

MADEIRA WALKS

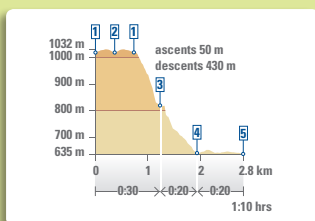
37 selected walks in all regions of the island
with downloadable GPS tracks and waypoints

OLIVER BRED A



Walks are star rated to indicate level of difficulty

- ★ Suitable for everyone including motivated children of school age.
- ★★ More challenging, but suitable for any reasonably fit adult or child of school age.
- ★★★ For the more serious walker.
- ★★★★ For seasoned hikers with suitable experience. Any special requirements – such as a head for heights – are indicated in the routes' information boxes.



Route profiles

The route profiles show walking time, distance and altitude for each walk, including total ascents and descents giving you a useful overview of each walk to a uniform scale (1 cm = 1 km).

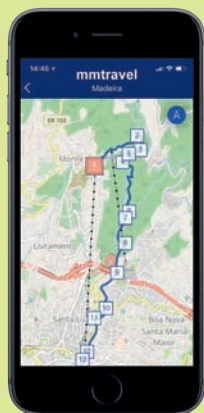
Maps

The 39 topographical hiking maps have been produced specifically for this walking guide to Madeira. Though they follow cartographic conventions, extra information such as cafés and bus stops is included. Maps are in the standard scales of 1:25,000 and 1:50,000.



Orientation

To link the route guide with the maps and route profiles, waypoints (numbered 1, 2, 3 etc) have been plotted for each walk using a GPS device. Note that all the routes in this book can be followed without GPS, simply by following the route guide and maps.



Walking with a GPS-enabled device

If you want to follow highly precise route data for your walks, use a GPS-enabled system to guide you. You can find waypoints and tracklogs for all walks in this guide at www.mmv.me/64997 for downloading to your GPS-enabled device or smartphone. All our mapping follows the UTM coordinate system with geodetic datum WGS 84. Note that slight deviations may be apparent due to minor technical inaccuracies, and there is no GPS reception in tunnels.

Tough thread-sewn binding and flexi cover

The tough thread-sewn binding and flexible cover allow the book to be folded right back on its spine, allowing you to keep your place in the book as you use it on your walk.



Information boxes – getting to and from each walk

The information boxes give an overview of the route and include everything you need to know for planning and logistics: getting to and from the walk by public transport or in your own car, places to eat and drink along the way and any special clothing or equipment required.

Warning: mountain walking can be dangerous

Every effort has been made by the author and publishers to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide. Nature and the climate ultimately remain unpredictable elements. The condition of paths and trails always depends on the time, weather conditions, human interventions and other unforeseeable events. Note the safety warning below. We ask for your understanding, and welcome any suggestions for improvements.

For your safety

Do not overestimate your abilities – you're on holiday, so relax and enjoy it! You'll find that all routes on Madeira are beautiful, including those marked with just one or two stars. Take particular care when walking on levada paths, including the easier ones – accidents only occur here through carelessness. Avoid walking alone if possible but, if you do, inform someone from your group or the hotel of your plans and take sufficient drinking water and your mobile phone (though not all mountainous areas enjoy good reception). Trail sections, and particularly those in narrow ravines, can remain muddy and slippery for long periods after rainfall.



In the event of an emergency, dial **112** (EU-wide emergency number)
or **291-700112** (Serviço Proteção Civil, the Madeiran Civil Protection Service)

Walking on Madeira

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South-east

- Walk 1 **** Along Ponta de São Lourenço, Madeira's eastern tip
Length: 7.2 km ■ Walking time: 3:00 hrs ■ ☺ ► 32
- Walk 2 *** From Maroços to the old Caniçal tunnel
Length: 13.4 km ■ Walking time: 4:05 hrs ► 36
- Walk 3 **** Through the laurel forest over the Portela pass
Length: 14.7 km ■ Walking time: 5:10 hrs ► 40
- Walk 4 *** Along the Levada da Serra do Faial to the Portela pass
Length: 9.6 km ■ Walking time: 2:40 hrs ► 46
- Walk 5 *** From Vale Paraíso to Camacha
Length: 5.2 km ■ Walking time: 1:30 hrs ► 50
- Walk 6 *** Along the Levada dos Tornos to Monte
Length: 8.7 km ■ Walking time: 2:20 hrs ► 54
- Walk 7 ***** From Monte down to Funchal
Length: 5.7 km ■ Walking time: 2:40 hrs ► 58

