Festive Walking in Madeira



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Festive breaks	Portugal, Portuguese Islands & Madeira	4 & 5	978kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Madeira now comes with a festive twist. This special Christmas departure combines scenic walks, mild winter weather, and the vibrant atmosphere of Funchal's markets and celebrations. Guests stay in a centrally located adults-only hotel, perfectly placed for the city's festivities. The well-paced holiday is designed for active adults blending iconic landscapes with seasonal charm—an appealing addition to our portfolio at a peak travel time.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Buffet-style Christmas Gala Dinner with drinks (24th Dec) – a joyful evening spent together with fellow walkers.
- Free Christmas Day (25th Dec) – time to relax, explore Funchal's festive spirit, or simply enjoy the mild climate.
- Centrally located adults-only hotel – perfect for easy access to Funchal's Christmas markets, lights, and seasonal celebrations.
- Explore Madeira's rugged landscapes – from dramatic coastlines to emerald-green mountains.
- Step onto Cabo Girão – Europe's highest glass skywalk with breathtaking views.
- Follow the famous levadas – scenic trails leading to stunning waterfalls.
- Sample Madeira's renowned fortified wine – a taste of the island's heritage.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Gatwick, including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- A choice of 2 guided walks per day with local leaders (on walking days)
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' accommodation in Funchal
- 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners with drinks including a buffet-style Christmas Gala Dinner (24th Dec)
- All in-destination transport

ITINERARY - CHRISTMAS

Day 1 **Arrival Day**

Welcome to hotel. Unpack and settle in

Day 2 **The North of the Island**

Today our walks take us to the north of the island on two exciting routes in the Sao Roque Valley to Porto da Cruz. Our day will include a visit to the pretty bay of Porto da Cruz.

Option 1 - Into the North of the Island

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Total ascent: 260 feet (80m)

Total descent: 0 feet (0m)

In summary: Starting from Cruz we ascend through farmland to join the Levada Castelejo. We follow the Levada upstream to enjoy views of the spectacular gorge before turning and following the Levada Castelejo and the Levada Nova through the quiet countryside to Referta.

Highlight: Exploring one of the greenest and most unspoiled valleys in Madeira followed by a visit to a seaside village.

Option 2 - Lombo Grande

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 950 feet (290m)

Total descent: 1130 feet (345m)

In summary: Starting in the village of Roque do Faial we ascend through small farms to Lombo Grande then descend through woods to join the Levada Castelejo. The route follows the beautiful Sao Roque valley to Cruz and then on to Referta.

Highlight: Following a levada from its source, along a spectacular valley

Day 3 CABO GIRAO, MOORLAND & LEVADAS

Our walks today take us to the western end of the island. We'll travel past Funchal before entering the Ribeira Brava Gorge. The coach will then take us high onto the western moors. This side of the island differs greatly from the high volcanic peaks in the east. Here rolling moorland offers views over the sea in both directions on a clear day. Torches are useful on this day, when walking through one of the levada tunnels, which is 800m long. Before returning to the hotel we call at the dramatic Cabo Girao skywalk viewpoint.

Option 1 - The Moorland Levada

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Total ascent: 100 feet (30m)

Total descent: 985 feet (300m)

In summary: Our walk follows a gentle levada path to a lovely viewpoint over the hills and woods of Rabacal before descending to Levada das 25 Fontes which will lead us via a tunnel through a mountain ridge to meet our coach. Before returning to the hotel, we'll stop to experience the magnificent Cabo Girao glass skywalk.

Highlight: Rabacal is considered one of Madeira's most beautiful areas.

Option 2 - Four Levadas in a day

Distance: 7 miles (11.5km)

Ascent: 460 feet (140m)

Descent: 985 feet (300m)

In summary: Following the Levada do Alecrim, we have sweeping views down the Rabaçal valley. Our route continues with views of the deep Ribeira da Janela valley, descending through woodland to a rock pool perched between two waterfalls. Our walk ends on the Levada 25 Fontes. Before returning to the hotel, we'll stop to take in the scenery at the Cabo Girao viewpoint.

Highlight: Traverse three of the five Levadas in the Rabaçal valley.

Day 4 Heart of Madeira & Pico Ruivo

We'll journey to the centre of the wonderful island of Madeira and marvel at Pico Ruivo, the island's highest peak at 1861m.

Today is a public holiday, so some shops and local attractions might be closed; however, our planned itinerary will remain unchanged.
Join us this evening for a gala dinner and help make it unforgettable by dressing in smart attire.

Day 5 Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest.

Christmas Day is a public holiday so some attractions and services may not be available in Funchal and surrounding areas.

Day 6 São Lourenço Peninsula and the Cliffs

Our walks today are at the far eastern end of the island. Walk along the São Lourenço peninsula and take a boat trip to the fishing village of Caniçal.

Today is a public holiday, so some shops and local attractions might be closed; however, our planned itinerary will remain unchanged.

Day 7 Verada Do Larano

Today's walks take us to the north coast on the eastern side of Madeira.

