

Câmara de Lobos

Madeira · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Câmara de Lobos is a working fishing town on Madeira's south coast, just west of Funchal. Its small harbour is full of painted wooden boats, and steep terraced hills rise behind the town. The municipality has about 35,000 people. It is one of the oldest settlements on the island.

It suits a half-day or full-day trip from Funchal, or a quiet base for a few nights. Spend the time at the harbour, on a short walk to the viewpoints, and at the high sea cliff of Cabo Girão. Late afternoon is a good time at the harbour, when the boats are in.

When to visit

The south coast is mild all year. Summer is warm, dry and sunny, and the sea is warm enough for swimming from early summer. Winter is mild but wetter, with more cloud on the hills above the town. Spring and autumn are comfortable for walking.

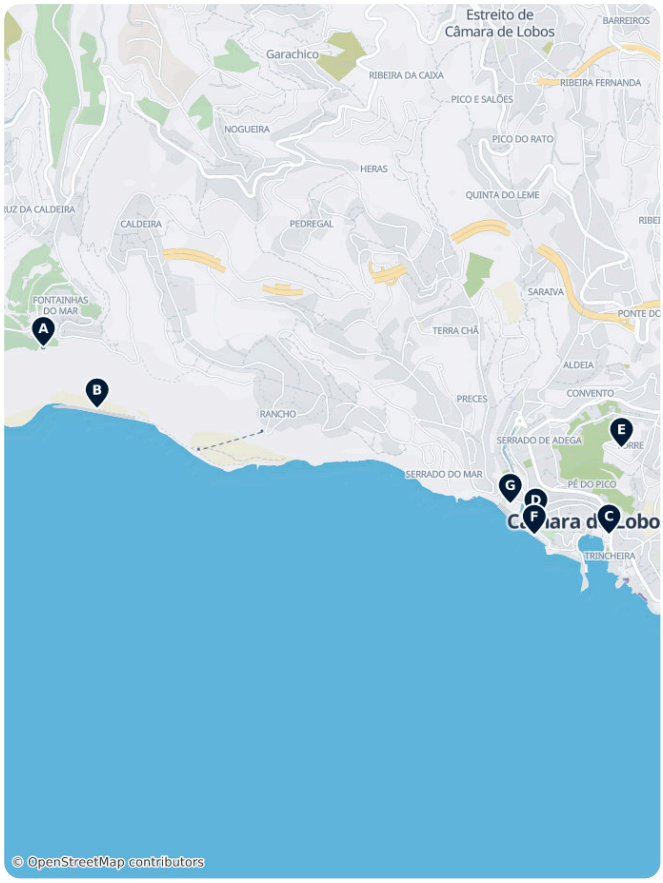
The Arraial de São Pedro is the best event to plan around. It takes place in the last days of June. Stalls, music and grilled food fill the harbour and the narrow streets around it. The Madeira Wine Festival in late summer also includes a grape harvest celebration in nearby Estreito de Câmara de Lobos.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 21°	15° / 12°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Great Great for hiking	18° / 22°	15° / 12°	Dry air
March	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 22°	15° / 12°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 23°	16° / 13°	Calm winds
May	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 25°	17° / 14°	22 sunny days · Calm winds · UV 8 (Very high)
June	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 27°	20° / 18°	22 sunny days · Humid air · Calm winds · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 29°	22° / 20°	26 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds · UV 10 (Very high)
August	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 30°	23° / 21°	25 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds · UV 9 (Very high)
September	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 29°	22° / 19°	21 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for sightseeing	24° / 27°	20° / 17°	Humid air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 24°	18° / 15°	14 rainy days · Calm winds
December	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 22°	16° / 14°	13 rainy days

Best months: April, May, June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Cabo Girão is a sea cliff about 580 metres high and one of the highest in Europe. A platform with a glass floor sticks out over the edge. Go early, because tour buses arrive later in the day. The view covers the whole coast as far as Funchal.

B Praia da Fajã do Cabo Girão lies at the foot of the cliff. This narrow strip of farmland and the beach beside it can be reached by cable car. Farmers still grow crops on the terraces below the wall.