North-east

- Walk 8 ***** Along the adventure-packed Levada do Gastelejo
Length: 14.4 (to Cruz and back), 17.8 km (full route) ■
Walking time: 4:20 (to Cruz and back),
5:30 hrs (full route) ► 62
- Walk 9 ****** Scaling Eagle Rock
Length: 2.9 km ■ Walking time: 2:25 hrs ► 68
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Length: 9.8 km ■ Walking time: 3:20 hrs ► 78
- Walk 13 ***** From Queimadas to the Caldeirão Verde
Length: 12.2 km ■ Walking time: 3:50 hrs ► 82
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Length: 9.6 km ■ Walking time: 3:20 hrs ► 86
- Walk 15 **** Along the north coast path from Arco de São Jorge to Boaventura
Length: 3.6 km ■ Walking time: 2:00 hrs ► 90

Centre

- Walk 16 ***** Over the Pico Ruivo and down the northern face to Ilha
Length: 12.1 km ■ Walking time: 5:20 hrs ▶ 94
- Walk 17 ****** The King's Route from Pico do Arieiro and up the Pico Ruivo
Length: 10.6 km ■ Walking time: 5:00 hrs ▶ 100
- Walk 18 **** From the Eira do Serrado viewpoint to Curral das Freiras
Length: 2.8 km ■ Walking time: 1:10 hrs ■ 🧑 ▶ 105
- Walk 19 ***** From Corticeiras via the Boca dos Namorados to Curral das Freiras
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- Walk 22 **** Circuit from Lombo do Mouro over the scenic Bica da Cana mountain
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- Walk 24 ***** Along the Levada do Alecrim with a detour to the Lagoa do Vento
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- Walk 25 **** To the Risco waterfall and the 25 springs near Rabaçal
Length: 8.4 or 10.3 km ■ Walking time: 3:00 or 3:30 hrs ■ 🧑 ▶ 136
- Walk 26 *** From the plateau up the Pico Ruivo do Paúl da Serra
Length: 3.2 km ■ Walking time: 1:10 hrs ■ 🧑 ▶ 140

South-west

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- Walk 28 **** Circular walk from Fontes
Length: 11.0 km ■ Walking time: 3:50 hrs ▶ 146
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Length: 13.3 km ■ Walking time: 4:35 hrs ▶ 150
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Length: 7.5 km ■ Walking time: 3:00 hrs ▶ 156
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Walk 32 *

An easy walk to the island's far west

Stage 1 ▶ Length: 12.1 km ■ Walking time: 3:10 hrs ▶ 166

Stage 2 ▶ Length: 6.5 km ■ Walking time: 1:30 hrs ▶ 170

Stage 3 ▶ Length: 7.4 km ■ Walking time: 2:05 hrs ▶ 172

North-west


Walk 33 ***

Along the Levada da Fajã Rodrigues
into the Ribeira do Inferno valley

Length: 8.2 km ■ Walking time: 3:40 hrs ▶ 176

Walk 34 *

Along the Levada da Central da Ribeira da Janela

Length: 11.8 km ■ Walking time: 3:30 hrs ■  ▶ 180

Walk 35 ***

From Achadas da Cruz down to Porto Moniz

Length: 7.2 km ■ Walking time: 3:15 hrs ▶ 184


Walk 36 ***

On the Caminho do Norte from the
Encumeada pass down to São Vicente

Length: 7.6 km ■ Walking time: 2:30 hrs ▶ 190

Walk 37 ***

Through the enchanted forest by Fanal

Length: 13.4 km ■ Walking time: 4:05 hrs ■  ▶ 196

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▶ 206



child-friendly walks

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If you have any suggestions for amendments, improvements or
tips to add to this book, let us know!

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1st English edition, 2018



Walking on Madeira

► Like a garden floating in the Atlantic, Madeira blooms year round with a diverse range of flora from all over the world, and there's lush greenery even in the dry season from July to September. Yet the island offers so much more than this: aficionados of wild, rugged landscapes will also



find all they could wish for in a perfect walking destination. The island features a jagged landscape with steep valleys and an indented coastline.

Madeira does indeed have something for everyone: from pleasant strolls along the levadas, the island's unique irrigation channels, to challenging walks of an Alpine character.

In this walking guide, I have selected a range of routes that should enable everyone to explore the variety of landscapes on offer on the island of Madeira. ■

Walking regions

Madeira can be roughly divided into five areas that correspond to the different walking regions in this book (south-east, north-east, central region, south-west and north-west).

