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10% OFF

Madeira Island Discovery

MADEIRA, PORTUGAL - TRIP CODE MDR
DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Explore Madeira's best known sights and learn why it's known as 'the pearl of the Atlantic' with its dramatic mountainous scenery criss-crossed by levadas and colourful flora. This highlights trip is based in the coastal city of Funchal and has a mix of full and free days.

- **Porto da Cruz** - Discover the history of Madeira's sugar and rum industry and sip a potent glass of the local tippie, poncha
- **Levada walk** - See the rugged landscapes on an easy walk along a small part of Madeira's vast levada network
- **Afternoon tea** - Take in the ocean views, as Churchill once did, at Madeira's colonial Reid's Palace Hotel



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 2



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat



ACCOMMODATION
7 nights
comfortable hotel



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Funchal

Our trip begins in Funchal, which will be our base for the next seven nights from which we will explore Madeira's highlights. Funchal takes its name from 'funcho', meaning fennel and according to local legend, when Zarco landed here in 1419, he named this spot after the abundance of the herb he found. Visiting sailors used to call the city 'Little Lisbon' because of the grandeur of its cathedral and the buildings that line its harbour.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no other activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Funchal at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Madeira International Airport (FNC), which is about 25 minutes' drive from our hotel. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

Tonight you might like to try one of fresh seafood dishes that Madeira is known for, such as tuna with fried maize or black scabbard with fried banana, and for dessert perhaps have a taste of passionfruit pudding.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel do Carmo (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Tour of the north of the island and easy levada walk

Today we leave Funchal on a full day tour of the north and north-west of the island including Camara de Lobos, where we see a plaque and statue dedicated to Sir Winston Churchill who used to holiday on the island and would sit at this spot to paint the beautiful coastline scene. We'll also take a look at the street art here created from recycled drink cans.

We continue to Pico da Torre viewpoint, which offers stunning views of the traditional buildings in Camara de Lobos lining the bay. The 360 degree panoramic views stretch back as far as Funchal. Our next stop is Cabo Girao, which is second highest cliff face in the world and offers yet more captivating sea views.

We drive on to Ribeira Brava and into the mountains to Encumeada. From here there's the chance to take an easy three kilometre walk along Levada Folhadal. Madeira's levadas are a unique series of mini-canals used for irrigation. There are a number of great walking trails on the island that follow these channels. After our walk we journey down through the forested area of Chao dos Louros to the pretty town of Sao Vicente on the north coast. We'll stop to see Pousada dos Vinhaticos, a heritage hotel, which is the last remaining pousada on the island.

You'll want to bring your swimming costume and a towel with you today, as on our way back to Funchal we'll stop in Porto Moniz where there are natural pools. We'll have the chance for a refreshing swim, which is the perfect way to relax after a day spent exploring.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel do Carmo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Walking tour of Funchal and afternoon tea at Reid's Hotel

This morning we go on a walking tour of the island's capital Funchal. We'll see Mercado dos Lavradores - a fascinating fruit market where there's every fruit and vegetable imaginable and it offers a huge array of colours and sweet smells. Another market well worth seeing is the fish market where the fresh catches of day will be on sale.

Next we head for Bordal Embroidery Factory, which produces some of the finest traditional embroidery and tapestries to be found on the island. After time to look around we continue into the historic centre of Funchal's Old Town, where you can find a large selection of restaurants and bars and also a permanent outdoor art gallery displaying over 200 works of art by guest artists that are painted onto the doors of Rua de Santa Maria. We'll have the opportunity to admire the colonial architecture outside Santiago Fort, the Regional Government Palace and the fort and palace of Sao Lourenco.

We'll visit the Municipal Theatre and Jardim Municipal - the large garden here is sure to enchant you with its collection of alluring exotic flowers, both endemic and from around the world, and its native ancient trees.

