



Route around the North, Porto Moniz and Funchal

NATURE

From: London

Travel details

● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - FUNCHAL - NORTE DE LA ISLA (RIBEIRO FRIO NATIONAL PARK - FAIAL - SANTANA)

Flight departure from the city of origin to Madeira and rental car pick-up.

Get ready to uncover all of Madeira's secrets! Departure to the north of the island. The entire coastline provides travellers with amazing scenery of mountains that tumble into the ocean waters. With our car we will cross the Ecological Park of Funchal and the Natural Park of Riberio Frio. If you have time, and as you are at the halfway point, you can make a visit here. Entering Ribeiro Frio is like penetrating the purest nature protected by mountains. Many hikers are drawn here by its trails and the desire to discover their hidden secrets. A visit to the trout farm and fish hatchery is not to be missed. One that should end in sampling a freshly prepared trout. A little over 20 minutes away is Pico do Arieiro, towering some 1,818 metres above sea level, it is one of island's highest points. It is the only peak whose observation point is accessible by car, therefore you don't need to climb all the way up on foot. As you ascend you will see the green forests of Madeira disappear making way for cleaner and more barren scenery in the middle of a steep but equally verdant mountain. With its clear blue sky it is a photographer's paradise. It will be difficult to tear yourself away from the view, but do not worry because there are more jewels still to be discovered. It is time to continue discovering the island's contrasts, because now we head towards the coast, to Faial to be precise, a coastal town whose name comes from the area's native beech trees. A good way to start the visit is to take a stroll around the fishing port, breathe in the sea breeze and watch the fishermen working with their nets. One of the country's best karting circuits is nearby. You can also enjoy the beach. It is pebble, but you can swim there in the summer as it is sheltered from the ferocity of the Atlantic. Do not miss the Fort of Faial that still has several original cannons once used by the villagers to fend off invaders. You can enjoy one of the most spectacular sunsets from here. As a matter of fact, it is rated as one of the 25 most beautiful sunsets in the world. After half an hour's drive you will reach the colourful town of Santana. Colourful due to its traditional architecture of unique triangular wooden huts built with thatched roofs. From here you can choose to take one of the many interesting routes. You can head to Parque das Queimadas, where Pico Ruivo is located, the highest peak of the island at 1,861 above sea level, and the Laurel Forest, a relic of the past now rarely found in the world. It is the largest remaining laurel forest and is home to a unique collection of plant and animal species. This is why it has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. (Note: If you want to see it, you must book in advance). Or, you have one last option. You can enjoy a 300-metre waterfall that tumbles into a small pool of ferns in the Caldeirão Verde (Green Cauldron). A wide range of options to satisfy everyone's tastes.

Overnight stay in Santana.

● DAY 2 · NORTH OF THE ISLAND (SANTANA - PORTO DA CRUZ - MACHICO - CANIÇAL - PONTA DE SÃO LOURENÇO - SANTANA)

Make sure you have a hearty breakfast today because you have a long day ahead of you to enjoy. Today you will visit the northeast coast of Madeira. We leave Santana and head for Porto da Cruz. Porto da Cruz is famous for its surfing and surrounding hiking trails. Its name came from the cross that was built on the coast to signal the port to Portuguese explorers. Nowadays, it is a picture-postcard rural village with zigzag streets and white houses with gardens that create a peaceful haven. The ruins of its 18th-century citadel and the Solar da Nossa Senhora de Belém, a manor house dating back to 1770, remind the traveller of its past. Porto da Cruz conserves part of its history of sugar production and still has the refinery where rum and "dry wine" is produced, which has become so popular that an annual festival is held.

You can discover its spectacular nature at Vereda do Larano, on the edge of a cliff some 300 metres above sea level. Naturally, the views merit more than just one photograph to take home as a reminder.

If you feel like taking a dip, you will find a range of facilities at Praia da Lagoa to enjoy a day in the water. A 20-minute drive is Machico, a landmark municipality in Madeira's history. Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira landed here in 1419 when they discovered Madeira. The bay of Machico with its Banda Além, a 125-metre long beach of yellow sand, is enclosed in a valley and protected by the Pico do Facho.

A man-made beach that is considered one of the best beaches in Madeira.

