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# Tour around the Island of Madeira

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## ABOUT



Photo: Turismo da Madeira

### Tour around the Island of Madeira

**Despite its small surface area, Madeira is rich in majestic sceneries of rare beauty. The best way to get to know its charms is to rent a car and set off to discover this floating garden!**

Heading west from **Funchal**, you will discover the typical fishing village of **Câmara de Lobos** and the **Girão Cape**, the highest headland in Europe and the second highest in the world at 580m.

You will also find here the distinctive parish of **Curral das Freiras**. Located in a deep valley, Curral das Freiras boasts one of the most striking landscapes on the island, whose dizzying views (over 500 metres high from the **Eira do Serrado** lookout point) take any visitor's breath away.

Travelling on to the west, you will reach **Ribeira Brava** before climbing up to Encumeada along a belvedere-dotted route. Another alternative is to head to the sunny shores of Ponta do Sol and Calheta which abound in beaches that invite swimming and diving. You can also visit the **Casa das Mudanças Arts Centre** which offers an extensive cultural programme all year round. For sportspeople, the beaches in the picturesque towns of Jardim and Paul do Mar offer excellent waves for surfing.

You will then climb to **Paul da Serra**, the largest plateau in Madeira, where you should take a break to admire the stunning view over the hillsides. Going on to **Porto Moniz**, you can regain your strength with a reinvigorating plunge into the famous natural rock pools. If you have **children** with you, a good option is to visit the **Madeira Aquarium**.

The tour continues to **S. Vicente** along a road dotted with waterfalls, where there is a marked contrast between the imposing green and the crystalline blue of the sea. Here you can visit the **Caves and Volcanism Centre** and the Rota da Cal Museum or simply stroll around the alleys of this pleasant town.

You then have two choices: either climb up to Encumeada again to admire the exuberant vegetation of the **Laurissilva Forest** or head on to **Santana** to discover small viewpoints amongst beautiful valleys and mountains.

In Santana, you can visit the typical houses, the **Theme Park** and the Queimadas area which is the starting point for wonderful walks, such as Caldeirão Verde. As you wind your way down to Faial, you'll be surprised once again by the beauty and majesty of the mountains.

On arrival in Faial, you can go on to Machico or continue into the interior of the island, along the road to Ribeiro Frio, Poiso and Pico do Areeiro. This peak is the third highest point on the island (1818m) and boasts some lovely rock formations soaring up like timeless statues.

Once in **Machico**, **Canical** and **Ponta de São Lourenço**, the easternmost point on the island, are well worth a visit.

Back in Funchal, the **views out to the Desert Islands at Ponta do Garajau are not to be missed**, and neither is the fabulous panorama over of the bay from the São Gonçalo viewpoint.

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#### **USEFUL INFORMATION**

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