

Quick Travel Guide
GLEX Ignition
2026



COIMBRA

*Where Knowledge
Inspires Exploration*



THE
EXPLORERS
CLUB
ECC

EXPANDING
beyond events

WELCOME TO COIMBRA

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WHERE CENTURIES OF CURIOSITY CONTINUE TO SHAPE TOMORROW.



For more than eight centuries, Coimbra has been a place of learning, discovery and innovation. Home to one of Europe's oldest universities, the city has inspired generations of students, scientists, writers and explorers.

Today, its medieval streets, academic traditions and world-class research continue to make Coimbra one of Portugal's most inspiring destinations.

A city where history meets the future and where curiosity has always found a home.



Did you know?

In 2025, The New York Times included Coimbra in its list of “52 Places to Go”, highlighting the city as an inspiring alternative to Lisbon and Porto for travellers looking to escape the crowds.



THE HISTORIC HEART OF PORTUGAL.

Long before becoming Portugal's academic capital, Coimbra was one of the most important cities in the young Portuguese kingdom. Between the 12th and 13th centuries, it served as the nation's capital, playing a central role in its political, cultural and religious development.

Its medieval streets, churches and monasteries still tell the story of a city that helped shape Portugal. Today, Coimbra continues to blend this remarkable heritage with a vibrant academic atmosphere, making it one of the country's most distinctive destinations.