Option 1 - Ribeira Seca

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 690ft (210m)

Descent: 1150 feet (350m)

In summary: This walk takes us above the Ribeira Seca to the viewpoint at Boca do Risco. After a picnic we'll walk along the coast path that was once used to carry wine and rum from the Porto da Cruz to Machico. Continuing along this path, we'll make our way towards the outskirts of Porto da Cruz where we'll be met by our transfer that will take us back to the hotel.

Highlight: The views across the coastline from Boca do Risco.

Option 2 - Ribeira Seca and Porto da Cruz

Distance: 7.5 miles (10km)

Ascent: 690 feet (210m)

Descent: 1150 feet (350m)

In summary: Our longer walk follows the same route as option 1 but lengthens things by continuing along the coast path all the way into Porto da Cruz.

Highlight: The views of the coastline from Boca do Risco

Day 8 Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 4

The most active Gentle grade, with longer walks, some ascent, and possible steps, stiles, or off-path uneven ground. Typically, 6-7 miles (10-12km) with around 1,000ft (300m) of ascent.



Moderate walking grade 5

Some walking experience needed. Full day walks which may include some short but steep ascents and descents throughout the day, and varied terrain. Regular stops. Typically, 8-9 miles (13-15km) with around 1,300ft (400m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel The Views Baía 4* - Adults Only

We are staying at Twin Land View Rooms, sea view room available at a supplement. Set on the hills overlooking Funchal Bay, The Views Baía Hotel offers a peaceful adult-only escape with a cosmopolitan atmosphere and some of the best views on the island. Guests can enjoy the region's gastronomy, with traditional Portuguese flavours given a tropical twist, fresh fish, and carefully selected local produce.

Your evenings

On the return from your daily excursion, our local leaders will tell you about the next day's activities and answer any questions you may have. During the evening why not relax with our tour manager and companions in the beautiful bar overlooking the sea.

FOOD & DRINK

Our holidays in Madeira are offered on a half-board basis, including buffet breakfast served at BayView Restaurant from 7:30am to 10:00am and buffet dinner from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. Half board also includes a choice of alcoholic or soft drink during along with coffee or tea after the meal. On 24 December 2026, during the Gala Dinner, drinks are included as usual, but coffee and tea are not served.

Lunch (payable locally)

Guests have several convenient options for lunch during their stay. The hotel offers the possibility to pre-order packed or picnic lunches (from €7–15 for a generous picnic), while nearby shops and cafés provide alternative choices. The Plaza Madeira Shopping Centre, located just a 10-minute downhill walk from the hotel, is perfect for picking up supplies. For a lighter option, sandwiches can be purchased at local supermarkets for around €3–4.

ROOMS

Your room at The View Baia

The hotel has 238 en-suite bedrooms spread over nine floors.

Traditional in style, with small balconies, fridge, kettle, tea/coffee facilities, and safe.

Sea View Rooms: Same facilities as Land View, but with stunning city and ocean vistas.

ABOUT YOUR STAY

Facilities at The View Baia

This adults-only hotel is designed for a more elevated stay, combining stylish design and serene surroundings.

Heated outdoor pool with pool bar (open daily 10am–6pm).

Woogie Boogie cocktail Bar open from 6 pm to midnight.

Spa open until 8pm.

Wi-Fi is free throughout the public areas of the hotel.

The hotel provides a courtesy shuttle bus five times a day (excluding weekends and public holidays).

The hotel is home to Desarma Restaurant, a Michelin one-star rooftop venue offering a fine dining experience with panoramic views over Funchal. The restaurant is open Tuesday to Saturday, with evening seatings available between 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm. Please note that dining here is not included in the holiday cost and must be pre-booked in advance directly with the restaurant.

VACCINATIONS & HEALTH

Vaccinations & health information

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel.

As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure.

Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting.

For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passport & Visa information

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice.

Passport Requirements

This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long.
We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues.

If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website.

Visa Requirements

Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling.
British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITH FLIGHTS)

With flights

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from selected UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS (WITHOUT FLIGHTS)

Without flights

If you are booking on a land-only basis, you can join the group transfer at an additional cost. To do so, your arrival and departure times must be in line with the scheduled group flight timings. Guests travelling at different times will need to arrange their own transfers. Please contact us before booking to discuss the available options and costs.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so before you travel.

For more information about healthcare and its costs, please visit: https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/

Drinking Water

Drinking Water

Standards for drinking water vary widely around the world. In many destinations, tap water may not be safe to drink, brush your teeth with, or use for making ice. Where advised, you should drink only bottled or treated water and ensure that bottle seals are intact before use. If bottled water is unavailable, water should be boiled or filtered.

Staying well hydrated is particularly important in hot climates and during active holidays. Carry water with you and drink regularly.

If you are unsure about local water safety, check official country-specific health advice before travel, or ask your accommodation or local guides for guidance once you arrive.

LOCAL CURRENCY

Local Currency in Madeira

The local currency in Madeira is the Euro. It is advisable to carry some euro cash with you, as certain toilets along walking routes, as well as cafés and shops in more remote areas, may only accept cash.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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