



Pathfinder Welcome Guide

June 2025



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Lusófona University - Lisbon



This guide aims to provide useful information for Pathfinder students upon their arrival in **Portugal** and throughout their first semester at Lusófona University, with mentions of the other partner universities as well.

It contains information about Portuguese local requirements for foreign residents, university and study procedures, housing agencies, health insurance and medical services, among others, and as well as a few suggestions to enjoy the city of Lisbon and to travel in Portugal.

By issuing this guide we assume that all students will read it before their arrival, thus acknowledging the local required procedures and further information of their interest.

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Before you arrive

Visa

For EU Citizens:

Citizens of the EU/EEA/Switzerland or the Principality of Andorra only need to have a valid Identity Card or Passport. However, those who have stayed in national territory for **more than 3 months** (90 days) should formalize their right of residence **within 30 days after the 90-day period** by obtaining a Certificado de Registro (Registration Certificate) from the Lisbon City Hall (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa - CML). You can find more details in the [Permits section](#) of this document.

For non-EU Citizens:

You should check the nearest local Portuguese Embassy/Consulate to apply for a visa. You can find more about it [here](#). If you have any problem finding which embassy it is, feel free to reach out to us for assistance.

Once you have identified the relevant Embassy/Consulate, contact them to inquire about the application procedure and required documents. They may ask for different documents, so it is very important to contact them as soon as possible. It is crucial to initiate this process as soon as possible, as different embassies may have varying document requirements.

Additionally, visa processing times may exceed the estimates provided by the Embassy/Consulate/VFS. While the legal processing time is a maximum of 3 months, some cases may take longer, up to 3 or 4 months.

Please note that in some countries, visa applications can only be submitted up to three months before the start of the master's program. It's advisable to check with your local Portuguese Embassy or Consulate for the specific timeframe and requirements to apply for a Portuguese student visa.

We recommend you to apply for the **E6 visa – Temporary Stay Visa for Periods of Over 3 Months**. The **general** documentation required for this type of visa includes:

- Application Form;
- 2 Passport-size Photos;
- Passport;
- Valid Travel Insurance;
- Return Ticket;
- Proof of Legal Residence in your Country;
- Request for Criminal Record Enquiry by the Immigration and Border Services (SEF);

- **Certificate of Clearance Issued by your Country Police Force*;**
- Proof of Means of Subsistence (for scholarship holders, this information is provided in your Declaration Letter);
- Certificate of Enrollment;
- Proof of Accommodation (some embassies may accept hostel or Airbnb bookings, but this should be verified).

(*) This document will also be required if you have received a residence visa. To check if this applies to you, please contact Pedro Caetano (pedro.caetano@ulusofona.pt) and Inês Teixeira (ines.teixeira@ulusofona.pt).

The Application Form and additional documents can typically be found on the Embassy's website. We recommend contacting the Embassy to confirm the requirements and inquire about the application submission methods (e.g., email, courier, or in person).

All documents must be provided in English or Portuguese, unless specifically required otherwise. Additionally, **some documents may require an Apostille as per the Hague Convention**. It is advisable to check whether the documents you send need to be notarized or if original versions are required. We also recommend that you keep copies for yourself.

The type of visa obtained will determine the subsequent legal steps that need to be followed. Additionally, please note that stopovers during your flight may entail additional legal procedures.

Accommodations

Lisbon boasts numerous housing agencies offering a variety of accommodation options. Room prices vary depending on factors such as apartment features, location within the city, and included services. However, it is typically possible to find suitable accommodation ranging from **350 to 550+ Euros per month**.

Establishing a **formal and legal contract** with the landlord or housing agency is recommended to protect your rights as tenants. Avoid sub-renting to individuals whose contractual terms with the landlord are unknown, as this could lead to eviction without legal recourse. Cheaper housing options may ultimately incur higher costs, so it's essential to consider the long-term implications.

It's important to note that homes in Lisbon typically lack heating systems, given the mild winters characterized by moisture and wind. Therefore, prioritize rooms with proper ventilation and good sun exposure.

For a better understanding of general expenses, we recommend visiting the [Cost of Living](#) website. You'll also find a dedicated section on living costs in Portugal later in this document. However, please treat the provided prices as **estimates** and use them as reference points. For instance, monthly meal expenses typically range **from 200 to 400€**, depending on individual dining preferences and habits.

Health Insurance

Each university provides its own insurance coverage for students during the semester you are enrolled there. This usually includes basic accident coverage during academic activities, including those that take place off campus. However, the exact scope and conditions may vary, so it's important to confirm the details with the Student Affairs office or Secretariat of each university. More information can be found at <https://www.ulusofona.pt/en/student/school-insurance>

Health Advice

In Portugal, access to certain medications is possible without a prescription, but for most, a prescription is required. Therefore, we recommend first considering common medications you're accustomed to and verifying if it's permitted to bring them from your home country to Portugal, as there may be differences in regulations. Additionally, if you rely on prescription medicines, remember to bring your prescriptions with you.

If you're unsure about which medications to bring, the CDC provides a [general checklist](#) that may help you decide what will best suit your needs. However, it's always advisable to consult with your healthcare provider before traveling to ensure you have the appropriate medications for any specific health concerns or conditions you may have.

Travel Checklist

Before embarking on your trip to Lisbon, it's important to ensure you have all the necessary documents and essentials. Here's a comprehensive checklist to help you prepare:

- **Passport/Identification Card:** Your primary identification for international travel.
- **Visa (for non-European students):** Ensure your visa documents are in order before departure.
- **Lusófona University Declaration Letter (Portuguese and English versions):** this letter verifies your enrollment at the university.
- **Certificates:** Any relevant certificates or documents required for your trip.
- **Accommodation Proof:** If you haven't arranged housing in Lisbon, carry proof of your accommodation reservation (hotel, hostel, Airbnb).
- **Medicines:** Pack any necessary medications and a basic first-aid kit for your health and well-being.
- **Currency:** Carry some pocket money in local currency for convenience, as not all places may accept cards.

It is highly recommended that you make both digital and physical copies of all your documents and keep them with you as a precaution.

When you arrive

Student Registration at Lusófona University

Permits

For EU Citizens:

Citizens of the EU/EEA/Switzerland or the Principality of Andorra only need to possess a valid Identity Card or Passport. However, those who have stayed in the national territory **for more than 3 months** (90 days) should formalize their right of residence **within 30 days** after that period by obtaining a Certificado de Registro (Registration Certificate) from the Lisbon City Hall (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa - CML). The address is Campo Grande, nr. 25, 1749-099 Lisboa, and the office is open Monday to Friday, **from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM**. The City Hall is conveniently located near the Entre Campos subway station (yellow line).

