

2024 Edition

EXPERIENCING ALFAMA WITH MEMMO.



OUR GUIDE TO EXPLORING
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

memmohotels.com



memmo.

ALFAMA

LISBOA • PORTUGAL

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Historical, labyrinthine, familiar: three adjectives that sum up the soul, life and architecture of this, one of Lisbon's most iconic neighbourhoods, and perhaps the one that the word 'tradition' still best fits today. With a name that derives from the Arabic word al-hamma (hot spring or bath) – a reference to the fact that the area was rich in thermal waters – Alfama has over the centuries developed and grown its own identity and topology, as a cluster of alleys, steps, lanes, arches and narrow buildings, always closely linked to the River Tagus.

The heart of the city until the 16th century, when Lisbon spread westwards, Alfama was for hundreds of years home to sailors and fishermen and a setting for authentic local life. It is this same authentic Lisbon that Alfama represents in the 21st century. Even as the massive 1755 Earthquake destroyed most of the city, and the following decades saw it reborn with different

contours, Alfama retained its labyrinthine character. The best way to explore it is without a map, in a spirit of discovery.

Alfama is a neighbourhood to visit at any time of the day: in the morning, when residents throw open their windows, hang clothes out to dry, and chat on the street; in the afternoon, when the sun is at its height and local lookout points afford beautiful views of the Tagus; at night, when the sound of Portuguese guitars being strummed begins, in preparation for the performances of fado singers. Fado, recognized by UNESCO since 2011 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, can be described as the Lisbon form of song; it is also the soundtrack of Alfama. But it is also impossible to talk about this neighbourhood without mentioning the traditional Santos Populares – the People’s Saints – festivals in June, which are celebrated with parties and dances in the streets of Lisbon, and especially in Alfama.

So as to never lose touch with Alfama's traditions, **memmo Alfama Hotel** was installed in an old vila operário or workers' housing complex of the kind that was common in Lisbon in the early 20th century, through the refurbishment of two buildings that were joined together to build the hotel. Tucked away in an alley in the heart of Alfama, the hotel fosters a spirit of familiarity and conviviality among the various common spaces, with the terrace and its red pool the standout feature. The choice of color is, of course, a tribute to the traditional rooftops of Alfama. Establish a first contact with them, from the hotel, and discover what is hidden beneath them with our suggestions to explore Alfama.



To visit



Alfama is a neighbourhood to explore on foot, following a rough itinerary but with an open mind for the unexpected and the surprises that await in the area's many streets and alleyways – whether views of the Tagus, urban art on the walls, or encounters with locals, among other secrets. The first stop for those leaving the **memmo Alfama** is, still on Travessa das Merceeiras, a work by **Vhils** (Alexandre Farto), one of Portugal's leading artists. It's the face of an old inhabitant of Alfama sculpted on the wall, using the technique that made the artist world famous, and commissioned by the hotel itself. From the top of the alley, once you have reached Rua Augusto Rosa, your walk can go in various directions, to explore at different times of day. Turning left, you soon come across the **Sé de Lisboa** or Cathedral of Lisbon, dedicated to Santa Maria Maior (the Virgin Mary) and one of Lisbon's must-see monuments because of

its great antiquity, dating as it does back to the 12th century, and its mix of architectural styles – the result of numerous interventions and additions over the centuries. Once you have admired the interior and the cloister, it is time to visit the treasury, which is a must-see for lovers of sacred art such as the Baroque monstrance, made in the 18th century. Continuing downhill, one enters the Baixa or downtown, at the bottom of which is the imposing **Praça do Comércio**, a grand square built after the devastating 1755 Earthquake. Once the focal point of the city's business,



favourite place to stroll. It is worth climbing the monumental arch at its top, the **Arco da Rua Augusta**, to enjoy a 360° view over the city. Still in this riverside area is the **Casa dos Bicos**, a building whose architecture is unique in the city, influenced as it was by 16th-century Italian Renaissance models; currently it is home to the foundation set up in the name of Nobel laureate José



Saramago (on the upper floors) with an interesting archaeological centre at ground level.

