

Funchal

Madeira · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Funchal is the capital of Madeira and home to about 106,000 people. The city climbs from a harbour up steep green hillsides. It has old stone streets, quiet gardens and a long seafront promenade. Most of the island's hotels, restaurants and museums are here. The mild climate means the city is busy in winter as well as summer.

It suits a relaxed trip of three to five nights. Spend days on the market, the old town and the gardens above the city. Use evenings for dinner in the old town and a drink by the marina. Funchal is also the easiest base for the whole island, because the mountains and the coast are within an hour or two. *Cristiano Ronaldo* was born here in 1985.

When to visit

Funchal is a year-round city. Winter is mild, so it is a popular escape from colder countries. Spring and early summer are the driest and sunniest. Summer is warm, and the sea is warm enough to swim. Most rain falls from October to January, and the mountains above the city are often in cloud when the harbour is sunny.

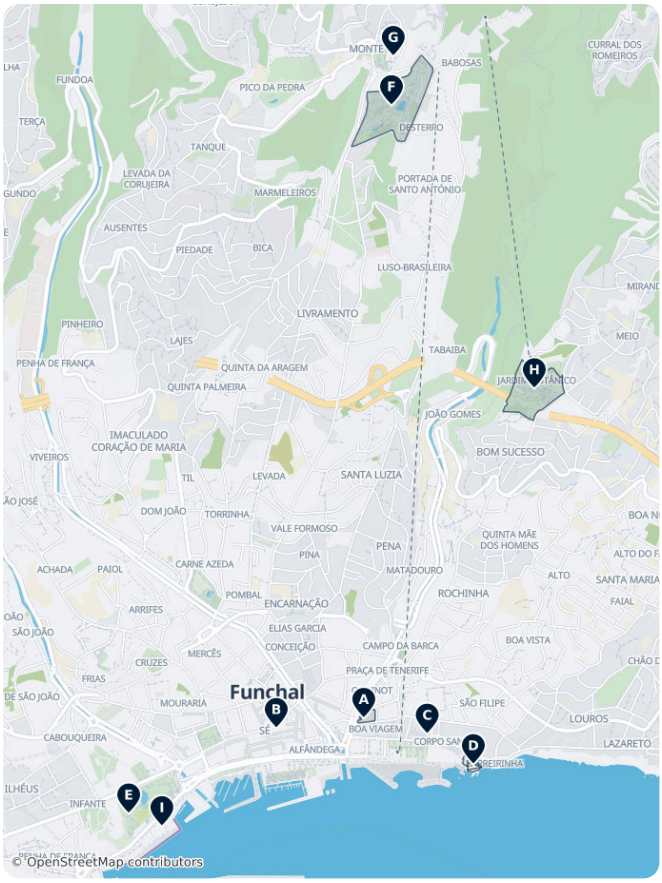
Two events are worth planning around. The Atlantic Festival fills June with concerts and fireworks over the bay. The New Year's Eve fireworks are famous across Europe, and hotels sell out many months ahead.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 21°	16° / 13°	Dry air
February	Great Great for hiking	18° / 22°	15° / 13°	Dry air
March	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 22°	16° / 13°	Dry air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 23°	16° / 14°	Calm winds
May	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 25°	18° / 15°	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	26° / 29°	22° / 20°	26 sunny days · Muggy, humid air · 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	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 29°	22° / 20°	Muggy, humid air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for sightseeing	24° / 27°	21° / 18°	Humid air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 25°	18° / 15°	14 rainy days
December	Good Good for sightseeing	20° / 22°	17° / 15°	14 rainy days

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

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

Top sights



A Mercado dos Lavradores is the covered farmers' market, open since 1940. Tile panels decorate the entrance. Go in the morning for tropical fruit, flowers and fresh fish. Sellers offer free samples and then charge by weight, so agree the amount first.

B Sé do Funchal is the city's cathedral, built from the late 1400s in the Manueline style. It stands in the middle of the old centre, and its carved wooden ceiling is the main reason to step inside.

C Rua de Santa Maria is the main street of the Zona Velha, the old town. Artists have painted the doors of its houses. Small restaurants and bars fill the street, so it is also a good place to eat in the evening.

D Forte de São Tiago is a yellow fortress built in 1614 at the edge of the old town. The walls look over the harbour and the coast.

E Jardins da Quinta da Vigia is a small public garden above the sea, beside the official residence of the regional president. It has good views over the bay and is quiet in the middle of the day.

