

# Levada Trails and Peaks of Madeira

Trip Code: MWW

Version: MWW Levada Trails and Peaks of Madeira



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike the 'Balcony Walk' between Pico Ruivo & Pico do Arieiro, Madeira's highest peaks
- Explore Madeira's west, east and centre on the island's best day walks
- Guided walking each day and all meals included
- Enjoy Madeira's unique and abundant flora - a botanist's dream!

**AT A GLANCE**

- 6 days walking
- Max. altitude - 1862 metres
- Join at Funchal

**ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS**

- All meals included
- 3 nights Hotel
- 4 nights Hotel with swimming pool

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

## Introduction

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With its rugged coastal scenery, impressive volcanic geology and lush levada trails, the Atlantic island of Madeira is a walker's paradise and a haven for keen botanists. Moving around Madeira and staying in different villages, we enjoy ever-changing sea views and have access to a variety of super day-walks. Following age-old paths and also hiking alongside Madeira's amazing network of irrigation channels known as levadas, we walk and hike through terraced farmland, explore extensive laurel forest, negotiate levada tunnels and cross jagged green ridges to find the best viewpoints. The scenery is far more varied than you may imagine and the floral diversity is remarkable! Highlights of this Madeira walking holiday include the enchanting green valley of Riberio do Poco, the dramatic mountain views at Encumeada and the spectacular trail that links Madeira's highest peaks, Pico Ruivo (1862m) and Pico do Arieiro (1810m). With daily walks of between 4 and 6 hours and plenty of time to enjoy our atmospheric sea-side locations and comfortable hotels, this is a brilliant walking holiday in Madeira.

### Is this holiday for you?

For this holiday we have picked the best walks on Madeira. We'll explore the island on a series of good day hikes and walks, any of which can be considered as optional. The walks themselves are mostly on good trails often following the famous 'levadas' or irrigation channels, but there are exciting sections including levada tunnels (the longest is just over 1km!), which lead us deep inside the hillside, and some places where there is considerable exposure (normally with a protective fence). Generally each day's walk will be from 5 - 6 hours, although the walk along the Levado Ribeira da Janela will be a little longer. To fully explore the island's volcanic ridges and dramatic coastline we also need to be prepared for a reasonable amount of ascent and descent (on average around 650m ascent and 850m descent per day). Some walks can be cut short with a short taxi ride if you are feeling a little tired. On the majority of days we will also finish at a cafe where we can enjoy a coffee (or cold beer!) whilst we unwind after our walk. Our accommodation each night is in well appointed hotels, the majority of which have swimming pools where we can cool off after the walk, and simple spa facilities to which we have free access! Evenings will be spent enjoying the good food and, of course, sampling the local Madeiran wine!

# Itinerary

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## DAY 1

**Meet at the group hotel in Funchal. A single timed transfer from Madeira Airport is provided.**

Meet at the group hotel in Funchal. Flight time allowing you can spend the afternoon relaxing at one of the nearby cafes, wandering around the port or the Mercado dos Lavradores or just enjoying the seaviews from the roof terrace.

Meals: **D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 2

**Curral das Freiras, via Boca do Cerro (1300m) to Boca da Encumeada (1007m).**

After breakfast at the hotel we take our picnic lunch and transfer (35 mins) to Curral das Freiras (650m), which lies deep in a steep sided valley. Our first walk starts in the shade of the chestnut, eucalyptus and pine, trees as we zigzag upwards. Soon coming into broom and gorse scrub we follow a stoney path carved from the rock before reaching a viewpoint where we can see Pico Ruivo and Pico do Arieiro (sometimes spelt Areeiro) across the valley. Further we reach today's high point at Boca do Cerro (1300m). The panoramic paths offers wonderful views into the central massif and the Paul da Serra plateau. We then continue in a northerly direction along the ridge where the path is flanked by bracken and broom with few trees. We cross over a stone-arched bridge which spans the rocky gorge on the Ribeiro do Poco continuing to Curral Jangao. We then pass by various peaks and come into the shade of the laurels and ascent a slope dominated by eucalyptus and we cross the stream at Poco. The path then opens up again and we have fine views of Pico Grande before we cross the pass of Boca da Encumeada (1007m) and then arrive at our accommodation.