Upon arrival at the CML's building, proceed to the ground floor and obtain a line ticket. Please wait for your turn. The documents required for registration are as follows:

- Valid EU Identity Card or Passport
- Declaration Letter from Lusófona University
- AON's Insurance Certificate or card
- Proof of Accommodation (***)
- Fee: 15,00€

Please note that the required documentation may be subject to updates, so we recommend verifying the information provided here before proceeding with your application [here](#).

For non-EU Citizens:

Some of you, upon obtaining your Portuguese visa in your home country, might receive a **D4 visa**, even if you applied for an **E6 visa**, and will be assigned an appointment with **AIMA** (Agência para a Integração Migrações e Asilo - Agency for Integration, Migration, and Asylum) for your residency card.

However, if you hold a **D4 visa** and have not been assigned an appointment, and your visa is set to expire before the start of the second semester, you will need to contact [AIMA](#) to schedule an appointment to obtain your residency card(*). The following documents are required for the residency card application(**):

- Passport and its scan;
- Proof of Accommodation (**);
- Declaration Letter from Lusófona University;
- Proof of Funds (if applicable, such as a scholarship declaration letter);
- **Criminal record certificate from your country.**

It's important to note the following:

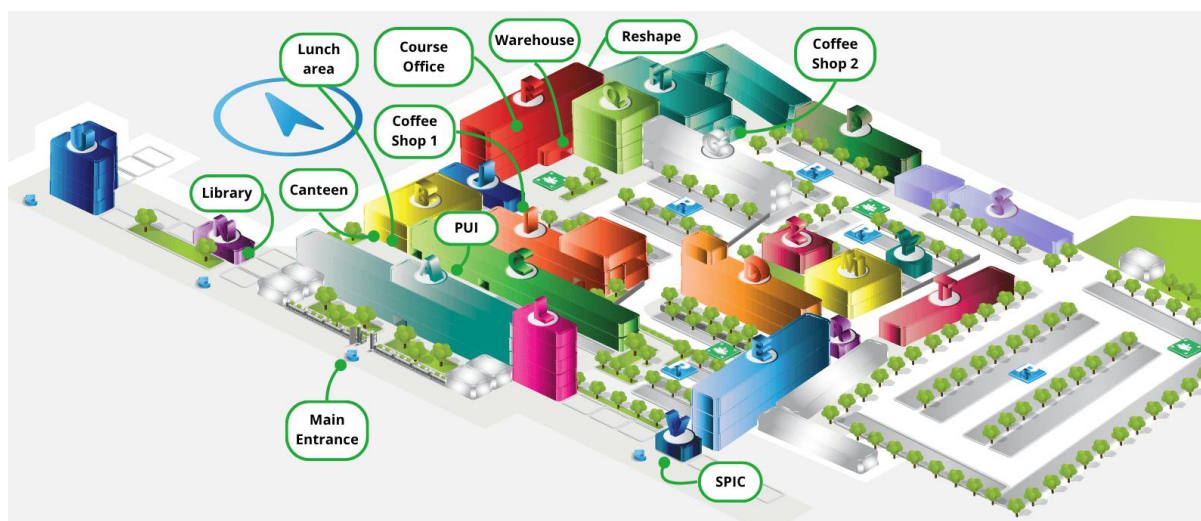
- AIMA can be difficult to reach, and some students spend months trying to schedule an appointment. Therefore, there is no guarantee that you will be able to secure an appointment on time.
- Residency cards typically take **30 to 90 days** to be processed and issued, sometimes even longer. Hence, when applying, you must provide proof of accommodation where you can receive your card, even if you have already left the country.

(*) – While your visa may expire, you will not be considered illegal in Portugal, as AIMA "extends" all visas within the country due to appointment delays. However, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to travel. Therefore, it is advisable to leave before your visa expires or obtain another legal document allowing you to travel.

(**) – Please note that the required documents are subject to change. Therefore, it's essential to confirm the specific requirements when preparing your documents.

(***) – If you do not have a housing contract in your name or any other document proving your residence in Lisbon, you must first visit the Junta de Freguesia (Parish Council) of your district and request an Atestado de Residência (Resident Credential).

Procedures and Main Facilities at Lusófona University



To delve into Lusófona University's services and facilities in detail, academic services portal, mobile app, and other digital tools, please visit our website [here](#). Scroll down to the "UL Campus" section, where you'll find two informative images about the university in Lisbon. For your convenience, we've highlighted some essential information to assist you in locating important places beforehand.

Opening Hours:

The main campus is accessible **24 hours** a day, including weekends and holidays. If you require access to a classroom, please request the keys at the PUI (Information Point) by presenting your Student ID.

The buildings outside the campus, such as **Building N**, have their own operating hours. **Building N** (Library), for example, operates **from 10:00 AM to 10:30 PM**.

Student ID:

Before your arrival at Lusófona, you will receive your student ID along with a username and instructions to create your password, required for accessing the university's online services and platforms.

PUI:

The PUI (Information Point) serves as the reception desk for the entire campus. Here, you can pick up and return keys for rooms and labs as needed.

Dining Options:

The university campus features a canteen and two coffee shops, as well as several drink and snack vending machines. Both the canteen and coffee-shop 1 (Xiribitátá) offer a variety of traditional Portuguese meals, sandwiches, burgers, and pastries. Near the sports pavilion, you'll find coffee-shop 2, offering a healthier selection. Additionally, there is a designated space **next to the canteen**, located on the ground floor of **Building B**, equipped with microwaves, tables, and chairs for those bringing their own meals. Please note that eating, drinking, or smoking is not permitted in classrooms, auditoriums, editing rooms, or the library.

Espaço Marmita:

A space where you can heat up your food. It's located right next to the Canteen, behind the large glass doors. There are plenty of microwaves available, and you're welcome to sit inside if you'd like. The room is fully climatized for your comfort.

