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[TOP 5 Capital City Breaks For Summer!](#)

By Barbara L. Nelson – Content Writer

Need a short getaway while summer is winding down. Why not try one of these five capital city breaks? One of the best ways to satisfy that never-ending need for travel is to take shorter trips called city breaks. This style of exploring a destination is gaining popularity, and it's not a surprise. Such breaks are really straightforward to plan and can often be fit into a busy schedule. They're also wonderful options for travelling on a budget, especially if you can find and take advantage of available deals and discounts. Taking a city break enables you to explore the city or region uniquely, without going too far or sacrificing too much time. Plus, you can usually get a direct flight to these capital cities, which further saves you time!

1. Lisbon



Portugal is becoming an ever more popular spot for vacationers, digital nomads and those seeking to live an off-the-grid lifestyle. But its capital city is also a great escape for a weekend! [Lisbon](#) is the largest city full of small winding streets, colourful buildings, beautiful and monumental pearls of architecture, iconic yellow trams and romantic fado music. It is filled with an extraordinary atmosphere. It is simply a dream town for a great weekend!

The postcard-worthy views, food that will take your breath away and places to visit that are like anything else in the whole wide world. If you are looking for a place to see and enjoy both visually and culinary, the capital of Portugal is a perfect place for you. Lisbon awaits!

Here are some Lisbon highlights not to miss.

Belém

The historic waterfront is one of the most important districts in Lisbon. Not only is the place where the city reaches the sea, but also home to some of the most famous and significant landmarks.

What can you see in Belém? For example, the port which remembers Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus while they were sailing and discovering new parts of the world. Another thing is the Belém Palace, the home of Portugal's president. Before, it was home to every monarch, but since Portugal established its republic, the presidents also began living there.

Another must see in Belém is the Belém Tower. What looks like a tiny castle floats in the water is fort that used to serve as the first line of defence for Lisbon's port. People can go inside and see the interiors of this beautiful building named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Tram 28

Lisbon's equivalent of yellow cabs and red double-deckers, tram 28 is the most popular ride in the whole city. It takes tourists through the most important places of Lisbon. While on the ride, you will get a glimpse of St. George's Castle, Alfama, etc. Also, you will pass by

Graça, Baixa and Bairro Alto.

And remember, since the tram ride is one of the most popular tourist attractions, it will surely be crowded. If you don't want to wait long, try to get there early in the day.

Alfama

The hilly neighbourhood in Lisbon is worth seeing, whether you take the tram or walk around and treat it like a workout. What's so picturesque about Alfama? The whole district dates back to the Middle Ages. You can see it in every single stone of the cobblestone streets. Additionally, the place is full of small, climatic restaurants, tiny shops and traditional Fado clubs.

People say that if you really want to get to know Lisbon, go to Alfama. Appreciate the street art, let the atmosphere sink in and take some time to get lost in the district. Please don't rush through it. Spend a day there and breathe in the climate of this amazing place. Grab a drink, sit for a coffee, eat something and ditch the map. You won't need it.

Santa Justa Elevator

If you like the great views from the reasonable height – add Santa Justa Elevator to your bucket list for Lisbon. Built in the 19th century, since its creation, it has been a landmark for people to use as a viewing point in the city. It used steam power to power itself and for the elevator to work.

Besides being a place to charm you with the picturesque panorama of the city, Santa Justa Elevator is also used by the citizens as a shortcut between two hilly parts of the city. Interesting fact for those interested in art and architecture – the whole building was designed by Raoul Mesnier du Ponsard, who took his lessons from the Parisian Eiffel Tower's designer – Gustave Eiffel. Also check out the Santa Justa Elevator let its gothic glamour sink into you.

St. George's Castle

The old fortress of the Romans, Visigoths and Moors will give you a piece of historical knowledge and an amazing observation deck in Alfama – St. George's Castle. When the first Portuguese king took it, Afonso Henriques, it was already a palace.

Because of its charm and beauty, luckily, most of the relics, including the old cannons, towers and a camera obscura, have stayed in close to perfect condition. If you have some time to spare after visiting the castle, there are also gardens and monuments around it. Example? The archaeological museum. Remember about the hills, though! Lisbon is a city that mostly consists of hills, so take comfortable shoes before reaching the castle. It is located in one of the highest spots in the whole city.

Food

Of course, when in Portugal, you cannot forget about Portuguese food. It is a true feast for your stomach. As a city with a port and sea access, you can easily find some fresh seafood. For example, Ameijoas and Bulhao Pato! A traditional Portuguese dish consisting of cooked clams is usually served as an appetiser. However, despite the sea access, Portugal is a country of meat, the heavier. Beef stews, cooked meat, fried meat – everything! The country is full of meat flavours; here are some examples. Rojoes a Moda Do Minho – pork loin cooked in the same pig's lard, Feijoada Transmontana – bean stew with pieces of shredded meat and Cozido a Portuguesa – the king of all meat stews.

