

Walking Around Madeira

Trip Code: SGMA

Version: SGMA Walking Around Madeira



WALK & TREK



SELF-GUIDED



MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk along the Levada do Norte, the oldest and longest levada on Madeira
- Discover the fascinating high pitched Madeiran houses of Santana
- Walk upon Paul da Serra Plateau some 1,500m above the coast for breath-taking panoramas
- Explore the botanical gardens of Monte, a festival of colour

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 6 days walking
- Tuesday / Thursday / Saturday departures
- Join at Porto da Cruz / End in Funchal

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 7 nights Hotel

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

Introduction

The lush green island of Madeira sits around 500km off the coast of Morocco and is often referred to as 'the Pearl of the Atlantic', a title justly deserved. This spectacular island really is Portugal's colourful garden, bursting with exotic plants, and is steeped in history having been a strategic port for Portuguese explorers during the Age of Discovery. On this fantastic one-week self-guided holiday you will circumnavigate the island to discover the deep roots of Madeira's heritage, witness the colourful flora, taste the delicious Madeiran delicacies, and walk in the footsteps of great explorers.

The island is a walkers' paradise thanks to the fantastic network of levadas, not to mention the miles of beautiful coastal walking and high plateaus above the steep valleys left behind by its volcanic past. Your routes will take you to the tranquil springs of Ribeiro Bonito, to the northern coast with views across to neighbouring Porto Santo, and to the centre of the island high upon the Plateau Paul de Serra. And when you have finished exploring you will retreat to pretty coastal towns to enjoy a relaxing swim or enjoy a glass of wine in our great selection of hotels.

Is this holiday for you?

If you want to experience Madeira's rich culture on foot then this is the holiday for you. The spectacular steep valleys and coastal paths provide breathtaking vistas for surefooted walkers with a head for heights. Using the island's amazing network of levadas and fantastic coastal paths, you will walk an average of 15km a day, with up to 650m of ascent each day, to lovely villages, vibrant botanical gardens, and wild coasts. You will spend 5 nights in a selection of excellent 4-star hotels, some with spa facilities, and two nights in a lovely family run 2-star hotel in Porto da Cruz. Plus, staying on a bed and breakfast basis means you can experience the island's warm hospitality as well as having the opportunity to sample traditional dishes in the many local restaurants.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive at your hotel in Porto da Cruz and visit Madeira's last remaining sugar mill.

Check into your hotel in the charming coastal village of Porto da Cruz or 'Port of the Cross'. Nestled on the north-eastern coast of the island, surrounded by steep volcanic landscape, the village gained its name from the single cross on the beach which indicated to Portuguese explorers their arrival at the correct port. Depending on your time of arrival you may wish to relax on the black sandy beach or take a swim in the village's fantastic swimming complex which was developed in 2004 for the village and its visitors to enjoy, and consists of 2 pools, a sun terrace and restaurant area- perfect for relaxing after your journey. Alternatively, you may wish to delve straight into the culture of the island and pay a visit to the last remaining sugar mill on the island where they have been distilling the sugar since 1927. Sugar cane was one of the main agricultural produces on the island and it is possible to visit the distillery and sample 'Poncha', a popular local drink made from sugar cane liquor, honey and freshly squeezed orange juice.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Transfer to Machico and walk along the wild north coast.

Your first day walking begins with a short transfer to Machico, the first landing point on Madeira when the island was discovered back in 1419. Today the first pioneers of the island wouldn't recognise the town, with its man-made sandy beach made from sand shipped from Morocco. Your route will take you away from the town between the hillside and along the impressive north-eastern coast. This sparsely populated coastline makes for some spectacular walking as you follow an ancient supply route, once used for cultivating the vineyards. Along your way you will be accompanied by breath-taking panoramas towards neighbouring island Porto Santo. Your route leads you all the way back to Porto da Cruz where you may have time to enjoy the village swimming complex or relax with a coffee before heading out for dinner.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
550M



Descent
550M



Time
4-5 hours



Distance
15KM

DAY 3

Discover the traditional houses of Santana and explore the wild northern coast.

