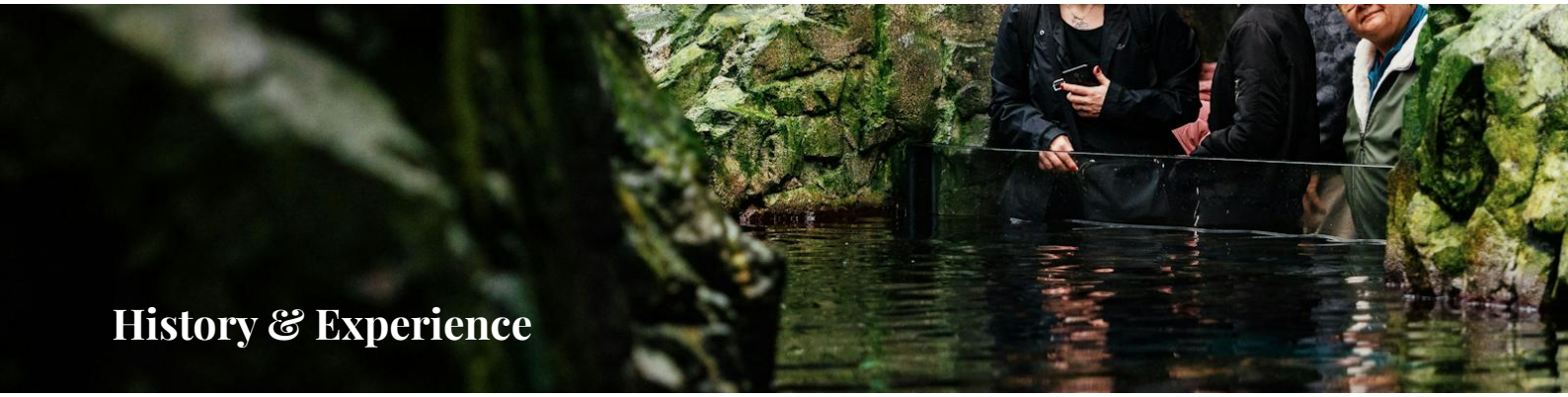


OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

Lisbon Oceanarium

Lisbon · From 25€

https://oceanario.visit-tickets.com/en/ · Skip-the-Line Tickets & Official Prices



History & Experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Expo Vision to Marine Icon

GOOGLE 4.7 ★★★★★ 102 457 reviews

TIQETS 4.7 ★★★★★ 7 322 reviews

The Lisbon Oceanarium stands as a monumental testament to human ingenuity and marine conservation, born from the ambitious vision of **Expo '98**. Conceived by renowned architect Peter Chermayeff, the structure was designed not merely as an aquarium but as a symbolic bridge between humanity and the ocean. Construction began in 1994 on a reclaimed port area, requiring engineers to drive **180 massive pillars** into the seabed to support the building's unique floating appearance. This architectural marvel, often described as a giant spider resting on water, was intended to raise awareness about the fragility of marine ecosystems during a global exposition themed around the future of our oceans.

The opening in 1998 marked a significant milestone for Lisbon, transforming the Parque das Nações district into a modern hub of culture and leisure. The aquarium quickly became the centerpiece of the Expo, attracting millions of visitors who were captivated by its innovative design and diverse habitats. A particularly heartwarming sign of success occurred just two weeks before the official launch, when a pair of otters gave birth to a pup, demonstrating that the animals had adapted perfectly to their new artificial environment. This event symbolized the harmony between technology and nature that the project aimed to achieve.

Since its inception, the Oceanarium has evolved from a temporary exhibition pavilion into a permanent scientific and educational institution. It now houses approximately **15,000 specimens** representing over 250 species, making it one of the largest aquariums in Europe. The facility continues to expand its mission beyond entertainment, focusing heavily on research, breeding programs for endangered species, and public education. In 2004, a room was renamed in tribute to poet Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, further cementing the site's cultural significance within Portuguese heritage.

