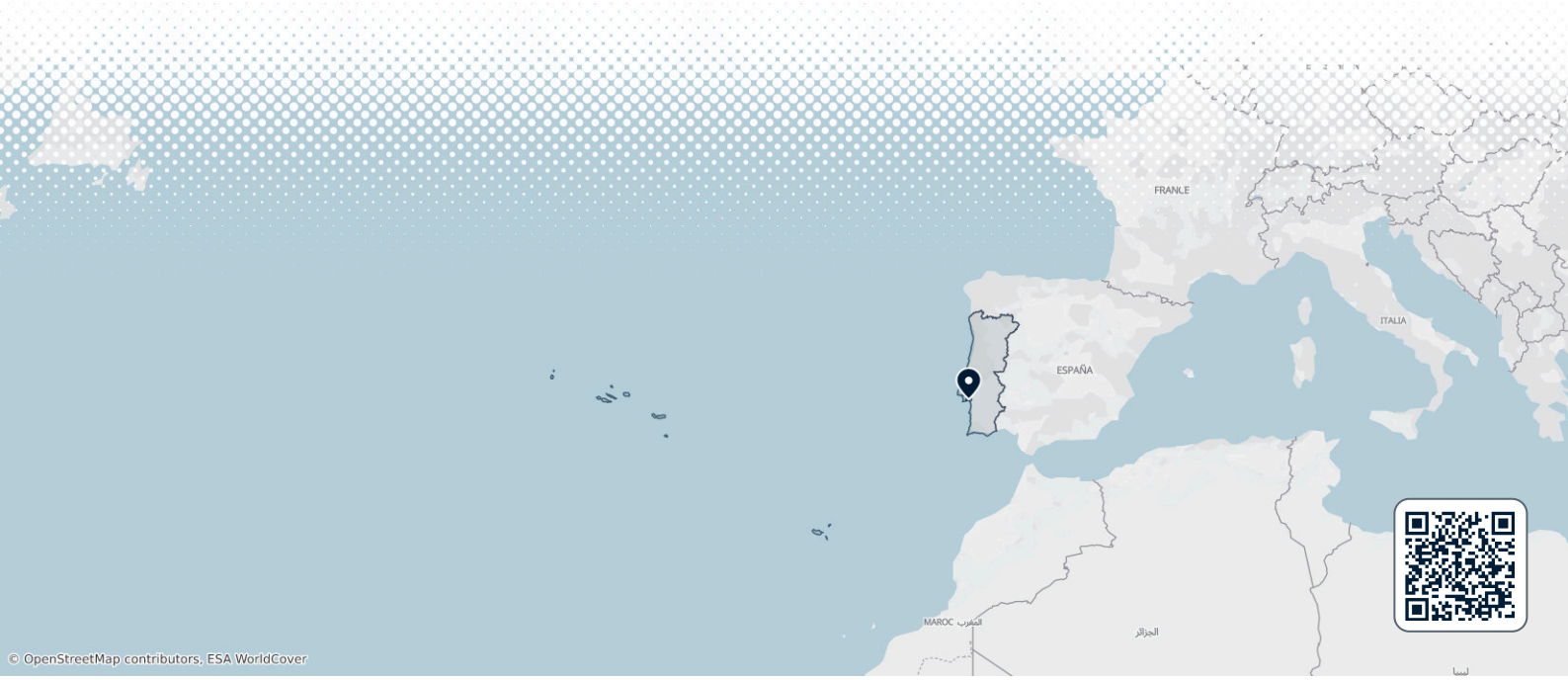


Setúbal

Setúbal District · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Setúbal is a working port city on the north bank of the Sado estuary, about 50 km by road from Lisbon. It has a fish market, a hilltop fort and an early Manueline monastery. The poet *Bocage* was born here in 1765.

The city is a good base for a few nights. Dolphin boat trips leave from the waterfront, the Tróia peninsula is a short ferry ride away, and the Arrábida hills and beaches start at the edge of town. It suits travellers who want nature and local food more than a long list of monuments.

When to visit

April to October is the best period. May, June and September are warm and mostly dry. July and August are hot and almost rainless, and the Arrábida beaches are busiest. Most rain falls from October to March.