And from the top of its mountains you will reach another of the island's spectacular viewpoints: the viewpoint of Portela. Nearby is the small fishing port of Caniçal, which until 1981 was the last whaling port in southern Europe. If you want to know more about its past and how they captured these animals, visit the Whale Museum. However, if you want to get more up close to nature, why not hop on board one of the boats that leave the pier to watch some whales and even swim alongside dolphins! (Note: Tour not included). Afterwards, relax in Prainha with its volcanic black sand, before taking a table at one of its restaurants to try one of the local specialties- tuna. After lunch we head to the tip of São Lourenço, one of the last unspoilt places in Europe. A combination of rock formations that join with the sea and contrast with its sparse vegetation. From here you can take in breathtaking views of both the north and south of the island and, on clear days, you can even see the island of Porto Santo.

Return and overnight stay in Santana.

● DAY 3 · NORTH OF THE ISLAND - WEST OF THE ISLAND (SANTANA - PONTA DELGADA - SÃO VICENTE - PORTO MONIZ)

We leave Santana behind to head for Ponta Delgada, less than an hour's drive along the roads of the north coast. It is popular for its famous religious festival of Senhor Bom Jesus that attracts thousands of pilgrims every September. Celebrations aside, this small coastal town is also a good place to enjoy the sun as it has recently created a complex of saltwater pools with a range of bathing facilities. And they have been created right on the seashore, with the best views of the bay. However, its waters are not the only reason to visit Ponta Delgada, there is also the picturesque 15th century church of Imaculado Coração de Maria, again located on a prime spot by the sea. Not far is São Vicente, nestled between a valley and beautiful mountains. It is famous for its caves formed by lava some 400,000 years ago. There are guided tours that cover part of its 700 metres, you go through tunnels and underground hideouts, and also learn about its history and how volcanoes work. There is also the Volcanism Centre, perfect for those interested in finding out more about the mysteries of their geology. But São Vicente has much more to offer than caves. This coastal town is the favourite haunt for lovers of water sports, as its beaches enjoy huge waves that are perfect for surfing and kitesurfing. Our last stop will be Porto Moniz. If you arrive in time, it is a great chance to visit it. If you don't, you can do so tomorrow before you leave. One of its best attractions are the natural lava swimming pools, some of the most impressive in the world.

Overnight stay in Porto Moniz.

● DAY 4 · WEST OF THE ISLAND (PORTO MONIZ - ACHADAS DA CRUZ - PONTA DO PARGO - LOMBADA DOS MARINHEIROS - FAJÃ DA OVELHA - PRAZERES - CALHETA - PORTO DO SOL)

After leaving Porto Moniz behind, we will stop off at Achadas da Cruz, a village known for its cable car. And you will understand why when you see its cable car positioned almost vertically to overcome the slope of the beach with the village. Real vertigo! It is very interesting to see close hand how the local people go up, since even the farmers use it to transport some of their crops. About 20 minutes south you will reach Ponta do Pargo, which gets its name from the most popular catch in the area: "el pargo" (the snapper). This is the westernmost point of the island; the perfect place to disconnect and relax in front of the vastness admired from near the lighthouse, located at 312 metres above the turquoise sea. Also worth a visit is the Vereda da Garganta Funda to take in the natural fall of the water. On the way to Fajã da Ovelha, we suggest a short stop at the viewpoint of Lombada dos Marinheiros. From this point, you will not only be able to take some snaps of the green cliffs and the sea, but you will also get another look at the Ponta do Pargo lighthouse. We rejoin the tour until we reach Fajã da Ovelha, a quiet village of just over a thousand inhabitants whose foundation is due to an old chapel dedicated to São Lourenço. Its main attraction is the viewpoint of Massapez, which offers breathtaking views of the fishing village of Paul do Mar, surrounded by its verdant terraces, its old tuna canning factory and salt factory. You will also have views of the beach of Ribeira das Galinhas and the connecting road. In just a quarter of an hour you will reach Prazeres, surrounded by mountains and lush valleys. Here you will find Quinta Pedagógica dos Prazeres, a rural education and awareness project where you can see a local agricultural area, herb gardens and all kinds of exotic animals. Sample some of its traditional herbal teas and sweets in the Tea House. Our last stop today is Calheta, one of the most popular tourist resorts in the island's south. It is ready to please everyone's tastes. It is perfect for those who want to enjoy water sports, as well as those who want to take advantage of the sun on one of its two man-made, golden sandy beaches and those who prefer to sail the sea in search of whales and dolphins. It is also a historical place. Just enter its church, see some of the old palaces of the first settlers or its sugar syrup factory. Touristy it may be, but beautiful nonetheless. You will be amazed by the banana and sugar plantations, and vineyards all around you. As well as by the Casa das Mudanças arts centre, with its unrivalled location perched on a cliff overlooking the sea. Another must-see is the distillery Engenho da Calheta, where they make "aguardente" (liquor), the main ingredient of the typical "poncha". You have to try it! And for dinner, we recommend going to the beachfront where there are the best restaurants on the island.