F Monte Palace Tropical Garden is a large hillside garden at Monte, high above the city. It has tropical plants, tile panels, sculptures and water gardens. Allow two hours.

G Nossa Senhora do Monte is the white hilltop church at Monte, reached by a long stone stairway. The last Austrian emperor, *Charles I*, is buried here.

H Madeira Botanical Garden Engineer Rui Vieira is the botanical garden on a ridge east of the centre. It has Madeiran and exotic plants and a wide view over the harbour. The cable car from Monte stops near it.

The football museum I Museu CR7 is near the marina and is dedicated to *Cristiano Ronaldo*.

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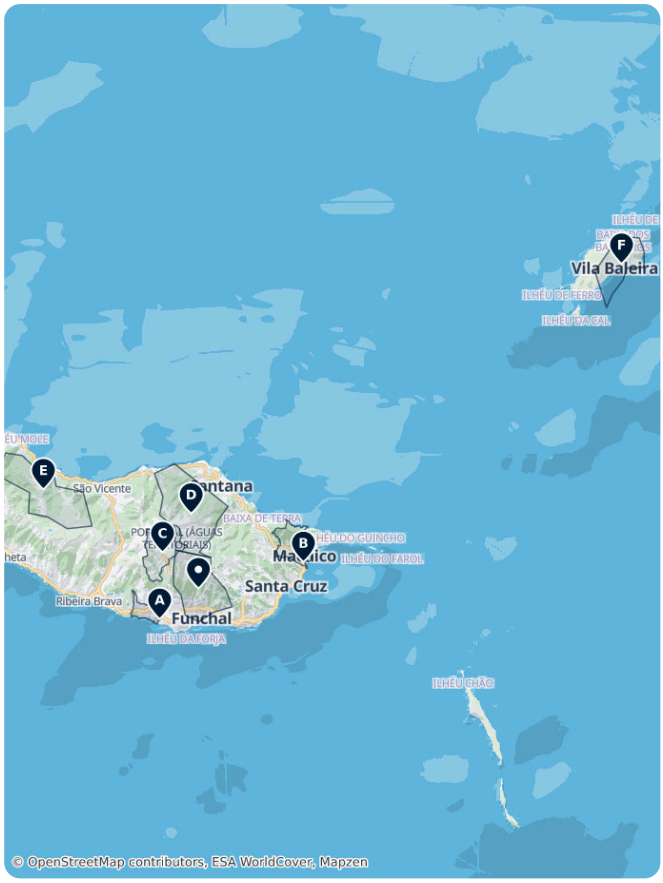
What to experience

- Ride down from Monte on the Madeira Toboggan. Two drivers in white clothes and straw hats steer a wicker basket for about 2 km on the public road to Livramento. Many visitors take the cable car up and the toboggan down.
- Watch the fireworks competition in June. During the Atlantic Festival, four Saturday shows are fired over Funchal Bay, each about 20 minutes long and set to music. The harbour front and the hillside above it are the best places to watch.
- Spend New Year's Eve here. The 2006 display won a Guinness World Record for the largest fireworks show. Hotels and restaurants fill early.
- Join the Monte festival on 14 and 15 August. It honours Our Lady of Monte, the patron saint of the city, with a religious celebration, decorated streets and stalls selling espetada, bolo do caco and poncha.
- Visit in spring for the Flower Festival, which fills the streets of the centre with flower displays over several weeks.
- Swim at the Lido, a supervised bathing complex with saltwater pools on the seafront promenade. The city has only pebble beaches.

Day trips

Funchal is the usual base for the whole island. Times are one way by car from the city centre. Most of these places also have buses, but less often.

- A Câmara de Lobos, 15 minutes west by car. A small fishing harbour with painted boats. Continue to Cabo Girão, a high sea cliff with a viewing platform, about 20 minutes from the city.
- B Machico, 25 minutes east. The site of the first Portuguese landing, with a sheltered beach and an old fort. It lies near the airport.
- C Curral das Freiras, 35 minutes north-west. A village in a deep mountain bowl. The road passes a famous viewpoint above the valley.
- Pico do Areeiro, about 45 minutes north. A high peak reached by road. It is the start of the best-known ridge walk on the island. Go early, before the clouds arrive.
- D Santana, 1 hour north-east. Known for its small triangular thatched houses and the green valleys around it.
- E Porto Moniz, 1 hour 15 minutes north-west. Natural lava swimming pools on the coast. This is a full day, usually combined with forest and cliff stops on the way.
- F Porto Santo, about 2 hours 30 minutes by ferry. A flat island with a long sandy beach. It works as a long day trip and better as an overnight stay.



