

PORTUGAL · HIKING · ISLANDS · MOUNTAINS · WINE · FOOD



Madeira

Portugal's Atlantic island is a year-round walking and sunshine destination: Funchal rarely drops below 19°C by day in winter and seldom tops 27°C in summer. It suits hikers following the levadas, garden lovers and couples rather than beach-seekers, as sand is scarce; Porto Santo, a ferry ride away, has a long golden beach.

Read the UK government's travel advice for Portugal and entry requirements before you go.

COUNTRY Portugal	BEST TIME Apr–Jun, Sep	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 3h 55m direct ~£140–£400 return	DAILY BUDGET £55–£250 ££ Moderate
WARMEST MONTH August (27°C)	SEA TEMPERATURE 18–24°C coolest–warmest	TIME ZONE Madeira same time as the UK now	CURRENCY Euro £1 ≈ €1.19

Madeira is a steep volcanic island where most visitors base themselves in Funchal and explore by bus, tour or hire car. The draw is walking: hundreds of kilometres of levadas, irrigation channels with paths alongside, contour through laurel forest, and the high ridge between Pico do Arieiro and Pico Ruivo tops the list. Non-residents now pay a small fee, booked online, on the official trails. Swimming is mostly from lidos, rock pools and pebble coves, so beach lovers add a few days on Porto Santo. There is no real off-season: spring brings the Flower Festival, New Year's Eve fireworks fill Funchal's hotels, and winter brings more rain and occasional storms that close trails.

Highlights

- 1

ADVENTURE

Pico do Arieiro to Pico Ruivo

The PR1 ridge walk links Madeira's third-highest peak with its highest, Pico Ruivo at 1,862m, through tunnels and along exposed stairways above the clouds. Since reopening in 2026 it is walked one way only, and a timed slot must be booked online.
- 2

NATURE

Rabaçal: 25 Fontes and Risco

From Rabaçal on the Paul da Serra plateau, levada paths lead through UNESCO-listed laurel forest to the Risco waterfall and the 25 Fontes pool, fed by dozens of springs. Arrive early; parking fills quickly.
- 3

CULTURE

Monte and the toboggan run

Take the cable car up from Funchal's seafront to Monte, wander the tropical gardens, then come down in a wicker toboggan steered by two white-clad carreiros, a tradition since the 19th century.
- 4

BEACH

Porto Moniz natural pools

Natural swimming pools formed in black volcanic rock on the island's north-west tip and refreshed by Atlantic waves; a sheltered place for a sea swim and a good stop on a round-island drive.

5

BEACH

Porto Santo

Madeira's small neighbour has a nine-kilometre golden sand beach, something the main island lacks. The Lobo Marinho ferry from Funchal takes around two and a half hours, or you can fly across in about 15 minutes.

Where to stay

WHERE TO STAY

Funchal

The capital holds most hotels, restaurants and bus routes, from the Lido's resort hotels to the old town; the best base without a car.

WHERE TO STAY

Canico

A quieter resort east of Funchal, close to the airport, with good diving and snorkelling in the Garajau marine reserve; suits couples and divers.

WHERE TO STAY

Calheta

The sunny south-west coast's resort, with a man-made sandy beach and a marina, close to the Rabaçal levada walks; best with a hire car.

WHERE TO STAY

Santana

A north-coast village of thatched A-frame houses, greener and cooler, handy for the Pico Ruivo and Caldeirão Verde walks; suits serious walkers.

When to go to Madeira

Best time: **Apr–Jun, Sep.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

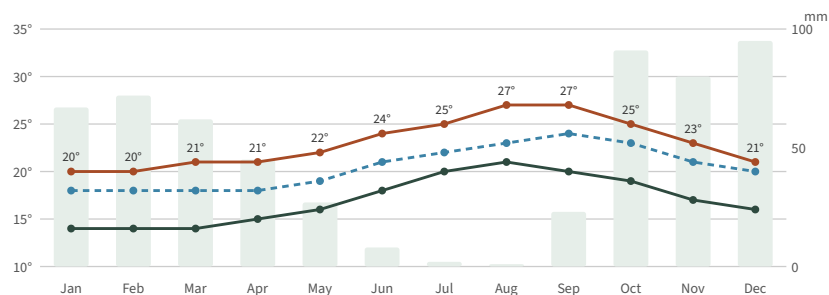
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Funchal

— High °C — Low °C — Sea °C ■ Rain (mm)

**How much does Madeira cost?**

SHOESTRING

£55

per person / day
≈ €65.47

MID-RANGE

£120

per person / day
≈ €143

COMFORTABLE

£250

per person / day
≈ €298

Per person per day excluding flights. Return flights from London typically cost £140 off-peak and £400 in school holidays.

Visas & entry for Madeira

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Portugal, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Portugal are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Portugal

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 1 Nov 2026	All Saints' Day
Tue 1 Dec 2026	Restoration of Independence Day
Tue 8 Dec 2026	Immaculate Conception
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Sun 25 Apr 2027	Freedom Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Thu 27 May 2027	Corpus Christi
Thu 10 Jun 2027	Day of Portugal, Camões, and the Portuguese Communities

Sun 15 Aug 2027	Assumption Day
Tue 5 Oct 2027	Republic Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Madeira's airport is exposed to strong crosswinds, and flights are occasionally diverted or cancelled; avoid tight onward connections and keep your travel insurance details handy.

Weather changes fast with altitude: Funchal can be sunny while the peaks are cloudy, wet and near freezing, so pack layers and check the mountain webcams before driving up.

Plugs, money, phrases, emergency numbers and more: see our Portugal guide.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.