ON BUSINESS

Making travel work for you

LISBON

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Lisbon is making waves as one of Europe’s trendiest cities as people discover its historic grandeur, warm hospitality and balance of traditional flavours and haute cuisine. Heck, even Madonna has moved here. The magnetism of Portugal’s sunny capital is not only attracting travellers, but also masterminds of creativity and innovation, as the city positions itself as a tech hub.

Between 2014-2016, 700 companies were created in Lisbon’s high-tech sectors, the city having incubated businesses such as the award-winning motion intelligence company Heptasense and call centre software provider Talkdesk – a five-year-old company now worth €500 million.

The city has also become awash with co-working spaces that support freelancers and entrepreneurs who relish the city’s fast Wi-Fi, collaborative work environment and appeasing pace of life. And what’s not to love about concluding a heavy brainstorming session with petiscos and vinho on a panoramic rooftop or by the banks of the Rio Tejo?

Lisbon’s clout on the tech stage is bolstered by its status as host to the world’s largest tech conference this month, Web Summit (websummit.com), which will see companies such as Google, Microsoft and Amazon flock to the city’s gleaming cobbled streets. With work and play stars aligned, it’s Lisbon’s time to shine.

**SUMMIT SPECIAL**

As the world’s tech giants swoop into Portugal’s capital for the Web Summit this November 6-9, Emily McAuliffe uncovers the city’s multifarious appeal.

**EAT**

**SOPHISTICATION**

O Watt is the latest venture of chef Kiko Martins – the man behind Lisbon’s A Cevicheria, which is well known for its delectable seafood, right, and consistent line out the door. At his modern new digs in Cais do Sodré, Martins focuses on guilt-free fine dining, where everything is grilled, raw or steamed. Rest assured, his culinary craftsmanship ensures no sacrifice on flavour. (Avenida 24 de Julho 12, +351 211 369 504)

**TRADITIONAL**

Amid the jam of tourist-centric establishments in Lisbon’s historic suburb of Alfama is a pearl of traditional Portuguese gastronomy. Mestre André has been ticking along for decades and makes every dish to order using fresh ingredients. The light and fluffy pataniscas (codfish fritters) are worth a trip in themselves. (Calçadinha de Santo Estêvão 6, +351 218 866 232; restaurantemestreandre.com)

**CASUAL**

To.B – To Burger or Not To Burger is positioned in a relaxed courtyard in the swish neighbourhood of Chiado. Chicken burgers are served with plump breast meat, while patties are made with 100 per cent grass-fed beef from Portugal’s Azores islands. Those who’d prefer “not to burger” can opt for a crisp salad with a side of rustic fries. (Rua Capelo 24, +351 213 471 046; to-burger.com)
GET SMART

RIDE ON The Lisbon Card provides the most efficient and cost-effective means of hitting the city’s major attractions. Buy a 24-, 48- or 72-hour card at the airport, use it to ride public transport at no cost and gain free entry to 28 museums and monuments across the city. Also receive discounts of up to 50 per cent on other attractions and services. visitlisboa.com

PLUG IN To tackle emails with a hit of quality caffeine, make a beeline for The Mill on the gentrified Poço dos Negros street. Power sockets are aplenty in this bright and airy café and the baristas whip up a mean cappuccino. The Mill also serves homemade cakes and biscuits alongside a casual café menu, and conveniently stays open until 8pm on weekdays. (Rua do Poço dos Negros 1, +351 211 575 220; themill.pt)

MIX MASTERS

Mark the end of a long day with a cocktail created by some of Lisbon’s crowning mixologists at Bistro 100 Maneiras, right, which was named one of Portugal’s best watering holes in the 2017 World Class awards. Pull up a stool to the bar and get close to the muddling action or tuck yourself away in the cozy lounge area. (Largo da Trindade 9, +351 910 307 307)