MORE THAN

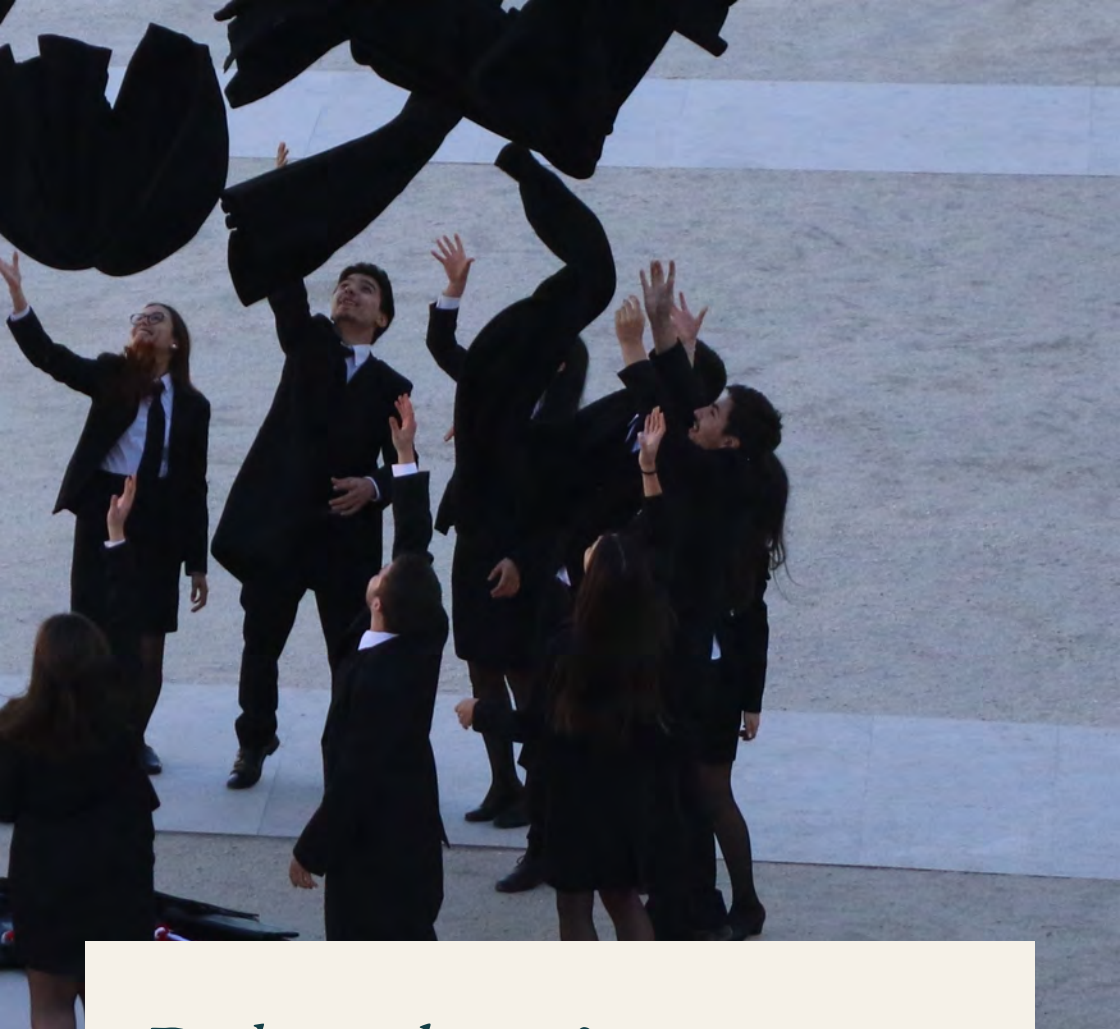
730

YEARS OF
LEARNING.

Founded in 1290 by King Dinis, the University of Coimbra is one of the oldest universities in Europe. After moving between Lisbon and Coimbra, it settled permanently in the city in 1537, transforming Coimbra into Portugal's leading centre of learning.



Today, the University welcomes more than 25,000 students from over 100 countries and remains one of Portugal's foremost institutions for education and research. In 2013, the University of Coimbra, Alta and Sofia was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Did you know?

For generations, Coimbra was considered the destination for anyone seeking higher education in Portugal. Until the 20th century, it was effectively the country's only university.

II

PLACES/THINGS YOU SIMPLY CAN'T MISS.



Discover the landmarks that define Coimbra's history, culture and academic spirit. Most of them are within walking distance, making it easy to explore the city's historic centre in just one day.



OI

EXPLORE THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA.

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Founded in 1290, the University of Coimbra is one of the oldest universities in the world and the city's most iconic landmark. Wander through the historic courtyards, admire the famous Clock Tower and experience over seven centuries of academic tradition.

Don't miss

- Paço das Escolas
- University Tower
- Academic Courtyard



02

STEP INSIDE THE JOANINA LIBRARY.

One of the world's finest Baroque libraries, home to more than 250,000 rare books dating back to the 16th century. Its lavish interiors are breathtaking, but its most unusual guardians are the bats that protect the collection from insects each night.

Good to know

Visit: 30–45 min

Entry by guided ticket only

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

Step into a world designed to awaken curiosity. The University of Coimbra's Cabinet of Curiosities brings together thousands of unusual objects and specimens from its scientific collections, recreating the sense of wonder of the curiosity cabinets that preceded modern museums.

With no labels or predefined route, visitors are invited to observe, question and explore, guided only by light and their own curiosity. A place where science begins exactly where exploration does: with the desire to know more.

EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS CABINET

Discover one of Europe's most remarkable collections of historical scientific instruments. Created in the 18th century as part of the University of Coimbra's commitment to experimental science, the Experimental Physics Cabinet reveals how observation, experimentation and discovery transformed the way we understand the physical world.

Its rare collection of scientific and teaching instruments was recognised by the European Physical Society as a European Historic Site in 2016, celebrating Coimbra's lasting contribution to the history of physics.



05

DISCOVER SÉ VELHA.

Built in the 12th century, Coimbra's Old Cathedral is one of Portugal's best-preserved Romanesque buildings. Its fortress-like appearance reflects a time when churches also served as defensive structures.

WALK ALONG THE MONDEGO RIVERSIDE.

The perfect place to slow down. Walk or cycle along the river, enjoy panoramic views of the University and watch the city come alive as the sun sets over Coimbra.





07

RELAX IN THE BOTANICAL GARDEN.

Founded in 1772, this peaceful garden is home to thousands of plant species from around the world.

LISTEN TO COIMBRA FADO.

A tradition unlike any other. Performed by students and graduates, Coimbra Fado is intimate, emotional and deeply connected to the city's identity.





09

VISIT QUINTA DAS LÁGRIMAS.

One of Portugal's most romantic places, forever linked to the legendary love story of Pedro and Inês.



IO

WATCH THE SUNSET AT PENEDO DA SAUDADE.

A favourite viewpoint
among students, offering
panoramic views across
Coimbra.



II

WANDER THROUGH THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN.

Lose yourself among cafés, bookshops, local stores and charming streets that reveal the city's everyday life.

TASTE COIMBRA.