After a morning of exploration we have time to relax and soak up the history at Reid's Hotel, where Churchill used to stay in 1950s, and where we'll partake in afternoon tea before returning to our hotel in the late afternoon. For the afternoon tea please wear smart casual clothing and avoid wearing shorts, flip flops or sportswear, such as trainers.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel do Carmo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 4 - East Madeira tour: Pico do Arieiro summit, A-frame houses of Santana and 16th century sugar mill

Each part of Madeira has its own character and today we are going to explore the eastern side of the island. We begin at the Cristo Rei Viewpoint, in Garajau, where we can admire the view back over towards Funchal and out into the Atlantic Ocean. We can also see the Christ the King statue, which looks like a smaller version of the Christ the Redeemer statue found in Brazil. We drive on to Camacha village where we'll be able to visit an artisan, who creates a wide variety of objects out of wicker. This is a traditional Madeiran craft that is sadly dying out, so there aren't many places left that produce the chairs, tables and artwork that is created here.

Next we continue up into the mountains to Pico do Arieiro, which is at 1,810 metres above sea level. From here we take in the view of rolling green hills and rocky mountain peaks. We continue through Laurissilva Forest to Ribeiro Frio to admire more of the unspoilt nature in this hilly part of the island.

When people think of Madeira many picture the traditional and colourful A-framed houses that are found in the northerly Santana area. We'll learn how this relatively flat region was one of the first to be settled for farming centuries ago. See how the locals produce 'pao de Santana' and get to taste this freshly made bread. There's the chance to have lunch in a restaurant overlooking the surrounding vineyards, and the vegetables and flowering gardens.

Finally we will visit one of the last remaining original sugar cane mills on the island in the pretty coastal town of Porto da Cruz. Dating back to the 16th century, the mill uses steam power in the traditional way. We'll learn of the importance of sugar cane cultivation or 'white gold' and the production of local rum, with a chance to taste the popular local drink 'poncha', which is made from lemons, honey and rum, and also sample molasses cake. If you're lucky enough to be here between April and mid-May then we should be able to see the mill working, as it'll be sugar harvesting season and production will be in full swing. Before driving back to Funchal we'll make one final stop in Ponta de Sao Lourenco, which is the easternmost point on the island.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel do Carmo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Boat trip to the Desertas Islands, search for whale and dolphin

Travelling by boat out to the Desertas Islands, we'll hopefully get to spot dolphins and whales along the way. Our boat will be 'Bonita da Madeira', a 23 metre long wooden sailing boat. The Desertas Islands are a group of three uninhabited islands, which lie around 25 kilometres off the coast of Madeira. They have been dedicated as a Natural Reserve to protect the rare species of monk seal, which favours them. Our boat will anchor along Desertas Bay where you'll have time to swim in the clear waters and relax in the secluded bay. Lunch will be served on board and then we will have time to visit the island. The transfer to the shore will be made on a smaller rubber dinghy boat. After the visit we begin our journey back to the mainland.

Please note that in the event of poor weather it may be necessary to cancel this boat trip or change the day of operation. If the boat trip isn't possible to do during your stay then we'll go on an excursion to the north of the island instead. Also if there are monk seals in the bay then we won't be able to swim there, as they are a protected species.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel do Carmo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Free day to explore or the option to visit Porto Santo by ferry

Today has been left free for you to further explore Funchal or there'll be the chance to go on a full day excursion to the island of Porto Santo by ferry. The journey takes approximately two and half hours each way. Porto Santo is a popular beach destination with the locals, and with its nine kilometre unspoilt white sand beach stretching all the way from Vila Baleira to Ponta de Calheta, it's easy to understand why. Whilst on the island you may also choose to visit the Columbus House Museum, which is the former home of the legendary explorer Christopher Columbus.

If you'd prefer to stay closer to Funchal then there are some great swimming opportunities nearby including the Lido Bathing Complex, Ponta Gorda Complex, Formosa Beach and Barreirinha Beach, which are all easily reachable by public bus. We recommend a visit to Blandy's Wine Lodge to understand more about how the four modern day Madeira wines came about, the island's long association with wine

through the centuries and the Estufagem process. Followed by a tasting of this famous export of course!

For those who want something more active than there's the chance to walk around the lakes of Madeira. This full day trip is around the Rabacal area. The walk covers around 13 kilometres, takes five to six hours and is graded as moderate. If you'd like to go for a walk, but fancy something that's a bit shorter, then you could take the half day Vale Paraiso walk, which begins in Camacha. The walk covers around six and a half kilometres, takes two and a half hours and is graded as easy. Both walking options include your transfers and a local guide.