Where to explore

Funchal is one of the island's municipalities, and each of the others has a different character. The whole island is covered in the guide to Madeira.

- **South coast, close to Funchal**: Câmara de Lobos and Curral das Freiras. Calheta is farther west and has one of the few sandy beaches.
- **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 at Santa Cruz, about 18 km east of the centre. Direct flights come from Lisbon, Porto and many European cities. The Aerobus runs to the main hotel areas in about 30 to 50 minutes. A taxi takes about 25 minutes. Strong crosswinds sometimes divert flights. Official site: Madeira Airport
- **By sea**: there is no regular passenger ferry from mainland Portugal, so almost all visitors fly. Cruise ships dock at the port in the city centre. A ferry connects Funchal with Porto Santo in about 2 hours 30 minutes.

Getting around

- **Public transport**: yellow city buses run by Horários do Funchal cover the city and the slopes above it. Pay the driver in cash, or use a rechargeable GIRO card, which is cheaper. Island routes are part of the SIGA network. Horários do Funchal and SIGA
- **Cable car**: the Funchal Cable Car runs from the old town up to Monte, a ride of about 15 minutes. It operates daily from 8:45 to 17:45. A one-way ticket costs 16 € and a return ticket 22 €, and tickets are sold online. A second cable car links Monte with the botanical garden.
- **Taxi**: yellow taxis wait at ranks in the centre and by the harbour. Ask the price before you leave for a trip outside the city.
- **On foot**: the old town, the harbour and the seafront promenade are flat enough to walk. Everything inland is steep.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The harbour, the old town and the seafront promenade are flat and easy to walk. Streets inland and above the centre are steep, with cobbles and steps, so many walks involve a climb.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

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

Driving

- Is a car worth it? Not for the city. Streets are steep and narrow, parking is difficult, and buses, taxis and the cable car cover the sights. A car is useful for the mountains and the north coast, so rent one for those days only.
- **Roads**: on very narrow steep streets, expect to reverse or wait for oncoming cars. A small car is easier than a large one. Madeira has no toll roads and the island's tunnels are free.
- Parking: use the underground car parks in the centre. On the street, park only in marked bays, and check whether payment is by meter or app. Parking on yellow lines is fined or towed.

Food & drink

Funchal is the best place to try Madeiran food and wine. The local dishes to look for are *espetada* (beef grilled on a laurel skewer), *espada com banana* (black scabbardfish with banana) and *bolo do caco* (flat bread with garlic butter). *Poncha* is the local drink, made from sugarcane spirit, honey and lemon.

Eat in areas, not at one restaurant. The old town around Rua de Santa Maria has the highest number of small restaurants and bars. Tourist menus are common there, so walk a few streets and choose a place full of locals. For wine, Blandy's runs tours and tastings in its old lodge in the centre. The Madeira Wine Festival is held in late summer.

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

Funchal is very safe for visitors. Violent crime is rare. Pickpockets work in crowded places such as the market, the cable car queue and the old town at night. Some old town restaurants send staff to the street to call in customers, so check prices before you sit down.

Most problems come from the terrain and the sun. Cobbled streets and steps are slippery when wet, so wear shoes with grip. The sun is strong from spring to autumn, even when it is cloudy. Swim only in supervised pools and marked beaches, because Atlantic swell can be dangerous.

History

Settlers arrived in the 1420s and named the place after *funcho*, the wild fennel that grew by the bay. Funchal became a city in 1508. Sugar made it rich, and the money paid for Sé do Funchal, begun in 1493 and raised to cathedral in 1514.

French corsairs sacked the city for fifteen days in 1566. Forte de São Tiago, built in 1614, is one of the forts that defended it afterwards. Later, wine became the main trade, and British merchant families settled here. Blandy's is still part of that story.

In the 19th century the mild climate made Funchal a health resort for European visitors. Empress *Elisabeth* of Austria stayed in 1860 at the estate now called Jardins da Quinta da Vigia. The last Austrian emperor, *Charles I*, was exiled to Madeira in 1921. He died at Monte in April 1922 and is buried at Nossa Senhora do Monte.

