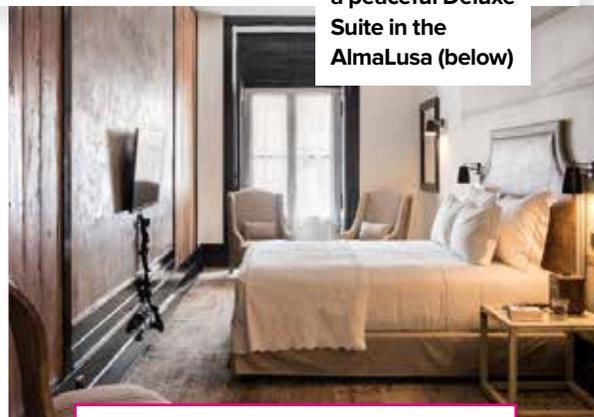




AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado is set in an attractive square (above); a peaceful Deluxe Suite in the AlmaLusa (below)



## 3 LISBON FOR FOODIES

I can see why Lisbon has become the hottest European city to visit this year. The ornate pastel coloured buildings look beautiful in the sunshine, which is plentiful because Lisbon gets more sun than anywhere else in Europe. Plus the restaurant scene is booming – there are six one Michelin star restaurants in the city and one with two (Belcanto in Chiado, visit [belcanto.pt/en](http://belcanto.pt/en)).

One of the best ways to sample the best food the city has to offer is in the Time Out market ([timeoutmarket.com/en/](http://timeoutmarket.com/en/)). Housed in an original market hall in the Cais do Sodre neighbourhood opposite the train station (there are still meat, fish and flower sellers down one side), the magazine's journalists and critics have chosen the best pizza, sushi, steaks and bacalao in the city bringing them together under the same roof (and for very reasonable prices).

When Rick Stein spent a long weekend in Lisbon for last year's TV series of the same name, he made a pilgrimage to the Pasteis de Belem ([pasteisdebelem.pt](http://pasteisdebelem.pt)). This traditional bakery, dating back to 1837, is rumoured to be the best place in the world to have traditional Portuguese Pasteis de Nata (those deliciously flaky custard tarts). Following in Rick's

footsteps I fought through the crowds to sample the secret recipe (they make over 16,000 a day using it) and found the rumours to be true – these heavenly tarts are well worth the airfare.

We made another foodie pilgrimage to the Conserveira de Lisboa ([conserveiradelisboa.pt](http://conserveiradelisboa.pt)) a traditional grocer shop specialising entirely in tinned fish (another Portuguese favourite). The brands it stocks (including Tricana) are far superior to the tourist tins sold stamped with your birth date in the main shopping street (which I also succumbed to!). Fill your suitcase and bring a selection home.

One of the best hotel openings last year was the AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado, a wonderful boutique hotel in the historic Praca do Municipio where Lisbon's Royal Palace once stood. Rooms are stylishly decorated with modern prints and monochrome bathrooms. Ask for one of the suites with a balcony overlooking the square on the first floor. Quiet and discreet, nothing is too much trouble for the friendly staff and it's worth eating in Delphina, the hotel restaurant. Try the local Açordas – a delicious bread stew (€14, approx. £12) washed down with some green wine, another Portuguese speciality. *By Emma Justice*

✦ **THE COST:** Rooms at AlmaLusa Baixa/Chiado ([almalusahotels.com](http://almalusahotels.com)) start from €145 (approx. £124) per night, including breakfast. To celebrate the opening of the new MAAT museum (see below), until 15 March the hotel is offering guests who book online with the code FRIEND free entry to MAAT (a 10-minute drive away), a 10% discount on their room booking and an additional 20% discount on meals at the hotel's Delphina restaurant. Monarch ([monarch.co.uk](http://monarch.co.uk)), the world's most punctual low cost carrier in 2016, flies to Lisbon from Birmingham, London Gatwick and Manchester with fares, including taxes, from £35 one way (£61 return).

✦ **INSIDER TIP:** Visit Lisbon's answer to the Tate Modern – the newly opened MAAT ([maat.pt/en](http://maat.pt/en)), the museum of Art, Architecture and Technology.



The futuristic MAAT museum is Lisbon's latest attraction