Warehouse:

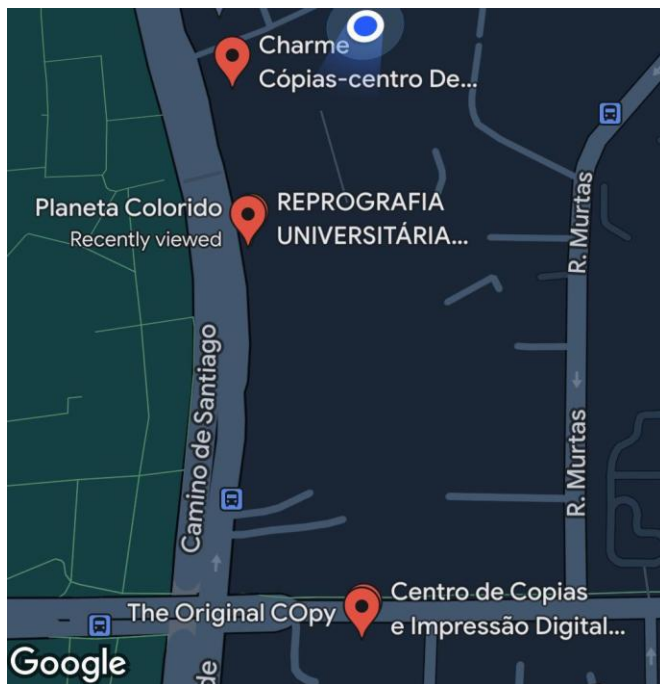
Is where you'll go to pick up and deliver the booked equipment. The warehouse service operates from Monday to Friday, but there are different timetables to get (17h to 20h) and to return (9h to 16h) the borrowed equipment. Students are responsible for the equipment while using it, and to hand it back in proper condition. Check in/out of every piece of equipment should always be done in the presence of both the student and the staff person, in order to confirm that what is received is in good working order and, conversely, that all pieces are returned in a proper condition. Delivering any piece of the equipment after the authorized booking time may result in the cancellation of further requests.

RESHAPE:

It's the online [platform](#) that students must use for any request of school's equipment, editing rooms, and Studios. Reshape's interface is available in English. Note that all bookings are subject to authorization and must be entered in the system at least 48 working hours before the desired date. Although the booking of any shooting equipment is limited to max, 2-3 days at a time, term extensions may be granted upon justified request by email to the course coordinators.

Library:

The library, named "Victor de Sá", is situated on the ground floor of **Building N**, adjacent to the main campus. It is open Monday to Friday **from 10:00 AM to 10:30 PM**, and on Saturdays **from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM**.



Copy Centers:

There is a copy center conveniently situated within the Lusófona Campus, providing easy access for students and staff.

Additionally, alternative options are available nearby, with the closest being only 90 meters away and another one at a distance of 500 meters from the university's main entrance.

Moreover, it is common to find general technology small shops that offer copying services inside transportation stations such as

subway or train stations.

How to reach Lusófona University

How to Reach Lusófona University

By [Subway \(metro\)](#):

Take the Metro to **Campo Grande** station, which is serviced by the yellow and green lines*.

By [Bus \(autocarro\)](#):

Board a bus heading towards **Campo Grande**.

By [Train \(comboio\)](#):

Take the train towards **Lisboa - Entrecampos**, then transfer to the Metro. From **Entrecampos**, take the yellow line to **Campo Grande**.

For daily mobility within the city, the Navegante public transport card offers practicality and convenience. Depending on your needs, there are two options:



Cartão navegante® ocasional (Image reproduced from <https://www.metrolisboa.pt/>)

Navegante Occasional:

Ideal for occasional users, this card can be loaded with tickets and 'zapping' credit, enabling pay-as-you-go usage. It's available for just €0.50 and can be reloaded unlimitedly for one year after purchase. This option is perfect while waiting for your main card. [Click here for more details.](#)



Cartão navegante® personalizado (Image reproduced from <https://www.metrolisboa.pt/>)

Navegante Card (Monthly Card):

The preferred choice for regular users, this personalized card supports top-ups with 'zapping' credit and passes. University students aged 23 or under can obtain the Sub23 Profile at no reloading cost, provided they meet certain requirements (see more here). If you're over 23, you'll need the Normal Profile, offering two payment options:

- **Metropolitan:** For €40 per month, enjoy unlimited travel across all 18 Lisbon counties.
- **Municipal:** Paying €30 monthly allows travel within a single Lisbon county. However, consider the "Metropolitan" option for broader access. [Click here for more details.](#)

For easy navigation of various transportation options in Lisbon, we recommend using the [Moovit](#) travel planner, a reliable application for urban mobility.

(*) – Please note that ongoing construction work may affect Metro lines, so it's advisable to check for any updates before planning your journey.

How to Obtain your Navegante Card:

The easiest and quickest solution is to visit the [Cais do Sodré River Terminal](#) (not the subway station). There, you'll find a **Customer Support booth** where someone can assist you. Please bring the following documents:

- **Identity Card** (for EU citizens) or **Passport**.
- **Original passport photo** in color, with a plain background (head coverings and sunglasses are not allowed, except for specific, duly substantiated reasons).

If you are under 24 years old, you will also need to bring:

- **Declaration Letter** (in Portuguese).
- **Sub_23 document** issued by Lusófona.
- **NIF** document

The standard price for those 24 years and older is 12 euros, while for those under 24, it's 6 euros. The card is issued instantly. We recommend arriving early, as they may have a limited number of cards available for the day.

When loading your card for the first time, we recommend choosing the **Navegante Metropolitano/Lisbon's Metropolitan Area** (40 euros monthly for those 24 years and older; free for those under 24) as this option allows you to travel to more places than just within the Lisbon municipality.

Reminder: Don't forget to ask the person assisting you about the reload period, options and how the process works.

Cost of Living

Talking about the cost of living isn't easy, as prices are constantly changing. Still, in this section, we'll highlight some general information to help you understand how expenses vary between the three countries.

Later on, you'll also find some practical financial tips. Below, you'll find a table showing estimated monthly costs in Portugal.

Lisbon - Portugal

Accommodation	€350 - 550+	Depends on location, room type, and whether utilities are included. Central Lisbon tends to be pricier.
Transportation	€0 - 40	Monthly pass (Navegante) costs €30 - 40; free for students under 24 years.
Food	€150 - 300	Cooking at home is most cost-effective. University canteens offer affordable meals (€6 - 7).
Phone	€15 - 40	Prepaid SIM cards or student plans (MEO, Vodafone, NOS). There are other cheaper options.
Internet	€0 - 50	Often included in student housing. Separate contracts may cost ~€30-50/month.
Sports	€15 - 30	University gyms are cheaper (~€15-30); private gyms cost more.
Entertainment	€50+	Bars, restaurants, concerts, museums. Some cultural sites offer student discounts.
Clothing	€30 - 50	Based on occasional purchases at budget-friendly stores.
Travel	€20 - 50+	Regional trains, buses or occasional low-cost flights (e.g. Ryanair).
Miscellaneous costs	€50 - 100	Includes hygiene products, school supplies, or leisure expenses.
Total	€870 - 1265+	- Monthly expenses vary by housing and lifestyle choices.

Financial Tips

Moving abroad for studies can be exciting but also financially demanding. Here are a few practical tips to help you stay prepared and avoid stress during your time in Portugal:

1. Create a Monthly Budget

Track your fixed costs (rent, transport, food) and plan for variable ones (entertainment, travel). A simple spreadsheet can help.