C Miradouro Winston Churchill looks over the harbour and the bay. *Winston Churchill* set up his easel here and painted the bay in January 1950. A bronze statue of him stands at the nearby hotel.

D Igreja de São Sebastião is the parish church of the town, dedicated to Saint Sebastian. It dates from the 16th century and stands near the harbour.

E Pico da Torre is a small hill 205 metres high with a cross on top. From the summit you see the town, the boats in the bay, Estreito de Câmara de Lobos and Cabo Girão. It is a good place for a short climb at sunset.

F Praia de Vigário is the main town beach. It is made of pebbles and has services close by.

G Madeira Printing Press Museum is a small museum in the municipal library. It shows old printing presses and typewriters from the history of the Madeiran press.

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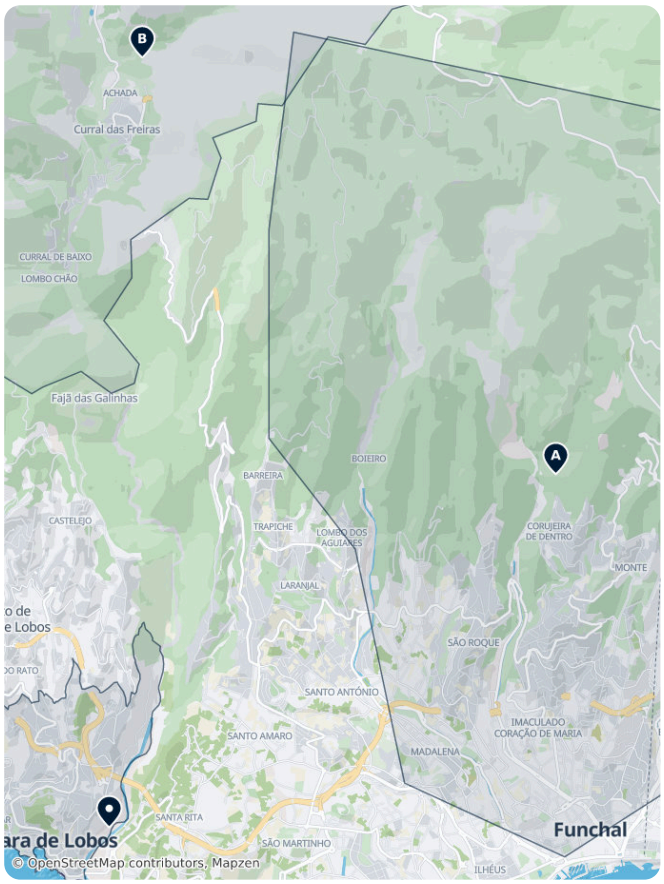
What to experience

- Join the Arraial de São Pedro in the last days of June. Grilled meat and fish, music and stalls fill the harbour, and the streets stay busy late into the night.
- Take part in the grape harvest festival in nearby Estreito de Câmara de Lobos. It is part of the Madeira Wine Festival in late summer. Visitors pick grapes, tread them in a large press and watch a parade of several hundred people. The festival has been held there since 1963.
- Ride the cable car from the cliff down to the fajã below Cabo Girão, then walk along the terraces and the shore.
- Walk the seaside promenade, about 2 km long, from the bay towards the Lido.
- Watch the boats return in the evening. The fishermen here catch black scabbardfish at night, and the boats rest on the pebble beach by day.

Day trips

The town is on the main south coast road, so many sights are close. Times are one way by car. Distances on mountain roads are slow, so allow extra time.

- Ⓐ Funchal, about 15 minutes east. The capital has the market, the cathedral and the cable car to Monte.
- Ribeira Brava and Ponta do Sol, 20 to 30 minutes west. Both are small seaside towns with a promenade and pebble beaches.
- Fajã dos Padres, about 25 minutes west. A fajã on the coast with gardens and a beach, reached by cable car or by boat.
- Ⓑ Curral das Freiras, about 30 minutes north. A village in a deep mountain bowl. The viewpoint Miradouro da Eira do Serrado on the road gives the best view of the valley.
- Pico do Areeiro, about 1 hour north-east. A high peak and the start of the best-known ridge walks on the island. Go early, before the clouds arrive.



