

DAY 2 · FUNCHAL AND SURROUNDINGS

Funchal is a city full of cobblestone streets decorated with paving stone patterns stretching between the hillside facing the sea. You can start off by exploring the Monte neighbourhood, perched in the upper part of town. It is believed that Emperor Charles I of Austria was exiled in Monte during World War I. So, as you can imagine, it's full stories and anecdotes that deserve to be discovered at leisure. 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. Another recommendation is the Nostra Senhora do Monte church, situated 598 metres 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. You can drive here or take a cable car that will whisk you some 560 metres up the mountainside in just fifteen minutes. And as you can imagine, the views will keep your camera very busy. And to head back down, you can use the famous basket sledges. Just imagine whizzing down the steep streets in a kind of basket made from wood and wicker steered by two 'carreiros' who use their boots as brakes. 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. Once you arrive in the lower part of Funchal, feel free to spend your time however you want, as the capital of Madeira boasts a whole host of attractions. You can decide whether to visit its museums, take part in water sports, lay your towel down on its beautiful beaches, take a stroll around the port, discover the craftsmanship of their traditional shops... Make sure you pick up some of the famous Madeira embroidery! Stroll around the vibrant Mercado dos Lavradores (Farmers Market), located in the heart of the old town, and mingle with the locals. You'll notice that the stallholders are usually dressed in traditional clothes, which creates a fascinating and colourful atmosphere. Smell, admire, taste and discover the island's beautiful native flowers. The Bird of Paradise is one of the most typical species. If you want to take some home, you could always buy a bag of seeds. Today, we suggest heading to any of the city's trendy restaurants to try the tasty beef espetada, a kind of kebab usually served with fried sweetcorn. Overnight stay in Funchal.

DAY 3 · FUNCHAL AND SURROUNDINGS

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

The city captivates visitors with a wide range of museums, such as the Museum of Sacred Art, where you'll find works by Flemish painters and interesting altarpieces; the Museu da Quinta da Cruzes, which was the final residence of the island's coloniser, João Gonçalves Zarco; or the Museum of Contemporary Art, where you can view a fascinating collection of art. Football fans should head over to the CR7 Museum, which, as the name suggests, is dedicated to the famous footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, who was born here. It is home to all the sporting achievements of the Portuguese star. If you're travelling with kids, then the Story Centre Museum is for you; an interesting museum that uses sensory spaces to explain the history of the island and its people. Fancy some time outdoors? Head to the Ecological Park or take a catamaran trip on the ocean to try and spot whales, dolphins and seals. (Note: Activities not included). And if you like cooling off in unusual places, here in Funchal you can swim in the pools of the Lido Bathing Complex, formed using local volcanic rock. And to regain strength after so much activity, the best idea is to savour the local cuisine paired with some excellent Madeiran wine. Have you still not tried the incredible wine from the island? In Funchal, you have the chance to take a guided tour around Blandy's Wine Lodge, Madeira's oldest winery. 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. (Not included. Advance booking is recommended). 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.

Overnight stay in Funchal.

DAY 4 · FUNCHAL - SÃO VICENTE

Less than an hour's drive from Funchal is the flat mountain marsh of Paul da Serra, full of sheep and goats. This central plateau located at 1,400 metres above sea level comes as a real surprise, as you'll be so used to the cliffs and mountains of Madeira that you'll be taken aback by this unspoilt and barren area, populated only by animals and the windmills that supply energy to the area. It is the starting point for many trails that connect various points of the island such as Rabaçal, Risco and Bica da Cana through the Laurel forests, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Take care if you see signs for cows along the way, because you may well come across some wandering around. Very close to Paul da Serra is Boca da 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 admire one of the archipelago's finest vistas. From here you have some outstanding views of the north and south coast. The area is home to the ancient "Caminho Real", a treat for walkers who want to uncover the secrets of these mountains. Leaving the interior of the island, we head for the north coast to reach São Vicente, nestled between a valley and stunning mountains. It is famous for its caves formed by lava some 400,000 years ago. (Note: You can sign up for a guided tour that covers part of its 700-metre cave walk. The itinerary combines an attractive route past galleries and underground pools with an information centre narrating the history of the caves and volcanic activity. There is also the Volcanism Centre, perfect for those interested in finding out more about the mysteries of their geology. Admission not included). 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. For dinner, ask at your hotel about the best restaurant for a great meal accompanied by wonderful sea views. Overnight stay in São Vicente.