► **South-east (p. 32–61) and south-west (p. 142–175):** The south of the island is densely populated up to about 600 m, and is criss-crossed by numerous roads and tunnels. At first sight, it might seem surprising that Madeira also has unspoilt nature to offer – but it does. In the south-east, the island is mainly dry and windy (Walk 1) though walkers must also contend with rain and fog at elevations above 500 m to 600 m (Walk 3). Farming concentrates on field crops such as onions or potatoes, though sugar cane is also grown in some of the more humid

valleys (Walk 2). The south-west is dominated by deeply cut valleys: the Ribeira Brava (Walks 28 and 21) and Ponta do Sol (Walks 29 and 30) are particularly impressive examples. Between Funchal and Calheta, bananas, sugar cane, and in some places tropic fruits abound – no wonder, as the south-west region across to Funchal is the warmest part of the island, and also features numerous levadas. Though the island's interior is less rugged in the west, the coast still features impressive cliff landscapes (Walk 31). ■

Caution

The paths through the mountains and by the coast are clearly laid out. However, following a direct route or walking cross-country simply isn't possible on Madeira: the island is too steep and the rock too brittle. Even experienced mountain hikers should not underestimate Madeira's wild nature. You should also take care when following maps from OpenStreetMap, as not all of the paths shown can be safely negotiated.

► **Central region (p. 94–141):** The island's interior consists of two entirely different landscapes: on the one hand, there are the jagged, rugged central mountains with the island's highest peaks, bizarre rock formations (Walks 16 and 17) and vast erosion craters, such as the Nuns' Valley (Walks 18, 19, 20 and 21), while on the other hand there is the flat and relatively barren Paúl da Serra plateau (Walk 23 and 26). ■

► **North-east (p. 62–93) and north-west (p. 176–201):** The entire northern part of the island is steeper, less densely populated and more wild. Quite often – but primarily in elevated areas above 600 m – conditions can become humid and cloudy, though the area can be sunny and warm in south-westerly winds. The north-east boasts fascinating deep, dark green valleys with steep sides and towering waterfalls (Walks 11, 13 and 14). Large parts of the north-west are barely accessible, and only a few routes allow walkers to explore the area's unspoilt landscape (Walks 33 and 34). The spectacular ecosystem of the laurel forest can be explored intensively on Walks 36 and 37. ■

You can find the best locations for each route on p. 22.

► **Weather and seasons:** Madeira is renowned for its balanced, spring-like climate which it enjoys all year round. This is particularly true for the lower parts of the south coast; though the island may be relatively small (about 740 km²), its rugged, jagged landscape is subject to significant regional differences. From January to April, it's not at all unusual to experience four seasons in one day: summer on the south-west coast, spring in bloom at moderate elevations (200–400 m), autumn with wind, rain and cloud at higher altitudes and winter with ice and snow in the summit region.

Weather and the walking season

July, August and September are the warmest months, with average temperatures of about 22°C in Funchal (→ Table of average daily temperatures) and almost 15°C on the highest peaks. July is the driest month: a cloud belt often forms around the island then, and it rarely if ever sees rainfall, while the summit region is largely cloudless.

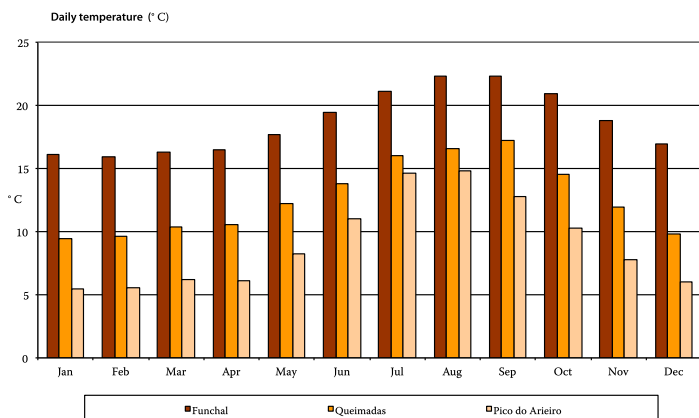
Most rainfall occurs as localised showers from October to March (→ Table of rainfall), though days where the entire island sees rainfall are rare. Madeira rarely suffers from thunderstorms. ■

► **Wind conditions:** A north-easterly wind (north-east trade wind) generally blows onto the island almost all year round, if it is not