In February 2010, floods and landslides killed dozens of people on the island. Funchal was badly hit.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



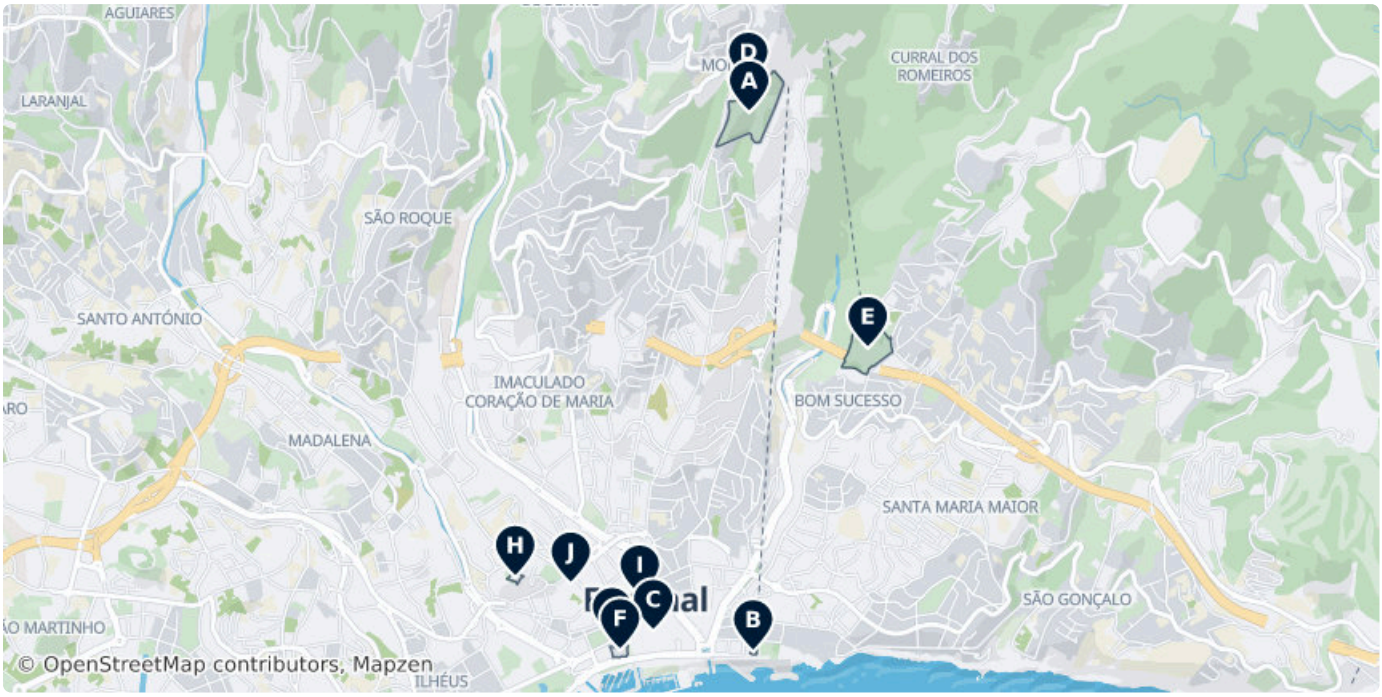
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Funchal's Absolute Essentials

Funchal's highlights range from the lush Monte Palace Tropical Garden and the Madeira Botanical Garden to the historic 15th-century Sao Lourenco Fortress. The city's religious heritage is preserved in the Funchal Cathedral and the tile-adorned Santa Clara Monastery. Visitors can navigate the steep terrain via the Funchal Cable Car or the traditional wicker toboggan run from Monte. For a taste of local culture, Blandy's Wine Lodge offers insights into Madeira wine production, while the Pico Fortress provides panoramic defensive views over the harbor.





A Monte Palace Tropical Garden

One of the most beautiful botanical gardens in the world. Surrounding the Monte Palace, a former hotel, it contains an abundant collection...

Caminho do Monte 174, 9050-288 Funchal (32.67400, -16.90255)

Mo–Su 09:30–18:00

montepalace.com/desktop/, +351 291 780 800



B Funchal Cable Car

This cable car connects the lower areas of Funchal with Monte. Operating since 2000, it is popular with both locals and tourists since it...