Overnight stay in Porto do Sol.

● DAY 5 · WEST OF THE ISLAND (PONTA DO SOL - ENCUMEADA - RIBEIRA BRAVA - CÂMARA DE LOBOS- FUNCHAL)

We set off from Porto do Sol making sure to bring your camera to photograph some wonderful sights such as the sugarcane and banana plantations, and the vineyards of Ponta do Sol. Some of Madeira's best beaches are here, such as Madalena do Mar, Lugar de Baixo or that bearing the same name, Ponta do Sol. The temperature is usually warm throughout the year, you can do all kinds of water activities and it also has one of the best sunsets in Madeira. That is why it is one of the most popular beach resorts. After half an hour's drive to the interior of the island, you will reach Encumeada. It is a viewpoint that rises to 1,007 metres above sea level and is located in the mountain range that crosses Madeira. Take your camera and allow yourself some time to enjoy one of the island's finest vistas. From here you can take in stunning views of the north and south coast and also the valleys of Ribeira Brava to the south and São Vicente to the north. The area is home to the ancient "Caminho Real", a treat for walkers who want to uncover the secrets of these mountains. Heading back south there is Ribeira Brava. Known as the angry river, you can see why by witnessing its strong currents. At the same time it offers a unique charm. Here the land is fertile, that is why all its gardens and fields, many of them part of the village, are full of exotic trees, colourful flowers and tropical fruit plantations. A picture full of colours and smells worthy of the best photographer. During the visit a must is the Church of São Bento, known for its combination of white and blue tiles, its pink-coloured town hall, and for the pleasant stroll through the market and along its beautiful promenade. Get yourselves ready to visit the best cliffs on the island. Those of Cabo Girão, on the outskirts of Câmara de Lobos, are some of the highest in Europe. A breathtaking view for those feeling brave, but only the very bravest would dare go on glass-floored viewpoint that juts out above a 500-metre drop! Beforehand we suggest a visit to the charming fishing village, where you can admire the pretty, colourful boats stranded on its grey, pebbled beaches. With such a view, it is not surprising that Winston Churchill painted a series of landscapes of the area that capture this region's appeal. This is the perfect place to try black cod, the village's most popular fish, followed with a "poncho", a strong liqueur made with lemon, honey, sugar and brandy. The capital of Madeira is nearby, where we will spend the next two days.

Overnight stay in Funchal.

● DAY 6 · FUNCHAL

Funchal is a city full of cobblestone streets decorated with paving stone patterns stretching between the hillside facing the sea. This is the capital of Madeira. The first thing we can do is go up to Monte, the top part of the city. Locals say that Emperor Charles I of Austria was exiled in Monte during World War I. Therefore, as you can imagine, it is teeming with history. Even today you can see the remains of the old railway, which had to be dismantled during the Nazi era and its steel used for the war effort. One of the must-sees in Monte is its Tropical Palace, an enchanting garden overflowing with plants and exotic trees. You feel as if you are entering a rainforest. Another place not to be missed is the church Nossa Senhora do Monte, situated some 598 meters above sea level and home to the tomb of Charles I of Austria. Its virgin is the patron saint of the island, and the patron festival on the 15th August attracts many faithful followers. However, one of the most fun ways to get to Monte is to take the cable car that connects it with the capital. You will be lifted some 560 metres up the mountain side in just 15 minutes. And as you can imagine, the views will keep your camera very busy. And to get back down, what better way than taking a typical basket sled! Just imagine travelling down the steep streets in a kind of large basket made of wood and wicker carried by the "wagons", two drivers on foot. They are like sledges, but instead of gliding over snow they do it on asphalt. What an experience! If it doesn't take your fancy and you prefer to go by car, at least stop and watch the spectacle of the basket sleds. You will find them near the church steps. Seeing them is an adventure in itself. Once you arrive in the lower part of Funchal feel free to choose how you want to spend your time, because in the capital of Madeira has a whole host of attractions. You can decide whether to visit its museums, practice water sports, lay your towel on its beautiful beaches, go for a stroll around the port or enjoy its unrivalled nightlife, and much more. Discover the vibrant and lively Mercado dos Lavradores (Farmers Market), located in the heart of the old town and mingle with the locals. You will notice the sellers are usually dressed in their traditional clothes, creating a fascinating atmosphere. We will continue exploring the city tomorrow, so we suggest doing some shopping before dinner and admire the famous embroidery and tapestry.