2. Set Aside an Emergency Fund

Unexpected health costs, lost items, or visa issues can happen. Try to keep at least **€100–200 saved per semester** as a safety net. Most countries have public health systems, but not all services are free.

3. Plan Ahead for Mobility Costs

Each semester, you may need to travel to a different country. Budget early for flights or trains, extra luggage, and housing deposits in the new location — these can easily cost **€100–300+** if left to the last minute.

4. Buy in Bulk, Cook at Home

Group meals with housemates or batch cooking saves money. Local markets and discount stores are your best friends. Check out more about supermarkets later in this document.

5. Use Student Discounts Everywhere

From transport passes to museums and cafes, student discounts are common. Always carry your student card.

6. Share & Resell

Buy used (Facebook Marketplace, OLX, second-hand shops), and resell or donate before you move. Sharing kitchenware or appliances with flatmates can also cut costs.

General Information

Weather in Lisbon

During your first semester, you'll experience both autumn and winter in Lisbon. Autumn (September to November) tends to be warm and a bit humid, while winter (December to February) can get chilly and quite rainy!

For more detailed and helpful tips, we recommend checking out this guide from [Flatio](#).

Mobile Data

During your stay in Lisbon, it's crucial to maintain regular access to your personal email and to be easily reachable by mobile phone for urgent school matters.

A monthly mobile plan with 10GB of data typically costs around 10 euros. Many providers offer specialized plans for students or young people with additional benefits, including coverage for Portugal, Europe, and the UK at reasonable prices. You can check more about it from one of the main local service providers ([Vodafone](#), [MEO](#), or [NOS](#)).

For cost-effective options, consider exploring [UZO](#), a smaller network provider. It's advisable to compare various plans to find the one that best suits your needs.

All telephone numbers in Portugal consist of nine digits. To call from abroad, dial the international access code 00 followed by the country code 351.

Internet

Wi-Fi access is available in various cafés, public facilities, restaurants, shopping malls, post offices, and more.

At Lusófona University, you can access "**freeulht**", the campus wireless Internet, although with limited bandwidth. With your student ID and institutional login credentials, you can also connect to **Eduroam**, an international academic Wi-Fi network available at universities and research institutions worldwide.

To connect to Eduroam, please do as follows:

- **Network:** Eduroam
- **Login:** a + student number + @ulusofona.pt or a + student number + @alunos.ulht.pt
- **Password:** your password

Example:

- **Login:** a00000052@ulusofona.pt
- **Password:** 000000000000

or

- **Login:** a00000052@alunos.ulht.pt
- **Password:** 000000000000

ATMs

In many places where card payments are accepted, foreign bank cards may not be usable. While card transactions are increasingly common, especially in modern or tourist-oriented establishments, cash remains the preferred payment method. Therefore, it's advisable to carry some cash with you at all times.



(Image reproduced from <https://jf-fanhoes.pt/gouveia.pt/>)



(Image reproduced from <https://www.cm->

Portugal boasts a nationwide network of ATMs identified by the MB (Multibanco) symbol, allowing for cash withdrawals 24/7 (up to 2x200€ per day). If you're withdrawing from another Euro account, there may be no charges. However, if you're withdrawing from an account in another currency, your bank may impose a fee.

ATMs provide various convenient services, including mobile phone top-ups, charging your monthly Lisbon transportation pass, and more. However, opening a local (Portuguese or European) bank account typically requires obtaining a Portuguese National Tax Number (NIF), which involves paperwork and time. If you're considering opening a local bank account, please consult with Paula to understand the necessary steps in detail.

For online bank card withdrawals, it's essential to verify the withdrawal limits, even if you have local currency, as they usually operate based on the currency of the country where you opened the account.

The most widely accepted credit cards in Portugal are Visa, MasterCard, and Maestro. However, ATM withdrawals using credit cards often incur fees.

- Tip: When prompted by the ATM, opt-out of currency conversion and choose to be charged in Euros. ATM conversion rates can be unfavorable, often worse than those charged by your bank.

In the event of a lost or stolen Visa or MasterCard credit card, seek assistance through the following phone numbers:

- Visa: 800 811 107
- MasterCard: 800 811 272

Exercise caution with ATMs lacking the "Multibanco" or "MB" designation, as they may impose substantial withdrawal fees (up to 13% of the total amount).

- Tip: These ATMs are commonly found in airports and near hotels.

Very important: If you choose to open a bank account in Portugal, remember to close it after two years of study if you don't intend to continue using it. This simple procedure prevents possible fees on inactive accounts.

Portuguese National Tax Number (NIF)

To apply for the **Navegante Card** (free for those under 24) or to **open a bank account in Portugal**, you'll need a **NIF (*Número de Identificação Fiscal*)**, which is your Portuguese national tax number.

To obtain a NIF, you will need:

- Your **Identification Document** (for European citizens) or **Passport** (for non-Europeans);
- **Proof of Residence** (preferably from your current address in Lisbon. Some say a document from your home country may work, but this varies by location and is not guaranteed).

Getting in line:

You must arrive **at the Financial Service in Central Lisbon between 4 AM and 5 AM** to secure a spot in line, as the office typically issues **only 10 tickets per day**. Unfortunately, this is the current reality of public services in Portugal. While the country is generally safe, we recommend going with someone if you don't feel comfortable waiting alone in the early hours.

Sometimes, a **police officer or security guard** may come by to write down names in order to organize the line. **This does not guarantee your spot**, so please **do not leave the line**, and stay alert to prevent people from cutting in front of you.

Locations:

Some locations, such as **Picoas** (Yellow Metro Line) and **Saldanha** (Yellow and Red Lines), can be very crowded early in the morning. Our colleagues recommend

trying the [Financial Service of Lisbon number 3](#), located near **Baixa-Chiado station** (Green Metro Line), which may be less crowded.

Please note: The NIF is *only* required for the specific cases mentioned above (applying for the free Navegante Card for those under 24 and opening a Portuguese bank account). It is **not** required for visa appointments or other processes.

