

MADEIRA: TREK THE ISLAND self-guided

Your Madeira walking holiday



Gateway to the Atlantic and island of flowers, Madeira is renowned for its mild climate, exuberant vegetation and natural heritage. Situated between Casablanca and Ghardaïa, with volcanic mountains carved by erosion, this land is influenced by the Gulf Stream, which brings the island mildness and humidity. As a result, the fertile soil allows a particularly exuberant, dense and varied vegetation to flourish, blending the riches of the Mediterranean and the Tropics to give us this floating garden of the Atlantic (over 5,000 plant species).

This largely itinerant tour begins gently along the spectacular and colourful coastal paths from the eastern tip of São Lourenço. Then it's on to the real heart of Madeira via the levadas that penetrate the lush Madeiran forest, the wild, craggy peaks of pico Ruivo and the balcony paths to the desert plateau of Paúl da Serra. The ascent of pico Grande offers superb panoramic views before reaching the bay of Funchal.

🕒 9 days

👤 Self-guided / without a guide

🚚 With or without baggage transport

🏠 Accommodation : Hotel ***

🧭 Level : ***

💰 From : 650€

You will like

- Maximum freedom on Madeira Island
- Spectacular coastal paths and levadas in the heart of the primary forest
- Volcanic ridges and exceptional panoramas on the island's slopes
- Comfortable hotels for a good recuperation

The route

Day 1

ARRIVAL IN MADEIRA

You will be met at Funchal airport and taken to your hotel in Machico, a small town with a protected bay where Portuguese sailors landed in 1419. Transfer by taxi or minibus (10 min). Night + breakfast in a small family hotel in Machico.

Day 2

PICO DO FACHO - CANIÇAL - POINTE DE SAO LOURENÇO - MACHICO

A first day of acclimatisation to discover the eastern tip of the island. In the morning, set off on foot eastwards to Pico do Facho, overlooking Machico, from where fires were once lit to warn the inhabitants of approaching pirates. The path then descends to the port of Caniçal, where a museum reminds us that sperm whales were once hunted here. Here you can enjoy a meal. Short journey by public bus (10 mins) to Baía d'Abra (this bus journey is unavoidable when crossing a free port zone). In the afternoon, hike to the end of the island to the rocky, narrow and desolate tip of São Lourenço, in stark contrast to the rest of the island's landscape (entrance fee: €1). The multicoloured volcanic rocks here are exposed in cliffs gnawed by the waves. This area is a Natura 2000 reserve. At the heart of the reserve, the warden's house is located in an oasis, close to which is a cove with a "portinho" (a place to moor a boat) ideal for swimming (crystal-clear water in an area protected from the swell). On the way back, at -Prainha-, you can enjoy a swim on one of the island's few black sand beaches, with a refreshment area and toilets. Return public bus from Baía d'Abra to Machico (30 min). Night + breakfast in a small family-run hotel in Machico.

5 h walk / 13.5km / Elevation: +/- 730m

Day 3

MACHICO - BOCA DO RISCO - NORD COAST PATH - PORTO DA CRUZ

From Machico, there is a short climb up to the Levada do Caniçal, which runs into the Ribeira Seca. Climb up to the Boca do Risco pass, where there is a magnificent panoramic view of the north coast, the tip of São Lourenço and the island of Porto Santo in the distance. An incredible coastal path cut into the cliffs and overhanging the sea by more than 200 m leads to Porto da Cruz, passing through the farming hamlet of Larano. The small coastal village of Porto da Cruz, in the north-east of the island, offers a municipal seawater swimming pool in summer (entrance €1.50 with sanitary facilities), while the rest of the year, a few surfers take to the waves at the foot of the cliffs. This is also where you'll find one of the island's two traditional rum factories, which we recommend you visit (free) and sample the puncha (for a fee). Overnight half-board in a ** hotel in Porto da Cruz.

4.5 h walk / 17km / Elevation: +/- 580m

Day 4

PORTO DA CRUZ - PORTELA - LEVADA DO FURADO - REIBEIRO FRIO

Climb through narrow streets and cobbled paths to the Portela pass, 600 m above sea level. A good path starts here, bordering the Levada do Furado, which flows swiftly and clearly eastwards, and which you will follow upstream. The views from this route are increasingly sumptuous. The high peaks of the island are opposite and the path, which is wide at first, becomes narrower and then runs alongside deep ravines. Well-protected by tree heathers and a few fences, the path penetrates the UNESCO World Heritage laurisilva with a touch of adventure. Arrive at Ribeiro Frio, where a short round trip to Balcões offers an extraordinary balcony overlooking the Faja de Nogueiras and the island's great peaks. Back in Ribeiro Frio, visit the forest park and the aquaculture station, whose main purpose is to produce trout for restocking the levadas on Madeira Island. In the late afternoon, transfer back to Porto da Cruz (30 min). Overnight half-board in a hotel** in Porto da Cruz.