Daylight hours on Madeira

Day	Sunrise	Sunset	Longest possible daylight duration	
	(Local time)	(Local time)	Funchal	Manchester
15 Jan.	8.09	18.24	10:15 hrs	8:03 hrs
15 Feb.	7.52	18.52	11:00 hrs	9:52 hrs
15 Mar.	7.19	19.14	11:55 hrs	11:00 hrs
15 April	7.38	20.37	12:59 hrs	14:01 hrs
15 May	7.09	20.59	13:50 hrs	15:54 hrs
15 June	6.59	21.16	14:17 hrs	17:00 hrs
15 July	7.10	21.16	14:06 hrs	16:30 hrs
15 Aug.	7.30	20.54	13:24 hrs	14:48 hrs
15 Sep.	7.50	20.16	12:26 hrs	12:41 hrs
15 Oct.	8.11	19.36	11:25 hrs	10:36 hrs
15 Nov.	7.37	18.07	10:30 hrs	8:37 hrs
15 Dec.	8.02	18.04	10:02 hrs	7:30 hrs

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is observed on Madeira (GMT + 1 in summer) so there is no time difference between Madeira and UK. Funchal: 32° 39' northern latitude, 16° 54' western longitude. Manchester: 53° 29' northern latitude.



replaced by any of the winds detailed below. The north-east trade wind condenses to fog along the north coast above about 800 m and sometimes sweeps over the main ridge to the south side. Obviously, only higher areas are affected.

Wind from the north-west often cools the island, bringing cold rain to the north coast, the extreme south-west, the Paúl da Serra plateau and the summit region, though the south-east generally escapes this rainfall.

Wind from the south-west can result in heavy showers across the south of the island, at high altitudes and in the summit region. The north-east usually escapes such showers, as does the south-east.

Wind from the east/south-east is known as the 'Leste'. This hot wind descends on Madeira, drying out the air within a few hours and causing temperatures to rise rapidly. In rainy seasons, walkers couldn't ask for anything better – but in summer, the Leste means that even shorts can feel too much, though this hot, dry wind rarely persists for long. ■

► **Walking season:** Walkers can explore all regions of Madeira throughout the year. Rain and fog can occur all year round, though such conditions are generally localised and temporary.

Temperatures in autumn, winter and spring are ideal for walking. Although routes through the central mountains and across the plateau might not be feasible at specific times, walkers will not have to wait long for the next suitable day. The major plus in winter months is the island's long days (→ Table p. 9). While it might be getting dark back at home, the light means walkers can continue to explore Madeira. Having said that, it's important to remember that some narrow valleys can become dark long before the sun sets.

Flora

Madeira's promotionally effective sobriquet, the 'floating garden in the Atlantic', is certainly apt, with plants from all over the world thriving in this small space. The avenues and gardens are a blaze of vibrant colours, with owners keen to plant new tropical and subtropical species. The island's native coastal vegetation is characterised by thick-leaved stonecrops that enjoy the dry conditions. Levadas often lead through arable land with terraced fields where native vegetation has been displaced, though flowers often line the paths.

The laurel forest at altitudes between 600 m and 1,300 m is typical vegetation for Madeira, and this is where the island's native flora is best preserved. Above this level are the mountains. The significant variations in temperature over the course of a day make big demands on plant life. Due to the wealth of local flora, I can only mention a small selection of the most common or special plants. For further information see *Madeira – A Botanical Melting Pot!* (available in English or German from www.bredaverlag.de).

► **Plants in gardens and avenues:** The Avenida Arriaga in Funchal is lined with **jacaranda trees**, which grow to about 20 m tall and lose their leaves in winter. Before the tree sprouts new leaves, it produces striking violet blossoms in April and May. The **African tulip tree** (*Spathodea campanulata*) is also a common sight in squares and streets, especially in Funchal. It also grows to a height of 20–25 m, but flowers year round. Its leaves are dark green, while its orange-red flowers are reminiscent of tulips. Many gardens feature **angel's trumpets** (*Brugmansia aurea*), which also flower all year and have now become a popular tub plant in mainland Europe. This shrub can reach a height of about 4 m, with long blooms reminiscent of the wind instrument, but beware: all parts of this plant are poisonous! By

Madeira blueberry



Lily-of-the-valley tree



Fauna

By comparison with the broad range of flora, fauna on the island is somewhat limited. Madeira is situated far into the Atlantic, meaning that only species that can fly or swim made it to the island without assistance from humans.

► **Fauna on land and in the air:** Before the arrival of man on the island, the only native mammals were **bats**. In the early 15th century, the first settlers brought cows, sheep, pigs, goats, rabbits, dogs, cats and hens with them. Like everywhere else, mice and rats were also in tow.

Wall lizards and **wall geckos** arrived on ships and flotsam. There are no **snakes** on the island.

Birdlife is rather more diverse. **Buzzards** often circle the valleys, while **kestrels** (*Falco tinnunculus*) are also native to the island. With any luck, in the evenings and at night you might encounter a **barn owl** (*Tyto alba*) out hunting.