Note- The path between Boca do Cerro and Encumeada is currently closed for works and is expected to reopen in April 2024. During this time we will begin our walk at Fajã Escura (Curral das Freiras) and end at Boca da Corrida where we will be transferred to our accommodation for the evening.

Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Ascent**  
870M



**Descent**  
570M



**Time**  
6 hrs walking



**Distance**  
14KM

**DAY 3****Levadas of Lombada da Ponta do Sol**

Our day begins with a transfer to the upper part of Ponta do Sol, a village on the sunny south coast where the production of sugar cane used to hold great significance. Enjoy a delightful hike along two parallel levadas, offering scenic views of the Ribeira da Ponta do Sol valley, nestled between the high plateau and the ocean.

Starting with a leisurely stroll along the Levada dos Moinhos, we make our way to the bottom of the valley, surrounded by vibrant endemic vegetation. Ascending to the upper Levada Nova, we pass behind a waterfall and encounter an impressive geological formation. Upon crossing the tunnel, breathtaking views of the valley, sky, and ocean unfold before us. We then descend through banana plantations to the charming village of Ponta do Sol, situated by a pebble beach.

From Ponta do Sol, we transfer to Porto Moniz (50 minutes) on the north-west tip of the island, where we will spend the next two nights. Porto Moniz is renowned for its natural swimming pools which are formed by volcanic rock, conveniently located right in front of our hotel.

Meals: **B L D**

**Accommodation**

Hotel with swimming pool

**Ascent**

120M

**Descent**

450M

**Time**

4 hrs walking

**Distance**

11KM

**DAY 4****Explore the Rabaçal area with a walk to Risco Waterfall, Lagoa do Vento, and Levada do Alecrim.**






A 45-minute transfer brings us to the south slope, where our scenic journey begins. After passing through a long tunnel, we enter an enchanting world of greenery and water in the Rabaçal area, home to several significant levadas meandering through the UNESCO World Heritage endemic forest known as laurisilva, or laurel forest.

Embarking on the Risco levada, a Madeira walking classic, we traverse the path to reach the captivating Risco Waterfall. Our journey continues as we climb to the mountain lake of Lagoa do Vento. Following a rejuvenating break, we ascend further along the serene Levada do Alecrim, leading us to another picturesque lake. Situated on the Paul da Serra plateau, this levada guides us to the conclusion of our walk.

Concluding our exploration we transfer back to our hotel.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel with swimming pool		<b>Ascent</b> 450M		<b>Descent</b> 100M		<b>Time</b> 5 hrs walking
	<b>Distance</b> 12KM						

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## DAY 5

### Achadas da Cruz coastal walk. Transfer to Santana.

We drive approx 15 mins to the most westerly point of Madeira to reach the starting point of our walk at Achadas da Cruz. Today's walk is splendid with total immersion in the Madeira countryside. The narrow path starts at the cable car station, which is used to transport wine and other products up and down the steep slopes to and from the fertile soils near the sea called faja. It is also not unusual to see farmers coming up and down with their crops. We walk along the coast to the beach not far from where the explorers Joao Goncalves Zarco and Tristao Vaz Teixeira anchored their ships in 1419. We ascent up and along the Vereda de Tristao river to a viewpoint where we have magnificent views of the sea, cliffs and Santa village. From here we descent along an old paved path to reach Porto Moniz. From here we transfer along the coast to our next stop in the pretty town of Santana in preparation for our walk tomorrow. Santana has classic Madeirense A-frame homes prettily painted with thatched roofs to the ground.