Today, the Oceanarium remains a beacon of marine biodiversity, constantly updating its exhibits to reflect current ecological challenges. Recent additions include immersive temporary exhibitions like "Monsters of the Sea," which explore prehistoric giants through life-sized models. The institution's commitment to conservation is evident in its Survival Center for Species, dedicated to protecting marine life. As Lisbon's most visited attraction, it serves as both a gateway to understanding our planet's oceans and a reminder of our responsibility to preserve them for future generations.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping onto the bridge leading to the main structure, visitors are immediately struck by the sheer scale and futuristic elegance of the architecture. The building seems to hover above the artificial lake, creating a sense of anticipation before even entering the cool, dimly lit interior. As you cross the threshold, the ambient sound of flowing water and the gentle hum of filtration systems create an atmospheric soundscape that instantly transports you away from the bustling city outside. The air carries a faint, clean scent of salt, enhancing the sensory immersion before you even see the first tank.

The journey begins with a gradual descent into the world beneath the waves, where light filters through vast panes of glass, illuminating schools of fish in mesmerizing patterns. The central basin dominates the space, offering a breathtaking view of sharks and rays gliding effortlessly through **5,000 cubic meters** of water. From the upper gallery, the perspective shifts dramatically, allowing visitors to look down upon this underwater metropolis from above, witnessing the complex dance of marine life from a bird's-eye view. It is a moment of awe, where the boundary between observer and observed dissolves, leaving only the profound beauty of the ocean.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

Parque das Nações · Metro: Oriente (Red Line) or Oriente Station (Train).

OPENING HOURS

Hours vary by season and school holidays. Check strictly on the official website before coming.

PRICES

Free entry for children depending on age (check variants). Discounts may apply.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 2h to 3h minimum for a complete visit including the 5 ecosystems and sufficient time to observe the central basin wildlife without rushing.

PHOTOS

Personal photography is allowed without flash or tripod. The upper level offers a unique bird's-eye view of the central basin, ideal for capturing sharks and ra

AUDIENCE

Ideal for families and biodiversity enthusiasts. Stroller access is possible but some areas are narrow; plan to fold if needed. Suitable for all audiences thank

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & Transportation

Metro

: Estação Oriente — 8 min à pied

Gare do Oriente, Gil - Gare Intermodal de Lisboa, S.A. (8 min) · Lisbon Airport (15 min)

Bus

: Oceanário de Lisboa — 4 min à pied

Gare do Oriente, Gil - Gare Intermodal de Lisboa, S.A. (11 min) · Lisbon Airport (23 min)

Car

Gare do Oriente, Gil - Gare Intermodal de Lisboa, S.A. (5 min) · Lisbon Airport (15 min)

Bike

Gare do Oriente, Gil - Gare Intermodal de Lisboa, S.A. (5 min) · Lisbon Airport (19 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve Lisbon Oceanarium ?



📍 s/nº,Esplanada Dom Carlos I — 1990-005 Lisbon

🌐 38°45.813′ N, 9°5.624′ O



ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Five Ecosystems

Level 1 (Ground Floor)

This level introduces the four continental wings: Antarctic, Indian Ocean, North Atlantic, and Temperate Pacific. Each wing features distinct ecosystems, from icy penguin habitats to vibrant coral reefs. Visitors walk through curved corridors lined with large acrylic windows, observing species native to these specific regions. The layout encourages a logical flow, starting with colder climates and moving towards tropical warmth.

Level 2 (Upper Gallery)

The upper level circles the central basin, offering a panoramic view of the open ocean ecosystem. Here, visitors can observe larger pelagic species like sharks, rays, and tuna swimming freely in the vast tank. The elevated perspective allows for unique photography opportunities, capturing the movement of schools of fish from above. This level also houses the gift shop and exit route, ensuring a smooth departure.