The laurel forest is home to the shy **Madeira laurel pigeon** (*Columba trocaz*): this species is endemic, meaning that it is only found on Madeira, and grows up to 40 cm. You can often find it along the seldom-used Caminho do Norte (Walk 36). Its counterpart is the tiny and also endemic **Madeira firecrest** (*Regulus madeirensis*), which only measures 8 cm when fully grown. Walkers in the Ribeira da Janela valley (→ Walk 34) or on the Ribeiro Frio trail (→ Walks 10 and 11) have the best chance of seeing this bird. The **Madeira chaffinch** (*Fringilla coelebs madeirensis*) is a common sight, and is almost irritatingly friendly at popular spots for a break, while the **wagtails**, with their bobbing flight, are rather more reserved.

The **Atlantic canary** (*Serinus canaria*), an ancestor of the famous yellow domestic canary, can be found in lower, coastal areas. In the wild, however, the species is an inconspicuous greenish-brown colour, and only the adult males' breasts display a bright greenish-yellow splash of colour.

As the Atlantic surrounding Madeira is very deep (up to 3,000 m) with relatively few fish, seabirds are less common than you might otherwise expect. The **Cory's shearwater** (*Calonectris diomedea*) and **Madeiran storm petrel** (*Oceanodroma castro*), which flit just above the surface of the water, are common ocean-going birds. A less common sight is the **Bulwer's petrel** (*Bulweria*

Madeira chaffinch



► **Hospitals:** Hospital Regional Cruz Carvalho, Avenida Luis Camões, Funchal, ☎ 291-705600; public hospital.

Clínica de Santa Catarina, Rua de 5 de Outubro 115, Funchal, ☎ 291-700000, 24/7 emergency number at ☎ 291-745780; private clinic.

Clínica de Santa Luzia, Rua da Torinha 5, Funchal, ☎ 291-200000; private clinic, good care, but expensive.

Policlinica do Caniço, Rua Dr. F. Peres, Caniço, ☎ 291-934504, ☎ 291-930070; public doctor's surgery. ■

Route planning

The walking routes in this guide require a certain degree of preparation. The timings given are for walking time

without breaks. If you're a keen photographer, like to take in the landscape or enjoy stopping for breaks at scenic spots, you may need more time. It's always advisable to start a walk early in the day (→ Table of sunrise and sunset times and daylight hours on p. 9). Due to its geographic location, dusk is a rather short period in comparison to central and northern Europe. In narrow valleys, it can become quite dark before the sun sets.

► **Locations:** If you decide to rent a car, you can base yourself anywhere you wish on Madeira. The road network is well developed, and makes it possible to visit the entire island. It is not strictly necessary to stay in different locations. If you opt to use public transport to get around the island, the best option is to choose accommodation in central Funchal.

Tip

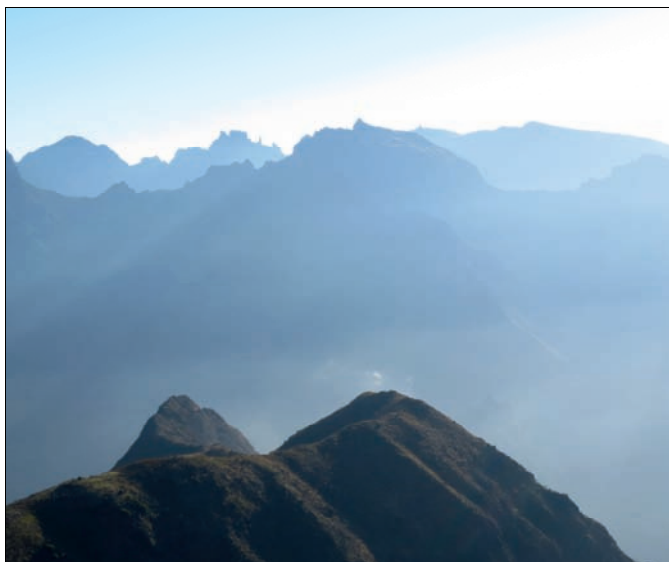
In cooler months, you should make sure that accommodation above 400 m has heating in all rooms.

South-east: The most popular destination in the south-east is **Caniço de Baixo**, which has numerous hotels and apartment complexes. The tourist infrastructure (restaurants, cafés, bars)

is good, with frequent bus connections to Funchal and the east of the island.

Machico, the island's oldest town, has hotels and guest houses, as well as a lovely city beach. The town is still overwhelmingly local but is fairly quiet in the evenings. There are relatively good bus connections to the north-east of the island. Reaching other parts with public transport can be problematic.

