

EXPLORE!

NEW

Self-Guided Walking in Madeira

8 days

Madeira, Portugal - Trip code WSMP



Self-Guided Walking in Madeira

A lush volcanic island lying off the coast of West Africa, Madeira is known for its year-round mild climate, beautiful gardens and breathtaking landscapes. On this trip you'll discover some of the island's best walking trails, from the footpaths that follow its 'levadas' (Madeira's unique network of narrow irrigation channels) to coastal paths overlooking the crashing waves of the Atlantic Ocean. Hike across cultivated terraces, through native laurisilva forests and encounter rural life in picturesque villages. Enjoy traditional Madeiran cuisine including great seafood and the pleasures of swimming in natural sea pools. This holiday is for experienced walkers only and is not suitable for anyone who suffers from vertigo. This holiday is available for groups of 2 or more people.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Levada paths** - Variety of picturesque walks alongside the island's special irrigation channels
- ★ **Walking in East Madeira** - Porto da Cruz, Levada do Furado and Ribeiro Frio

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip starts Funchal airport; taxi transfer to Machico

On arrival at the airport an included taxi transfer takes you to the fishing village of Machico, the first city founded in Madeira on the arrival of Zarco in 1419. After checking in to your hotel you can explore the village, home to the oldest church, the 'Capela dos Milagres', and two forts that still bear witness to the locals' defence against the many pirate attacks of years gone by.



Accommodation: Hotel Amparo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Hike along the Ponta da Sao Lourenco

The walk today explores the wild Sao Lourenco peninsula at the eastern end of the island, a place where the raging waters of the Atlantic crash up against dark basalt cliffs and screeching gulls wheel overhead in their hundreds. There are excellent views towards both the northern and southern sides of the island and, when the weather conditions allow it, across to Porto Santo Island some 60 kilometres away. At the end of the walk a taxi takes you to your hotel for the next two nights in the charming seaside village of Porto da Cruz where you may like to enjoy a swim in the saltwater 'basaltic swimming pool'. Today's 7km walk is expected to take about 3 to 4 hours.



Accommodation: Hotel Costa Linda (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 3 - Walk along Mimosa Levada and the northern coastal path to Porto da Cruz

Today's walk takes you along the Mimosa Levada to Marocos. It gives you an idea of what life on Madeira was like when there were no roads and following the levada irrigation canals was the only way to get around. For nearly five centuries, this levada served to transfer the 'must' used to make wine between Porto da Cruz and Machico. From Canical, you start on a level path hiking along the levada, surrounded by the mimosas that bloom throughout the year. You'll see some 'Palheiros' (the distinctive small 'A'-shaped two-sided houses used as agricultural shelters) that lie scattered on the mountain terraces in the small valleys of Ribeira Secca,

Ribeira de Noia and Ribeira Grande. Before reaching the village of Marocos, the landscape becomes more populated and both sides of the levada are bordered by a beautiful array of flowers. Today's 16 km walk is expected to take about 5.5 to 6 hours and you will ascend 240m and descend 400m.



Accommodation: Hotel Costa Linda (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 4 - Porto da Cruz, Levada do Furado and Ribeiro Frio

Today's walk is one of the most beautiful in the east of Madeira. You can choose to start from sea level at Porto da Cruz or avoid the first 600 metres of ascent by taking a taxi (at your own expense) to Portela. The route starts out on a good path following the Levada do Furado eastwards, passing through lush gardens spread out on the terraces in the valley of Faial. At first, the path is wide then becomes narrower and follows deep ravines through the laurisilva forest, the native marquis-like vegetation which includes trees of heather, bay, cedar and laurel to name just a few species. The mountains of the island dominate the sky high above you. At Ribeiro Frio, you can enjoy the awesome views from the lookout point at Balcoes, looking out over the valley of the Faja de Nogueiras and the great peaks of the island. At the end of the walk it's a short taxi ride to your hotel in Sao Roque do Faial, facing the distinctive rocky mountain of the Pena de Aguia. Today's 11km walk is expected to take about 4 hours (40 minutes less if you take a taxi to avoid the first climb).



