

Title:

Portugal - Lisbon, Algarve and Lagos

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Summary:

On the southwestern tip of continental Europe, Portugal is an old school country. In this article, we take a look at Lisbon, Lagos and the Algarve.

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Article Body:

On the southwestern tip of continental Europe, Portugal is an old school country. In this article, we take a look at Lisbon, Lagos and the Algarve.

Lisbon

Lisbon is the biggest city in Portugal and is located on the Atlantic coast in middle of the country. I've been to Lisbon three times, but only for a few days each time. Every time I come away with the impression of elegance.

Arriving by train, your first taste of Lisbon is when you walk out of the train station directly onto the shore of the harbor. As you look to the ocean, the name "San Francisco" immediately comes to mind. Mountains rise up on both sides of the mouth of the harbor and then there is the bridge. Running across the mouth of bay is a bridge that looks for all intensive purposes like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. I've never had a chance to research it, but there has to be a connection.

As you walk into Lisbon, everything is clean and relaxed. There are walking only streets with cafes and garden areas. Bringing to mind San Francisco again, there are cable cars running though the center of the city. I can't tell you why, but Lisbon is a very low stress city on both the mind and the wallet. Yep, it is cheap and a good destination for budget travelers.

Algarve

The Algarve is the southwestern tip of Portugal and borders on both the Atlantic

and Mediterranean oceans. This is an interpretation on my part as some feel the area only covers the beaches on the Mediterranean Ocean. Regardless, the Algarve is a collection of beach towns that remind me of Southern California in the 1940's. No I am not that old. I am just relying on family stories and pictures. Jeez, give me some credit! One of the highlights of the Algarve is Lagos.

Lagos

I grew up in San Diego, California. It's a great place to be a kid and an adult. The only complaint I have is a lot of people seem to feel the same way. The population has exploded beyond belief, freeways are crowded on weekends and housing prices average roughly \$500,000 for a deluxe closet without driveway. Its still nice, but I've begun to think about relocating. If I do, Lagos may be my destination.

Lagos is a sleepy beach community with just about anything you could want in paradise. White beaches, private beaches, grottos, wine growing, a lively nightlife, modern conveniences and just about the nicest people you have ever met in your life.

You can stay in a hotel while in Lagos, but this is a mistake in my opinion. Instead, go to the train station and reserve a room with a family. Families in cities all over the world do this, but Lagos is different. The family you stay with more or less adopts you as one of their own. They will haul you all over town, introduce you to other locals and generally give you a true taste of Portugal. For veteran travelers, nothing could be better.

Rating

For an overall rating, I give Portugal and Lagos the highest rating of "bar." I loved it so much, I wanted to stay and almost purchased a bar by blackmailing, bribing and begging a friend in California over the phone. Alas, his wife didn't think it was such a good idea.

Hey, how about you? We could probably still get a good deal!

No, seriously.