Funchal is not only the island's capital (about 125,000 inhabitants) but is also its most popular destination. Despite this, the city is relatively peaceful and relaxed, and has retained its traditional Portuguese charm. The city centre has a good range of guest houses, apartments and hotels to suit all tastes and budgets, while there are also plenty of restaurants, cafés and bars, etc. The hotel district lies to the west of



the historical centre, and offers a little more hustle-and-bustle. The accommodation consists predominantly of 4- to 5-star hotels. City buses provide regular connections to the centre. If you wish to explore the island by bus, taking a bus into the city centre is recommended. Almost all intercity buses stop there.

South-west: Ribeira Brava enjoys good transport links and a good infrastructure (restaurants, cafés, supermarkets, shops, bathing area by the sea). In the evenings, the locals tend to keep to themselves.

Ponta do Sol is a small, picturesque town with two hotels. There are good bus connections to Ribeira Brava and the west of the island, though travellers must change in Ribeira Brava and Funchal to reach other regions.

There is some accommodation in the vicinity of **Calheta**, but a rental car is an advantage. In Vila da Calheta, there is even a sandy beach.

North: The north is less populated, and is more wild than the south coast. Bus connections to the north are mainly based on locals' needs, and so a rental car is advisable. Key locations for walkers are **São Vicente**, with good bus connections to the south coast, as well as **Santana** and **Porto Moniz** with its large ocean swimming pool.

Centre: Some places in the mountains (e.g. Residencial Encumeada → Walk 21, Hotel Pico da Urze → Walk 23) offer guests transfers to nearby walking routes. However, as there are not enough routes in the area to keep most walkers occupied, a change of location is recommended. ■

bus timetable. Of course, changes are always possible. The bus companies all have reliable websites giving the individual timetables for each bus line.

Walk 1

Out: Line 113 (SAM) Funchal – Caniçal – Baía D’Abra, from Funchal Mon–Fri 7.30, 8.30, 9.00, 11.30, 12.15, 14.30, Sat 7.30, 8.30, 9.00, 10.30, 11.30, 12.15, 14.30, Sun 7.30, 9.00, 10.30, 11.30, 15.00. Journey approx. 1.30 hr.

Return: Line 113 (SAM) Baía D’Abra – Caniçal – Funchal, from Baía D’Abra Mon–Fri 10.30, 11.30, 12.00, 12.55, 13.55, 15.00, 16.00, 17.00, 18.15, 19.35 (May to Oct), Sat 10.30, 11.30, 13.00, 14.00, 17.00, 18.15, 19.35 (May to Oct), Sun 11.55, 14.00, 17.00, 18.15.

Walk 2

Out: Line 156 (SAM) Funchal – Marroços, from Funchal Mon–Fri 6.45, 8.00, Sat 6.45, 8.00, Sun and bank hols 12.15. Line 208 (SAM) Funchal – Marroços – Porto da Cruz, from Funchal Mon–Fri 10.30, 11.45, Sat, Sun and bank hols only from Santa Cruz 11.00 and Machico 11.20. Line 156 (SAM) from Machico Mon–Sat 8.50, Sun and bank hols 8.00, 10.30 and 13.15. Line 208 (SAM) also from Machico 11.20.

Return: Line 113 (SAM) Caniçal – Funchal, from Caniçal Mon–Fri 12.05, 13.00, 14.00, 15.05, 16.05, 17.05, 18.25 and 19.40. Journey from Caniçal, stopping at the end of the walk, is 15–20mins.

Walk 3

Out: Line 53 (SAM) Funchal – Portela – Faial, from Funchal Mon–Fri 10.00, 13.15, Sat 10.00, 13.15, from Machico Mon–Fri 9.00, 10.50, Sat 9.00 and 10.50.

Return: Line 53 (SAM) Faial – Portela – Funchal, from Faial Mon–Fri 13.10, 15.40, 17.15, 18.20, Sat 15.40, 17.45, Sun and bank hols only 10.15. Journey to the Portela pass approx. 20 mins.

Walk 4

Out: Line 77 to 4 Estradas (CCSG), Funchal – Santo da Serra (via 4 Estradas) from Funchal Mon–Fri 7.35, 10.30, 14.00, Sat 7.40, 10.30, 14.00, Sun 8.30, 10.30, 14.00.

Return: Line 53 (SAM), Faial – Funchal

(via Portela and Machico), from Faial Mon–Fri 13.10, 15.40, 17.15, 18.20, Sat 15.40, 17.45, Sun and bank hols only 10.15. Journey to the Portela pass approx. 20 mins.