Avenida do Mar e das Comunidades Madeirenses, 9060-190 Funchal (32.64717, -16.90232)

madeiracablecar.com, +351 291 780 280



C Funchal Cathedral

The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in Sé, Funchal, Madeira, Portugal, is the cathedral of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Funchal,...

Street Aljube, 9000-067 Funchal, Madeira, Portugal (32.64819, -16.90822)

sefunchal.com, +351 291 228 155



D Madeira Toboggan

One of the most popular tourist attractions that Monte offers - a ride down the mountain on a wicker sledge.

Caminho de Monte 4, 9050-084 Funchal, Madeira, Portugal (32.67543, -16.90260)

youtu.be/VCtIg9WJ-7g, +351 291 783 919



E Botanical Gardens Madeira

One of the most visited parks in Funchal provides a great view of the city.

Caminho do Meio, Bom Sucesso, 9064-251 Funchal, Madeira, Portugal (32.66227, -16.89553)

Mo–Su 09:00–18:00

ifcn.madeira.gov.pt/pt/quintas-e-jardin..., +351 291 211 200



F Sao Lourenco Fortress-Palace

An impressive colonial fortress from the 15th century served as a seat of military and governors.

Avenida Zarco, 9004-903 Funchal (32.64722, -16.91019)

exercito.pt/pt/quem-somos/organizac... , +351 291 204 902



G Blandy's Wine Lodge

One of the famous Madeira wine lodges dedicated to presenting and promoting the traditional way of making Madeira wine.

Avenida Arriaga 28, 9000-064, Funchal, Portugal (32.64779, -16.91066)

blandyswinelodge.com, +351 291 228 978



H Pico Fortress

This fort used to be an important part of the defensive system of Funchal.

Beco do Amaro 39A, 9000-203 Funchal, Portugal (32.65087, -16.91639)

Mo–Fr	10:00–12:30, 14:00–17:00



I Igreja do Colégio

The church has beautifully decorated walls and ceiling. You can also climb the tower and admire the wonderful views.

Rua dos Ferreiros 105, 9000 082 Funchal, Portugal (32.64990, -16.90902)