Seven flavours you have to try.

Food in Coimbra reflects centuries of convent traditions, nearby farming communities and recipes passed down through generations. From comforting slow-cooked dishes to delicate pastries, these are the flavours that define the region.

Bacalhau à Moda de Coimbra

Coimbra's own take on Portugal's much-loved salt cod. A local speciality to look out for on restaurant menus.

Chanfana

Goat meat slow-cooked for hours in red wine, garlic and spices inside a traditional black clay pot. Rich, tender and deeply rooted in the villages surrounding Coimbra.

Leitão da Bairrada

Although originally from the nearby Bairrada region, roast suckling pig has become one of the area's signature dishes. Crispy skin, juicy meat and perfectly paired with sparkling wine.

Pastéis de Santa Clara

Created by the nuns of the Santa Clara convent, these delicate pastries are filled with a rich almond and egg-yolk cream, making them one of Coimbra's sweetest traditions.



Rabaçal Cheese

Produced in the nearby Serra do Sicó, this semi-hard sheep's cheese is known for its creamy texture and slightly spicy flavour.

Praxis Craft Beer

Brewed in Coimbra, Praxis craft beer celebrates the city's brewing heritage. Taste its different styles at the Praxis restaurant for a distinctly local experience.

Licor Beirão

Portugal's most famous herbal liqueur was born just outside Coimbra. Traditionally enjoyed after a meal, it combines aromatic herbs and spices in a recipe that remains a closely guarded secret.

WHERE TO TASTE COIMBRA.

Zé Manel dos Ossos

Best for: An authentic local experience

A Coimbra institution. Small, informal and full of character, it's the perfect place to enjoy traditional Portuguese dishes in a genuinely local atmosphere.

Don't miss: Chanfana and other regional specialities.

Fangas Maior

Best for: Modern Portuguese cuisine

A stylish restaurant that celebrates Portuguese flavours with a contemporary approach, excellent wines and beautifully presented dishes.

Ideal for: Dinner in the historic city centre.

O Refeitro

Best for: Dining in a historic pottery setting

Portuguese flavours in the Baixa, within Coimbra's historic ceramics workshops.

Instagram

O Cordel

Best for: Traditional flavours with a contemporary touch

Regional cooking, convent sweets and a terrace beside Convento São Francisco.

Website

Solar do Bacalhau

Best for: Portugal's iconic cod dishes

Dedicated almost entirely to bacalhau, this restaurant offers a wide variety of traditional recipes showcasing one of Portugal's most celebrated ingredients.

Terraço da Alta

Best for: Dinner with a view

Combining contemporary Portuguese cuisine with one of Coimbra's most beautiful panoramic terraces, it's an excellent choice for a relaxed evening overlooking the city.

O Palco

Best for: Fine dining

A Michelin Guide restaurant focused on seasonal ingredients and creative interpretations of Portuguese cuisine. Ideal for a special dinner or a memorable gastronomic experience.

A Praxis

Best for: Local craft beer

Discover Coimbra's brewing heritage over a meal paired with Praxis craft beers.

Instagram



For a sweet break

No visit to Coimbra is complete without trying its famous convent pastries.

Recommended stops:

Briosa Coimbra

Traditional pastries since 1955.

Nicola de Coimbra

Famous for handmade convent sweets and local delicacies.

Pastelaria Visconde

Convent and regional pastries in Coimbra's historic downtown.

Instagram

Café Santa Cruz

A historic café for coffee and a sweet break in the heart of Coimbra.

Website

EXPERIENCE COIMBRA LIKE A LOCAL.

It's not just about what you see, it's about what you experience.

Coimbra is best discovered slowly. Wander through its steep streets, pause in a centuries-old café, listen to Fado echoing through medieval courtyards and take in the atmosphere that has inspired generations of students, artists and explorers.

Listen to Coimbra Fado.

Unlike Lisbon's Fado, Coimbra Fado is deeply rooted in academic tradition. Usually performed by students or former students dressed in the traditional black cape, it is intimate, emotional and often sung at night in historic squares and courtyards.

Recommended venues

- Fado ao Centro
- À Capella
- Café Santa Cruz
(special performances)

Enjoy a coffee like a local

Coffee culture is part of everyday life in Coimbra.

Order a bica, take a seat on a terrace and watch the city go by.