Walk 5

Out: Line 129 (CCSG) Funchal – Camacha via Vale Paraíso, from Funchal Mon–Fri 8.00, 9.00, 10.00, 11.00, 11.45, 12.15, 13.00, 13.30, 14.30, 15.30, Sat 8.15, 9.00, 10.00, 11.00, 11.45, 13.25, 14.35, 15.30, Sun and bank hols 9.00, 10.00, 11.00, 12.30, 13.30, 14.30, 15.30.

Line 77 (CCSG) Funchal – Santo da Serra via Vale Paraíso, from Funchal Mon–Fri 7.35, 10.30, 14.00, Sat 7.40, 10.30, 14.00, Sun 8.30, 10.30, 14.00.

Return: Line 129 (CCSG) Camacha – Funchal via Vale Paraíso, from Camacha Shopping Mon–Fri 10.45, 11.45, 12.30, 13.00, 13.45, 14.15, 15.15, 16.15, 17.40, 18.45, 19.15, 19.45 and 22.45, Sat 10.45, 11.45, 12.30, 13.15–16.15 hourly, 17.45, 19.15, 19.45 and 22.45, Sun and bank hols 9.45, 10.45, 11.45, 13.15, 14.15, 15.15, 16.15, 17.45, 18.45, 21.00 and 22.45.

Line 77 (CCSG) Santo da Serra – Funchal via Vale Paraíso, from Santo da Serra Mon–Fri 9.00, 12.00, 16.15 and 18.00, Sat 16.15 and 18.00, Sun and bank hols 12.00, 16.15 and 18.00.

Walk 6

Out: Line 36 (Horários do Funchal). Hourly/half-hourly departures from Funchal on Rua Artur Sousa Pinga, east of the Electricity Museum, near valley station of Funchal – Monte cable car. Alight at Campo 1º de Maio.

Line 29 (CCSG) Camacha – Funchal – Camacha. Departures from Camacha and Funchal hourly/half-hourly, less frequent on Sun.

Return: Lines 20 and 21 (Horários do Funchal) into the centre, Line 48 goes to Funchal hotel district. Departs hourly/half-hourly.

Line 22 (Horários do Funchal) from Babosas to the centre. Departs hourly/half-hourly.

Walk 7

* Along the Levada da Serra do Faial to the Portela pass

If you love woodland landscapes this easy Levada walk is for you. It takes you from Sítio das Quatro Estradas through wild laurel forest.

►► The starting point **1** is on regional road ER 202 from Santo da Serra to the Poiso pass above a former pig farm. At the entrance to the levada, signposts point toward Camacha to the west and Portela, the destination of this route, to the east. A broad meadow path runs along the levada, starting above the derelict former pig farm.

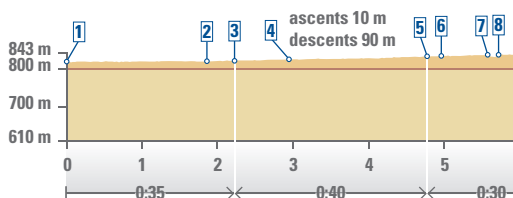
The walk begins in a eucalyptus forest, though other trees such as old gnarled oaks, pines and a few laurels start to appear after about 15 minutes. A wide track **2** then crosses the path, but your level route continues and follows a left-hand bend, passing a levada warden's house immediately after the bend.

You then walk through an idyllic side valley filled with laurel trees, before crossing an old natural stone bridge **3** leading over the valley floor. Another old bridge then appears. After this second bridge, a wide path descends from the left to meet yours: don't take it. The vegetation becomes wilder and more interesting and includes tree heath, occasional specimens of the endemic Madeira blueberry (→ p. 18), knotted old oaks covered with ferns and other typical laurel forest flora. Beard lichen on the trees attest to the high air humidity and good air quality.

Once again – this time from below – a wide path joins yours **4**, as does another 10 m further on, before a section of the route with relatively monotonous eucalyptus forest follows. This, however, soon gives way to dense vegetation.

After crossing a wide dirt road **5**, the path briefly runs along the narrow levada wall before widening once again. Another path joins ours as we follow a left-hand bend.

Further along the levada, the route passes a waterhouse **6** dating from 1906 that is reminiscent of a prison tower. The Japanese cedars



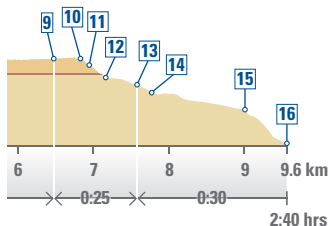
in this area are particularly striking. Signposts have been attached to the corner of the building (e.g. you could follow the path down to Santo da Serra), but your route leads further along the levada towards Portela.