Daily Shopping

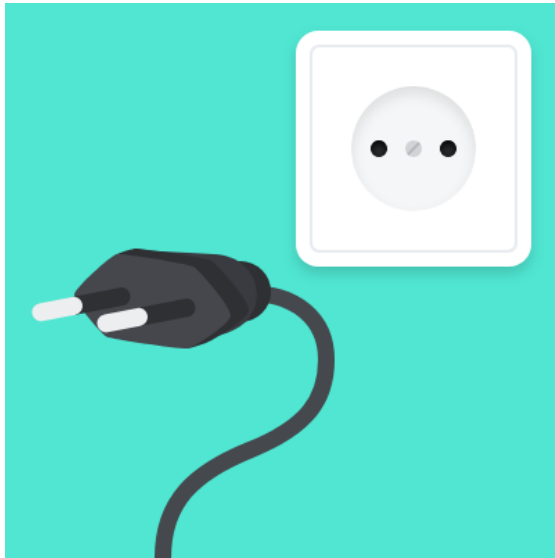
Local markets in the neighborhood offer daily groceries at affordable prices. However, for a wider variety of goods, consider visiting supermarket chains like Continente, Pingo Doce, and Lidl. In Portugal, supermarkets often feature their own or exclusive brands, which are typically the most budget-friendly options. Here's a breakdown:

- **Continente**
 - Own brand: Continente. More information about the products [here](#).
- **Pingo Doce**
 - Own brands: Pingo Doce, ActivPet (pet supplies), Be Beauty (body, face, and hair care), Go Active (healthy food for active lifestyles), Go Bio (organic food), Skino (men's skincare), and Ultra (laundry, dishwashing, and household cleaning). Explore more [here](#).
- **Lidl**
 - Lidl offers exclusive brands that are not Lidl-branded.
 - Highlighted exclusive brands: Cien (beauty products), Milbona (yogurts and fresh items), Chef Select (ready-to-eat meals), Orland and Coshid (pet food), Terra do Vento (cheese), and Fumadinho (charcuterie). Discover more of their products [here](#).
- **Aldi**
 - Similar to Lidl, Aldi sells exclusive brands.
 - Highlighted lines include Anjinho (for children), Aurada (biscuits), Baldo (for dogs), and Kimba (for cats). Learn more about the brands [here](#).
- **Minipreço (now Auchan)**
 - Auchan has acquired all Minipreço stores, and by the end of 2025, all of them will operate under the Auchan name.
 - Own brand: Dia. You can check them out [here](#).

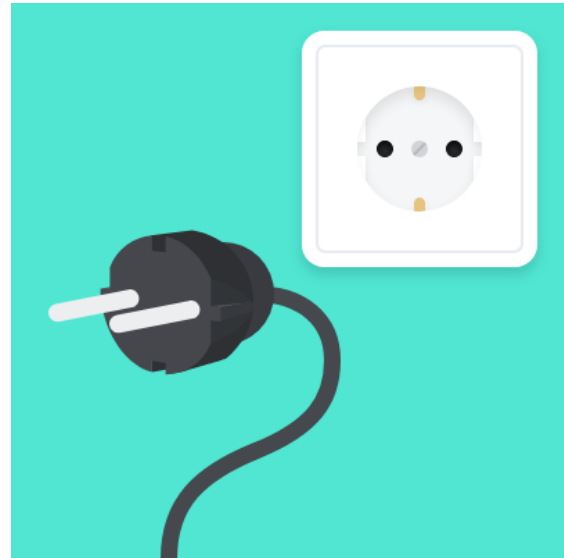
For a one-stop shopping experience with various brands of clothing, food, and services, consider visiting some of the city's shopping centers, such as [Amoreiras](#), [Colombo](#), [Vasco da Gama](#), and the [Freeport](#) outlet.

Voltage and Plug Type in Portugal

Due to the variety of electrical socket types worldwide, it's essential to carry travel adapters when traveling abroad. It's important to note that these adapters do not convert voltage or frequency.



Type C



Type F

(Images reproduced from <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/>)

In Portugal, there are two associated plug types: C and F. Plug type C features two round pins, while type F includes two round pins with two earth clips on the sides, with type F being the most commonly used in the country. Additionally, Portugal operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz frequency.

Trash Disposal



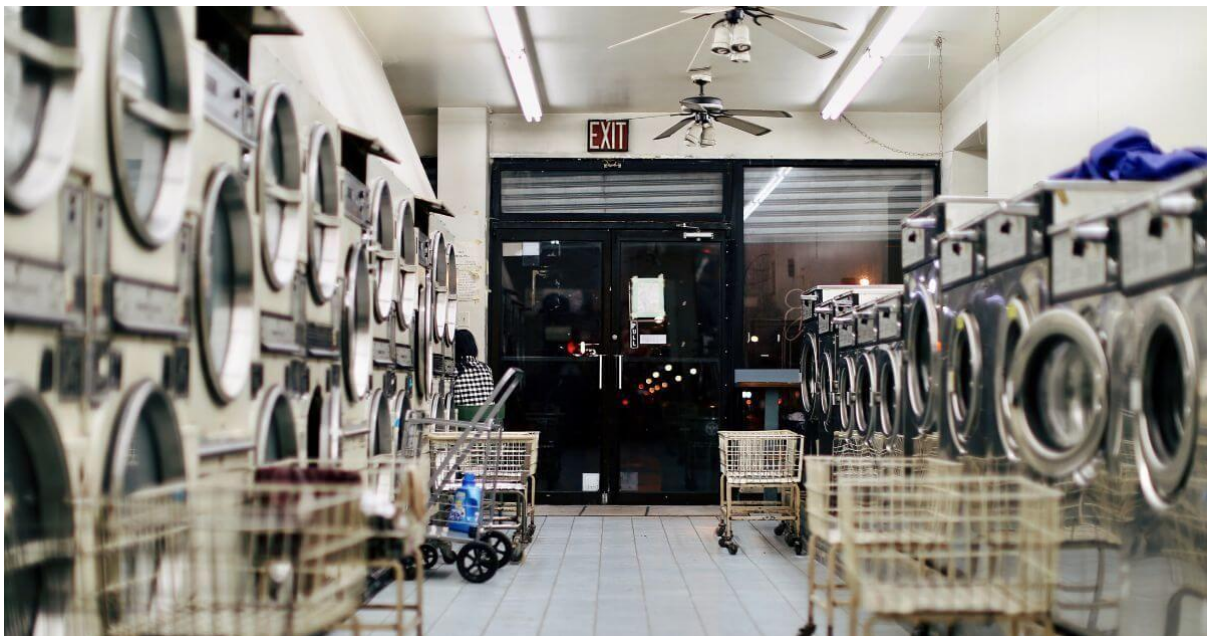
(Image reproduced from <https://www.expatica.com/>)

In Portugal, there are color-coded bins called Ecoporto, designed for household waste disposal:

- Blue bins are designated for paper and cardboard (*papel e cartão*).
- Yellow bins are intended for plastic and metal (*plástico e metal*).
- Green bins are allocated for glass (*vidro*).
- Gray/Black/Brown bins are for residual waste (*resíduo/lixo*).

For more information, you can refer to [this](#) resource.