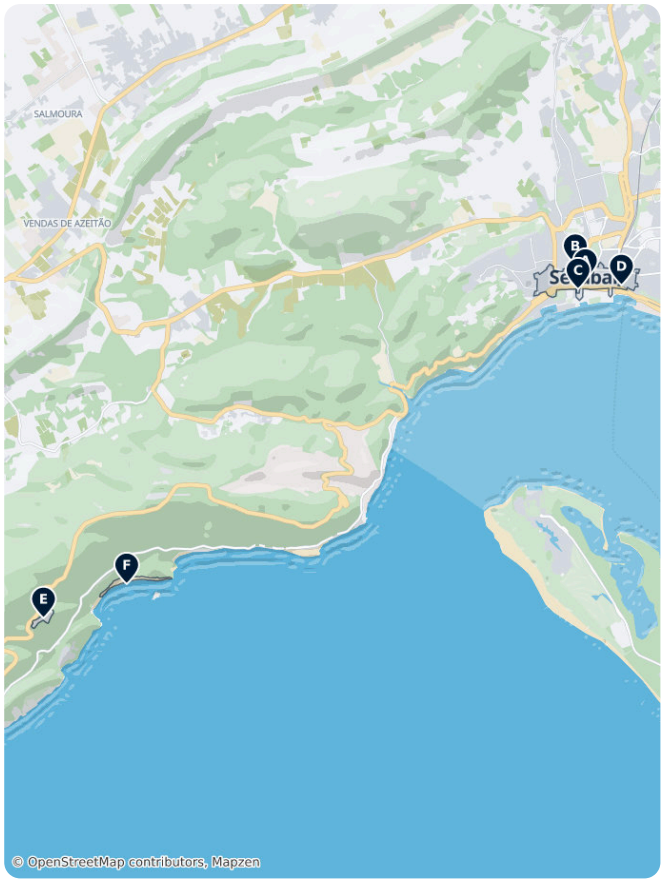
In summer, car access to the Arrábida beaches is restricted during the day (see Getting around), so plan beach trips with that in mind.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for wildlife watching	15° / 18°	9° / 4°	Dry air
February	Great Great for hiking	16° / 20°	9° / 4°	Dry air
March	Great Great for hiking	18° / 24°	10° / 6°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 26°	12° / 9°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 30°	14° / 11°	Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 33°	16° / 14°	☀ 22 sunny days · UV 8 (Very high)
July	Great Great for wildlife watching	29° / 35°	18° / 15°	☀ 27 sunny days · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Great Great for wildlife watching	29° / 35°	18° / 16°	☀ 27 sunny days · UV 8 (Very high)
September	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 32°	17° / 14°	☀ 21 sunny days · Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 29°	15° / 12°	
November	Great Great for wildlife watching	18° / 22°	12° / 7°	Dry air
December	Good Good for wildlife watching	16° / 19°	10° / 5°	Dry air

Best months: April, May, June, July, August, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Setúbal Fortress stands on a hill above the city. Work began in 1590 under *Philip II of Spain*, who was also King Philip I of Portugal. The views over the Sado estuary are the main reason to climb up, and a small Baroque chapel inside has azulejos with scenes from the life of Saint Philip. The fort has been open to visitors since 2017.
- B Mosteiro de Jesus was built from about 1490, mostly to a design by *Diogo de Boitaca*. Its church is among the earliest buildings in the Manueline style, with twisted-rope ribs in the vault. The cloisters hold the city museum, with 15th- and 16th-century paintings.
- C Mercado do Livramento is housed in a building from 1930. Tile panels cover the walls, and fish, vegetables and regional products are sold inside. It is open Tuesday to Sunday from 07:30 to 14:00, so go in the morning.
- D Museu do Trabalho Michel Giacometti tells the story of the city's sardine canning industry, which made Setúbal one of Portugal's main fishing centres in the early 1900s.
- E Convento de Nossa Senhora da Arrábida is a convent founded in 1542 on the sea-facing slope of the Serra da Arrábida, inside the natural park. Visits are by advance booking and run only on certain days, so check before you go.
- F Praia do Creiro is a sandy beach inside the Arrábida Natural Park. In summer, daytime car access to the park beaches is restricted, so use the shuttle bus or walk.