If you're looking to take things at a more relaxed pace then you may wish to take the cable car to Monte or to the Monte Botanical Gardens. The cable car to Monte takes approximately 15 minutes and then to the gardens it's a further nine minutes each way. The gardens have been open since the 1960s and are one of Madeira's best known tourist attractions. The huge gardens display over 2,500 exotic plants that provide an exuberance of colour and scents. You may decide to return from Monte to Livramento in Funchal (around 15 minutes' walk from our hotel) by a ride on a traditional wicker toboggan. The downhill journey takes about 10 minutes along a two kilometre long road course. The toboggan will be steered by two operators and can reach up to 48kms per hour.

Alternatively, you could join the Nun's Valley half day tour to visit the viewpoints at Pico dos Barcelos and Eira do Serrado, and then the Nun's Valley itself, which is located in the heart of the Madeira's mountains.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel do Carmo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 7 - South and West Madeira - Banana levada walk and Madeira wine tasting at Quinta vineyard

This morning we drive west to Ribeira Brava where we'll visit the Ethnographic Museum to learn more about Madeira's culture and traditions through the ages such as wine, fishing, transport and much more. Driving further west along the sun-drenched southern coast we reach Madalena do Mar, surrounded by banana plantations. We plan to follow a 2km easy walk along a levada through the plantation and the Leader will explain more about banana cultivation on the island and its importance for Madeira's economy.

Continuing along the scenic drive we head to Ponta do Pargo on the westernmost point of the island - an area less-visited by tourists and defined by its dramatic cliffs where the escarpment falls into the sea. The atmospheric setting of the lighthouse here offers a great viewpoint, towering some 290 metres above the sea. Nearby we take a short walk to visit the Garganta Funda waterfall, a fantastic spot surrounded by nature and with amazing views. Most of the inhabitants of the charming, small village of Ponta do Pargo work in agriculture in the surrounding fields.

Our next stop is at the Quinta das Vinhas organic vineyard. The main house is a typical Quinta dating from the 17th century - a beautiful and historic place to learn more about Madeira wine, its history and production - where we will be able to sample different types of Madeira wine.

Finally, before returning to Funchal we'll make a stop in Jardim do Mar, a beautiful spot between the sea and the mountains. This small parish preserves the calm of days gone by with its narrow streets and low level houses with beautiful gardens.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel do Carmo (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Funchal

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Funchal.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Funchal at any time.

If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Madeira International Airport (FNC), which is about 25 minutes' drive from our hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Madeira

Portugal

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	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Portuguese

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

There are a range of optional excursions for you to choose from on day six of this trip:

Porto Santo:

Full day trip to the Golden Island including transfers, ferry (in tourist class) to the island and one hour island tour is €99.00 per person.

Visit to Columbus House Museum (Casa Museu Cristovao Colombo) is €2.00 per person or €1.00 per person if 65 or over.

Island tours:

Nun's Valley Tour half day tour is €28.00 per person.

Lakes of Madeira full day walk including transfers and a local guide is €37.00 per person.

Vale Paraiso half day walk including transfers and a local guide is €24.00 per person.

In Funchal:

Blandy's Wine Lodge tour and tasting - €11

Cable Car Funchal to Monte is €11.00 per person one way or €16.00 return per person.

You can extend the cable car to Monte Botanical Gardens, which is €24.00 per person one way or €31.40 per person return including entrance to the gardens.

Wicker toboggan ride down to Funchal from Monte is €25.00 for one person, €30.00 for two people or €45.00 for three people, which is the maximum per toboggan.

Lido Bathing Complex (which has a salted pool and access to the sea) is 10 minutes from Funchal centre by bus - entrance is €5.00 per person.

Ponta Gorda Complex (which has a salted pool and access to the sea) is 10 minutes from Funchal centre by bus - entrance is €5.00 per person.

Formosa Beach (a sand and pebble beach) is 15 minutes from Funchal centre by bus and access is free.