Your day begins with a short transfer to the town of Santana, renowned for its brightly painted triangular wooden dwellings with sloping thatched roofs, known as 'casas de colmo'. These lovingly restored farm labourers' houses bear testimony to the local natural resources, and are very photogenic. After soaking up this traditional Madeiran ambiance, you will be taken to cafe Quinta Levada do Rei, where you will begin today's walk. On this relaxing hike along the wonderful Levada do Rei, you will feel immersed in an almost primeval atmosphere as you are surrounded by other-worldly vegetation with its evocative sights and scents. Tap into the relaxing energy of the gently-running water that moves alongside you in the irrigation channel, sometimes even passing through short tunnels, and feel refreshed by the spray as you pass small waterfalls - remember your waterproofs! Meander along until you reach the springs and main waterfall of Ribeiro Bonito, an almost magical place at the head of the river valley. Pause for a while and soak up the moment, before making your way back along the levada to the Quinta where you can enjoy a bite to eat and a drink, surrounded by nature. You will then be collected by your driver and taken to Sao Vicente, your home for tonight.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
350M



Descent
350M



Time
3 hours



Distance
10KM

DAY 4

Walk amongst breath-taking panoramas along the Paul da Serra plateau and enjoy the natural pools of Porto Moniz.

Feeling refreshed, today you will head away from the coast and into the mountains, taking a transfer to the Paul da Serra high plateau. This fantastic plateau is the largest on the island at approx. 24km square and at a lofty average altitude of 1500m making for some great easy walking and even better panoramas over steep valleys. Your route will take you through UNESCO protected shady laurel forest, through colourful blooming broom bushes to Fanal and on to fairy-tale like wood forest and pastures. Here crooked trees, green meadows and grazing highland cattle create a beautiful peaceful experience, and you will pass several viewpoints providing the perfect picnic spot to end your walk. A short transfer will take you down towards the coast once more, still accompanied by beautiful vistas out to the turquoise ocean, to reach your final goal of the day, Porto Moniz, a charming and well known spot for swimming. Here the natural pools were created by the hot powerful rock lava as it meets the cooling blue waters. You will have time to enjoy the natural swimming complex before checking in to your hotel for the evening.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
150M



Descent
350M



Time
3-4 hours



Distance
11KM

DAY 5

Explore the quaint streets of Prazeres and walk through fragrant eucalyptus forests scattered with colourful lilies and Amarryllis.

Today's walk will explore the south west coast of the island where you will discover the island's colourful wild growing flora. This part of the island, where the lush green hills fall steeply into the sea, is full of traditional charm. Your route begins in the small village of Prazeres, known as one of the loveliest villages on the island. Here there is time to stroll the quaint streets and perhaps enjoy a morning coffee before continuing on your way through fragrant eucalyptus forests. Depending on the time of your visit you may also find the colourful Calla Lillies, Amarryllis and Agapanthus which grow here in the fertile soils. You will enjoy a lovely levada walk before your route finally takes you back down towards the coast, towards your home for the night in the lively coastal village of Calheta. This popular holiday village is home to an elegant marina which makes for a lovely evening stroll before dinner, and there are some great restaurants to sample the island's delicacies.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 50M	 Descent 650M	 Time 4-5 hours	 Distance 17KM
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DAY 6

Experience the oldest levada on Madeira, Levada do Norte, and spectacular panoramas at Cabo Girao.

