



## The "Levada" Self-guided Trek (Madeira, Portugal)

### Introduction:

Madeira is a 3-island Portuguese archipelago consisting of Madeira (an autonomous territory), Porto Santo and Desertas. This small island group lies about 1000km southwest of Portugal in the Atlantic ocean and not far from the African coast. This is a beautiful place offering mild summers and virtually no winter. The climate is really favourable for this open-air botanical garden – a true paradise for nature lovers.

Walking along by the side of a "levada" is a unique experience and something very special for Madeira – a real paradise for walkers. A "levada" is a canal, which takes the water down from the rainy mountains to the dry lowlands where it is used for irrigation. Canals that last for hundreds of kilometers built centuries ago and still well maintained. The first "levadas" date back to the 15th century and the whole "levada"- network is around 2150 km long. The paths along the "levadas" take you through unspoilt nature, scenic landscapes, gorges, luxuriant banana groves, vineyards, pitch-dark tunnels and ancient pine forests.

### Tour highlights:

- Machico Was the first point of landing in Madeira for the discoverers. The city of Machico is on the east coast of Madeira, just over 22 km from Funchal. It has a fishing port and is

also an attractive holiday resort. It has a fascinating landscape, with its high mountains and deep valleys covered by exotic vegetation and colourful flowers

- Madeira Natural Park - It is in the exuberance of the landscape that it finds one of the greater tourist attractive of Madeira Island. It is its luxuriant vegetation, whose aboriginal forest was recognized as World Natural Heritage Site.

- Levada de Serra - One of the most fascinating features of Madeira is the vast network of open-air water canals that cover the island bringing water from the mountains to the plantations below. The levada da Serra do Faial is a relaxing walk along one of the most beautiful levadas on the neighbourhoods of Funchal, mixture of sea and mountain views are going to delight you. This walk starts at "Caminho do Pico do Infante" and ends in "Rochão".

### Itinerary:

#### Day 1: Arrival at Funchal Airport.

Transfer to Machico (approx. 15 min) - Madeira's second largest town is situated in a green valley between the slopes of Ribeira do Machico. Accommodation in the charming old quarter.  
**/no meals included/**

#### Day 2: Walk from Machico to Ribeiro de Machico.

An easy walking tour north from Machico up to Pico de Facho (322 m a.s.l.) with a "vigia" – a viewpoint from the

17-th century. Spectacular view over Machico and all the way to Ponta de Sao Lourenco in the east. From there we walk along by the side of Levada do Canical – a relatively new irrigation channel – from its point of emergence from a 750m long tunnel all the way to its source near Ribeira de Machico. Transfer back to Machico.

*Walking distance: 12km; walking time: 4hrs; uphill/downhill walking 400/50m;*

(NB: alternative tour only for experienced walkers and only if the weather conditions allow it): from Machico to Porto da Cruz (15 km/5 hrs). The first part of the route – up to Pico de Facho – is the same as the ordinary tour. We follow the Levada do Canical for 2 km, then walk over Boca de Risco pass (300 m a.s.l.) down to the coast. This part of the coastline is rugged and very scenic. The path we follow round the Espigao Amarela and down to Larano is quite exposed and, at times, head whirling, so it's only for those who are not scared of heights. From Larano it's an easy hike downhill to Porto da Cruz. This option is highly recommended to the super views most of the time towards the ocean. Transfer back to Machico. Uphill/downhill walk for both options: 350m/350m  
**/breakfast/**

#### Day 3: Trek from Monte to Camacha.

Transfer from Machico up to Monte (550 m a.s.l.). The small town of Monte

huddles in the green hills 6km north of Funchal and has a very favourable microclimate, which made it a famous summer resort in the 19-th century – with elegant hotels, artificial lakes and fountains. Monte's main attractions are its tropical garden (where a short sightseeing is more than recommended), the white church of Nossa Senhora do Monte with its beautiful garden and the wickerwork sleighs on which you can slide down to Funchal. From Monte you follow for a while the Levada dos Tornos and then you climb up to join the Levada da Serra at an altitude of 750 m. We follow it around the head of the Valley of Paradise to Camacha (700 m) where you stay overnight. *Walking distance: 12,5km; walking time: 5hrs; uphill walking 200m; /breakfast, dinner/*

**Day 4: Walk from Camacha to Santo da Serra.** You walk along by the green side of Levada de Serra at an altitude of about 800 m. This is a popular summerhouse area with luxuriant vegetation and fresh and cool air. Beautiful view over the long and very narrow Ponta de Sao Lourenco peninsula – Madeira's most eastern point, expects you there. The walk ends in the village of Santo da Serra (660 m a.s.l.) where you stay overnight. Before dinner you can make a short stroll in the local botanical garden. *Walking distance: 14km; walking time: 5hrs; uphill/downhill walking 100/150m; /breakfast, dinner/*