DAY 5 · SÃO VICENTE - PORTO MONIZ - SÃO VICENTE

Today, you'll leave São Vicente for a few hours to visit Porto Moniz, located just twenty kilometres away. It's incredible that you can see so much beauty in such little space. The road snakes around the coastline, flanked by cliffs and viewpoints that will tempt you to stop off along the way. Make sure your camera is well charged up, as you'll be taking a lot of photos. You'll get some of the most wonderful pictures of the whole trip, so take advantage and snap away! And don't forget to bring your swimwear and towel with you, as in Porto Moniz you'll find some of the most impressive lava pools in the world. While cooling off, you can admire Ilhéu Mole, a rock island just off the shore. Once out of the water, there's a pleasant drive along the avenue that connects the natural pools with the port. It will also take you to another of the town's must-visits. It's a fascinating aquarium, which can be a good plan if it's raining or if you fancy a change of activity. Looking for breathtaking views? In that case, head over to the Miradouro da Santa viewpoint, which commands panoramic views over the area. You can round the day off by visiting São João Baptista Fort, an 18th-century architectural wonder. At sunset, head back to São Vicente along the same road. Overnight stay in São Vicente.

DAY 6 · SÃO VICENTE - ARCO DE SÃO JORGE - SANTANA - RIBEIRO FRIO - SANTO DA SERRA

Today's route will take you eastwards, with Arco de São Jorge being the first stop-off. Leave São Vicente on the VE1 and pass through Ponta Delgada and Boaventura before reaching this small village of just over 500 inhabitants. If you're a wine lover or you're interested in the production process, make sure you visit the Wine and Vineyard Museum. The second attraction here is its rose garden. It features approximately 20,000 examples of different species of roses, making it one of the largest collections in the whole of Europe. At the end of the visit, you can keep driving on the same road. Cross through São Jorge with the ocean on the left and the Queimadas Forest Park on the right at all times. After driving for half an hour, you should arrive at 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. If you want to see it, you must book in advance. You can also admire the 300-metre waterfall that tumbles into a small fern pool at Caldeirão Verde (Green Cauldron). On with our journey. After half an hour's drive you'll come to Ribeiro Frio, a picture-postcard nature park in the north of the island. Entering is like penetrating the purest nature protected by Madeira's ever-majestic mountains. Many hikers are drawn here by its trails and the desire to discover their hidden secrets. With luck, you'll even be able to spot the trocax pigeon, the smallest bird endemic to this island. What is sure is that a visit to the trout farm and fish hatchery is not to be missed. One that should end in sampling a freshly prepared trout. Overnight stay in Santo da Serra.

● DAY 7 · SANTO DA SERRA - MACHICO - CANIÇAL - SANTO DA SERRA

Welcome to nature at its purest! Here you can breathe in one of Europe's freshest airs and admire the fauna and flora of the Quinta Santo António da Serra Park. Keep your eyes peeled, as you may well come across deer, horses and several native species of birds. This is the perfect opportunity to leave your watch behind in the car and wander along the paths and trails found here. There's so much green that even golf courses here bloom with joy. The ever-growing popularity of this sport has made Santo da Serra an essential destination for players wanting to improve their swing in a setting of extraordinary beauty. Culture and heritage lovers should visit the church of Santo Antonio da Serra. But don't forget that you've got two more stops scheduled for today. The first one is Machico, a landmark town in Madeira's history. Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira landed here in 1419 when they discovered Madeira. The Bay of Machico and its Banda Além, a 125-metre long beach of golden sand, is nestled in a valley and sheltered by the Pico do Facho. Despite being man-made, this is one of the most sought-after beaches on the island, as you can sunbathe in a laid-back and protected environment. In the historical quarter of Machico, you'll be awestruck by the Igreja da Nossa Senhora da Conceicao, a fortified church built between the 15th and 16th centuries. And in the fishermen's quarter, the imposing fortress of Nossa Senhora do Amparo is juxtaposed with the picturesque little houses in the area. 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! You can end the day unwinding on Prainha, a black-sand beach of volcanic origin. Our recommendations for eating out? Savouring the local fish specialties is always a great idea. Overnight stay in Santo da Serra.

● DAY 8 · SANTO DA SERRA - 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 Funchal.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Funchal.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in São Vicente.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in São Vicente.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Santo da Serra.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Santo da Serra.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Funchal direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.

Destinations Visited

Funchal



São Vicente



Porto Moniz



Santana



Arco de São Jorge



Santo da Serra



Machico



Canical



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.