SMART FLIERS

- AERLINGUS flies from Dublin to LISBON up to 11 times per week.
The five-star Valverde sits pretty on Lisbon’s swanky, tree-lined boulevard, Avenida da Liberdade. The corridors and 25 rooms are shrouded in bold colours and/or patterns that are paired with bright, bubbly service. A highlight is the leafy interior patio, where you can feel a million miles from the city buzz with a poolside cocktail. Rooms from €220.
(Avenida da Liberdade 164, +351 210 940 300; valverdehotel.com)

You can’t beat the location of the grand Pousada de Lisboa in Lisbon’s main square, Praça do Comércio. The design of this renovated government office that once headquartered the country’s presidents is elegant and inviting, and stately statues flank the corridors. Despite its busy surroundings, the spa, pool and terrace provide ample opportunities to relax. Rooms from €285. (Praça do Comércio 31-34, +351 210 407 640; pousadas.pt)

The Tivoli Avenida Liberdade is a Lisbon icon from the 1930s that has recently undergone a €15 million facelift. The modern refurbished rooms are fitted out with comfy beds and an executive desk, making them well suited to the business traveller. When it’s time to unwind, head to the aptly named Sky Bar for magnificent views of the city, castle and river. Rooms from €195. (Avenida da Liberdade 185, +351 213 198 900; minorhotels.com)
Director and co-founder of Lisbon’s successful Village Underground (vulisboa.com) co-working and events space, Mariana Duarte Silva took a London concept to her home city and stamped it as her own. The privately owned company was one of the first projects to come out of the Portuguese government initiative Startup Lisboa (startuplisboa.com), which has churned out almost 200 innovative businesses since its inception in 2011. Village Underground now houses office space in 14 shipping containers and has an old warehouse that hosts corporate productions and events, plus two double-decker buses that moonlight as a café and meeting rooms.

What do you like most about doing business in Lisbon? People here are honest, hard workers and are generally happy about what they do, so there’s a good sense of community. Also, more and more people want to come and live here, particularly within the creative industries, and foreigners are always received well by the locals. We’re used to welcoming immigrants, but this wave of freelancers and younger people who want to come to live and work in Lisbon is new, and the way they are trying to mix with us and work with us is very positive.

Where do you eat out? I like Bota Sal (Rua Domingos Sequeira 38, +351 961 401 085) in Campo de Ourique for traditional Portuguese and my favourite brunch spot is the The Decadente (Rua São Pedro de Alcântara 81, +351 213 461 381; thedecadente.pt). The brunch is excellent because it’s all you can eat at an affordable price and the terrace is amazing. There’s also a place called Cozinha Popular da Mouraria (Rua das Olarias 5, +351 926 520 568), which is run by a chef who invites refugees and local people to cook for different occasions and it’s a really great project.

As a former music manager and DJ agent, where do you find good music? There are a lot of music options in the city but I like to go for events organised by independent promoters, as they tend to do a lot of good outdoor parties. For instance, there are always good parties going on in the quiosques (pavement kiosks) in Avenida da Liberdade, or at parks and beaches with underground techno promoter Fuse. Collectives such as Flow, Lx Music, bloop and Wrong are also great.

What about cultural activities? I like the MAAT museum (Avenida Brasília, +351 210 028 130; maat.pt) in Belém and the Underdogs Gallery (Rua Fernando Palha 56, +351 218 680 462; under-dogs.net) in Marvila, curated by well-known Portuguese street artist Vhils. He and DJ Glue run another store right by the river that showcases the work of many Portuguese and international street artists. It’s called Montana Shop (Rua da Cintura do Porto de Lisboa, +351 912 993 675; montanashoplisboa.com) and is a really good spot to buy art, and eat.

Where do you go to get away from the city? My favourite spot is Azeitão, which is just outside Lisbon near the Arrábida Natural Park. It’s amazing because there are lovely beaches as well as great wineries and good food. I love Ericeira to the north of Lisbon too for the beach, the surf, the people and the vibe. The walled city of Óbidos is also a beautiful place to go.