Back on Rua Augusto Rosa, and for those who like a good workout, there is one objective to be set on any day out: to climb up to the **Castelo de São Jorge** (St George's Castle). The first stones of a fortified



settlement were laid here millennia ago but the building you see today is the result of major remodelling completed in the 20th

century. It also contains remains from the Islamic era that can be visited along with the rest of the castle, whose terrace affords wonderful views across central Lisbon. On the way to the top, you can stop off at the **Teatro Romano** or Roman Theatre, a branch of the Museum of Lisbon, which as well as the archaeological site has ruins of the theatre itself, rediscovered in 1768, and an interesting exhibition space. Built in the 1st century A.D., under the Emperor Augustus, the theatre could fit as many as 4,000 spectators. The theatre is located between Rua de São Mamede and Rua da Saudade – the latter name paying tribute to one of the most special words in the Portuguese language – and from here you head up Rua Bartolomeu de Gusmão to the Arco do Castelo access to the castle.

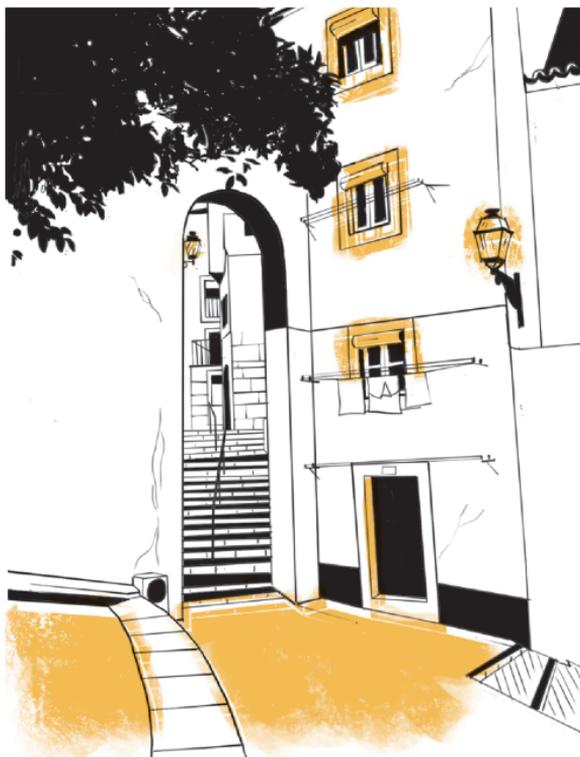
Finally, the third tour option, starts by turning right at the same starting point and proposes a journey through the viewpoints



and the most residential area of Alfama. The first stop is very short, next to a centuries-old tree known as *bela sombra* or *ombú* (Latin name *Phytolacca dioica*), which is snapped by many visitors to Lisbon. The road then leads up to the iconic **Miradouro de Santa Luzia** lookout point, framed by *bougainvillea* that bloom at different times of the year and so provides a beautiful backdrop in any season. Sit down on one of the stone *namoradeiras* or love seats, here in

the open air, and then before continuing on your way take a look at the tile panel depicting the Praça do Comércio in the early 18th century. A few meters above is another viewpoint that is not to be missed, **Portas do Sol**, the view from which is particularly lovely on sunny days with blue skies.

It is from this same spot that you can start your stroll through the residential area of Alfama. Start from Rua Norberto de Araújo, to get to know the work of another well-known Portuguese artist, Nuno Saraiva, who tells the history of the city of Lisbon in comic strip format on the walls of a small tunnel. From here, we recommend that you forget your GPS and wander aimlessly through the streets, where the residents of traditional Lisbon mix with outsiders. Small houses, picturesque architecture, a set of dwellings built in no apparent order mark the landscape of this labyrinthine area, which in the summer months gains new life with the



lyrics of one of the neighbourhood's favourite songs, the Marcha de Alfama:
“Becos escadinhas ruas estreitinhas/ Onde

em cada esquina há um bailarico” (Dead ends, little stairways, narrow streets / Where there’s a dance on every corner). It’s worth taking your time to explore the area, always aiming to head downhill towards the Tagus and the arches that once marked the entrance to the city, ending your trip at the **Fado Museum**, which celebrates that Lisbon form of song. Starting from the roots of fado, it tells the story of the music, its evolution and protagonists, in a collection that is showcased with multimedia information.