6 h walk / 18.5km / Elevation: + 900m - 875m

Day 5

TRAVERSÉE DES CRÊTES / PICO DO ARIEIRO - PICO RUIVO - ENCUMEADA

Morning transfer by taxi or private minibus to Pico do Arieiro (45 mins), or on request to Achada do Texeira (35 mins). Discover the island's most beautiful peaks, from Pico do Arieiro (1,818 m) to Pico Ruivo (1,862 m, the island's highest point) via the Miradouro Ninho da Manta (1,798 m). Steps and paths cut into the rock, galleries and tunnels! A magical journey along the sharp, multi-coloured ridges that often emerge from the sea of clouds. Arrive at Pico Ruivo (1,862 m) before setting off on the long ridge that bisects Madeira from east to west as far as Encumeada (1,000 m), at the gateway to the Paul da Serra plateau. The trail wanders along a ridge line, between passes and peaks, passing Pico das Eirinhas (1,649 m), Pico Casado (1,725 m), Pico Jorge (1,691 m) and finally the Col das Torrinhas (1,400 m). Overnight half-board in a three-star hotel in Encumeada.

7 h walk / 19km / Difference in altitude: + 1060m - 1860m

Variant: This walk can be shortened by a morning transfer to Achada do Teixeira (instead of Pico do Arieiro). You then begin a short ascent to Pico Ruivo. The route to Encumeada is the same as above.

6 h walk / 14km / + 560m - 920m

Day 6

LEVADAS DA SERRA AND DO NORTE

In the morning, a short minibus transfer (10 minutes) organised by your hotelier. Drive along one of Madeira's most charming levadas, the levada da Serra, which clings to the slopes of the Paul da Serra plateau and offers sumptuous views of the Ribeira de São Vicente on the island's north coast. The return to Encumeada is via the Levada do Norte, alternating between tunnels and wild areas in the heart of the laurel forest. Overnight half-board in a three-star hotel in Encumeada.

5.5 h walk / 14.5km / Elevation: + 225m - 660m

Day 7

BOCA DA CORRIDA - PICO GRANDE - CURRAL DAS FREIRAS - FUNCHAL

In the morning, taxi or minibus (45 mins) from the Hotel Encumeada to the Boca da Corrida pass. Hike towards Pico Grande along a balcony path over the Ribeira Brava to the Boca do Cerro pass. Descent along a steep path into the Curral das Freiras caldera, home to fruit trees and nestled in a mountain cirque. Bus to Funchal and accommodation in a hotel in the city centre. At the end of the hike, public bus (1 h) from Colmeal to Funchal. Night + breakfast in a *** hotel in Funchal.

3 h walk / 7.3km / Elevation: + 190m - 790m

Variant: From Boca do Cerro, you can climb the Pico Grande (1,654 m) and back. This summit offers an incomparable panorama of the island and the entire Picos range. An alpine route with a handrail to the summit.

4 hrs 30 mins / 9km / Elevation: + 525m - 1100m

Day 8

FUNCHAL

Free day in Funchal, with a choice of: discovering the market, strolling through the old town centre and its narrow streets, discovering wine cellars and tasting the 4 varieties of Madeira wine, visiting gardens (botanical, tropical, municipal, etc.), the marina, the Monte cable car, descending in -carros- the large wicker baskets that used to be used as a means of transport down the island's slopes! Night + breakfast in a 3-star hotel in Funchal.

Option: It is also possible to do another hike on the heights of the bay of Funchal:

- between Monte and the Botanical Gardens (5.8 km, 1 hr 40 mins, ascent 160 m, descent 430 m)

- or between Camacha and Monte (13.8 km, 3 h 45, ascent 180 m, descent 330 m).

These walks are accessible by public bus.

Optional: 3-hour trip on a catamaran sailing boat to see the cetaceans and the coastal cliffs of Cabo Girão.

Day 9

END OF STAY IN FUNCHAL

Departure from the island: taxi or minibus to the airport according to your flight schedule (20 minutes).

The programme has been drawn up according to the latest information available at the time of writing; imponderables are

always possible and situations beyond our control may alter the programme.

The trip

LEVEL ***

This is a demanding hike for good walkers, with 5 to 7 hours of actual walking per day. The positive daily difference in altitude ranges from 600 to 1060 m, with some steep climbs, sometimes involving log or stone steps. The descents can also be steep, and generally do not exceed 1000 m, except on day 5, when the long version has a cumulative difference in altitude of 1860 m.

This trip is organised in collaboration with our local partners, who share our commitment to offering you an authentic holiday.