Meals: **B L D**

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	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel with swimming pool		<b>Ascent</b> 500M		<b>Descent</b> 400M		<b>Time</b> 4 hrs walking
	<b>Distance</b> 10KM						






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## DAY 6

### Along the Levada Caldeirao, via the Caldeirao Verde waterfalls, to Ilha (350m). Return to Santana.

We depart from the coast after breakfast and drive for 15 minutes to Pico das Pedras (880m). Our walk begins on an easy path along the Levada do Caldeirão Verde, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and sea. We pass charming thatched houses and enter the valley surrounded by ferns and lush, rainforest-like flora. Along the way, we encounter the stunning Caldeirão Verde waterfalls, which can be particularly dramatic after rainfall. The descent is steep, taking us down log steps through heather, into the woods, and eventually past agricultural fields and picturesque houses to Ilha (350m). Here, we may have time for a coffee or a glass of refreshing wine before returning in the vehicle for the 15-minute journey back to our hotel in Santana. Please note that in wet weather, the 4-kilometer descent to Ilha can be slippery. In such conditions, we may opt to walk the route in reverse.

Meals: **B L D**





	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel with swimming pool		<b>Ascent</b> 90M		<b>Descent</b> 500M		<b>Time</b> 6 hrs walking
	<b>Distance</b> 15KM						

## DAY 7

### Ascent of Pic Ruivo (1862m) and Pico do Arieiro (1810m). Transfer to Funchal.

After our week walking we have the climax with the highest point on the island Pico Ruivo (1862m). Leaving Santana after breakfast we drive for 30mins to Achadas do Teixeira (1592m). Quickly we reach a ridge with great views ahead of the mountains, and down through the valleys to the sea. Ahead of us we see the peaks of Torres as we walk along our path through the boulders and rocky outcrops, and across sections of bare pumice. We pass the refuge (possibly stopping for some refreshments) before we continue up the heather-clad slopes to the summit of Pico Ruivo, the top of Madeira. Splendid views surround us of the rock, verdant valleys and blue sea. After the excitement of our achievement our walk continues on an exposed section of path deeply cut into the cliff face before zigzagging up to the base of Torres and a high level path is found. We then descend through the vegetated slopes and through a tunnel to Pico do Gato and then a brief but sharp ascent Pico Do Cidrao. All along this route the views are marvellous. Descending and saying goodbye to the mountains we arrive at Pico do Arieiro (1810m). Our waiting vehicle then takes us back the 35 minutes to Funchal and our hotel. Tonight we have a celebratory dinner in Funchal town.

Meals: **B L D**

	<b>Accommodation</b> Hotel		<b>Ascent</b> 890M		<b>Descent</b> 690M		<b>Time</b> 5 - 6 hrs walking		<b>Distance</b> 9KM
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## DAY 8

### Departure day. A single timed transfer to Madeira Airport is provided.

The holiday ends after breakfast. A single timed group transfer to the airport is provided. Flight time allowing you can spend the morning exploring Funchal.

Meals: **B**

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All accommodation as described
- All meals

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for local staff
- Airport transfers (other than group transfers)
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

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### TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

The group will meet at the group hotel in Funchal.

There will be a single timed transfer from the airport to the group hotel departing in the early afternoon on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary there will be a single timed transfer from the hotel to the airport.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available and there is a reliable airport bus service.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 8.



## Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Madeiran food is fresh and delicious. Many of the local dishes are prepared from ingredients grown on the island or caught from the sea. Popular dishes include:

Espetada - Grilled beef marinated in garlic, bayleaf and rock salt and cooked on a skewer made from local laurel wood.

Espada com banana e maracuja (black scabbard fish with banana and passionfruit) - This unusual sounding dish features on just about every menu!