A final tip: near the hotel is something else well worth visiting – the **Feira da Ladra** flea market, in the Campo de Santa Clara. The largest street market in the old city – and one of the longest established – it takes place on Tuesdays and Saturdays, with secondhand items such as vinyl, crockery, clothes and antiques. Go early to get the best bargains.

To taste



The culinary offer in Lisbon has taken on new contours and latitudes over the last few years. The area surrounding **memmo Alfama**, however, remains above all a place for Portuguese food, with a greater or lesser degree of creativity. Along these same Portuguese lines is the menu of the **memmo**

Alfama Wine Bar & Terrace, which boasts a fine view over Lisbon. Here you can sample Portuguese snacks, cheeses, salads and sandwiches with a glass of wine. The nearby restaurant **Prado**, overseen by chef António Galapito, has a different concept: signature cuisine and great respect for seasonal produce. Next door is **Prado Merceria** – a ‘grocery’ where, in addition to products for purchase, light meals can also be had. Also with signature cuisine, and a great tribute to the best from the Portuguese land and sea, **Sála** is the restaurant of prominent Portuguese chef João Sá. Another place with creative cuisine, made with the best market produce, **Boi-Cavalo** is chef Hugo Brito’s restaurant, reminiscent of a bistro but very much a local affair. You get a great view over Lisbon at **Chapitô à Mesa**, the restaurant of the Chapitô arts school and theatre complex, which also has a bar and restaurant where chef Bertílio Gomes prepares

Portuguese cuisine, revamped with international inspirations and flavours.

Within walking distance from memmo Alfama, **Lisboa Tu e Eu 2** is the go-to spot that offers an authentic culinary experience with delicious Portuguese food with a different touch. There is more Portuguese cuisine at **Maria Catita**, which is a good option for eat fish, polvo à lagareiro (roast octopus), bacalhau (codfish) or a classic bitoque (steak, topped with a fried egg). In the same street is **Baixa Mar**, a real Portuguese marisqueira dedicated to serving fresh seafood, to be washed down with a beer.

And because fado is integral to Alfama, here is an iconic place to listen to it while sampling typical Portuguese dishes: **Mesa de Frades**, ensconced in the former chapel of an old palace. It has long served as the stage for emerging Fado talents: it was where current star Carminho sang for several years as a youngster. Also hosting fado singers

since the 1950s, **Parreirinha de Alfama** is another must for anyone wanting to hear genuine fado and Portuguese guitar.

Taberna Moderna is a restaurant-bar with an Iberian soul, where various snacks and dishes for sharing are accompanied by a choice of gins, in what was Lisbon's first gin bar. At **Grenache** you can try good French cuisine, where the chef uses classic techniques with a sense of freedom and Portuguese products.

For another dessert on this culinary itinerary, there are the handmade ices of **Gelato Therapy**, a parlour that uses Italian recipes, some of them quite unusual.



To drink

The first stop we suggest is at the hotel itself, and has already been mentioned here: the **memmo Alfama Wine Bar & Terrace**, a great place for a drink with a panoramic view of Lisbon. Also with an excellent backdrop for a postcard-style snap, the **Portas do Sol** café and bar – in a building designed by the Portuguese architect duo Aires Mateus – serves fresh juices, cocktails and other classic drinks. Still in the ‘good view over Lisbon’ class – after all, we are on one of the city’s seven hills – **Chapitô** can also be visited as a bar. For something completely different, **Ulysses Speakeasy** is almost certainly the smallest bar in town, but boasts a full cocktail and spirits menu. Back to the Lisbon form of song: **Clube do Fado** is considered one of the city’s best fado houses, with the best musicians. Stop by to check it out and sample a glass of wine.

