements page a week before you go.
- ☐ **Vaccinations:** none needed beyond routine UK ones. Make sure tetanus is up to date. No malaria risk.
- ☐ **GHIC** (UK Global Health Insurance Card) for state healthcare, plus travel insurance.
- ☐ **Money:** euros. Cards are widely accepted, but carry some cash for tascas, markets and small cafés.
- ☐ **Emergencies:** 112. Portugal is on UK time, so no jet lag.

Sources: FCDO travel advice and entry requirements for Portugal; TravelHealthPro. Rules change, so check gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/portugal before you travel.

Want anything changed?

Reply to the email this came with: one round of changes is included. You could ask to add a beach day in Cascais, swap the Douro for Coimbra, or slow the pace.

Example itinerary prepared by Pick My Trip, pickmytrip.co.uk, in October 2026. Timings, prices and opening days are typical figures checked at the time of writing; always confirm with the provider before you book or travel. Pick My Trip plans; you book. We don't sell or arrange travel.