



8 Days

# Madeira

## Pearl of the Atlantic

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Right in the middle of the Atlantic, the island of Madeira is famous for its natural beauty. Green rolling hills, exotic botanical gardens, volcanoes and rugged-cliff tops looking out over the crystal blue sea. With everything so close by, in just 8 days you can explore a vast range of interesting geo-biology. Walk along levadas, swim in lava rock pools and visit plantations. No visit to Madeira is complete without a whale and dolphin watching tour!





# Recommended tour itinerary

Day  
1

## Arrive in Funchal

On arrival, we are met by our local STC Expedition Leader and take a short transfer to our accommodation in Funchal city centre. Our Leader will give us a briefing on what to expect from our trip and a short language lesson. The rest of the afternoon will be spent settling in before our first traditional meal.

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Day  
2

## Discover Madeira, above & under ground

Our discovery of Madeira begins as we take to the skies... literally! Our first visit of the day is to the highest sea cliff in Europe and the second highest in the world, Cabo Girão. At 580m the views from the skywalk platform are breath taking. Continuing along the coast we reach Seixal where we take part in a cooking class! We learn how to make traditional dishes such as Espetada and Bolo do Caco and then feast on a lunch of our own making.

This afternoon we visit Porto Moniz in the northwest of the island and can take time to relax in the natural lava swimming pools. From the coast we continue our journey underground and explore São Vicente Caves. The caves were formed 890 thousand years ago by a volcanic eruption in Paul da Serra. There is now an underground route running over 1km for us to explore as well as incredible 5-6m high caves and unique series of lava tubes. The Volcano Centre offers a range of educational displays showing the geological evolution of the Madeira Islands.

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Day  
3

## Whale & dolphin watching

Today we have the opportunity to spot and observe some the 28 cetacean species that can be found in the Madeira, a short walk from our accommodation in Funchal. Although nature offers no guarantees, whales and dolphins are regularly seen during these half day tours along the south coast of the island. Local marine biologists or sea guides will brief us on which cetacean species can be observed, safety measures aboard, how we respect the animals and rules of observation at sea.

Spotted and Bottlenose dolphins, Pilot and Fin Whales are among the species we have the chance to see. Rare species are also spotted here such as the Rough Toothed Dolphin and Blainville Beaked Whale, which are the least studied animals in the world being a deep water animal. After the boat trip and a scenic picnic lunch, we have time this afternoon to explore the city of Funchal.

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Day  
4

## Levada hike & bike tour

Besides its natural beauty, Madeira is also well known for its great network of irrigation channels - the Levadas. 3,000km of waterways or "Levadas" are a living reminder of the monumental effort of past generations to distribute water from the mountain springs to the lower slopes, agricultural land and valleys of the island. Our morning hike follows the Levadas through lush vegetation and indigenous forest. After a picnic lunch, the adventure cranks up a gear. Jumping onto mountain bikes, we cycle along quiet roads, paths and dirt tracks that wind through epic mountain landscapes. This is an easy to moderate mountain bike tour, suitable for all levels, and with its stunning mountain and Atlantic Ocean views, one we won't easily forget!





Day  
5

## Forest Conservation

We spend today volunteering at the Ecological Park of Funchal, a short drive from the city centre. The Park was created in 1994 to preserve nature and promote environmental education. On arrival, we meet the park rangers and listen to a talk on the park's history and the important work that they do to conserve its biodiversity. Time to roll up our sleeves as we work alongside the rangers, helping with the current conservation activities taking place in the park. This could include collecting seeds of native species, planting trees, cutting back invasive species and helping in the greenhouse or nursery. There are also a number of short and interactive walks we can do in the park, as well as visiting the nearby Monte and Botanical Gardens.

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Day  
6

## Bananas about Volcanoes

Green landscapes, a pleasant climate and the unique coastal environments make Madeira an ideal environment for growing exotic fruits. This morning we walk along banana fields to a banana factory and learn about the different types, growing stages and climate conditions.

Next we visit Pico do Arieiro, an extinct volcano and the third highest peak of the island standing tall at 1,818m. The incredible panoramic views from the top are a great backdrop for a team photo!

From here we descend to Ribeiro Frio, meaning "Cold River". This is a natural park located in the north of the island, in a deep valley surrounded by mountains. A short Levada walk along an ancient water channel gives us the chance to spot different bird species such as the Madeira Firecrest and Trocaz Pigeon. The incredible Balcões viewpoint is a real highlight and we can see the Laurissilva Forest from here which is what gives the area World Heritage UNESCO status. We can also visit a nearby sugar cane factory to see how they produce molasses used in honey and rum!

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Day  
7

## Hiking the Volcanic Peninsula

Today we enjoy a full day hike along São Lourenço, a long and narrow peninsula at the eastern end of the island. The peninsula is volcanic in its origin, mainly formed of basalt, although there are some limestone sediment formations. The semi-arid climate and exposure to the north winds have sculpted the low vegetation and explains the lack of trees, which makes this part of the island very unique compared to what we have experienced so far. At the end of the trail we can enjoy a well deserved swim and relax in Sardinha port.

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Day  
8

## Last goodbye & departure

There should be time for final souvenir shopping today before we catch our return flight to the UK.

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# Further information

## Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch evening
- Pre-departure preparation evening
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

## What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

## Your educational journey timeline



## Physical journey rating:



Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

## Culture shock rating:



Expect to find local life broadly familiar to that in the UK, however aspects of the trip are likely to be in remoter areas where differences are more profound. Whilst English may not be the native language, you can expect it to be widely spoken. There may be some cultural differences and although western pallets should be well catered for there will be the opportunity to try new dishes.



# A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey.

## 1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your educational travel itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

## 3 Arrange a trip launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with a comprehensive information evening and an opportunity for questions.



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