Your day begins with a short transfer along the coast to the start of your walk on Levada do Norte above Ribeira Brava. From the start you will be greeted by amazing views down the Ribeira Brava valley cut deep into the mountainside. Levada do Norte is the longest and oldest levada on the island and has played an important role in the irrigation of the precious farmlands in the area. You will need to be surefooted today as you follow the levada towards the small villages of Campanario and Quinta Grande. Along the way you will witness the importance of the levada engineering as you walk through the farmed terraces and discover the vast varieties of fruits which it waters. You will soon arrive at Cabo Girao, the highest cliff in Europe, which whilst you may need a head for heights the views this lofty spot provide are spectacular. Here you will have time to enjoy the vistas over the terraced fields and along the coastline before hopping on the bus to Funchal. An alternative walk on this day begins above the spectacular cliffs of Cabo Girao from where you will make your way along the coast with wonderful vistas over the sea, through Camara de Lobos to Funchal.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 250M	 Descent 150M	 Time 5 hours	 Distance 15KM
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DAY 7
Take the cable car to Monte, explore the botanical gardens and Funchal's old town.

Your final walk of the week begins with a transfer with a difference, taking the cable car to the pilgrimage site of Monte, with its impressive panoramic view over the city of Funchal. The cable car station is located in Funchal's old town, characterised by its narrow cobbled streets; the perfect spot for a morning coffee before ascending on the cable car to Monte. Arriving at Monte we recommend you pay a visit to the church of Nossa Senhora do Monte (Our Lady of Monte). The church not only contains spectacular chandeliers but the tomb of Charles I of Habsburg, the last emperor of Austria, who was exiled to Madeira in 1921. We also recommend a visit to the colourful Botanical Gardens, home to over 100,000 exotic plants and the location of the Nossa Senhora do Monte festival. After exploring Monte, the church and the beautiful gardens you have a choice of undertaking a final walk through subtropical landscapes to the coast, or taking an exhilarating ride on one of the traditional wicker basket cars back to Funchal. These iconic cars date back to the 19th century as a mode of transport for Monte's wealthy and today is a popular experience for visitors looking for an adrenaline rush. **NOSSA SENHORA DO MONTE FESTIVAL:** Each year on the 14th August thousands gather in Monte to celebrate the patron saint of Funchal. The festival is a celebration of tradition with food stall selling traditional bolo do caco while people dance in the streets to traditional music.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
100M



Descent
550M



Time
3 hours



Distance
8KM

DAY 8
Departure Day

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast and perhaps a final stroll around town if you are making your onward journey today. However, there is so much to do in and around Funchal, you might like to add an additional night or two here. We can arrange this for you - please ask our Sales Team for more information.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Luggage transfers
- Welcome briefing
- Transfers as described in the itinerary
- Bus journey from Cabo Girao to Funchal
- Uphill cable car journey to Monte / Funchal

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Porto da Cruz
- Travel from Funchal
- Visas (if applicable)
- Tourist taxes may apply and are usually under 5 Euros per person per night
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit and the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook, and all your relevant documents, no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start-date. We will send your documents using a signed-for courier so that you can track your package and know that it is safely on its way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our Sales Team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker, so please remind them to pack it before setting off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start-date, please inform our Sales Team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for most of our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, so please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling instead.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

Your trip starts at your hotel in Porto da Cruz. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis, allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method that best suits you. The nearest airport is Cristiano Ronaldo International Airport (Funchal), served by many departures from UK regional airports.

If you are flying to into Funchal you can travel via public transport to Porto da Cruz - the journey takes approximately 1 hour and costs approximately €3 - €4 per person.

Alternatively, it is possible to take a taxi from the airport - this costs around €40. NB there is a 20% supplement for trips made between 9pm and 6am.

Your trip ends at your hotel in Funchal. You can travel via the Aerobus shuttle from the stop near to your hotel - this takes 20 - 30 minutes and costs approximately €6 per person - your hotel will be able to give you the latest timetable information and advise you how to reach the bus stop.

Alternatively, it is possible to take a taxi to the airport - this costs around €40. NB there is a 20% supplement for trips made between 9pm and 6am.

We can also arrange additional nights' accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, or you may even wish to make this trip part of a bigger trip of your own, or pair it with one of our other holidays - just ask our Sales Team for details.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

It is not just fantastic walking this Pearl of the Atlantic has to offer. The island's fertile volcanic soils and incredible network of levadas make for a plethora of fresh and tasty produce, not to mention the fantastic seafood the local fisherman catch daily from the surrounding North Atlantic Ocean. This holiday is on a bed and breakfast basis allowing you to sample all the great tastes the island has to offer.