Laundry Options



(Image reproduced from <https://www.vendus.st/>)

If your accommodation doesn't have a washing machine or if you need drying facilities, your most economical choice is a self-service laundry/laundromat (***Lavandaria***).

During your semester in Portugal, the predominant weather will be windy and rainy throughout the day. Because of the high humidity, your clothes may not dry properly. For this reason, it's very common to see locals using only the dryers at laundromats.

Prices may vary depending on the location and the weight of your laundry, so it's a good idea to check in advance. As a reference, using a small washing machine (8 kg) typically costs around €5–8, while a dryer (15 kg) costs about €1.50 to €2 per 10 minutes.

Health and Medical Services

In moments when you're experiencing minor health issues like headaches, sore throats, or allergies and find yourself without medications, you can easily purchase them at a pharmacy. You can refer to this [link](#) to check the "*Medicamentos não sujeitos a receita médica*" (Medications not subject to prescription). Look for the DCI (International Non-proprietary Name) column to find the name of the drug you're seeking, and in the "*Nome do Medicamento*" column, you'll see its local name. This link serves only as a reference to assist you.

Pharmacies are generally open on weekdays between **9:00 AM and 7:00 PM**, although some may close for lunch from **1:00 PM to 3:00 PM**. Many pharmacies are also open during weekends until **7:00 PM**, and a few operate 24 hours every day. Pharmacies open in the evening display an illuminated green cross outside. Check detailed info about the nearest open pharmacies [here](#).

In case of a serious condition requiring urgent assistance, you should call the national emergency phone line (dial 112) or turn to the emergency services (Urgências entrance) of the hospital closer to your neighborhood. You can find the location of the city's main public hospitals [here](#).

You should head to the emergency entrance of a public hospital only in case of serious situations (traumatism, intoxication, burnings, thrombosis, breathing difficulties, etc.). In case of severe illness, before running to the Hospital you should get prior medical counseling by calling the [National Health Service hotline](#) at **808 24 24 24** which can be dialed at any time of day or evening (choose option 9 for English).

As an alternative to the National Health Service, you may seek treatment at a private hospital in the city such as [CUF Hospitals](#), [Hospital da Luz](#), or [Hospital dos Lusíadas](#), which, while more expensive, typically have shorter waiting times.

In addition to hospitals, you'll easily find other specialized medical services in all areas of the city. Our university has an agreement with a **clinic near the Campus**, which is [Clínica São João de Deus](#). For inquiries or appointments, please contact them at **217 987 700**.

Discover Portugal and Lisbon

Portugal is located in the southwest of Europe. The weather in Portugal is pleasant, with striking blue skies. Its 850 km of coastline boasts breathtaking beaches, making Portugal itself one gigantic beach, ideal for surfers of all levels from around the globe. Consequently, Portugal hosts many of the main international surfing events.

Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, is a city with a rich history where traces of the past blend seamlessly with a flourishing cosmopolitan present, creating a unique atmosphere.

Built on seven hills—Castelo, Graça, Monte, Penha de França, S. Pedro de Alcântara, Santa Catarina, and Estrela—Lisbon spreads in the shape of an amphitheater along the northern banks of the Tejo (Tagus River).

Not far from Lisbon, a train ride to the coastal towns of Cascais and Estoril reveals many small but beautiful sandy beaches and stunning ocean views.

Crossing the river Tejo by boat takes you to the former naval city of Almada and several colorful neighborhoods like Seixal, as well as quaint fishing communities.

Further north, towards the Atlantic Ocean, lie the expansive sandy beaches of Costa da Caparica. Traveling north by train leads to the picturesque green mountains of Sintra, home to regal palaces, manor houses, and breathtaking views.

Portuguese Gastronomy

Portuguese traditional food is characterized by its simplicity yet distinctiveness and variety. It creatively combines various meats or fish with assortments of vegetables or salads on the same plate. Olive oil, tomato, onion, garlic, fresh herbs, and vegetables are typical ingredients in Mediterranean cooking, as well as in Portuguese cuisine.

While some dishes in restaurants and bistros (known as **tascas**) may be heavy and salty, they are rarely spicy. Portuguese cuisine often features barbecues made over charcoal, particularly with fresh fish sourced from the Atlantic waters, which are abundant in the city's markets. A notable national dish is dried **bacalhau** (salted codfish), ironically a fish that Portugal imports from Norway and Iceland. Lunch is traditionally a full meal at the table, while light meals like sandwiches or burgers are more popular among young people.

Portuguese pastry selections in cafes and pastry shops (**pastelarias**) are often diverse, typically featuring egg, cream, almond, or fruit as the main filling ingredients. One beloved pastry is the egg custard tartlet known as Pastel de Nata, which is consistently delicious although recipes may vary significantly from place to place.

In terms of beverages, **Ginjinha** (sour cherry liqueur) is a popular appetizer, while **Porto** (sweet Port wine) pairs well with desserts. Portuguese beers are robust, typically stronger than imported European ones. Portuguese wine, crafted from native grape varieties, is renowned globally for its quality and affordability, making it a staple on Portuguese tables (with fair quality national wines starting at an average of just 3€ in chain supermarkets).

PORTUGUESE CUISINE



Pastel de Nata

It is a tart filled with cream of egg yolks



Ginja em Copos de Chocolate

Sour cherry liqueur in chocolate cups



Caldo Verde

It is made from thinly sliced kale, with potatoes as well as onions, garlic, olive oil, and salt



Bacalhau

It is dried and salted cod. Prior to cooking, a chef will soak the bacalhau in cold water for at least 48 hours to remove the salt from the fish. There are over 365 ways of preparing bacalhau



Francesinha

The dish comprises two slices of bread filled with steak, ham, sausage and chorizo, covered in Flemish cheese or Gouda, drizzled in a secret spicy tomato-based sauce and optionally crowned with a fried egg



Cataplana

It is a seafood stew cooked in a copper double pan (shaped like a giant clam) and served with rice or boiled potatoes



Polvo à lagareiro

The octopus is first boiled and then baked with boiled potatoes with skin, garlic and olive oil before it is finally served



Sardinhas assadas

In June, the smell of grilled sardines infuse the streets of Lisbon for the whole month



Cozido à portuguesa

At its core, the dish is a platter of slowly boiled meats, enchidos (sausages) and vegetables

(Image reproduced from [Pinterest](#))

Food Restrictions

If you have any food restrictions for any reason, it's very important and highly recommended that you learn the names of these items in European Portuguese (as they can differ significantly from other Portuguese-speaking countries). Many places here don't offer menus in English, or they may use names that don't clearly describe the ingredients in a dish. Additionally, you can search online for stores or restaurants that sell food from your country or with a similar food culture — with a bit of luck, you're likely to find one!

