



## 2 days in Coimbra itinerary

What to do and see in **2 days in Coimbra**, Portugal?

With two days in Coimbra, you'll have time to see the famous landmarks, like the gorgeous university library, and also enjoy charming urban nature, Portuguese music, and more of the things that make Coimbra unique.

Use this 2-day Coimbra Itinerary to organise your trip and make the most out of your time in Coimbra. It's compact and perfect for a short city break.

### Things to do in Coimbra in 2 days

This itinerary matches Coimbra's relaxed pace. It's packed with activities but without the rush of a big city. Most attractions in Coimbra don't open until about 10 am, so you can start your days late with a long breakfast.

#### Coimbra itinerary day 1

##### The old town

Start the day in the **old town square**, Largo da Portagem. It has lovely views of the river and it's a good starting point for a stroll in the historic centre.

From there, continue into the old town shopping streets – Rua Ferreira Borges and Rua Visconde da Luz.



There are many cafes, restaurants, small local shops (not chain stores!), and souvenir shops with those beautiful Portuguese tiles printed on just about anything.

There are street musicians along this street and a lively atmosphere.

### **Some points of interest in this area:**

- Santa Cruz Church – worth seeing inside, especially for the tiles and the organ.
- Praça do Comércio – another shopping street with more restaurants and local shops.
- Edifício Chiado – the city museum.

You'll easily find a place for brunch or lunch on any of these streets.

### **The University of Coimbra**

From the old town, go up to the **University of Coimbra**.

On foot, you pass through the old Barbican Gate and from there it's a steep uphill climb.

You can either make many stops along the way, or take a bus or a taxi instead.

The university, especially its gorgeous old library, is the most famous attraction in Coimbra.

I recommend you see the university on a [guided tour](#).



I took a tour because I realised there was a lot to see inside the university complex and didn't want to miss out on anything. I felt the tour made the experience deeper and more meaningful.

### **What to see at the University of Coimbra:**

- The Baroque Library (Biblioteca Joanina). It's stunning inside and you need a time slot to enter (included in the tour).
- The Chapel of St. Miguel, next to the library, another beautiful interior.
- The Palace of Schools, which was the old royal palace that later became part of the university.
- The Science Museum. featuring collections of old scientific equipment and the very quirky Cabinet of Curiosities.

You can see everything (the tours of the old buildings plus the Science Museum) in about 2 hours.

After the university tour, visit the **Botanic Gardens** right next to the campus.

They're beautiful and perfect for a relaxing stroll.

### **A fado show and dinner**

Next, head back downhill towards the old town. Every day at 6pm there's a **fado concert at [Fado ao Centro](#)** which I warmly recommend.

Fado is a traditional Portuguese folk music style and Coimbra fado is the unique local version of it.

Fado ao Centro is the best place to learn about fado, because the show includes an introduction in English on fado history and traditions.



Coimbra fado music is performed by a singer with two guitar players. The songs are soulful, nostalgic, melancholic.

The singer at the show I went to explained (in English) in between songs what the song was about and shared some of the lyrics.

So you don't just enjoy the beautiful music, you also learn a lot in just under an hour.

After the show, you can go for dinner at any of the restaurants nearby. Fernandes Tomás Street, a narrow street very close to the concert venue with many nice places to eat.

## Coimbra itinerary day 2

On the second day in Porto you'll see the other side of the river.

### Boat trip

Walk from the old town square (Largo da Portagem) towards the city park (Parque da Cidade Manuel Braga). It's a lovely walk along the river, take in the views.

Within about 5 minutes you'll reach the first staircase, the departure point for the [traditional boat trip](#) on the Mondego River. I recommend you book it in advance for the early trip before noon.

It's a relaxing way to start the day and you'll get to see the city from a different perspective.

The boat tour takes about an hour, bringing you back to the riverside just in time for lunch.



There are a few restaurants as you go down the stairs from the spot where you took the boat ride. All of them have menus in English and beautiful river views.

If you're not ready for lunch yet, those restaurants are great for drinks or snacks by the river too. There are more places to eat on the other side of the river.

Head back in the direction of the main square, and when you reach the **Santa Clara Bridge**, cross to the other side.

## **Portugal dos Pequenitos**

The first attraction on this side is [Portugal dos Pequenitos](#): a miniature park with impressive small scale versions of Portuguese landmarks.