The island has many fantastic seafood restaurants serving delicacies such as grilled limpets fresh from the grill served with garlic butter, lemon and local bolo do caco (a typically Madeiran flat round bread). For meat eaters we recommend sharing picado with your travelling companion; made with fried chunks of beef, garlic and red peppers served in a large dish surrounded by French fries designed for everyone to grab a fork and dig in.

Food is varied and plentiful on Madeira and it's not just savoury dishes the Madeirans excel at. Across the island you will find bakeries filled with delicious treats to satisfy any sweet tooth including the traditional Portuguese tarts pastel del nata and bolo de mel, a honey cake traditionally eaten at Christmas time. And let's not forget the aperitif for which the island is famed- Madeira Wine. The fortified wine comes in many forms from a sweet dessert wine to a dry aperitif making the perfect end to an evening meal or a souvenir to remember a great holiday on the island.

Accommodation

We have handpicked a great range of 4* hotels for your trip, you will also spend two nights in a family run 2* hotel in Porto da Cruz. Each hotel has been specially chosen for its great location and warm hospitality. All of the hotels offer something different such as wellness centres, pools and cosy bars perfect for relaxing after a busy day walking on the island.

All of our hotels offer a great breakfast buffet to fuel you for the day ahead and are in close proximity to many bars and restaurants where you can enjoy a traditional Madeiran meal.

It is possible to arrange additional nights' accommodation if you would like to extend your time on the island. Please speak to our Sales Team for more information.

Baggage Allowance

Your main luggage will be transferred between each of your hotels while you are out on your walk. We ask that you please ensure that each piece of your luggage is under 20kg and that your luggage is ready for collection in the morning on the day of each hotel change. You will also need a daypack to carry your daily essentials with you whilst you are walking.

General Information

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.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

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.

Health & Vaccinations

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.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace however getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable your walks will be. You should be comfortable with walking 3 to 5 hours for consecutive days. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of daily walks in hilly countryside before your trip and it's always a good idea to spend some time walking in the footwear you are going to use on this holiday.

Climate

Madeira has a mild sub-tropical climate, with the Gulf Stream helping to ensure pleasant temperatures all year round. The warmest months are July and August with maximum temperatures of around 26 - 27 degrees centigrade, and in February and November it is a little cooler at 18 - 20 degrees centigrade, so this makes the shoulder seasons of spring and autumn absolutely ideal for being active on the island. Madeira generally has sunshine all year round, with May through September being the driest months and seeing very little rain. October through March can be wetter, but with still just an average of 6 days of rain per month. Of course, there would be no beautiful greenery on Madeira without a little rain!

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 before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at 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 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 directly 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

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

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good-grip soles
- Hiking socks
- Long / short hiking trousers
- Functional base layer top and leggings
- T-shirts
- Fleece / extra warm layer
- Windproof jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Hat, gloves, and neck gaiter
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses

- Sunhat
- Small first aid kit inside your rucksack
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Camera (and batteries / memory card)
- Reusable sealable picnic boxes for picnics
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Walking poles
- Headtorch with spare batteries
- Personal wash kit
- Your self-guided route notes
- Rucksack (approx. 20L)

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 a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

Land Only Information

Departures available on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

We offer some transfers to your hotel from the nearest airports, please refer to the 'joining arrangements and transfers' for further details for this trip.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

Circumnavigating the entire island allows you to experience the very best of Madeira's strong culture in just one week - from sampling the island's potent Poncha to standing proud on Cabo Girao, Europe's highest clifftop, for the ultimate panorama. We have included all transfers to/from your walks each day, luggage transfers, and a journey on the cable car to Monte - high above Funchal - so that all you have to do is put one foot in front of the other and enjoy your holiday!

Please Note This document was downloaded on 09/02/2025 and the trip is subject to change