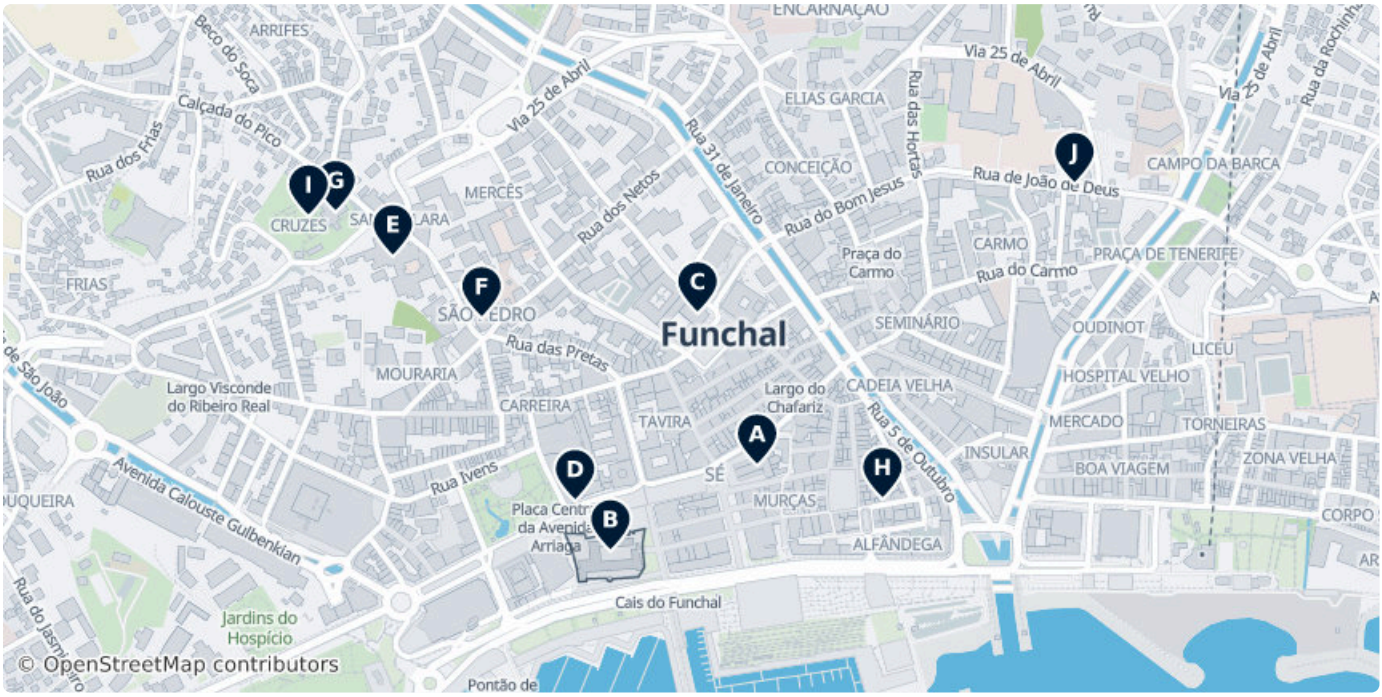
J Santa Clara Church and Monastery

The chapel is characteristic for its traditional tiles and an impressive wooden ceiling.

40 Calçada de Santa Clara, Funchal 9000036, Portugal (32.65055, -16.91311)

Madeira's Hidden Gems

Funchal's cultural landscape is defined by its 15th-century architecture and deep religious heritage. This collection features the Manueline-style Funchal Cathedral and the São Lourenço Fortress-Palace, a military stronghold turned governor's residence. Visitors can explore the intricate tilework and wooden ceilings of Santa Clara Church, or climb the tower of Igreja do Colégio for panoramic views. Beyond the monuments, the list includes Blandy's Wine Lodge for traditional viticulture and the Quinta das Cruzes gardens, alongside museums dedicated to Madeiran artists like Henrique and Francisco Franco.





A Funchal Cathedral

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sefunchal.com, +351 291 228 155



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exercito.pt/pt/quem-somos/organizac... , +351 291 204 902



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(32.64779, -16.91066)

blandyswinelodge.com, +351 291 228 978



E Santa Clara Church and Monastery

The chapel is characteristic for its traditional tiles and an impressive wooden ceiling.

40 Calçada de Santa Clara, Funchal 9000036, Portugal
(32.65055, -16.91311)



F Igreja de São Pedro

16th-century church notable for its interior walls covered in 17th and 18th-century azulejos and its ornate Mannerist altarpieces.

3 Rua de São Pedro, Funchal 9000219, Portugal
(32.64985, -16.91192)



G Manor Estate of the Crosses Museum

Manor house surrounded by a garden full of exotic species. The museum collections encompass rich variety of antiques and paintings.

Calçada do Pico 1 (32.65105, -16.91387)

mqc.madeira.gov.pt, +351 291 740 670

H Restaurante Armazém do Sal

Contemporary Portuguese cuisine.

Rua da Alfândega, 135, Funchal, Madeira 9000 - 059, Portugal (32.64781, -16.90654)

Mo–Sa	12:00–15:00, 18:30–23:00
Su	18:30–23:00

armazemdosal.com/en/, +351 919 134 411

I Quinta das Cruzes

Landscaped garden featuring exotic flora, archaeological fragments, and Manueline stone carvings salvaged from historic buildings across Funchal.