Where to go

- Café Santa Cruz
- Café Académico
- A Brasileira

Watch the sunset

Few places are better to end the day than overlooking Coimbra as the sun sets.

Best viewpoints

- Penedo da Saudade
- University Terrace
- Pedro e Inês Footbridge

Wander without a map

The real charm of Coimbra isn't only found in its landmarks.

Explore the narrow streets of the Alta and Baixa districts, discover hidden stairways, browse independent bookshops and enjoy the city's relaxed rhythm.





HIDDEN GEMS.

Look beyond the landmarks.

Some of Coimbra's most memorable places are often overlooked by first-time visitors.

Jardim da Manga

A peaceful Renaissance garden tucked away behind Santa Cruz Monastery. One of the city's most photogenic hidden corners.

Arco de Almedina

The last remaining gate of Coimbra's medieval walls and the historic entrance to the old city.

Penedo da Saudade

A quiet garden and viewpoint filled with poems carved into stone, long associated with generations of university students.

Livraria Almedina

One of Portugal's best-known bookshops and a perfect stop for anyone interested in literature, history or architecture.



QUICK CONVERSATION GUIDE.

A few Portuguese words go a long way.

English	Portuguese
Hello	Olá
Good morning	Bom dia
Good afternoon	Boa tarde
Good evening	Boa noite
Please	Por favor
Thank you	Obrigado / Obrigada
You're welcome	De nada
Excuse me	Com licença
Sorry	Desculpe
Yes	Sim
No	Não
Do you speak English?	Fala inglês?
Where is the University?	Onde fica a Universidade?
How much is this?	Quanto custa?
One coffee, please.	Um café, por favor.
Cheers!	Saúde!
Goodbye	Adeus

USEFUL INFORMATION.

Before you go.

Currency - Euro (€)

Language - Portuguese

Emergency - 112

Payments

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted, although it's useful to carry some cash for smaller cafés or shops.

Getting around

The historic centre is best explored on foot. Expect steep streets and comfortable shoes are highly recommended.

Transport

Uber, Bolt and taxis are available throughout the city.

Weather in October

Average temperatures range between 15°C and 23°C, making it an ideal time to explore Coimbra.

Nearest airport

Porto (OPO) – approx. 1h30 by car.

HOTELS

Three and four star hotels identified in Coimbra.

Distances are measured from Convento São Francisco (the venue for GLEX Ignition)

Event partner discounts: see page 32.

4 - star hotels

Casa dos Aromas		- 180 m
Praxis CBR Boutique Hotel		- 850 m
Palácio São Silvestre Boutique Hotel		- 11,3 km
Sapientia Boutique Hotel	12% OFF	- 1,2 km
NH Coimbra Dona Inês		- 2,0 km
Ibn Arrik		- 1,9 km
Hotel Coimbra Aeminium		- 3,0 km
Hotel Quinta das Lágrimas		- 700 m
Hotel Vila Galé Coimbra	10% OFF	- 1,9 km
Stay Hotel Coimbra Centro		- 1,4 km
Tivoli Coimbra		- 1,8 km

3 - star hotels

Hotel Mondego		- 1,1 km
Hotel Vitória	5% OFF	- 1 km
Hotel Oslo	10% OFF	- 1,1 km
Hotel Bragança		- 1,1 km
Hotel D. Luís		- 2,5 km
Hotel Astória		- 900 m

PARTNER OFFERS.

Special conditions for GLEX Ignition 2026

Hotel Oslo

10%

10% off bookings made through the hotel's website.

Promotional code: LOVECOIMBRA

Hotel Vitória

5%

5% off the standard rate available at the time of enquiry, for direct bookings through the hotel's website, by email, telephone or at reception.

Vila Galé Coimbra

10%

10% off the best available rate for bookings made directly on the Vila Galé website.

Promotional code: GLEXIgnition

Not valid for non-refundable rates.

Sapientia Boutique Hotel

12%

12% off the rate available on the hotel's website, corresponding to the best rate at the time of your search. Bookings must be made through the hotel's website. This offer cannot be combined with other promotions.

Airport Shuttle

Airport transfers to and from Coimbra. GLEX Ignition 2026 participants can benefit from a discount on airport transfers with Airport Shuttle.

Discount voucher: GLEXSIC26

www.airportshuttle.pt