Where to explore

Câmara de Lobos is one of Madeira's municipalities. The whole island is covered in the guide to Madeira.

- Close by: Funchal to the east and Curral das Freiras in the mountains above the town.
- West: Calheta has one of the few sandy beaches on the island.
- East: Machico.
- North coast: Santana, São Vicente and Porto Moniz.
- Another island: Porto Santo.

Getting there

- By air: Cristiano Ronaldo Madeira International Airport (FNC) is the only airport on the main island. It is on the east side, about 30 minutes from the town by car or taxi. Direct flights come from Lisbon, Porto and many European cities. Official site: Madeira Airport
- By bus: regular buses link Funchal and the town, a ride of about 30 minutes. Timetables and tickets are on the island bus network site: SIGA
- By car: the VR1 expressway runs along the south coast between Funchal and the town. The drive from Funchal takes about 15 minutes.
- By sea: the nearest port is Funchal, where cruise ships dock.

Getting around

- On foot: the harbour, the seafront promenade and the old centre are close together and easy to walk. The streets behind the harbour are steep, with many steps.
- Cabo Girão and the hills: Cabo Girão is a short drive from the town. Local buses and taxis also go there. A cable car goes down from the cliff to the fajã below.
- Taxi: taxis serve the town. Ask the price before a longer trip.
- Buses: island routes are part of the SIGA network. SIGA

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The harbour, the seafront and the old centre are compact and easy to walk. The streets behind the harbour are steep, with many steps.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Steep hills and narrow streets make cycling hard. Only the seafront is easy on a bike.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? For the town itself, no. The centre is small and streets are narrow. A car is useful to reach Cabo Girão, Estreito de Câmara de Lobos and the mountain villages in one day.
- Roads: Madeira has no toll roads. The VR1 expressway and the island's tunnels are free. Hill roads are steep and narrow, so expect to wait for oncoming cars.
- Parking: there is an underground car park under the São Francisco gardens in the centre. On the street, park only in marked bays. Parking on yellow lines is fined or towed.

Food & drink

Câmara de Lobos is the home of *poncha*, the island's drink of sugarcane spirit, honey and lemon. The first poncha was made here for fishermen, to warm them on cold nights at sea. Try the traditional version in a small bar by the harbour. Fish is the other reason to eat here. Look for *espada* (black scabbardfish), which is the local catch, and *bolo do caco* (flat bread with garlic butter).

Eat in areas, not at one restaurant. The streets around the harbour and the seafront have the most bars and simple fish restaurants. For wine, the village of Estreito de Câmara de Lobos, just inland, is a wine-growing area.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Caldo Verde
A simple, comforting soup of shredded kale, potato, and slices of chourico sausage.

Francesinha
A hearty Porto specialty: a meat-stuffed sandwich covered in melted cheese and a spiced tomato-beer sauce.

DINNER

Bacalhau
Salt cod, Portugal's national dish, said to be prepared in hundreds of different ways across the country.

Sardinhas Assadas
Charcoal-grilled sardines, especially popular in summer street festivals and along the coast.

Arroz de Marisco
A rich, soupy seafood rice, similar to paella but wetter, packed with shellfish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Pastel de Nata
A small custard tart in flaky pastry, best eaten warm with cinnamon and sugar.

DRINKS

Vinho Verde
A young, light, slightly sparkling white wine from northern Portugal, meant to be drunk within a year of harvest.

Port Wine · Vinho do Porto
A fortified wine from the Douro Valley, aged in cellars around Porto, ranging from sweet ruby to complex aged tawny styles.

Ginjinha · Ginãa
A sweet liqueur made from sour cherries, traditionally served in a small cup, sometimes with a cherry at the bottom.

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Safety & health

Câmara de Lobos is safe for visitors. Violent crime is rare. Pickpockets work in busy places, so keep valuables close at festivals and in crowds.