Accommodation: Hotel San Roque (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 5 - Walk from Ariero to Achanda de Teixeira via Pico Ruivo, the Island's summit

A taxi will take you to Pico de Ariero (1818m), the starting point of today's hike. The trail undulates along through some very impressive gullies between Ariero and the Pico de Gato that you will cross by a small tunnel. The views to the east side of the island are incredible. A beautiful section of the path follows a 'balcony' passing under the Torres to a point below the summit of Pico Ruivo. The final section of the climb ascends through the heather trees to Pico Ruivo (1862m) the panoramic summit. From here, part of the descent is back on the same route then continues to the road head at Achada de Teixeira. Here a taxi will transfer you to Santana, the largest settlement on Madeira's northern coast. Today's 10 km walk is expected to take about 4 to 4.5 hours and you will ascend 550m and descend 700m.



Accommodation: Hotel O Colmo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 6 - Walk to Encumeada

Today's walk passes through one of the most beautiful landscapes of the island, an open panorama with great views to the north and south. You walk from side to side of the crest path, on a beautiful and untouched trail surrounded by heather with some incredible views of the peaks. The path sometimes ascends and descends on large paved steps. Passing alongside the basaltic cliffs of Ferreiro you will reach the pass at Encumeada, overlooked by the Paul da Serra plateau and some gigantic wind turbines. There is the option not to walk to day and instead take a taxi (not included) to Encumeada and enjoy a day relaxing. Today's 16 km walk is expected to take about 6 to 6.5 hours and you will ascend 550m and descend 1100m.



Accommodation: Hotel Encumeada (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 7 - Walk from Encumeada to Boca de Corrida, taxi to Funchal

Today's path goes up along the Fenda do Ferreiro and continues under the crest of Pico Grande (1600m) along a large cliff wall of black basalt. The panoramas over the valley of Serra de Agua and Paul da Serra to the pass of Boca do Cerro are wonderful. From here, you see the astonishing valley of Curral das Freiras (valley of nuns) in the centre of the island, dotted with traditional Palheiros, some with characteristic thatched roofs. In the distance, the chain of the Great Peaks stands proudly. The trail ends at the road at Boca de Corrida. From here you have a taxi back to Funchal, the island's lively capital for your last night on Madeira. Today's 14 km walk is expected to take about 4 to 5 hours and you will ascend 550m and descend 100m.



Accommodation: Hotel Windsor (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends Funchal

After breakfast you will have an included taxi transfer to the airport.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

On this trip you will walk 74 km over six days (an average of 12.3 km per day). The route generally follows well-marked paths and dirt tracks, there are some road sections. Parts of the 'balcony walk' on day 5 are not suitable for vertigo sufferers. We have graded this trip as Moderate.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7

Dinner: 6



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

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Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a trip to Portugal - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The northern high plains has both extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. The islands have very different weather patterns due to their positioning and can have sudden rain falls throughout the year so waterproofs are recommended even in the summer.

Time difference to GMT

0

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Portuguese

Clothing

The following are essential: good quality waterproof jacket and trousers, fleece jacket, comfortable walking trousers, shorts, warm hat and gloves, sunhat and sunglasses.

Footwear

We recommend walking boots with proper ankle support and good tread. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. We recommend that you wear/carry your walking boots as hand luggage on the international flight. Should your luggage be delayed, your well broken in boots will be irreplaceable. Trainers or trekking sandals are useful for relaxing in the evening.

Luggage transfer

A luggage transfer between each accommodation. This is provided by a local taxi supplier.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle (preferably 2 litres) and high factor sun cream. Trekking poles are recommended. Tap water is safe to drink as are the fountains found in villages, but water sources along the trail may not always be drinkable. Using tap or purified water rather than bottled water will help avoid creating plastic bottle waste. Energy snacks including chocolate and sweets are recommended whilst on trek.

Country Information

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Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Foreign Exchange

Portugal Holidays & Tours

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Dinner price

£15

Beer price

£2.00 - 3.00 depending on your location, well touristed areas are usually slightly more expensive.

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Cash-point machines are available in all major towns. Bankcards with the Cirrus logo are accepted.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be exchanged in all major towns but are not recommended due to the high rate of commission.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Visas are not required by UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of

your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