Search now for you [Lisbon stay](#).

2. Prague



[Prague](#), the capital and the largest city of the Czech Republic, is currently the most famous city in Central Europe among tourists. Located in the country's North West, it is home to over 1.2 million people. By many considered the most beautiful city in Europe, it is in the top 6 of the continent's most visited cities. During its 1000+ years of existence, Prague was always one of the most important cities in Central Europe. The city has plenty to offer to its visitors. The most famous landscapes in Prague are:

The Charles Bridge

It is the oldest and the most recognisable bridge in Prague, connecting the Old Town with the Mala Strana district. Built in 1357, it has over 600 meters in length. It was built in the gothic style, but later 30 baroque sculptures were erected on the balustrade, leaving a wonderful contrast and an incredible sensation for anybody visiting it. Tip – try seeing the bridge at different times of the day to see the bridge in its beauty.

Prague Castle

Not only is it absolutely spectacular, but according to the Guinness Book of Records, Prague Castle is the largest ancient castle in the world. Built in the 9th century, the complex is also an official residence of the President of the Czech Republic. Due to its long life, it represents nearly every architectural style. It is located in the Hradčany neighbourhood.

The Old Town

The Old Town of Prague is surely one of the most beautiful in Europe. Built in the 10th century, 1992, it is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its central part is the Staromestske Namesti – an old market. The impressive gothic Powder Tower separates the Old Town from the New Town. Surrounded by churches and houses from the past centuries, it can leave anybody breathless. One of its main attractions is the astronomical clock Orloj. This 600-year-old clock still shows the exact time and position of the celestial bodies in the sky. The cute narrow streets and lovely houses make the Old Town a wonderful place to see.

Dancing House

Built in the 90s in the style known as deconstructivism, it sets a contrast within the gothic, baroque and art-nouveau buildings that the city is known for. The building's wicked shape is supposed to reflect two people dancing, and the sensation was achieved using nearly 100 concrete panels, each of a different form. On the top of the building is a large twisted structure of metal nicknamed Medusa.

But Prague is not only the buildings. The city is a home to many wonderful museums and galleries as well as theatres and cinemas. And for the food lovers? Well you will surely not be disappointed after visiting Prague. Koprovka, Pečená kachna, Guláš and Bramboráky are only a few off the long list of the country's delicacies. And if you're brave enough (and an adult!) you have to try absinthe when in Prague since it is one the most popular places in the world to buy and drink it.

Prague is a wonderful place, and a must-see spot on the map of Europe. Definitely give it a try and you will not be disappointed! Search now for your [stay in Prague](#).

3. Edinburgh



The capital of Scotland is a frequent destination for the best city breaks and for good reason. [Edinburgh](#) offers a wide array of museums and galleries that showcase Scotland's history and art. One of the most noticeable ones includes the National Museum of Scotland, the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, the National War Museum, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and many others. Must-see attractions include Edinburgh Castle, which was named the top UK Heritage Attraction by the British Travel Awards in 2019.

Arthur's Seat

Scottish volcanoes? Yes, Scotland has volcanoes! However, the ones in the [Edinburgh](#) area are over 350 million years old and are now considered extinct. Because of the fact that they will not blow up again, some of them are treated like a hill on which you can build a castle. If you want to climb a volcano and be sure to get a magnificent view of the whole city, take a hike on Arthur's Seat. It is located just over a mile from Edinburgh

Castle. Moreover, the hill is one of Edinburgh's symbols. It is located in the park, close to the city centre. If you like to go somewhere to appreciate nature, one of the volcanic hills is a great choice.

Whisky Tour

Scotch whisky is one of the most popular alcohols in the world. Fun fact, if you see a bottle with "Whisky" on it, it means that it's a Scotch. The name is reserved as the one for this type of alcohol coming specifically from Scotland. Whisky-type alcohol from other parts of the world is usually referred to as "Whiskey." So, since whisky is a special Scotch liquor, there is a possibility of booking a Whisky Tour while in Edinburgh. Not only will you see how this liquor is mixed and made, but you will also see the collection of whiskies made there and try three-four different types of this alcohol. This is especially recommended for people interested in getting to know a little more about the nuances of the whisky industry.

Edinburgh Castle

Located on one of the hills near the Old Town, it brings thousands of tourists yearly. From a historical point of view, the oldest part of the castle, St Margaret's Chapel, comes from the 12th century. However, the whole castle has been extended until the 16th century. The Scottish National War Memorial also appeared in the castle after the First World War. From the touristic point of view, what can you see there? Besides the old chapels and a palace, you will be able to see the oldest Crown jewels in the British Isles, Mons Meg, as well as the National War Memorial and the Stone of Destiny. If you are interested in history, the castle will be a great choice.