Most problems come from the terrain and the weather. Steps and cobbles are slippery when wet, so wear shoes with grip. The sun is strong in summer, even when it is cloudy. The glass platform at Cabo Girão can be hard for people who fear heights. Swell can be strong on the pebble beaches, so swim only when the sea is calm.

History

The explorer *João Gonçalves Zarco* and his men reached this bay in 1419. They found many monk seals, which the Portuguese called sea wolves. The name of the town comes from them. It was one of the first settlements on the island, and it became a parish in 1430. A chapel dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Conceição was built in the bay at the end of the 15th century and still stands. The old convent of Convento de São Bernardino has a 15th-century origin.

The sea and the sea cliff shaped the life of the town. The people fished, and they farmed small terraces on the hills. The parish church, Igreja de São Sebastião, was built in the 16th century. The municipality was created in 1835.

Winston Churchill visited in January 1950 and painted the bay from the viewpoint now named after him. The visit is remembered by a statue at a local hotel and by Miradouro Winston Churchill.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



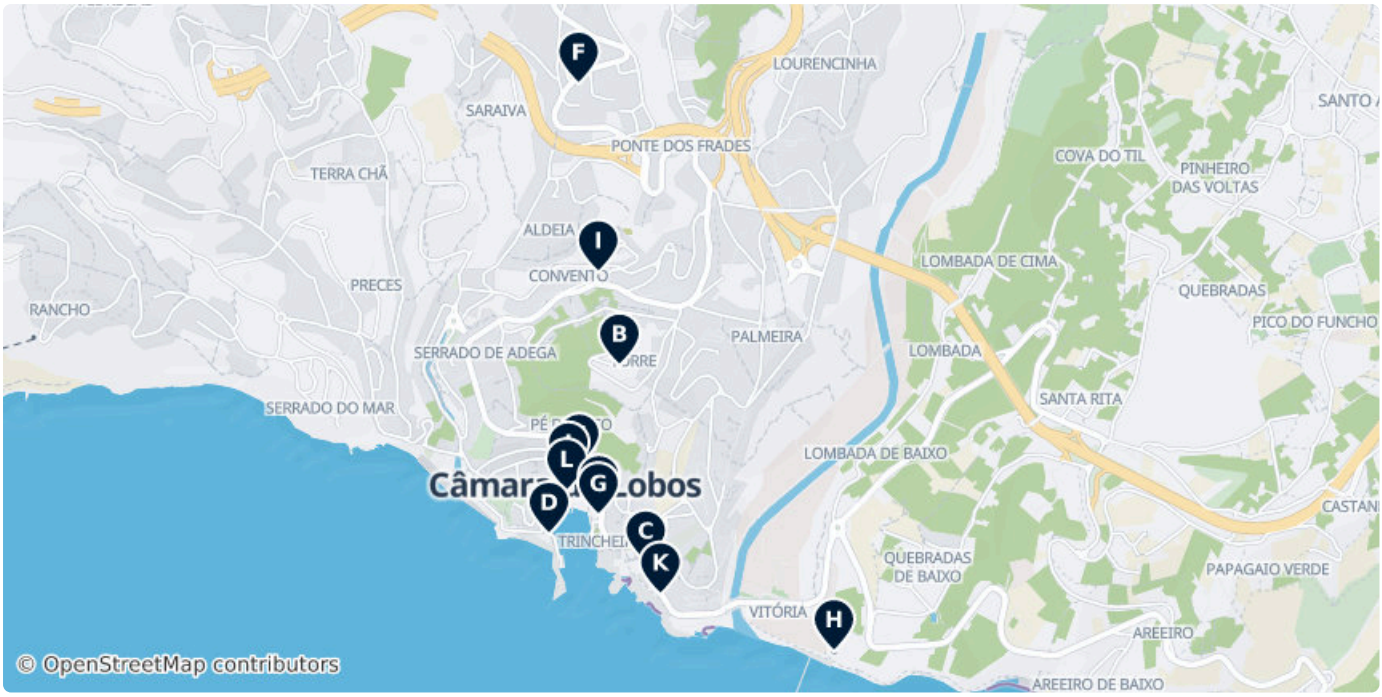
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Câmara de Lobos Essentials

Explore the heritage of Madeira's historic fishing village through its most significant landmarks and culinary spots. This selection includes the 18th-century Forte Nossa Senhora da Vitória, the 15th-century Convento de São Bernardino, and the specific bay-side location where Winston Churchill painted in 1950. The list features viewpoints overlooking the Atlantic, regional restaurants specializing in black scabbard fish and Espetada, and authentic bars serving Poncha, the island's traditional sugar cane spirit drink.