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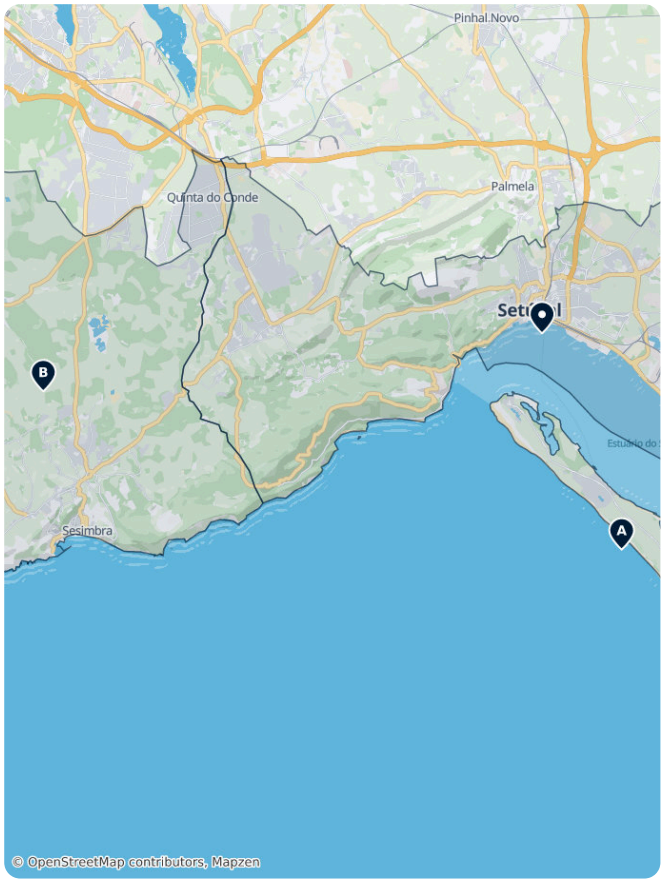
What to experience

- Dolphin watching: a small group of bottlenose dolphins lives in the Sado estuary. Boat trips leave from the city waterfront and last about two hours.
- Take the catamaran to Tróia for a beach afternoon. The crossing runs day and night.
- Swim at the Arrábida beaches, such as Praia do Creiro, Portinho da Arrábida and Galápos. Go early in summer, when access is limited.

Day trips

Close options come first. Times are one way by car, except Tróia.

- Palmela: 12 minutes. A hilltop wine town. The castle has wide views over the Setúbal peninsula.
- Azeitão: about 15 minutes. A village area known for wine estates, sheep's-milk cheese with protected origin status and sweet *tortas*. The Quinta da Bacalhoa palace is nearby.
- A Tróia Peninsula: 15 minutes by catamaran. A long sandy peninsula with beaches and the ruins of Roman fish-salting workshops, built between the 1st and 6th centuries.
- B Sesimbra: about 40 minutes. A fishing town on the south side of the Arrábida range, with a beach and the ruins of a Moorish castle above the town.



Getting there

- By air: the nearest airport is Lisbon (LIS). From there, go by metro or taxi to Roma-Areeiro station and continue by Fertagus train.
- By train: Fertagus trains run from Roma-Areeiro in Lisbon across the 25 de Abril Bridge to Setúbal. They run every 20 minutes and the trip takes about an hour. Tap a contactless bank card or phone at the Fertagus validators, or use a rechargeable Navegante card. CP also runs the Sado line from Setúbal station. Tickets for that line must be bought at a ticket office or machine before boarding. Fertagus CP Comboios de Portugal
- By bus: Carris Metropolitana runs buses between Setúbal and the Lisbon area. Carris Metropolitana
- By car: Setúbal is about 50 km and 40 minutes from Lisbon.
- By ferry: Atlantic Ferries links Setúbal with Tróia. Atlantic Ferries

Getting around

- On foot: the market, the monastery, the fort and the museum are all within about 1 km of each other. The fort is on a hill.
- Local buses: Carris Metropolitana runs the city lines. Buy a ticket from the driver or use a Navegante card. Carris Metropolitana
- Arrábida beaches in summer: during the beach season (early June to mid-September in 2026), private cars are banned from 07:00 to 20:00 on the access roads to Albarquel and Figueirinha, and the roads to Portinho da Arrábida, Creiro and Galápos can close when car parks are full. Shuttle buses cover these routes, including line 4470 from Setúbal to Creiro through Azeitão, and Navegante is valid on them. Check the dates each year on the Setúbal municipality website.
- Ferry to Tróia: the catamaran takes about 15 minutes and carries pedestrians. The car ferry takes about 25 minutes. Navegante passes are not valid on Atlantic Ferries. Atlantic Ferries

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The market, monastery, fort and museum are within about 1 km. The fort is on a hill.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

The centre is small and mostly flat. The road into the Arrábida hills climbs.

Driving

- A car is not needed in the city. It helps for Arrábida, Azeitão and Sesimbra, but check the summer beach restrictions first.
- Parking: in the beach season the Várzea car park by the bus terminal and the Alegro shopping centre are free park-and-ride points for the shuttle buses. The car park at Creiro is paid.
- Tolls: the A2 motorway and the 25 de Abril bridge route from Lisbon are tolled. Ask the rental company about its toll transponder.

Food & drink

The local dish is *choco frito*, battered and fried cuttlefish served with fried potatoes and salad. Grilled fish is also common. Look for them at traditional restaurants in the centre, and buy fruit and fish at the market.