To buy



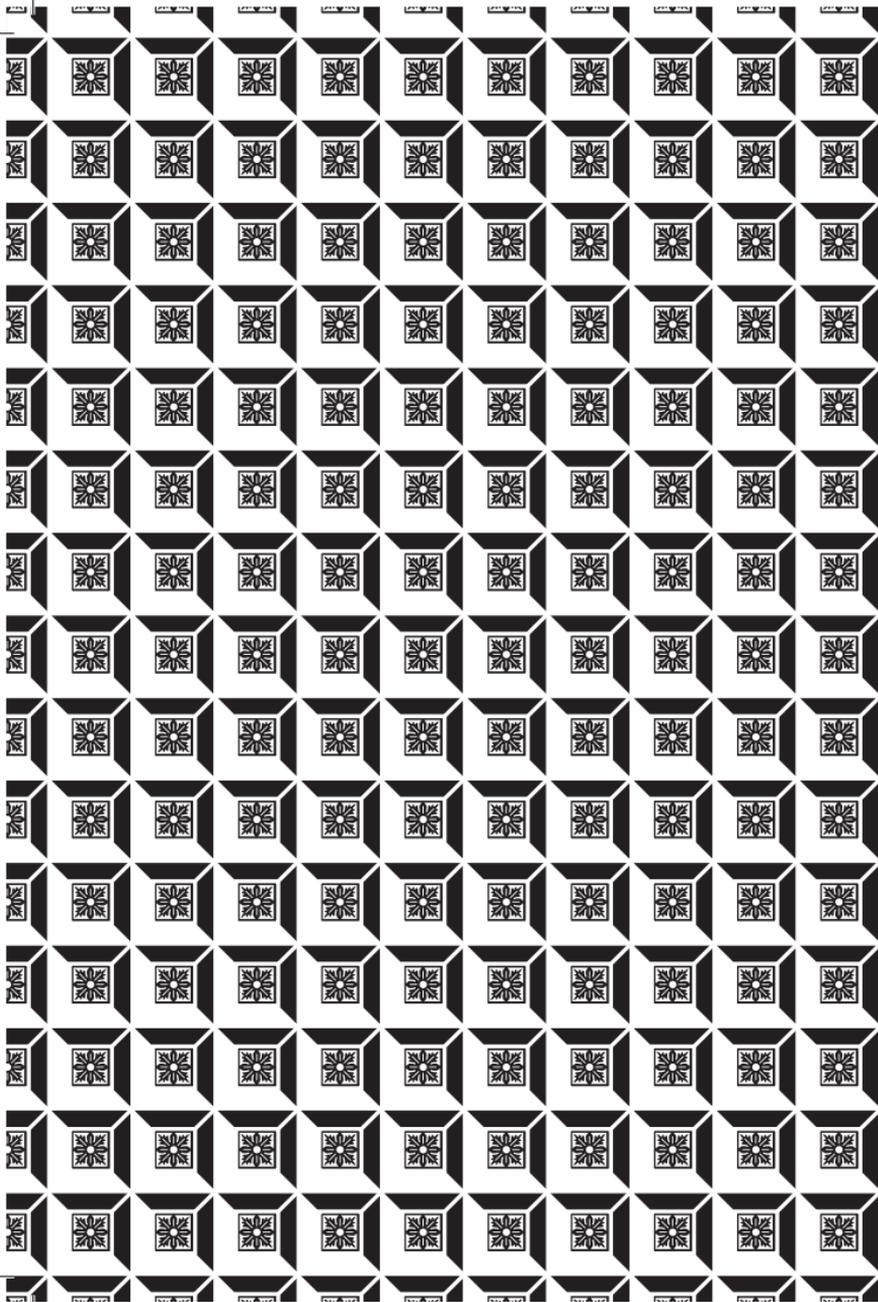
We start with a suggestion of what not to do: ignore the dozens of souvenir shops dotted around the neighbourhood. As well as all stocking similar items, they offer little that is authentic. That can be found elsewhere. Close to memmo Alfama is the **ChiCoração**, a shop selling wool and cotton blankets as well as coats, scarves and other items made from Portuguese textiles.

If you are looking for Portuguese ceramics, there are two lovely places to visit: the **Caulino Handmade Ceramics** shop and atelier where, as well as buying very original pieces, you can take a ceramics class; and the atelier of artist **Teresa Segurado Pavão**, where pieces made of white clay are combined with other materials such as bones and wood (visits by appointment only).

Those who appreciate Portuguese wine (and who doesn't?) will love the **Garrafeira da Sé**, a shop founded in 1927 where new wines join classic names, and where port takes pride of place.