A Miradouro Winston Churchill

The specific location where Sir Winston Churchill sat to paint the harbor during his 1950 visit to Madeira.

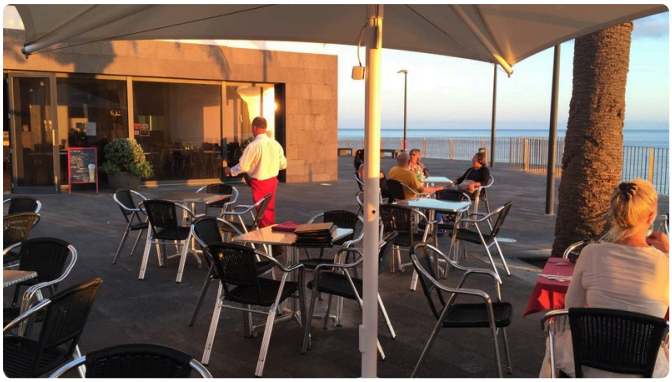
Estrada João Gonçalves Zarco, 9300-053 Câmara de Lobos, Portugal (32.64799, -16.97411)



B Pico da Torre

A panoramic viewpoint 205 meters above sea level, offering 360-degree views of the bay, the town, and the surrounding terraced hillsides.

36 Rua do Alto da Torre, Câmara de Lobos 9300026, Portugal (32.65191, -16.97343)



C Coral Restaurant

Fish and seafood restaurant located on the seafront. Modern interior as well as outdoor seating with an astonishing view.

Largo república 2, Camara De Lobos, Madeira 9300-138, Madeira, Portugal (32.64646, -16.97257)



E Vila do Peixe

Restaurant specializing in fresh regional fish where diners can select their catch from a display counter before it is prepared.

(32.64914, -16.97476)

Mo–Su 11:00–23:00

viladopeixe.com, +351 291 099 909

G Churchill's Restaurante

Waterfront restaurant serving regional Madeiran cuisine, located near the historic spot where Winston Churchill painted the village.

84 Estrada Regional João Gonçalves Zarco, Câmara de Lobos 9300, Portugal (32.64777, -16.97412)

D Lobo Marinho

A large-scale mural of a sea lion created by artist Bordalo II using recycled plastic and scrap metal to highlight marine conservation.

2 Rua Nova da Praia, Câmara de Lobos 9300114, Portugal (32.64724, -16.97575)

F O Lagar

Traditional restaurant known for serving Espetada, Madeira's signature beef skewers grilled over wood embers on laurel branches.

(32.65972, -16.97478)

H Forte Nossa Senhora da Vitória

An 18th-century fortification originally constructed to defend the harbor and fishing village from pirate attacks.

Beco da Vitória, 9000-228 Funchal, Portugal (32.64399, -16.96637)

I Convento de São Bernardino

A Franciscan monastery dating back to 1459, featuring a simple chapel and historic cloister.

(32.65449, -16.97413)

J Mercado Municipal de Câmara de Lobos

Local market featuring stalls of subtropical fruits, fresh vegetables, and regional fish caught by the local fleet.

(32.64890, -16.97511)

K Miradouro do Salão Ideal

Coastal viewpoint providing a direct perspective of the traditional colorful fishing boats, known as Xavelhas, moored in the harbor.

(32.64557, -16.97208)

L Number 2 É Pra Poncha

Bar specializing in traditional Poncha, a local beverage hand-mixed with sugar cane spirit, honey, and fresh citrus juice.

(32.64843, -16.97517)

DATA SOURCES

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