About 10 minutes after the waterhouse, your route branches off onto a narrow path **7** leading down to the right and enables you to bypass a narrow, slippery section along the levada wall. This path runs parallel to the levada, slightly below it, and rejoins the levada again **8** before the wide path continues through dark forest.

The path then crosses another wide road **9** before the levada curves once again, with the path becoming narrow and slippery. This section can also be avoided by quickly crossing a small valley and climbing to meet the levada once again on the other side.

You then abruptly reach a stony path **10** leading down to the right with signs for 'Portela'. (There are also signs for Pico do Suna to the left. The detour to the once panoramic mountain is not worthwhile: over time, the trees have grown so tall that nothing but tree trunks can be seen. Straight on, the path leads to Ribeiro Frio and the path of Walk 10; → p. 72. If you head straight on by mistake, you will reach a second waterhouse that also resembles a prison tower. At this point, you've gone too far – and have reached the three-star Route 10.)

The descent may be slippery in wet conditions. After a few minutes, a steep, narrow levada joins the path from the left as you descend. A few steps further down, the path comes to a rather inconspicuous fork **11**: the wide path to the right leads into the forest, while to the left the path ascends with the levada. The latter is more scenic, but the paths join each other before long. Along the narrow levada, steps then lead to the beautifully landscaped park of the ►



Length/walking time: approx. 9.6 km, 2:40 hrs

Terrain: easy levada-based route; slippery in parts.

Marking: none; occasional signs.

Equipment: sturdy walking shoes.

Supplies: take drinking water; stop for a bite at the Portela pass **16**: Bar/Restaurante Miradouro da Portela, or just below in the Portela à Vista.

Getting there: by car, take the ER 102 between Camacha and Santo António da Serra (often simply called Santo da Serra) to Sítio das 4 Estradas. From here, the ER 202 branches off to the Poiso pass, and after about 600 m passes a large pig farm. The levada runs right above it. There is limited parking space directly by the levada on the roadside, but the grass verge opposite offers plenty of space. Bus → p. 26.

Getting back: by (bus → p. 26) or taxi back to the start, about €12; in Santana ☎ 291-572540, in Machico ☎ 291-962480.

► **Lamaceiros forest lodge 12.** The trail previously crossed by the levada then joins from the right.

The route cuts straight across the garden area and passes the lodge along a wide road, after which a newly-built reservoir can be seen to the right of the path. A little later, the road reaches a lovely viewpoint **13** looking out towards the distinctive **Eagle Rock** (Penha de Águia, → Route 9).



Along the levada

Then, continue downwards on the wide dirt road up to a fork **14** in a long right-hand bend close to a large, enclosed area used for agriculture. At this fork, your route leaves the wide road and bears left (following signs for 'Portela') on a path that leads past the enclosed area.

A short, gentle uphill section then follows. At a right-hand bend, a newly-built concrete levada runs alongside the path, which in this section can be very slippery in wet conditions. Follow this path to a short set of steps **15** cut into the earth leading down to the left, where the route encounters the remains of a former levada house. Follow these onto a dirt path permeated by tree roots and rocks. It ends at the road from the Portela pass to Santo da Serra.

Follow this road a short distance down to the left to reach the **Portela pass 16**. Directly at the pass is the Bar-Restaurante Mira-

douro da Portela; the Bar-Restaurante Portela à Vista is a few metres further down towards Machico. ■



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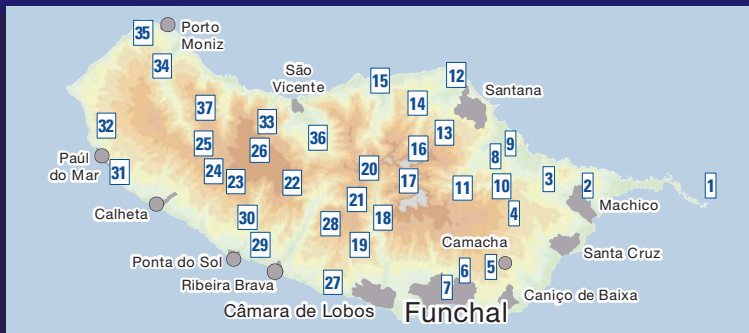


37 selected walks in all regions of Madeira

Oliver Breda (left) has been leading hiking tours along the trails of Madeira for almost 20 years.

For this guidebook, co-published and produced in association with MM Travel, he has selected 37 walks in all regions of this popular holiday island.

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