Eating Out

Eating out is a common practice in Portugal, with lunch or dinner outings often serving as a pretext for meeting friends or exploring typical locations in the seashore or countryside, where regional specialties abound.

In Lisbon, there's a wide variety of restaurants catering to all tastes and preferences. Fresh fish is a cornerstone of Portuguese cuisine, while local meat, including pork, is flavorful and safe to consume. Strict vegetarians may find limited options in traditional Portuguese restaurants, but soup (**sopa**) is usually a reliable and nutritious choice, as it's a staple on restaurant menus, made daily with vegetables sourced from local markets.

Even the smallest cafés offer a fresh and hearty main course of the day (**prato do dia**) at reasonable prices. Some budget menus include soup, a main dish, dessert or fruit, and a beverage or coffee. Be mindful that if you consume items from the unordered couvert – the appetizers typically brought to your table upon seating, such as bread, butter, olives, cheese, pâté, or smoked ham (**fiambre fumado**) – you'll be charged for it. However, if you decline, it's perfectly acceptable, and no offense will be taken. Additionally, don't hesitate to ask about prices – '**quanto custa?**'

While restaurants typically serve lunch from **midday to 3:00 PM** and dinner **from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM**, some establishments offer extended hours, especially in areas with vibrant nightlife. Restaurants in the city center usually close one day a week, but shopping centers remain open daily.

Fun fact: we usually have lunch around **1 PM**.

Service charges are usually included in the bill, but it's customary to leave an additional tip of about **5-10%** of the total.

Portuguese Coffee and Bread Culture

Coffee holds a significant place in Portuguese daily life, much like in other Latin countries. Whether enjoyed alone or with friends, the Portuguese typically consume **strong**, dark coffee multiple times a day. Many kick-start their mornings with a quick coffee (**uma bica** in Lisbon) while standing at a bar counter.

Interestingly, Portugal offers at least nine distinct ways to order local coffee:



Black Coffee:

1. **Bica, Espresso**, or simply **Café**: a small black coffee served in a small cup.
2. **Café Cheio** or **Duplo**: a full small cup of black coffee.
3. **Café sem princípio**: the second press of black coffee served in a small cup.
4. **Abatanado**: larger, milder coffee, akin to "American coffee".
5. **Café Descafeinado**: a small black decaffeinated coffee.

Coffee with Milk:

6. **Café Pingado**: a small black coffee with a drop of milk.
7. **Meia de Leite** or **Café com Leite**: equal parts coffee and hot milk in a tea-sized cup.
8. **Garoto**: a small coffee cup filled mostly with milk and a dash of coffee.
9. **Galão**: a tumbler glass with more

hot milk than coffee.

(Image reproduced from [Margaret's Portuguese Kitchen](#))

Coffee isn't the only thing that comes in many forms—Portugal is also known for its wide variety of breads. And here's a fun challenge: the Portuguese word for bread (**pão**) is also one of the trickiest (and riskiest!) for non-native speakers to pronounce. A quick internet search will show you why. To learn more about Portugal's different types of bread, check out [this blog](#).

International Gastronomy in Lisbon

As Portugal's capital, Lisbon offers a rich and diverse culinary scene with food from all over the world. When you're feeling homesick, a familiar meal can be one of the best ways to feel comforted and recharged.

From flavors of Portuguese-speaking countries to dishes from across the globe, you'll find plenty of options to explore. Whether you're craving something from home or feeling adventurous, there's always something new to try.

[Check out this guide](#) for a list of popular international cuisines in Lisbon, along with tips on where to eat. And if you're curious, don't hesitate to explore the city and discover new spots on your own.

Activities and Cultural Life in the City

Lisbon is a city brimming with cultural events and activities, both in its main cultural venues and in the vibrant neighborhoods, with many [places of interest](#) to visit.

To explore the diverse cultural scene of Lisbon, start by visiting the city's official tourism website [here](#). Stay updated on museums, monuments, theaters, events, Fado houses, and more [here](#). For a schedule of major events in Lisbon, check [here](#).

The city boasts several parks and numerous viewpoints in the uptown center, many featuring kiosks and terrace cafés. While bicycle paths are limited, there are some available in certain areas.

Close to the city, you'll find Monsanto Nature Park, a sprawling 900-hectare forest park nestled amidst woods. It offers leisure areas, fitness circuits, mountain biking and running tracks, climbing walls, skate lanes, slides, and other outdoor sports activities.

Lusófona University offers an on-campus gym, with prices typically ranging from €14 to €20 per month. They often have discounts available, so it's worth checking with them directly for the latest offers. The gym is located in Building H. You can find more information on their website (Portuguese only): <https://ces.manz.pt/contactos>.

Alternatively, there's a nearby gym called [Go Fit](#), located close to Lusófona. Their most affordable plan starts at around €50 per month (excluding the registration fee). More details can be found on their website, available in Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian: <https://go-fit.pt/alta>.

You can engage in various sports at the University Stadium facilities, conveniently located close to Lusófona (15 minutes on foot or 5 minutes by subway from Cidade Universitária station). Find more information [here](#).

For surf enthusiasts, Lisbon's coast features popular spots and several schools open year-round. Here are some contacts to explore:

- General information: <http://lisbonsurfcamp.com/>
- Costa da Caparica: <http://www.caparicasurf.com/> and <http://www.angelsurfschool.com/>
- Cascais: <http://www.carcavellossurfschool.com/en/>

Nightlife in Lisbon

The most vibrant nightlife spots in Lisbon are concentrated in the districts of **Bairro Alto**, **Cais do Sodré**, **Santos** and **Alfama**, some of the city's oldest areas.

Bairro Alto is a captivating blend of historic taverns, stylish bars, restaurants, and fado houses, nestled within a district that boasts a rich history spanning 500 years. **Santos**, once an industrial and commercial hub, has evolved into the city's design district, while **Cais do Sodré**, historically associated with maritime activities and seamen's taverns, has been transformed into a hub of trendy bars.

Alfama, home to the [Fado Museum](#), enchants visitors with its labyrinthine streets reminiscent of the city's Moorish past. Adjacent to Alfama is **Mouraria**, which retains the evocative charm of its Arab roots. Both neighborhoods are renowned for hosting some of the oldest fado venues in Lisbon and are vibrant multicultural melting pots.

Nightlife in these historic districts typically begins with late dinners followed by bar-hopping until the early hours of the morning. Locals and tourists alike, representing various ages and lifestyles, converge to socialize and enjoy drinks at the outdoor bars, creating a lively street party atmosphere. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays are particularly lively nights in Lisbon. [Bars](#) usually close around 2:00 AM, while [clubs](#) may stay open until 4:00 AM to 6:00 AM.

