

Title:

Lisbon: Portrait Of Portugal

Word Count:

338

Summary:

Lisbon is a relaxed city, full of friendly folk who make the effort to stop and talk. But their city was falling into decay and renovation became a priority.

Recent years has seen Lisbon begin to clean up its act. Hosting the 2004 European Football Championships focused the city and brought about an exiting new era.

For years Lisbon sat awash with building sites and rubble, eager to regain its status as one of the major calling ports of Europe.

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Article Body:

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Downtown Lisbon was stuck in a time warp. Tight, cobbled streets were a throwback to the 18th century, a million miles from the ultra-modern, cosmopolitan capitals of Europe.

Today, Lisbon is at the dawn of a bright new age and keen to promote itself in a new world of tourism.

The devastating earthquake of 1755 led to new town planning, much of which

exists to this day. Urgent reconstruction was necessary to keep Portugal's capital up and running. A new infrastructure heralded the start of a new era.

The Praca do Comercio sits at the edge of the waterfront. The pretty square attracts the pigeons en masse and looks up to a magnificent archway. The perimeter is laced with retail stores; busy shoppers dart from one to the other, seeking their bargains.

The square provides a focal point for much of the local community. The folk gather and exchange conversation whilst children dance and play, adding to the general din.

The delightful smell of cooking emanates from the surrounding restaurants and drifts enticingly across the square, inducing your hunger.

Opened in 1901, the Elevador de Santa Justa is an outdoor cast-iron lift. Catering exclusively for those with a head for heights, the elevator provides unparalleled views of the streets beneath. The tiny people below scurry around the busy backstreets, all with somewhere to go.

East of the city, Alfama is a legacy of Moorish times, retaining much of the old architecture. Following Christian victory in the religious wars, the Romanesque cathedral was built on the site of a mosque in 1147.