It was originally designed to teach children about Portuguese architecture, but these days it's also an attraction for grown ups (I saw more adults than kids when I visited).

I think adults would appreciate the craftsmanship better, and also enjoy the exhibitions around the park which aren't really designed for kids.

The landmarks include iconic buildings such as Belém Tower, Batalha Monastery, Sanctuary of Fátima, Almourol Castle, and of course, the University of Coimbra.

Most of the buildings in this spacious park are not tiny miniatures. You can walk inside them. There are exhibitions inside about history, culture, nature, and so many other things related to Portugal that I frankly never knew about.

A large part of this park is dedicated to the Portuguese Maritime Exploration leading to colonialism, but it's handled in a respectful way and is mainly educational.



## Jardins da Quinta das Lágrimas

When you leave [Portugal dos Pequenitos](#), you're just a few minutes walk away from a magical garden.

**Jardins da Quinta das Lágrimas**, a lush garden linked to Portugal's most famous legend, the tragic love story of Pedro and Inês.

It's a picturesque and truly relaxing walk. You can easily spend 20-30 minutes there, immersing yourself in the beauty.

To enter this garden, go to the adjacent golf club, where you pay a small admission fee and pick up a map of the garden.

## Santa Clara

This side of the river is referred to as Santa Clara, which is also the name of the bridge you crossed earlier.

That's because of the Santa Clara Monasteries. There are two of them, the old and the new.

The **Old Monastery of Santa Clara** was destroyed many times by floods, so these days what's left of it is mainly ruins which you can visit.

The **New Monastery of Santa Clara** was built up on the top of the hill to avoid the same predicament.

You can climb up to see it. The climb isn't too steep but you can always take breaks along the way. That's the only climb in today's itinerary.

There's a small entry fee and a handy audio guide. The church has the traditional lavish decorations of Portuguese churches.



There are also great views of the city from above when you stand in the courtyard, it's an excellent view point and a great spot for taking pictures.

## Dinner and evening entertainment

After visiting Santa Clara, go back down the hill.

At this point you can head back to the old town, but you also can have your dinner and evening entertainment on this side of the river.

There are many **places to eat on Av. João das Regras**, the street that runs directly from the bridge.

For entertainment, check the agenda at **Convento São Francisco** that has top-quality music shows (as well as theatre and stand-up, if you understand Portuguese).

As an alternative, check what's on at **Salão Brazil** (back in the old town on the other side of the river), a music bar with great live music shows.

This concludes this 2 days in Coimbra itinerary, covering all the main highlights and a bit beyond.

## What to book ahead for 2 days in Coimbra

For your peace of mind, book some of the activities in this guide at least 48 hours in advance:

- [University tour](#)
- [Fado concert](#)
- [Boat trip](#)
- [Portugal dos Pequenitos](#)



You can book them all in one go (instead of separate transactions) by clicking “add to cart”. They come with free cancellation 24 hours in advance.

As for Santa Clara and Jardins da Quinta das Lágrimas, you can pay their admission fees at the entrance.

## Staying for more than 2 days in Coimbra

If you’d like to stay in Coimbra for more than two days, you can use it as a base for day trips in the area without changing hotels.

Some easy day trips from Coimbra include:

- [Conímbriga](#)
- [Aveiro](#)
- Figueira da Foz

## 2 days in Coimbra – FAQ

### Where to stay in Coimbra?

Stay in or near the old town, it’s a non-hilly part of the city and a short taxi ride to the Coimbra-B railway station or to the central bus station.

Hotels around the old town in Coimbra:

[Cbr Boutique Hotel](#)

[Pharmacia GuestHouse](#)

[Hotel Oslo Coimbra](#)

### Are 2 days in Coimbra enough?

Yes, you can see Coimbra in 2 days and cover the main highlights without rushing.



## How to get to Coimbra?

Reach Coimbra by train or bus from Lisbon / Lisbon Airport, Porto, and other cities in Portugal.

See my complete guide on [how to get to Coimbra](#) for public transport options.

## What's the best time to visit Coimbra?

The best time to visit Coimbra is when the weather is comfortable, namely in the spring (March – May) or in the autumn (September – October).

For the full guide and the most current information, visit [Bright Nomad](#)

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