General Information:

TO VISIT

1. Sé de Lisboa

Largo da Sé, 1
21 886 6752

Monday, Thursday, Tuesday and Friday

9.30am-7pm; Wednesday and Saturday

10am-6pm (May to October), Monday to

Saturday 10am-6pm (November to April)

2. Casa dos Bicos

Rua dos Bacalhoeiros, 10

21 880 2040

Monday to Saturday 10am-6pm

3. Castelo de São Jorge

Rua de Santa Cruz do Castelo

21 880 0620

Daily 9am-6pm (November to February),

9am-9pm (March to October)

4. Museu de Lisboa - Teatro Romano

Rua de São Mamede, 3A

21 581 8530

Tuesday to Sunday 10am-6pm

5. Museu do Fado

Largo do Chafariz de Dentro, 1

21 882 3470

Tuesday to Sunday 10am-6pm

6. Feira da Ladra

Campo de Santa Clara

Tuesday & Saturday 9am-6pm

TO TASTE

7. Wine Bar & Terrace memmo Alfama

Travessa das Merceeiras, 27

21 049 5660

Daily 12.30pm-10.30pm

8. Prado

Travessa das Pedras Negras, 2

21 053 4649

Tuesday and Wednesday 7pm-01am,

Thursday to Saturday 12pm-5pm, 7pm-01am

9. Prado Merceria

Rua das Pedras Negras, 35

21 053 4652

Monday to Friday 12pm-12am

10. Sála

Rua dos Bacalhoeiros, 103

21 887 3045

Tuesday to Thursday 6.30pm-9.30pm,

Friday & Saturday 12.30pm-2.30pm,

6.30pm-10.30pm

11. Boi-Cavalo

Rua do Vigário, 70B

93 875 2355

Wednesday to Sunday 8pm-1am

12. Chapitô à Mesa

Costa do Castelo, 1

21 887 5077

Daily 12pm-6pm, 7pm-11pm

- 13.** Lisboa Tu e Eu 2
Escadinhas das Portas do Mar, 4
91 948 5256
Daily 12pm-11pm
- 14.** Maria Catita
Rua dos Bacalhoeiros, 30
21 133 1313
Daily 12pm-10.45pm
- 15.** Baixa Mar
Rua dos Bacalhoeiros, 28B
21 887 2411
Daily 12pm-10.45pm
- 16.** Mesa de Frades
Rua dos Remédios, 139
91 702 9436
Monday to Saturday 8.30pm-2am
- 17.** Parreirinha de Alfama
Beco do Espírito Santo, 1
21 886 8209
Tuesday to Sunday 8pm-1am

18. Taberna Moderna

Rua dos Bacalhoeiros, 18A

21 886 5039

Monday to Friday and Sunday 6pm-1am,

Saturday 12pm-4pm, 6pm-1am

19. Grenache

Pátio de Dom Fradique, 12

21 887 1616

Thursday to Monday 7pm-10.30pm

20. Gelato Therapy

Rua da Madalena, 83

21 886 0831

Daily 2pm-7.30pm

TO DRINK

21. Wine Bar & Terrace do memmo Alfama

Travessa das Merceeiras, 27

21 049 5660

Daily 2pm-7.30pm

- 22. Quiosque das Portas do Sol**
Largo das Portas do Sol, Beco de Santa
Helena
21 885 1299
Daily 10am-1am
- 23. Chapitô**
Costa do Castelo, 7
21 885 5550
Daily 9pm-2am
- 24. Ulysses Speakeasy**
Rua da Regueira, 16A
92 769 6684
Daily 4pm-midnight
- 25. Clube do Fado**
Rua de São João da Praça, 94
21 885 2704
Daily 7.30pm-1am

TO BUY

26. ChiCoração – Loja da Sé

Rua Augusto Rosa, 46

96 162 7254/21 886 1661

Daily 10am-8pm

27. Caulino Handmade Ceramics

Rua de São Mamede, 28

91 244 7703

Monday 1pm-6pm, Tuesday and Friday

11am-6pm, Wednesday 11am-8pm, Thursday

11am-9pm, Saturday 11am-2pm

28. Teresa Segurado Pavão

Largo Chão do Loureiro, 7

91 963 7895

Visits by appointment only

29. Garrafeira da Sé – Ferreira & Silva

Rua de São João da Praça, 118

21 886 9549

Monday to Friday 9am-7pm, Saturday

9am-6pm