Barreirinha Beach is 15 minutes' walk from our hotel and entrance is €2.00 per person.

Public buses are about €1.95 per way. The fare is paid on the bus or you can buy prepaid tickets for €3.20 for two trips.

Clothing

July and August are the warmest months, though the islands are freshened by cooling sea breezes.

Waterproofs are essential at any time of the year, as are gloves, a hat and a warm jacket, jumper or fleece for higher altitudes and evenings.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes and trainers or sandals for relaxing. Plastic sandals are useful if swimming off lava rocks.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a day pack for personal items. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage - so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

We recommend taking a reusable water bottle, sunhat, sunscreen and sunglasses, and also a torch and first aid kit in case of emergencies. Bring a swimming costume, small dry bag and towel for swimming opportunities on this trip.

We will be visiting a local market on this trip, so we recommend bringing your own reusable shopping bag in order to avoid using plastic carrier bags.

During the included boat trip to the Desertas Islands sometimes there can be some wave motion on board, so if you suffer with sea sickness then please consider bringing anti-sickness medication with you.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approximately £20 of local currency for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Madeira

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

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.

Dinner price

£18

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

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Accommodation notes

On this centre based holiday our hotel is central located within Funchal city centre and is around 10 minutes' walk from the beach and 5 minutes from the Old Town. It's a recently renovated 4 star hotel. Facilities include a bar, rooftop outdoor swimming pool, restaurant and a laundry service (additional charges apply). Bedrooms have modern decor in neutral colours and each has cable television, mini bar, telephone, hairdryer, Wi-Fi (additional charges apply) and a safety deposit box (additional charges apply). All rooms are en suite and most have a shower over bath. Bedrooms do not have air-conditioning.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Portugal: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visitors must carry proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test result for arrival (test must be taken no more than 72 hours prior to the time of boarding your flight). If you do not have proof of a COVID-19 test, you will have to take a test at the airport and self-isolate at your accommodation until the results are known. This will take about 12 hours

All visitors must complete and submit a traveller questionnaire 12-48 hours before departure - <https://madeirasafe.com/#/login> . On this website you can upload proof of your negative COVID-19 test. On arrival, you will be subject to health screening. If you have not uploaded your COVID-19 test result, you will be asked to show it at the airport.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from

the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

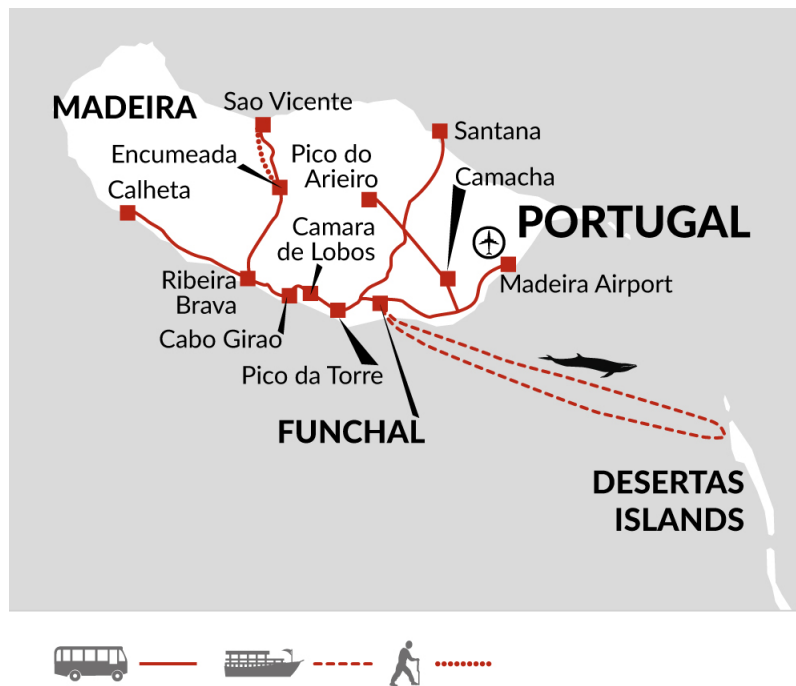
Madeira

Portugal

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**