Overnight stay in Funchal.

● DAY 7 · FUNCHAL

Today is our second day in Funchal, so it is time to find out more about its culture and cuisine.

There is a wide range of museums to visit, such as the Museum of Sacred Art, where you will find works of Flemish painters and interesting altarpieces; the Museu da Quinta da Cruzes, which was the last residence of the island's coloniser, João Gonçalves Zarco; or the Museum of Contemporary Art, where you can view an interesting collection of art. There is also a new addition that has become an essential visit for football fans: the CR7 Museum, which as its name indicates is dedicated to the player Cristiano Ronaldo, one of its most international neighbours. It is home to all the sporting achievements of the Portuguese star. If you are traveling with kids, then the Story Centre Museum is for you; it is an interesting museum that uses sensory spaces to explain the history of the island and its people. However, if you prefer being outdoors, in contact with nature and wild animals, you can head to the Ecological Park or take a catamaran trip that will take you on the ocean waters to try and spot whales, dolphins and seals. An unforgettable experience. And if you fancy taking a dip, in Funchal too you can swim in the pools of the Lido, formed using local volcanic rock. And of course, during today we will enjoy some of the most authentic local cuisine. If you still haven't tasted the island's incredible wine, in Funchal you have the opportunity to visit the Blandy winery, the Madeira's oldest. It is housed in an old monastery, so you can imagine what awaits you inside. A mix of tradition and modernity, without losing an ounce of the area's authentic feel. Here you can try a variety of different wines, as almost 30 different types of grapes are used. The Santo Antonio Biscuit Factory is also worth a visit, where the best "honey cakes" are made, as well as almond and ginger biscuits, and sweets made with eucalyptus or fennel. As you walk along the streets of Funchal you will also see different places selling "bolos do caco". They are round, flat breads made from wheat and sweet potato served with garlic butter. Finally, we suggest heading to a restaurant to try the famous beef "espetada" (skewer) served with fried corn.

Overnight stay in Funchal.

● DAY 8 · FUNCHAL - CITY OF ORIGIN

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

Your trip includes

Your trip includes

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ✓ Return flight. | ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Santana. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Santana. |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Porto Moniz. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Porto Moniz. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Ponta Do Sol. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Ponta Do Sol. | |
| ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Funchal. | ✓ Selected meal plan in Funchal. | ✓ Rent-a-car. |
| ✓ Insolvency protection. | | |

Your trip doesn't include

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| ✗ Accommodation taxes in Funchal direct payment in facility. | ✗ Possible toll charges. |
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Destinations Visited

Funchal



Santana



Porto da Cruz



Machico



Canical



São Vicente



Porto Moniz



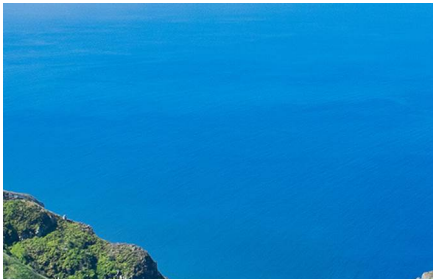
Achadas da Cruz



Ponta do Pargo



Lombada dos Marinheiros



Faja Da Ovelha



Prazeres



Estreito da Calheta



Ponta Do Sol



Câmara De Lobos



Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.
- If you want to explore its natural attractions and mountainous areas we recommend taking some warm clothing.