



MADEIRA FUNCHAL

PORTUGAL

Funchal is the capital of the Portuguese island of Madeira which is situated some 350 miles from North Africa, amidst the warm waters of the Gulf Stream. The Island is lush and mountainous with a mild, sunny climate, conducive to the growth of the many varieties of exotic plants and trees to be seen blossoming in every direction. The clear seas surrounding the Island provide a natural recreational facility as well as a good fishing source.

The Island was first settled by the Portuguese, although seafarers and soldiers of many origins have created a people of mixed descent. The culture and language remains proudly Portuguese and the people are both friendly and very polite.

The economy is based on a number of exports, including; bananas, potatoes, onions and orchids, with tourism being a major contributor. Madeira is famous for its wine, aptly named Madeira Wine, which has been widely exported since the 17th century. Other local specialties are wickerwork and embroideries.



HISTORY

Madeira was discovered by the Portuguese explorer João Gonçalves Zarco, in 1419. The Portuguese settled on the Island and established trade links with Italy, Flanders and England. In 1560 the Spanish invaded Portugal and came to occupy Madeira. Portuguese sovereignty was regained in 1640.

With the marriage of Catherine of Bragança and Charles II in 1662, strong ties were formed with England.

Many British wine merchants came to settle in Madeira which led to the growth of wine production in the region.

In 1949 the first plane service began between Britain and Madeira and this heralded the beginning of tourism for the Island.

Beyond Central Funchal

Museu das Cruzes, located on Caminho do Pico, occupies the house where João Gonçalves Zarco, the Island's founder, is thought to have lived. It contains furniture, porcelain and paintings as well as relics taken from ancient buildings, and is surrounded by fabulous gardens with many varieties of Orchids.

Chapel and Convent of Santa Clara is found on Caminho Santa Clara. The Chapel is the final resting place of Zarco, the interior famous for its beautiful tilework. The Convent is now a school run by Franciscan Nuns. You must ring the door bell to be let inside.

Municipal Museum, located on Rua da Mouraria, close to the Chapel and Convent of Santa Clara, contains natural history exhibits as well as a small Aquarium.

Quinta do Palheiro, approximately 5 miles from Funchal, the home of the Blandy family, an old family of Wine Shippers of British descent. The house is surrounded by 30 acres of the most magnificent gardens.

Pico dos Barcelos, north-west of the town of Funchal, at a height of 1,164 ft, provides panoramic views.

Cabo Girão, 11 miles west of Funchal, the second highest sea cliff in the World at 1,804 ft, offers stunning views of southern coast of island.



Monte, a small town situated just above Funchal, once a fashionable resort for European aristocrats, provides a nostalgic atmosphere. Visit the church of Nossa Senhora do Monte, or take a sledge ride down the paved streets, a popular tourist activity.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Funchal and the island of Madeira we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

LOCAL CUSTOMS AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Bargaining: Some shops may be prepared to bargain.

Tipping: There is no general guide here, tipping is up to the individual.

Local Cuisine: Try the Espada, a tasty local specialty, this fish lives at depths below 3,000 ft and is only caught in this area and off the coast of northern Japan. Fruit is abundant in Madeira, including guavas, paw-paws and passion fruit. Bolo de Mel is a rich honey cake popular with the locals.

Drink Specialties: Madeira Wine is the specialty and samples may be tasted at the local Wine Lodges. Also, there is Aguardente, a locally distilled rum and Maracujá, a fizzy drink made from passion fruit. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES

The best shops are situated close to the Cathedral at Centro da Sé, approximately 2 miles from the Ship's berth, there are also shops at Centro do Infante. General opening hours are 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm on Saturday. Local handicrafts include; embroidery, wickerwork, hand-painted tiles and pottery. Madeira wine is also a popular souvenir.

Some tourist orientated stores may accept U.S. Dollars, most accept major credit cards.

Value Added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1 cent pieces. Every euro coin carries a common European face. On the obverse, each Member State decorates the coins with their own motifs. No matter which motif is on the coins they can be used anywhere inside the Member States. There are 7 euro notes in different colors and sizes, they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euros. The notes are uniform throughout the euro area; unlike coins, they have no national side. All euro notes are legal tender in all countries of the euro area.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES

The main Post Office is located on Avenida Zarco. There is also a facility on the pier for making international telephone calls.

In addition, there is often a Postal Van located on the Pier where the Ship berths, from which it is possible to purchase postage stamps and place local or international calls.

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