Camera Obscura

The building from the outside doesn't necessarily bring to mind the most modern museum because it is located in the old tower in the Old Town. Before it was a museum, the tower was an observatory and then a science museum throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Right now, the place offers visitors a virtual trip through Edinburgh along with a mirror maze, numerous optical illusions, colour illusions, puzzles and a vortex tunnel. Being more interactive proves that the city of Edinburgh will make everyone happy even if the history is not a part of your interest.

Scott Monument

The Scott Monument, built to honour one of the most popular Scottish novelists, Sir Walter Scott, is a Victorian gothic work of art. The tower, because that is actually what the monument looks like, is over 60 metres tall. Serving not only as a visual work of art, but it is also a viewing point for the tourists to enjoy the beautiful views of Edinburgh. Another fact worth mentioning is that the whole monument is covered with very detailed sandstone figures and figurines. They represent Scots that impacted the country's history, for example, Mary Queen of Scots, Lord Byron and King James V. The total number of figurines is 96, with 93 people, two dogs and a pig.

Scottish National Galleries

The Scottish National Gallery will surely match your preferences, no matter which historical period is your favourite. While the building is a magnificent landmark itself, it's the art collection that will awe you. This complex of museums has over 90,000 artworks in its exhibitions and storage, all covering different artistic and historical periods. The complex consists of the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and National Galleries of Modern Art (Modern One and Modern Two). It is recommended to take at least a day

to see everything these places offer, as they all have artworks known globally. If you are an artistic soul, I don't think you need anything else to convince you this place is 100% worth checking out.

Old Town

Old Town of Edinburgh is the last one on the list of places to visit in Scotland's beautiful capital. It is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site along with the New Town. You find there: Old College of the University of Edinburgh, St Giles' Cathedral, Scottish Parliament and the National Museum of Scotland.

The atmosphere and the feeling of history coming from every wall and street make it Edinburgh a superb city break choice.

Search for your [stay in Edinburgh](#).

4. London



Our list of the best capital city breaks in Europe would not be complete without the capital of England. A few days will likely not be enough to visit all the attractions this wonderful city offers, but you can at least see the most famous places—like the Tower of [London](#), Trafalgar Square, London Eye, Big Ben, Shakespeare's Globe, or many others. Remember, [London](#) is filled with free museums and other attractions, making the city the perfect city break for history and culture lovers.

Most Popular Places

Big Ben is, without a doubt, London's most popular symbol. The magnificent clock tower and the Parliament building are dear to the Brits, and one can understand why. Another place that everyone has to see in London is, for sure, Buckingham Palace. Mycroft Holmes once said that it is the heart of a British Nation, and he was not mistaken.

Greenwich

There are a few less popular places that are still very much worth visiting. First of them – is Greenwich, with its Royal Observatory and the meridian. The beauty of the town can steal your heart with its small streets with short buildings, numerous cafes, little shops and restaurants. The atmosphere can be engaging and surprising, especially because

the train ride from the London centre to this small town takes about 20 minutes. If you are looking for a quieter place with more privacy than London's central streets, you should spend a couple of hours in Greenwich.

Baker Street

Baker Street is elementary, my dear Watson! The street famous for its genius detective is a must-see for a geek like yours truly. Whether you are a fan of one of the TV shows or movies, or you love Arthur Conan Doyle's original books, this street is for you. With the museum dedicated to the famous Sherlock Holmes and a souvenir shop next door, you will be more than satisfied. Don't be surprised if you see the line outside the museum. Every person visiting the museum has a chance to take a picture with a famous detective's hat outside his Baker Street apartment. You can probably imagine that rarely ever someone not taking that chance. And, if you want something to take home, you must visit the souvenir shop. Be careful! It can be a real trap for a huge Sherlock Holmes fan.

Hyde Park

Who wouldn't love to have such a place where you can say simply anything that's on your mind? Historically, Hyde Park was exactly such a place. Created in the 16th century, it was a place for King's hunting trips. Then, it was opened to public, as the royalty was hosting the duels and May Day parades. In the 19th century, it became a spot of free speech and, as a result, the most popular spot for protests. Right now, it is the biggest of four Royal Gardens, but what you may visually know it from is the beautiful Grand Entrance. The gate has been the official Hyde Park entrance since the 19th century and is still there.

Museums

Whether you are a fan of science, music or anything else, London has got you covered. It is recommended giving yourself at least a full day for the London museums. The Museum of Natural History can teach you all about plants, animals and nature. The most impressive thing is the big dinosaur skeleton by one of the entrances and the general look of the museum. Maybe you are not a fan of nature? If so, the Science Museum may interest you. It's where you will learn about everything from the history of industrial machines to how the human brain works. Lastly, the Victoria and Albert's Museum is worth seeing as it is the largest art design museum in the world.