Central Basin Viewpoints

Accessible from both levels, the central basin is the heart of the Oceanarium. The ground floor offers close-up views of smaller creatures and intricate reef structures, while the upper gallery provides a dramatic overview of the entire habitat. Special viewing points allow for face-to-face encounters with gentle giants like manta rays. This dual-level access ensures no angle of the underwater spectacle is missed.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Accessibility for people with reduced mobility**

PMR access guaranteed via elevators and ramps in the modern building and bridge.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Families**

Family-friendly with stroller access and low viewing windows, but some narrow areas possible.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Unmissable Marine Encounters

01

Main Tank

The Central Basin

Holding **5,000 cubic meters** of water, this massive tank represents the open ocean. It is home to over 450 species, including tiger sharks, hammerheads, and manta rays. The sheer volume creates a naturalistic environment where predators and prey coexist in a balanced ecosystem.

> 💡 It contains enough water to fill **two Olympic swimming pools**, making it one of the largest single tanks in the world.

02

Polar Zone

Antarctic Wing

This section recreates the icy landscapes of Antarctica, complete with simulated icebergs and cold temperatures. Gentoo penguins and king cormorants inhabit this area, showcasing their adaptability to extreme conditions. The visual contrast between the white ice and blue water is striking.

> 💡 The temperature here is kept near freezing, so visitors often feel a chill as they pass by, emphasizing the harshness of the **polar environment**.

03

Tropical Zone

Indian Ocean Reef

A vibrant display of color and diversity, this wing mimics the coral reefs of the Seychelles. Napoleon wrasses, clownfish, and various tropical birds roam freely in semi-liberty. The lush vegetation adds a terrestrial element, creating a holistic view of island ecosystems.

> 💡 This area boasts one of the highest levels of **biodiversity on Earth**, featuring species found nowhere else in such concentration.

04

Pacific Wing

Sea Otter Habitat

One of the most beloved attractions, this enclosure allows visitors to watch playful sea otters floating on their backs. These intelligent mammals use rocks to crack open shells, providing endless entertainment. Their social behavior and grooming habits are fascinating to observe up close.

> 💡 Otters hold hands while sleeping to avoid drifting apart, a charming fact that delights **children and adults alike**.

05

Temperate Pacific

Jellyfish Exhibit

Illuminated tanks highlight the ethereal beauty of jellyfish, whose pulsating movements create a hypnotic effect. Various species, including lion's mane and moon jellies, are displayed against dark backgrounds to enhance their bioluminescence. This quiet zone offers a moment of reflection amidst the busier sections.

> 💡 Despite their delicate appearance, some jellyfish species have existed for over **500 million years**, predating dinosaurs.

06

Central Basin

Sunfish Encounter

Occasionally, the rare sunfish makes an appearance in the central tank. Known as the heaviest bony fish in the world, its slow, clumsy swimming style contrasts with the agility of sharks. Spotting one is considered a lucky break for many visitors due to its elusive nature.

> 💡 Sunfish are often found near the surface, making them vulnerable to boats, which highlights the importance of **marine conservation efforts**.

07

Literary Tribute

Sophia de Mello Room

Named after the famous Portuguese poet, this room combines literary homage with marine life. It features texts by Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen alongside displays of local Portuguese coastal species. This integration of art and science reflects the cultural depth of the institution.

> 💡 The poet's deep love for the sea inspired her writings, making this tribute a fitting nod to **Lisbon's maritime soul**.

08

Exclusive Access

Behind-the-Scenes Tour

For those seeking deeper insight, guided tours offer access to restricted areas where feeding and maintenance occur. Visitors learn about the daily routines required to keep thousands of animals healthy. This exclusive experience provides a glimpse into the hard work behind the scenes.

> 💡 These tours reveal how staff carefully monitor water quality and animal health, ensuring the **sustainability of the ecosystem**.

TIPS

Smart Strategies for Families

TIMING

Arrive exactly at opening time to beat the crowds. The central basin is least crowded in the first hour, allowing for unobstructed photos and better visibility of shy species.

BILLET

Purchase tickets online in advance to save 5% and skip ticket queues. During peak season, on-site lines can be lengthy, wasting valuable time meant for observation.