**Day 5: Trip from Santo da Serra to Santana.** At 09:00am you will be picked up from Santo da Serra and will be driven to Queimadas park where you will be able to start the walk. Once you finish the walk in Ilha and after exploring the small village, you will have to take the public bus to the next accommodation in Santana (you will be provided with a bus timetable)- please keep your bus tickets and give them to the driver on the last day for money refund. *Walking distance: 13km; walking time: 5hrs; uphill walking 200m; /breakfast/*

**Day 6: Trek from Achada do Teixeira to Encumeada.** Time to show stamina! Today, weather permitting, you climb the mountains at the heart of Madeira. Drive to Achado (1590m a.s.l.), near the famous

Homem em Pe rock. From there it's about an hour easy climb to Madeira's highest peak - Pico Ruivo (1862m a.s.l.). You descend to Encumeada along a high ridge with breath-taking views on both sides. This is a strenuous walk, only for experienced hikers as it ends with numerous steep steps, which can be very hard on the knees. There are also few places with rolling rocks but in general the hike is rewarding and one of the best in the tour. If the weather is bad, we will drive you from Santana to Encumeada (950m a.s.l.) for overnight. *Walking distance: 14km; walking time: 6hrs; uphill/downhill walking 300/800m; /breakfast, dinner/*

**Day 7: Trek from Encumeada to Corticeiras.** A scenic walk across the lush green valley of Ribeira do Poco, sprinkled with the traditional thatched cowsheds (palheiros), and up to the viewpoint of Fenda do Ferreiro (1100 m a.s.l.). From there you continue over a steep slope to the pass of Boca do Cerro, commanding spectacular views over the Curral Valley. Easy descent to Corticeiras (750 m a.s.l.) along an old track – part of the ancient main road running north-south across the heart of the island, known as the Mountain Garden (Joardim da Serra). From Corticeiras there is a regular bus service to Funchal, where your luggage will be waiting for you. Overnight in Funchal. *Walking distance: 16km; walking time: 6hrs; uphill/downhill walking 250/500m; /breakfast /*

**Day 8:** Departure. Transfer to the airport (approx.30 min). */breakfast/*

#### **Accommodation and luggage transportation:**

We stay 2 nights at 4\*\*\*\* hotels, 5 nights at 3\*\*\* hotels with breakfast included and 3 evening meals (Days 3, 4 & 6). Luggage is taken care throughout the whole journey, and so are the transfers from place to place as specified above. Detailed roadbook and map are provided upon arrival.

**Tour type:** IT

**Difficulty grade:** B (days 2,3,4,5, 7), C (day 6)

**Best period:** All year round.

#### **Weather:**

It is never too hot (temperatures can get up to around 33°C when the 'Leste' (east wind coming from the Sahara desert)

blows for a few days every year) averaging a maximum of 24°C during the summer months (July through to October) and a minimum of 17°C. During the winter average temperatures drop by approximately 4°C.

#### **Equipment and clothing:**

A daypack, lunchpack, hat, sun glasses and sunscreen lotion. Light hiking shoes with good sole for wet/slippery parts along the road (sometimes it is very humid above 500m a.s.l. and the rocky "levada" banks may be slippery, which can cause danger in the steep parts of the gorges). See General for the full list with recommended items.

#### **Terrain:**

Gentle terrain with well marked paths. Most of the routes are going through eucalyptus woods or diverse vegetation. However sun-exposed parts occur (be prepared for strong sun during summer). Please read carefully the roadbook and decide among the options mentioned there (especially for people, who are afraid of heights).

**Group size:** Minimum 2 persons

**The price includes:** transfers from/to Funchal airport on day 1 and day 8; private transfers as per itinerary (days 2,3,5,6); luggage transportation on each of the days; accommodation and mealplan as per itinerary; detailed roadbook and map in English;

**The price does not include:** flight tickets; alcohol drinks; personal expenses; tickets for public transport.

**GENERAL**

**TOUR TYPES & GRADES**

We provide different varieties of tours as regards to their types and difficulty grades! Whether you will choose individual and group tours with a guide or combined tours with a guide for some part of the trip depends on you. We emphasize on using local experienced guides with knowledge of the local language, culture, history, art, etc. The tours are conducted in the English language. Guides in other languages are available upon request.

**Tour types**

Our tours are divided in different tour types, regardless of being guided or not or if someone travels alone or in a group. We have prepared your vacation so that you can concentrate on new impressions and experiences, awaiting you all the time.

Here is a description of the various tours:

**IT: Individual tours**

There is no guide on this tour. You travel individually and we are responsible for the hotel overnights and /some/ transfers. Sometimes you will travel together with other people. If you wish a guide can be arranged, if ordered. We take it for granted that you can read maps, provided by us upon arrival.

**Difficulty grades**

To prepare yourself for the best of your vacation we recommend that you start planning it in an advance. Good physical condition is required. In order to achieve it we advise you to start walking, jogging or cycling everyday. Swimming a couple of times a week is also highly recommended. You do not need much to get yourself in shape. And don't forget that the most important tip for an unforgettable active holiday is to choose a trip which corresponds to your physical condition!