Discover more about things to do in Lisbon [here](#).

Events that might interest you in Lisbon

Web Summit 2025:

Web Summit is one of the world's leading technology conferences. It began in Dublin, Ireland, in 2010 and moved to Lisbon, Portugal, in 2016. The event brings together a diverse range of participants—including tech companies, startups, investors, and thought leaders—to explore the latest trends and innovations in technology, entrepreneurship, and digital business. Notably, it also features entrepreneurs and researchers from the Games field. If this aligns with your interests, attending Web Summit could be a valuable experience.

Dates: November 10–13, 2025.

Learn more about it [here](#).

Lisboa Games Week 2025:

Lisboa Games Week (LGW) stands as Portugal's premier gaming event and is an integral part of Europe's major gaming circuit. It debuted in 2014 at the International Fair of Lisbon (FIL) and has since expanded to encompass various aspects of gaming culture, including eSports, gaming hardware, pop culture, retro and indie games, and virtual reality. Lusófona University actively engages in the event, showcasing students' projects and facilitating connections with industry professionals.

Dates: November 20–23, 2025.

Learn more about it [here](#).

DevGAMM Lisbon 2025:

This B2B conference features carefully curated speakers, a large-scale game showcase, various networking formats, and meetings powered by MeetToMatch. Some of our past students have participated as volunteers, gaining valuable connections with game developers and other professionals in the industry.

Dates: November 6-7, 2025

Learn more about it [here](#).

Game Break:

Game Break is a monthly event that brings together aspiring and experienced game developers, artists, designers, programmers, and gaming enthusiasts. The event promotes the sharing of ideas, games, experiences, and discussions about the games industry. It usually takes place at the GamingHub, hosted by [Unicorn Factory Lisboa](#).

Dates: Monthly, 2025

Learn more about it [here](#).

Game Creators Club:

Lusófona University's Game Department hosts a monthly game jam called the Game Creators Club. At the start of each month, a new theme is announced, and participants have until the beginning of the next month to work on their projects at their own pace. At the following meetup—just before the next theme is revealed—everyone shares what they've created in a relaxed, informal setting. You'll receive more information about it at the beginning of your semester.

Dates: Monthly, 2025

Learn more about it [here](#).

Should any other noteworthy events arise, we'll promptly inform you via email.

Safety

Lisbon is generally considered a safe city, with few instances of violent crime, allowing you to navigate public spaces confidently during both daytime and evening hours.

However, it's advisable to take common-sense precautions to minimize the risk of robbery, particularly when using public transportation like buses or trams, as pickpockets often target unsuspecting tourists. Remain vigilant, especially with electronic devices, ensuring they are kept out of sight as much as possible. Additionally, exercise caution when venturing out at night, avoiding deserted or suspicious areas, as well as solitary walks in parks or poorly lit parts of the city.

If, unfortunately, you fall victim to theft, it's recommended to report the incident promptly at the nearest police station and request to file a formal complaint. This procedure is crucial for potential police investigations into your stolen belongings and serves as documentation for insurance claims.

Renting a Car

For those interested in exploring the sights with greater flexibility, renting a car can be a convenient option. [Inter Rent/GoldCar](#) offers competitive prices, and by sharing the costs with classmates, it can become more affordable. While the gas prices may not be the most economical, you can use the [ViaMichelin](#) website to accurately calculate travel expenses.

In Lisbon, parking can be a concern, especially in areas where fees apply. Always check for parking indications when driving, as designated parking zones are clearly marked. Taking this precaution can help avoid parking violations and ensure a hassle-free experience.

When driving on highways, it's important to adhere to local rules. Avoid driving in the middle lane unless overtaking another vehicle, as fines for this infraction can be substantial. Exercise caution and stay mindful of lane usage to avoid penalties.

Learning Portuguese

Portuguese, of Latin origin, ranks among the [top 10](#) most spoken languages globally, with over 200 million native speakers across several continents. While the

language of instruction at Pathfinder is English, familiarizing yourself with Portuguese can enrich your experience, aiding in understanding local customs and fostering better communication with residents. Therefore, supplementary learning options are recommended, tailored to your preferences and schedule.

Portuguese Language Course for Non-Native Speakers (PLA)

There is an external, **optional language course** available for non-Portuguese speakers living in Portugal, called **PLA – Portuguese as a Foreign Language**.

The program is **certified by the Portuguese government**, and offers **up to 150 hours** of instruction per level (A1–A2 / B1–B2), with **online and in-person options** available depending on the provider.

These courses are **mostly free**, but availability and conditions may vary depending on the institution offering them.

If you're interested, please contact us directly so we can check your eligibility and available options.

Here are some other suggestions:

- www.falamos-portugues.com: Offers instructor-led online courses, either individual or group classes, at affordable rates.
- www.portuguesetcetera.com: Provides small group classes with paid lessons, suitable for interactive learning.
- www.erasmuslifelisboa.com: Offers small group classes with evening schedules, making it convenient for students. Lessons are paid but reasonably priced.
- www.learn-portuguese-with-rafa.com: Provides online courses with pre-paid packages for structured learning.
- www.internetpolyglot.com: Offers a free online thesaurus organized thematically, supplemented with downloadable sound files. While resources are somewhat limited, it can be a helpful supplementary tool.

Student-Led Exchange Networks in Lisbon

Lisbon has several student-led organizations created by former exchange students to help newcomers make the most of their time in the city. These groups are not officially connected to the programme, but they're incredibly popular and worth exploring.

Those organizations provide a great way to meet people, get involved in local culture, and discover Lisbon beyond the university walls.

There may be other local initiatives as well, so feel free to explore and find the one that suits your vibe best!

Useful Contacts

Police Useful Contacts

In the Lisbon area, the Metropolitan police, known as PSP (Polícia de Segurança Pública), can be reached through the following contacts:

- Lisbon Tourism Police Station: 213 421 623
- PSP/ Lisbon Metropolitan Police Command: 217 654 242
- PSP / Traffic: 217 501 200

Outside the metropolitan area, the police authority falls under GNR (Guarda Nacional Republicana). Here are some relevant contacts:

- GNR / General Command: 213 217 000
- GNR / City of Sintra: 219 244 925
- Cascais Tourism Police Station: 214 863 929

Emergency Services

For urgent medical assistance, fire emergencies, or other critical situations, utilize the following emergency service contacts:

- Health Hotline: 808 24 24 24
- Ambulance: 112
- Fire Department: 117

This **Welcome Guide** was developed by the **Lusófona International Office (LIO)**.

Updated: June 2025

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Pathfinder
Joint International BA in Film
June 2025