Bolo del Mel (honey cake) - This deliciously dark and dense slab of treacle-filled goodness is Madeira's oldest and most moreish dessert and is great with coffee. There is an active coffee culture in Madeira and one of Funchal's small cafes are the perfect place to relax and enjoy your first 'Bica' of the week. A Bica is the Portuguese equivalent of an Espresso, but served in a slightly more generous portion and smoother to the taste.

Madeira wine is world famous and there are vineyards all over the island. However there are also many local wines which are well priced and of reasonable quality – and it will always be plentiful!

Evening meals will be taken either at the hotel or a nearby local restaurant and there will be plenty of opportunity to try all of Madeira's most famous dishes during the holiday.

Breakfasts will be continental with tea, coffee, bread, jams and fruit.

You will be given a packed lunch to carry on each day's walk. This normally consists of a sandwich made with cheese, tomatoes, olives, ham or other meats, or sometimes a pasta salad, plus some fruit. We recommend that you take a small tupperware box (and spork) to carry your lunch.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.



## Accommodation

The group will spend 2 nights at a hotel in Funchal, within walking distance of the port, city centre and market, 1 night in a hotel in the mountains at Encumeada, 2 nights in a sea front hotel in Porto Moniz, with an indoor pool and adjacent to the natural swimming pools, and 2 nights in a hotel with a pool in Santana. All hotels are comfortable 2/3 star, with en suite rooms and well located.

Accommodation is based on twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

## Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

## Spending Money

We estimate that approximately €100-150 should be sufficient to cover all personal expenses including tips for your guide. If you buy many drinks in the afternoon/evenings you may need slightly more cash. Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs at the airport and the main towns, and credit cards can also be used to pay for most goods and services.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We recommend that you decide levels of tipping and give any tips as a group rather than from individual group members.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

### Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

## GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

## Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

## Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 3 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

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## Climate

Madeira has a mild sub-tropical climate, with the Gulf Stream ensuring pleasant warm temperatures all year round. The hottest months are July and August with average temperatures around 23 °C, in February and November the maximum temperature is around 18-20 °C. There would be no beautiful greenery in Madeira without a little rain, however there are many micro climates across the island, with the southern lowlands being the driest and the mountainous northern parts receiving the most rain. Madeira generally has sunshine all year around, with May through to September being the driest months with very little rain. October through to March can be wetter, but with still just an average of 6 days of rain per month.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](https://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Walking in Madeira - Cicerone Guide, Paddy Dillon Walk!
- Madeira - Discovery Walking Guides, Shirley & Mike Whitehead
- Madeira Landmark Guide, Richard Sale
- Madeira & Porto Santo - Cadogan Guides Madeira - Insight Guide

## Maps

### Madeira - Freytag-Berndt und Artaria KG, 1:40,000

Large, contoured road map with hiking trails and tourist information marked.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

### You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Socks

- Spare laces
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer (wicking) shirts
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Lightweight windproof/waterproof jacket
- Lightweight gloves
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack c. 25 - 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries (on some days we will be walking through tunnels)
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Tupperware box for lunch salad (approx 15x10x3cm)
- Plastic fork/knife/spoon for eating lunch

- Washbag and toiletries
- Basic First Aid Kit. Including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

**The following items are optional:**

- Trainers or sandals
- Gaiters
- Shorts
- Swimwear (most hotels have pools)
- Towel (for swimming)
- Small plastic cup for tea/coffee at lunch (guide carries a flask)
- Antibacterial handwash
- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- Insect repellent - (DEET)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

**Cotswold Outdoor**



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.  
[-> Find out more](#)

## Land Only Information

We sell this holiday on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The holiday starts/ends at the hotel in Funchal and a single timed transfer is provided from/to Madeira Airport.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

We're proud of all the 5\* reviews for this holiday, which includes the best walks on Madeira. With overnights in 4 different locations, this is a real exploration of the island. Madeira is a destination that exceeds expectations.... [Click here to read about KE's Tom Partington's first hand experience hiking the levadas and peaks of Madeira.](#)

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change