Moscatel de Setúbal is a sweet fortified wine made mainly from Muscat of Alexandria or Moscatel Roxo grapes and aged in wood. Wine cellars around Azeitão offer tastings. Azeitão is also known for its sheep's-milk cheese with protected origin status.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Caldo Verde
A simple, comforting soup of shredded kale, potato, and slices of chourico sausage.

Francesinha
A hearty Porto specialty: a meat-stuffed sandwich covered in melted cheese and a spiced tomato-beer sauce.

DINNER

Bacalhau
Salt cod, Portugal's national dish, said to be prepared in hundreds of different ways across the country.

Sardinhas Assadas
Charcoal-grilled sardines, especially popular in summer street festivals and along the coast.

Arroz de Marisco
A rich, soupy seafood rice, similar to paella but wetter, packed with shellfish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Pastel de Nata
A small custard tart in flaky pastry, best eaten warm with cinnamon and sugar.

DRINKS

Vinho Verde
A young, light, slightly sparkling white wine from northern Portugal, meant to be drunk within a year of harvest.

Port Wine · Vinho do Porto
A fortified wine from the Douro Valley, aged in cellars around Porto, ranging from sweet ruby to complex aged tawny styles.

Ginjinha · Ginãa
A sweet liqueur made from sour cherries, traditionally served in a small cup, sometimes with a cherry at the bottom.

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Safety & health

- Setúbal is a safe city. Normal precautions apply. Keep valuables out of parked cars at beach car parks and viewpoints.
- Summer is hot and the sun is strong. Carry water and sun protection on the Arrábida trails and beaches.

History

The Sado estuary was a Roman centre for salted fish. The ruins of the workshops are across the water on Tróia.

Mosteiro de Jesus was founded around 1490 and damaged by the 1755 earthquake. Setúbal Fortress was begun in 1590 when Portugal and Spain shared a crown. Setúbal became an official city in 1860. In the early 1900s it was one of Portugal's most important fishing and sardine processing ports, a story told at Museu do Trabalho Michel Giacometti.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



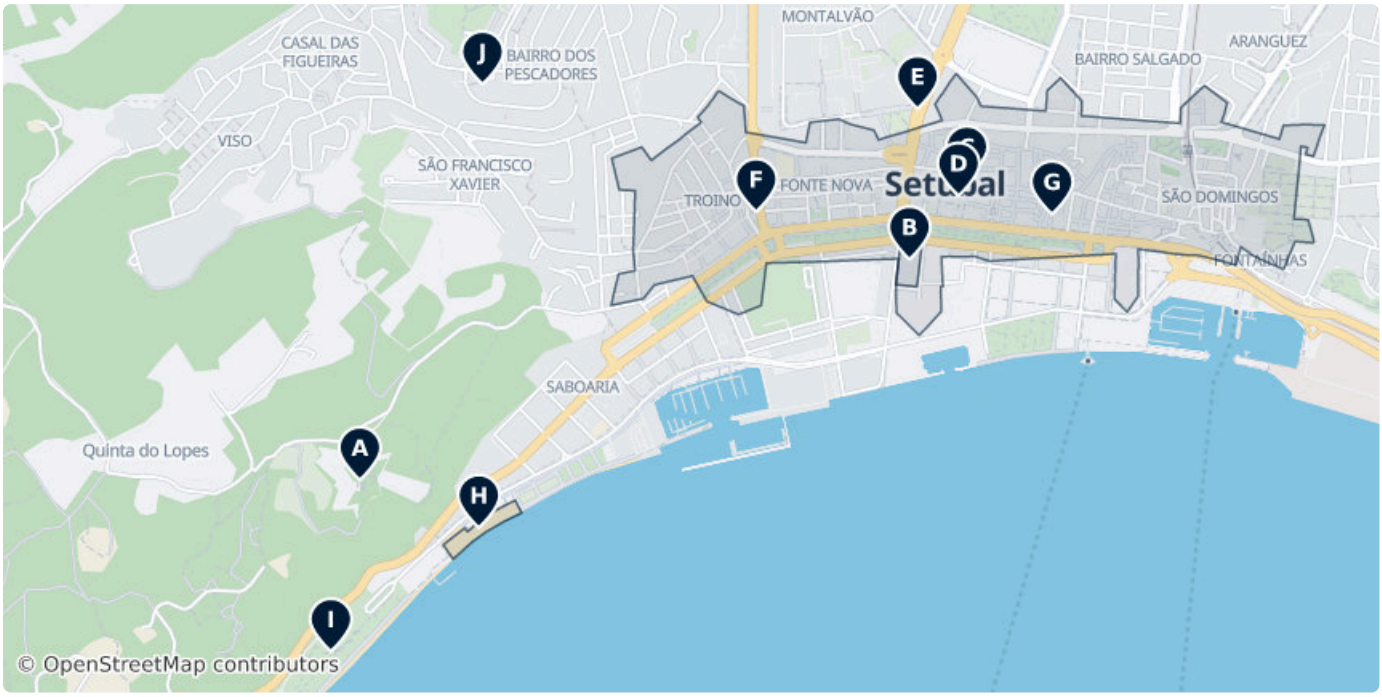
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Setúbal Essentials