1 Rua São João Deus, Funchal 9000028, Portugal (32.65100, -16.91424)



J Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum

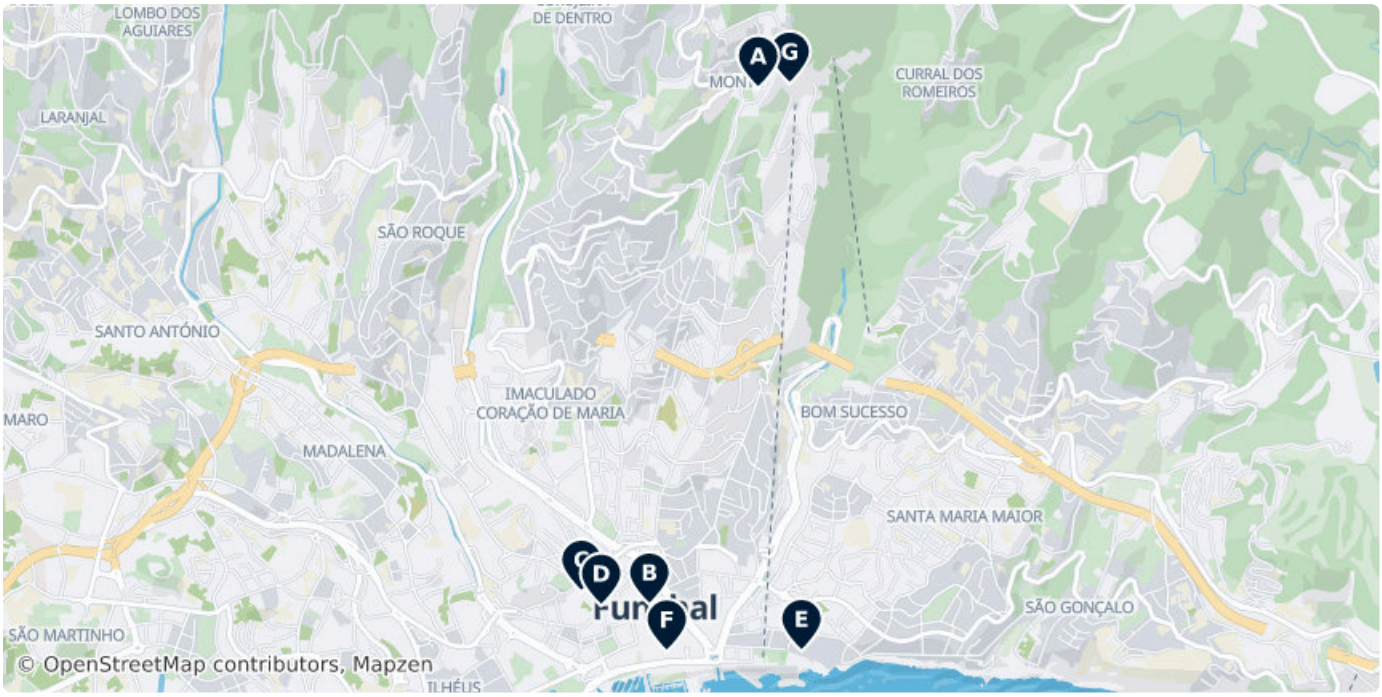
Here you can encounter work of the Madeiran artists. They have been a significant influence to the other Portuguese artists of 19th century.

Rua João de Deus 13, 9050-027 Funchal Madeira, Portugal (32.65136, -16.90397)

+351 291 23 06 33

Notable Places of Worship

Funchal's religious heritage is showcased through a diverse collection of architectural styles, ranging from the 15th-century Manueline details of the Capela do Corpo Santo to the ornate Baroque interiors of Igreja do Colégio. Highlights include the pilgrimage site of Monte, famous for its mid-August festivals, and the Santa Clara Monastery, known for its traditional tilework and carved wooden ceilings. These sites offer insights into Madeira's spiritual history and provide panoramic views of the city from their towers and hillside locations.





A Our Lady of the Mountain Church

Pilgrimage site. Best time for a visit is 14th to 15th of August during the most important religious festival of Madeira.

190 Caminho do Monte, 9050, Portugal
(32.67605, -16.90246)

+351 291 783 877



B Igreja do Colégio

The church has beautifully decorated walls and ceiling. You can also climb the tower and admire the wonderful views.

Rua dos Ferreiros 105, 9000 082 Funchal, Portugal
(32.64990, -16.90902)



C Santa Clara Church and Monastery

The chapel is characteristic for its traditional tiles and an impressive wooden ceiling.

40 Calçada de Santa Clara, Funchal 9000036, Portugal
(32.65055, -16.91311)



D Igreja de São Pedro

16th-century church featuring extensive 17th-century tilework covering the walls of its nave and a Mannerist altar.

3 Rua de São Pedro, Funchal 9000219, Portugal
(32.64985, -16.91192)



E Capela do Corpo Santo

15th-century chapel dedicated to the patron saint of fishermen. Located in the old town, it features a Manueline portal and late Gothic architectural elements.

20 Largo do Corpo Santo, Funchal 9060249, Portugal
(32.64755, -16.89986)

Mo–Su 08:30–12:30, 14:30–17:00



F Capela de Santo António da Mouraria

Small 18th-century Baroque chapel located in the city center, featuring a simple facade and historical ties to the local neighborhood.

27 Rua da Alfândega, Funchal 9000059, Portugal
(32.64753, -16.90797)

G Capela de Nossa Senhora da Conceição

Historic 16th-century chapel located in the Monte district, representing some of the earliest religious architecture in the area.

(32.67627, -16.90058)

DATA SOURCES

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