

Portugal in February is Just Right

By JAMES | Published: FEBRUARY 20, 2012



Portugallo, It Would Seem

It's one of the best things about traveling— there continues to be the sense that home and your daily life are further than you would expect. So a little less than twenty four hours after flying out from Boston, with connections in New York to Madrid and finally to Lisbon, it feels like a whole new world. (Or Old World, I guess it would be).

And maybe not having slept over the first twenty four hours might have something to do with it. Warding off

sleep for the first day seems to be an essential part of traveling to Europe, Sarah tells me. So off we went, making sure to not stay still any longer than we needed to—with eyes and limbs too-quickly drooping.

So from early iphone app learning exercises on the plane to its halting use on the streets (*Disculpe, nao falo portugues. Fala ingles o espanol, senhora?*), off we went. We shook off the stasis of flight and unexpectedly found ourselves sitting at a breakfast spread at the [Casa de Bairro apartments](#) in the southern Bairro Alto neighborhood of Lisbon. An initial blur of wide avenidas, heroic statues in squares, and an overlook towards the Tejo river in our host neighborhood of steep and narrow small-stoned, graffitied streets.



Walking the Streets of Lisbon

After unpacking our things into our 'blue' room and extra bites of sugared pastries, we walked through some colinas (hills) of Bairro Alto towards the Baixa-Chiado subway station—to our first destination, the impressive Calouste Gulbenkian art museum. (You have to take advantage of those free museum days, right?). Definitely worth wandering through, with generous sized gallery rooms displaying an overabundance of riches—from Egyptian artifacts, to impossibly preserved ancient Greek coins with their reliefs, to European masterwork paintings to the most ornate furnitures.

Shops and coffee/pastry eating for the rest of the afternoon and then a small, perfect neighborhood restaurant called Guarda-Mor for the end of night—some complimentary white port to begin with and a cadbury cream-egg like combination of dessert to finish.

No doubt that we slept extremely well. Tudo bem, Portugal!