PARCOURS

Start with the four continental wings before tackling the central basin. This strategy saves energy for the most impressive part of the visit when fatigue may set in.

PHOTO

Use the upper gallery for wide-angle shots of the central tank. Avoid flash photography to protect the animals, and position yourself above the crowd for clearer views.

PAUSE

Take a break at Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre opposite the entrance. It offers numerous dining options and restrooms, making it convenient for families needing a mid-visit pause.

ENFANTS

Strollers are allowed but may be cumbersome in narrow areas. Consider folding them or using a carrier for younger children to navigate tight spaces around the tanks easily.

AUDIOGUIDE

Rent an audioguide if you want detailed scientific explanations. It enhances the educational value, especially for older children and adults interested in marine biology specifics.

CONFORT

Wear comfortable walking shoes as the visit involves extensive walking on multiple levels. The indoor temperature is cool, so bring a light jacket, especially for the Antarctic wing.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Is it better to buy tickets online or on-site?

Online purchase is highly recommended to avoid often long queues, especially during peak season. You save valuable time that you can devote to the visit itself. Moreover, it guarantees your entry even if attendance is at

Are tickets included in tourist passes worth the investment?

It depends on your overall itinerary. If you plan to visit several major sites like the Belém Tower or the Tram 28, the pass can be cost-effective. Compare the total cost of individual entries with the price of the pass

Are there any temporary exhibitions currently?

The program varies regularly. It is imperative to check the Oceanário official website to verify current special events or exhibitions. Do not leave based on the promise of a specific event without recent confirmation.

Do I need to book a specific time slot?

Yes, booking with a time slot is often mandatory to manage crowds. This also allows you to plan your day in Lisbon more efficiently. Choose an arrival time corresponding to your logistical availability.

How long does it take to visit the Oceanarium?

Allow between 2 and 3 hours for a complete and relaxed visit. It is not just a quick stop; you need time to explore the 5 distinct ecosystems and observe the fauna in the central basin. Take your time to fully enjoy the

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Architecture on Water

The building rests on **180 concrete pillars** driven deep into the port bed, creating the illusion that it floats. This engineering feat minimizes environmental impact while maximizing structural stability, a hallmark of Chermayeff's design philosophy.

Expo Record Breaker

During Expo '98, the aquarium welcomed **four million visitors** in just three and a half months. This unprecedented attendance established it immediately as a major tourist landmark, surpassing initial projections.

Otter Birth Sign

Two weeks before opening, a pair of otters gave birth, signaling successful adaptation. This event was widely publicized as proof that the artificial environment could support **complex reproductive behaviors**.

Global Ocean Concept

The central tank embodies the concept of a single global ocean, connecting all continents. It reminds visitors that despite geographical boundaries, marine life flows freely, highlighting the need for **international conservation cooperation**.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

The Parque das Nações district offers a modern contrast to historic Lisbon, providing ample opportunities for relaxation and exploration after your visit. Just across the street lies the **Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre**, a sprawling complex ideal for lunch or picking up souvenirs without the crowds typical of older city centers. For families seeking outdoor activities, the adjacent **Tejo Park** provides green spaces and river views perfect for a post-aquarium stroll. If you wish to extend your day with science, the nearby Pavilion of Knowledge offers interactive exhibits that complement the biological focus of the Oceanarium. Alternatively, a short boat ride along the Tagus can take you to the historic **Belém Tower**, blending modern aquatic wonders with Portugal's maritime heritage.



Leaving the Lisbon Oceanarium is more than just exiting a building; it is emerging from a dreamlike state back into reality, carrying with you a renewed appreciation for the hidden depths of our planet. The experience lingers in the mind, reminding us that we share this Earth with countless other forms of life, each playing a vital role in the delicate balance of our oceans. Whether you came for the stunning architecture or the educational value, the emotional resonance of seeing a manta ray glide past your eye level is unforgettable. It is a call to action wrapped in wonder, urging every visitor to become a guardian of the seas long after they have left the premises.