ROAD BOOK

- 1 route map (list of accommodation and services provided)
- 1 map of the island (1:30,000 scale)
- 1 hiking guide
- 1 day-by-day itinerary description

ACCOMODATION

- 2 nights in a residencial or ** hotel in Machico (close to shops and beach)
- 2 nights in a ** hotel in Porto da Cruz, facing the ocean (or, depending on availability, 2 nights in a comfortable hostel in Ribeiro Frio, in the forest park)
- 2 nights in a 3-star hotel in Encumeada (the Encumeada hotel is simple but has the advantage of being located in the middle of the mountains with a beautiful panorama, at the arrival or departure point of the hikes)
- 2 nights in a *** hotel in Funchal (in the heart of the city)

In all cases, rooms for 2 or 3 people or single rooms (with supplement)

MEALS

- breakfast in all accommodation
- 4 dinners included in accommodation from day 3 to day 6
- 2 picnics provided in Encumeada on days 6 and 7

Please inform us about your food allergies and special diets **at the time of booking.**

We do our best to accommodate special diets (gluten-free, vegetarian, etc.). However, we encourage you to bring some additional products for your own picnics.

WEATHER

The weather is relatively dry on the south coast, wetter in the mountains and on the north coast. Temperatures are noticeably cooler at higher altitudes (snow sometimes falls on the highest peaks in winter).

In Funchal :

- June to September: 20°C to 25°C
- October to May: 15°C to 20°C

Practical information

ACCESS TO THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

Flights from Paris to Funchal and back on scheduled or low-cost airlines. Flights available from Nantes, Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Marseille, Nice and Basel-Mulhouse, with or without a stopover in Lisbon. Flights also available from Brussels and Geneva.

Flights not included.

ACCOMMODATION BEFORE OR AFTER

We can book you extra nights in a *** hotel or **** in Funchal.

INSURANCE

In accordance with regulations, we are covered by Professional Liability Insurance. Under no circumstances, we can replace your personal civil liability.

The repatriation insurance EUROP ASSISTANCE that we offer is dedicated to French speaking people living in Europe. If it is not your case, we advise you to subscribe to another travel insurance which will cover you in case of injury and repatriation during your trek.

If you chose to take out repatriation insurance with EUROP ASSISTANCE whom we propose, Altitude Mont Blanc will only serve as an intermediary between the client and the insurer. We cannot influence either party. We adhere to strict conditions of sale. You are responsible for compliance with the reporting procedures of any incident.

Before making any decision, **contact EUROP ASSISTANCE.**

Dates & prices

DEPARTURES AND PRICES

9 days / 8 nights tour, choice of departures from 01/04 to 31/10/2024

FULLY BOOKED IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

Without luggage transport from 01/06 to 31/07 and from 01/09 to 31/10

1250 € for 1 person
810 € for 2 people
700 € for 3 to 4 people
680 € for 5 to 6 people
650 € for 7 to 8 people

Without luggage transport from 01/04 to 31/05 and from 01/08 to 31/08

1280 € for 1 person
850 € for 2 people
740 € for 3 to 4 people
720 € for 5 to 6 people
690 € for 7 to 8 people

With luggage transport from 01/06 to 31/07 and from 01/09 to 31/10

1460 € for 1 person
920 € for 2 people
770 € for 3 to 4 people
730 € for 5 to 6 people
690 € for 7 to 8 people

With luggage transport from 01/04 to 31/05 and from 01/08 to 31/08

1490 € for 1 person
960 € for 2 people
800 € for 3 to 4 people
770 € for 5 to 6 people
730 € for 7 to 8 people

Prices per person

Options available :

- Single room supplement (required for single departure)
- Optional whale-watching trip on a catamaran in Funchal

THE PRICE

The price includes :

- Accommodation with breakfast
- 4 dinners from day 3 to day 6
- 2 picnics
- Transfers by taxi or minibus as mentioned in the programme
- Luggage transport between accommodations according to chosen option
- Route Book, 1 copy per enrolment pack
- 1 hiking topo-guide with subsidiary suggestions

The price does not include :

- Le voyage aller-retour de votre domicile au point de rendez-vous et dispersion.
- Les repas en dehors de ceux indiqués comme compris
- Les bus publics, compter environ 6 € pour l'ensemble du voyage
- Les boissons et dépenses personnelles
- Les visites
- L'assurance
- Les frais d'inscription

The price applies from departure to end point.

Equipment and baggage

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

For hiking :

- for maximum comfort, opt for a "multi-layer" clothing system: warm underwear (tights + jersey) such as "carline" or "capilene" (hollow fibres that wick away perspiration) + sweatshirt or fleece jacket + mountain jacket and overtrousers with a waterproof, breathable membrane (such as "gore tex" or equivalent) for bad weather.

