ON A SHOESTRING

Lisbon

A culinary revolution has taken place in Lisbon. You’ll find a market selling small plates made by top chefs and revamped classics like salt cod and custard tarts.

Words AUDREY GILLAN

Imagine a place where 30 of the city’s best chefs sell small, reasonably priced plates of their top dishes, alongside local wines and fresh lemonade, from a gathering of stalls. That’s exactly what’s on offer every day at Lisbon’s Mercado da Ribeira in the Cais do Sodré area. With dishes ranging from €5-8 each, we pile in the Cais do Mercado da Ribeira over glasses of red wine, also from the Alentejo, and a mini burger of PDO beef (€6). There’s also a street kiosk (plates, banners, and anything else that can be plastered with the publishing company’s logo is) but our real destination is Lisbon’s iconic cherry liqueur bar, A Ginjinha, a hole-in-the-wall big enough for just three people (Largo de São Domingos 8, no phone). We order glasses of the house-made Morelli cherry spirit and yet more twinkly tins of fish. Following the calçada-lined streets downhill from here to Flores, we stick our heads in Confeitaria Nacional, an old-school pastry and jam shop complete with rococo shelves are lined with reissued kitchen packaging classics (av Randolphs.com). We buy a sardine grill for the beach, a street-top toast maker, a range and red molasses plates, and yet more twinkly tins of fish.

For a more affordable way to sample his cooking, we head to Mini Bar (minibar.pt), a cocktail lounge with a menu of snacks and small dishes, like codfish nuggets with ‘Balhão Pés’ emulsion (€9). Albacore sashimi in curry (€7.5) and a mini burger of PDO beef (€5). There’s also a street kiosk outside Mini Bar where you can try ‘Avillex’ take on pastéis de nata and savoury pies.

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