

MAGNIFICENT MADEIRA

Madeira with its' tropical landscape and rich volcanic soil is known as the 'floating garden' and the warm temperatures ensure that there is always an abundance of tropical flowers making it a colourful paradise.

There seems to be a constant joy for life on this little Atlantic gem with feasts, festivals, cultural and sporting events as well as the annual Wine Festival every September. Starting in the district of Câmara de Lobos, twelve kilometers from Funchal, the rituals of wine making are kept alive and enjoyed by both locals and tourist alike.

Beautiful Levanda Walks have become synonymous with Madeira. An open irrigation system was designed to transport precious water from the wetter Northern regions to the sun dried banana plantations and vineyards in the South. The Levanda Walks follow these trails along the maintenance paths in the high moors allowing you to enjoy beautiful valley landscapes, waterfalls and breathtaking views over the Atlantic.

Just a few hours flying time away, you can discover a whole different world-from the waterfalls of the interior to the unique attractions of Funchal the busy capital, with its stunning architecture, flower market, shops, restaurants and bars.

Funchal is a bustling city surrounded by steep hills on three sides, with a south facing bay and magnificent harbour. By day the little street cafes and recovered old squares have an atmosphere all of their own and are lined with wine shops and traditional flowers sellers.

Sightseeing:

Funchal has a great selection of interesting sights. Try the air balloon ride that rises 150 metres to give an unmissable panoramic view of the city bay. Alternatively, take the cable car up to Monte, 'fly' high above the city, stroll through the park and visit the Church. Then, to return back, take advantage of one of Funchal's highlights - a unique two kilometre ride back down in wicker toboggans.

Madeira has a host of enchanting gardens, the most spectacular of which is the Botanical Garden in the upper part of Funchal with a collection of over 2,500 plant species, and offering views over the bay.

Nightlife here is very low-key during the week, ideal for spending a relaxing evening in an elegant restaurant overlooking the harbour or bay area, followed by visiting one of the traditional pubs in the old part of the town. However the city comes alive at the weekend when many bars and clubs catering for locals and tourist alike stay open until dawn.

With English widely spoken, the euro as local currency and daytime flights direct from Dublin, Madeira is truly a fascinating and colourful destination.

To book your holiday to Madeira, contact Eblana Travel on (091) 501400