In general, and outside hot climates and countries, avoid cotton, which retains moisture close to the body (and dries with difficulty), in favour of suitable synthetic materials.

- canvas trousers - shorts - T-shirts
- 6 to 7 pairs of hiking socks
- 1 rain cape covering the hiker and the rucksack. If you have very technical tracksuits (see above), you can cover just the rucksack with a rain cover. An umbrella is less practical, especially if it's windy or stormy...
- 1 sun hat, ideally a Saharan-style cap with a peak and neck protection
- 1 scarf to protect you from the sun and/or wind
- 1 hat and 1 pair of gloves, depending on the season and altitude: always keep them at the bottom of your pack.

For the stage:

- a change of clothes and comfortable shoes
- earplugs or ear plugs
- minimum toiletries + towel + swimming costume

All in all, your clothes should be adapted to the season and the region you've chosen.

Miscellaneous equipment:

For hiking :

- 1 pair of hiking boots (with a waterproof, breathable membrane, such as "gore tex" or equivalent) that you feel comfortable in! New shoes should be "broken in" before setting off on a hike by wearing them a few weeks beforehand to avoid the inconvenience of blisters and overheating...
- 1 (or even 2) pairs of sunglasses with at least factor 3 lenses
- 1 large, sturdy plastic bag to wrap your clothes and belongings in your rucksack (in case of heavy rain)
- 1 water bottle, preferably insulated, minimum 1 litre. Drinking is essential when hiking, so 2 water bottles of 1 to 1.5 litres will not be a luxury in the summer and/or in dry, hot regions.
- 1 folding Swiss Army knife (to put in your hold luggage) + cutlery + cup
- 1 Tupperware-type bowl with lid for picnics
- toilet paper and tissues
- 1 pair of telescopic poles, optional, but they help you balance and lighten your body weight on the way down, and help you on the way up by giving rhythm to your walk and providing extra thrust.
- 1 headlamp for the tunnels and spare batteries
- 1 pouch to hold your papers and valuables: passport or identity card, insurance policy, health insurance card, vaccination certificate, plane or train tickets, credit card, money, etc.)
- 1 small personal first-aid kit (please note that this list is not exhaustive and should be adapted to suit your own medical needs): pre-cut sterile dressings, local antiseptic for external use (wounds), Elastoplast and/or double skin (blisters), Paracetamol-type analgesic, Antidiarrhoeal and intestinal antiseptic, Antisapsmodic, Antihistamine (allergies), saline solution or eye drops, light sleeping pill, high protection sun cream for skin and lips, Biaffin-type moisturiser (sunburn and burns), mosquito repellent cream or spray, Arnica Montana granules 9 CH (aches and pains). ..
- 1 mosquito repellent spray (e.g. "5 sur 5 tropic")

For the stage :

- 1 pair of light sandals

TOUR WITH LUGGAGE TRANSPORT

- 1 rucksack (30 to 35 litres) with an airy back, adjustable and fitted with a waist belt, for the day's provisions, water bottle, protective clothing, papers and telephone...
- 1 travel bag for a change of clothes for the week, to be left with the transporters. Please note! Only one bag per person, not exceeding 20 kg.

TOUR WITHOUT LUGGAGE TRANSFER

- 1 rucksack (approx. 50 litres), ventilated, adjustable and fitted with a waist belt, to hold your spare items, food for the

day, water bottle, rain gear, personal first-aid kit, etc. Your bag should be placed in the hold for the plane (bring a small, light, compact bag to take with you in the cabin with your papers). As this is a hike in a hotel, sheets, towels and soap are provided, so you can hike light, bringing only technical spares.

Details

HOW TO REGISTER

- Online: www.altitude-montblanc.com

- By telephone: +33 (0)4 50 79 09 16

-Please provide your details

- Surname, First Name, Date of birth
- Address
- Email
- Telephone
- Mobile

Please specify whether you wish to take out an optional cancellation insurance (4.2% of the tour price).

On receipt of your registration we will email an invoice (per couple) with a request for a deposit of 30% in association with your account details at Altitude Mont-Blanc ('My Account'). Payment can be made by credit card, bank transfer or by cheque. On receipt of your deposit you will receive a registration confirmation. The balance must be paid one month before departure without a reminder from us. For self-guided tours, we will then send your tour pack (includes maps, descriptive book etc.)

Our terms and conditions of sale can be found on our website.

Registration by mail form

Last name:

PRENOM:

Date of birth:

Address:

Phone number:

Mobile phone number:

Email address:

SEJOUR DEMANDE:

Number of days:

Insurance:

Price:

x 30% =

Deposit

Locality where signed:

Date

Signature:

Return with your deposit to:
Altitude Mont-Blanc, 62 Passage du Nant Devant, 74110 Montriond, FRANCE