Setúbal combines maritime tradition with military architecture along the Sado Estuary. This selection features the 16th-century Forte de São Filipe and the Mercado do Livramento, famous for its fresh fish and decorative tile panels. Visitors can explore Roman ruins at the Fábrica Romana de Salga, relax at the urban Praia da Saúde, or enjoy views from Albarquel. From the central Praça do Bocage to the medieval fortress walls, these landmarks represent the city's evolution from a Roman salting center to a strategic coastal stronghold.



A Forte de São Filipe

A 16th-century star-shaped fortress built to defend the city from pirates. Its interior chapel is lined with 18th-century blue and white tiles depicting the life of Saint Philip.

(38.51782, -8.90942)



B Mercado do Livramento

An Art Deco market hall known for its fresh fish stalls and walls decorated with over 5,000 traditional tiles illustrating the region's agricultural and fishing history.

Avenida Luísa Todi 163, 2900-276 Setúbal
(38.52259, -8.89421)

Tu–Su	07:30–14:00



C Estátua do Bocage

A white marble monument in the city's main square honoring the 18th-century neoclassical poet Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage, who was born in Setúbal.

50 Praça do Bocage, Setúbal 2900276, Portugal
(38.52433, -8.89263)



D Setúbal Fortress

Medieval fortress featuring walls and bastions built to defend against pirate and corsair attacks. Recognized as a protected heritage site reflecting military architecture and cultural history.

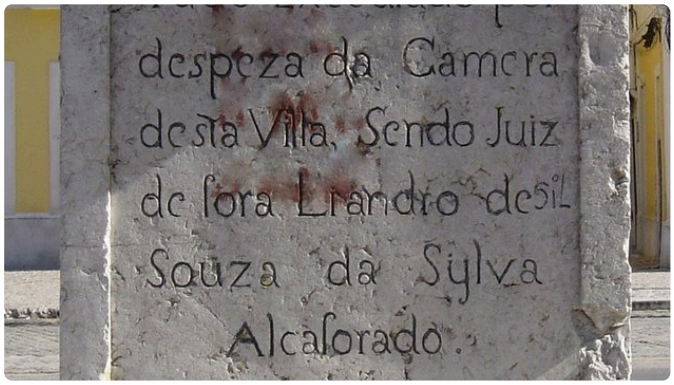
29 Praça do Bocage, Setúbal 2900276, Portugal
(38.52397, -8.89285)

E Museum of Setubal

Visit this interesting exhibition on an equally interesting city. You'll find some very intriguing stuff here.

R. Balneário Dr. Paula Borba, 2900-261 Setúbal, Portugal
(38.52585, -8.89399)

+351 265 537 890



F Pillory of Setúbal

An 18th-century marble column in Praça Marquês de Pombal. This historic symbol of local jurisdiction and municipal autonomy features a decorative capital and iron hooks.

Praça Marquês de Pombal, 2900-562 Setúbal, Portugal
(38.52362, -8.89846)

patrimoniocultural.pt/pt/patrimonio/patrimonio-imovel/...

G Fábrica Romana de Salga

Archaeological remains of a Roman fish-salting complex used between the 1st and 4th centuries. The site includes stone basins once used for producing garum, a fermented fish sauce.

19 Travessa Frei Gaspar, Setúbal 2900388, Portugal
(38.52357, -8.89027)

H Praia da Saúde

An urban river beach offering views of the Troia Peninsula. It features a paved promenade and green areas suitable for walking along the Sado Estuary waterfront.

Avenida José Mourinho, Setúbal (38.51678, -8.90613)

visitsetubal.com.pt/praias/praia-da-saude/

I Parque Urbano de Albarquel

A waterfront park located at the edge of the city. It includes a beach area, gardens, and recreational spaces with views toward the Arrábida Natural Park.

(38.51411, -8.91023)

J Miradouro Nossa Senhora do Cais

An elevated viewpoint overlooking the Sado Estuary and the commercial port. It provides clear vistas of the Troia Peninsula and the city's maritime infrastructure.

(38.52638, -8.90603)

DATA SOURCES

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