

SHOWS, SHOPPING AND SWEETS – LISBON’S PERFECT CHRISTMAS TRIO

... and a brand new 3D multimedia show joins the city’s festive offering



22nd November 2016 – The Portuguese capital is the perfect choice for UK travellers to enjoy a Christmas – or pre-Christmas – break. The smell of roast chestnuts fills the air and there’s great shopping, fabulous food and plenty of events and activities for all; not to mention a mild climate and easy accessibility from the UK. This year, an exciting new festive-themed 3D multimedia show at Arco da Rua Augusta from 14th to 23rd December joins the host of options on offer.

From circus to carols – festive events for all

With sparkling lights – this year starting on 21st November and extending into Comércio Square – and one of the largest Christmas trees in Europe as the backdrop, the Portuguese capital will play host to a variety of events and performances throughout December and January to help visitors and locals alike embrace the festive spirit. These include:

- **Video mapping:** “Nicolau’s New Palace” is a brand-new 3D multimedia show that will be projected onto the Arco da Rua Augusta from 14th to 23rd December. Using the latest video projection technology and optical illusions, the show aims to raise awareness of the effects of climate change through the story of St. Nicholas, who has to get help to re-build his home at the North Pole after it is destroyed by an avalanche. Three sessions per day (7pm, 7.45pm and 8.30pm). Entry is free.
- **Christmas concerts and carols:** Christmas concerts with choirs and orchestras will be held at churches and theatres across the city – a great opportunity for visitors to listen to traditional Portuguese carols. For a special treat, visitors should head to the Christmas concert from the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra at the Belém Cultural Centre on 20th December.
- **New Year celebrations:** On 31st December, locals will gather in central Praça do Comércio to welcome 2017 by... eating raisins! By tradition, 12 raisins are eaten as the clock strikes midnight and this is followed by a colourful firework display and great musical entertainment to welcome the new year with the best vibes.
- **Cirque du Soleil:** The world-renowned theatrical company will visit Lisbon from 5-15 January 2017 to perform Varekai, an “acrobatic tribute to the nomadic soul”. Considered as one of Cirque



du Soleil's most touching performances, the show will tell the story of the Greek myth of Icarus, who lands in a captivating forest full of eccentric creatures.

Shop 'til you drop

No Christmas visit to Lisbon is complete without taking home that original gift for relatives... or quirky souvenir for yourself! **Baixa** and **Chiado** are the city's most popular neighbourhoods for shopping, offering a great variety of outlets and goods to suit everyone's pockets – from soaps to canned fish and from watches to vintage clothing. Nearby **Mercado da Figueira**, located next to Rossio Square, is beautifully lit for Christmas and this market is ideal for buying local food and wines, including the city's famous *ginjinha* (cherry liqueur) – tasting available!

Those looking for a more traditional souvenirs and gifts should head to **Alfama**, whose maze of narrow streets hide some of Lisbon's best handicraft shops selling from *azulejos* (the beautiful tiles for which the city is famous) and pottery items to original jewellery and towels. Alternatively, visitors who would like to do all their Christmas shopping under one roof should consider visiting Lisbon's major **shopping centres** such as Amoreiras, Centro Colombo, Centro Vasco da Gama and El Corte Inglés.

Sweet treats

The Portuguese are known for having a sweet tooth, and joining the famous *pasteis de Belém* are a variety of sweets and cakes which are only consumed over the Christmas period. **Bolo Rei** is the most popular and a 'must-have' in all Lisbon homes. It consists of a circular cake with a hole in the middle stuffed with raisins and dried fruit – it usually contains a small surprise for the person who grabs the lucky slice!

Also traditional at Christmas are the **rabanadas** – the Portuguese version of French Toast but with a twist: they are soaked in milk and/or wine and dressed with cinnamon – and the **aletria**, the pasta version of rice pudding, great for both angel hair pasta and sweet lovers. Not to be forgotten are the **roasted chestnuts**, whose rich smell fills the streets of Lisbon throughout Christmas.

For more information, ideas and inspiration on a festive visit to Lisbon please go to www.visitlisboa.com.

From the UK, direct flights to Lisbon operate from London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Bristol with TAP Portugal, British Airways, easyJet, Ryanair and Monarch. From Ireland, direct flights to Lisbon operate from Dublin with Aer Lingus and Ryanair.

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About Lisbon

Portugal's national capital, Lisbon, boasts one of the longest histories, warmest climates and bustling nightlife of any major European city alongside its dramatic location sprawled along seven hills overlooking the river Tagus and the country's west coast. Famed for its year-round sunshine and beauty, Lisbon's grand architecture dazzles and its old-world charm mingles with chic streets, galleries, lively nightlife and a centre which gives way to sandy beaches just minutes away. It is also one of the most affordable capitals in Europe, perfect for a captivating city break or short haul escape. www.visitlisboa.com

About Turismo de Lisboa

Turismo de Lisboa is a non-profit organisation established through an alliance of public and private bodies operating in the tourist sector. It has over 800 associated members. Since its inception in 1998, the main objective of this association is to improve and increase the promotion of Lisbon as a tourist destination and therefore enhance the quality and competitiveness of the city.