**B: Moderate**

Most of you, who are used to walking during a long weekend, will be in condition to cope with a tour of this level. You should be in good health condition and not too bad physical condition. We have successive days of longer and more difficult walking and days of lighter walking. Some parts of the day routes are done at a higher altitude. The paths are in good condition. We walk for 5-7h a day. You are free to skip some walks and have a rest.

**C: Difficult**

These tours include trekking which is a little harder, normally on a challenging terrain. We take it for granted that you are in good condition and fit. You should be physically prepared at home to get the maximum of the tour. Most of the trekking is done at a greater height (max 3000 m).

As on other tours you are free to skip some treks and have a rest.

**Equipment and clothing:**

You should always remember that you must try to keep the weight of your clothing equipment down to a minimum. Your packed rucksack should weigh no more than 10-15 kilograms.

Recommended items: waterproof rucksack (60 l) & daypack (35 l); walking waterproof boots with suitable ankle support; sandals; light casual shoes for walking and/or for travelling; gaiters; loose, casual trousers for trekking; waterproof trousers; fleece windstopper jacket; windproof, waterproof outer shell garment (breathable if possible!); hat for sun protection; sunglasses with UV protection; sunscreen lotion and lip balm; water bottle; torch (headlamp); mobile phone; underwear (not cotton); mosquito repellent; trekking sticks.

**Vaccination**

Immunisation against Hepatitis A is recommended two weeks prior departure.

**Money and personal expenses:**

You will need some extra money to cover meals, drinks and extra trips not included in the tour price. Additional money for souvenirs and personal things could also be spent. That is why it is always necessary to have some money in cash. The Euro is the currency of the Economic and Monetary Union and was adopted by 11 state-members from the European Union on the 1st of January 1999 including Portugal. Euro cheques can be used to exchange for cash at the banks but Euro cheque cards, although valid for ATM machines, are not accepted to make payments in restaurants and shops.

Here are some examples of comparative costs in Portugal (NB: prices in mid-range restaurants!):  
- Coffee – 1 Euro  
- Beer (0,5 l) - From 1 Euro  
- Soft drink (0,5 l) – From 90 Cents  
- Bottle of mark red wine (0,75 l) – From 6 Euro  
- Three-course lunch – From 12-20 Euro

**Cell phone coverage**

There is good coverage on most of the island. There is no coverage for non-EU mobile phones.

**Electricity**

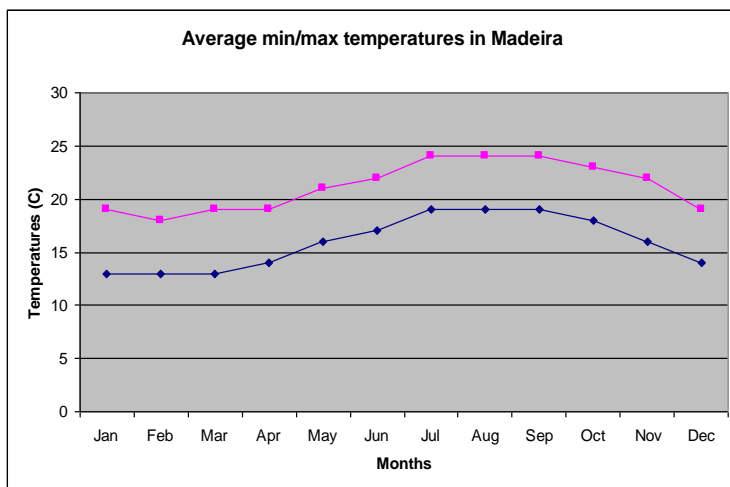
Electricity in Madeira is 220 Volt, 50Hz. The connection is made by a two-pin plug. Travellers from the USA will require a voltage converter. Travellers from the UK will require a plug adapter and this is best bought at home as they are hard to find in Madeira.

**About Madeira:**

Territory - 741 sq km  
Population –245 000 (2006)  
Capital city – Funchal (pop 100,000)  
Administrative division – 11 municipalities  
Ethnic groups – as in Portugal – homogeneous Mediterranean stock; resident Western European emigrants also occur;  
Religion - The main religion in Madeira is Catholic.

**Weather**

Madeira's weather may be described as a climate with only one season, and it would be Spring. It is not much cold neither much hot and the average temperature during the year is 19,5° C. By concept it is a mild climate but it has unique characteristics that give an exceptional amenity to Madeira's weather, as we can not expect the same weather on the day after. Between Summer and Winter, the average temperature gap is about 7°C, were in colder days one can get to a minimum of 8°C and in warmer days to a maximum of 28°C. This attractive weather is due to the Golf Stream that warms the sea. But be aware that Madeira has several microclimates as there are differences in temperature and humidity between North and South and on different altitudes. Sometimes you can have 17°C



in Funchal and 0°C in Pico do Areeiro at 1810 meters high.

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