Tate Modern

If you like modern art, the Tate Modern is the one place you mustn't miss. The gallery has five levels and is one of the biggest contemporary art centres in the world. Some of the exhibitions are free to enter, and they are more than enough to find out if that place is something you want. The most amazing is the atmosphere the streets surrounding the gallery give you. It is certainly a different kind of vibe than the one you have when you walk around the old streets of London. After visiting Tate, you can easily find a restaurant or a cafe to sit in and get some rest. Try finding a place that overlooks Tate Modern, as the building is a treat to the eyes.

Click [here](#) and find your dream hotel in the amazing city that London indeed is.

5. Berlin



The capital city of Germany is the second most populous city in the European Union. One of the most developed but also battling ideologies throughout history. [Berlin](#) certainly is a special place on the European map. Here are just some highlights.

Monuments

You cannot visit Berlin and not see the city's most iconic monuments. You can start with Brandenburg Gate. Built in the XVIII century and inspired by the Acropolis entrance in Athens, it has been a backdrop of the city's history. Right now, it represents German unity. Another thing to see is the Reichstag – the Building of the Parliament. Built in the XIX century, it hadn't been functioning until 1999 after the bombing during Second World War. The last two monuments are Charlottenburg Palace and Berlin State Opera. The first one, an ornate palace, a summer residence for royalty, now serves as the biggest palace in Berlin and a very popular place for tourists. The second one recently reopened, is a German national opera. Enchanting the tourists and locals with its beautiful architecture and breathtaking shows is a place one mustn't skip.

Berlin Wall

Throughout the ages, Berlin has gone through quite a lot. Thirty Years' War in XVII Century, Second World War and afterwards, the division wall made by the Soviets. Berlin Wall, as it was called, is one of the most popular symbols of the Cold War. The ruins of the Berlin Wall are still available to see in the city. I recommend especially the one nicknamed East Side Gallery. It is a remaining piece of the Berlin Wall that was moved to where the artists could cover it with murals. It shows the time of change and people's hope for better and more peaceful times. The most popular one is called "Fraternal Kiss." It reproduces a famous photo of Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker in an embrace. Another historically important to Berlin places – is Berliner Mauerweg (the road that follows the path of the Wall's patrols).

Museums

You are probably familiar with choosing which museums to see because each one is in a different part of the city. In Berlin, you don't have to worry about it. All the most important museums are located in one place – Museum Island. Because Berlin is a city with many islands, it's no surprise that the city's centre is also divided by them. One of these islands,

especially it's northern part, is covered with internationally important museums. Examples? Bode Museum, Pergamon Museum and Altes Museum, to name a few. Together, they cover the art and remains of the whole world's history. Ancient Greece, and Ancient Egypt, followed by the art remains of the medieval times and everything after, are found within this small island's borders. If you like history and art, you mustn't skip them.

Berlin Zoo

The Zoological Garden of Berlin is superb. The oldest zoo in Germany brings tourists and citizen families together in one place. With Elephant Gate by the zoo's entrance, it is a zoo that has the biggest number of animal species in the whole world! An amazing place to spend a day and learn new facts about the animals you haven't seen anywhere else, walk through the biggest aquarium in the world or appreciate the beauty of this garden. Located in the city centre, it will not require a long journey to get there, so you will certainly have the strength to go around the zoo and have a fabulous day.

The Fernsehturm

Also known as the Television Tower, it is the tallest building in the whole city and the second tallest building in the EU. One of the symbols of the city, easy to spot on the panorama of the city with its characteristic shape, is another must-see of Berlin. Originally opened in 1969, it underwent many renovations during the '90s. Now, it is where the television stations broadcast their programmes. Another function of the Television Tower is an observing deck. Its magnificent height makes it possible for tourists to see the whole city of Berlin along with the monuments, bridges, islands and parks.

Parks, bridges and boat trips

Berlin is known to have over 40% of the city covered with parks and trees. Almost every island has its parks, where families spend quality time together. What's interesting about Berlin's topography is that Berlin has more bridges than Venice, the most popular island city in the world. Why isn't Berlin known for it? The size of Berlin is much bigger than Venice, so the number of islands and bridges is not that visible to the locals. However, you can use the city's characteristics and book a boat trip. The number of river canals within the city's borders allows the tourists to spend hours on the boats and lets the beautiful atmosphere of this magnificent place sink in.

As you can see, Berlin is full of surprises and if you go there. This combination of old and new, traditional and modern, urban and nature-focused is something rarely seen in other European capitals.

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