

Funchal Madeira Portugal Port Guide

Maderia is a beautiful, mountainous island with high cliffs overlooking the sea and picturesque villages along the coast. The temperature is a near perfect 64-75 F year round. The mild climate, adequate rainfall, and rich soil create an abundance of gardens with over 2500 species of plants and lush vegetation in the mountains to create the largest laurel forest in the world.

Cruise ships dock in Funchal about 2.2 Km (1.3 miles) from Center City. Self-guided travelers will be happy to hear you can walk from the ship to Center City. The public bus system is excellent, there are HopOn buses to tour Funchal, and low cost bus tours around the island. Cable cars are available to ascend the mountain.

There are many things to see and do in Funchal plus many places to visit outside the city. The tough decision is how to spend your limited, half-day in port. I have written this guide to describe the popular tourist sites in Funchal, sites in the Monte area north of Funchal, and sites outside of Funchal along the coast and in the mountains. You can't do it all, so choose wisely between visiting the old town, markets, museums, churches, botanical gardens, shopping for wine and embroidery, cable car rides, nature trail walks, and/or going into the mountains and visiting fishing villages along the coast. If that's not enough, there is also the possibility of whale and dolphin watching.

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CAVEAT

Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify information for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. You are free to use and share this guide for non-commercial purposes. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan

NOTE: I would like to thank Carol Mills and Mike Engelberg for help on this port guide.

Cruise Ship Dock (map below)



Cruise ships line up at a 0.6 mile long pier.
Where your ship docks determines whether you have an extra 1/2 mile walk to the city.

NOTE - There is a short hill as you leave the dock walking up to the main road. It can be a bit strenuous.

From the docks at point B (in green circle) on the map above, it is:

- 1.8 Km (1.1 miles) to the Marina. The Marina is important because this is where you board the HopOn bus, some of the public buses, and where you can purchase ticket/cards for the public buses.
- 2.2 Km (1.3 miles) to Center City.

A cab charges around 7.50 euros from the dock to Center City. A cab is the most convenient, fastest, and lowest cost route to the city unless the cruise ship offers a shuttle bus.

The Hop-On bus is next at about 12 euros, but you have to walk to/from #3 bus stop between the cruise dock and the Marina. There are a couple of different HopOn bus companies. One of them has a program with the public bus system such that the 12 euro HopOn bus ticket includes unlimited use of city public buses for the day.

Madeira - The Largest Laurel Forest in the World

Maderia is considered to have the largest laurel forest in the world. It is amazing. See this website as the first step in your vacation planning process <http://www.madeira-live.com/en/nature.html>

*Nature Reserves, Laurissilva Forest and Ecological Parks of Madeira - Protected Areas and Parks
A natural beauty filled with a rich biodiversity of species of endemic flora and fauna, classified a World Nature Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999. The Laurissilva Forest is 15,000 hectares, 12,000 are in a Nature Reserve.*

Madeira 2012 Calendar of Events

See these web-links <http://www.madeira-live.com/index.html>

[Carnival Festivities](#) – February 15th to 22nd - Main Parade Feb18th and Fun Parade Feb21st 2012
[Anona Festival \(Festa da Anona\)](#) – Faial, Santana - (Cherimoya Fruit Exhibition) February 25-26 2012
[Flower Festival](#) – April 21st and 22nd 2012 - Children's parade (Wall of Hope Ceremony) and Main parade
[Madeira Island Open](#) – Santo da Serra – 17th to 20th May 2012
[Festas da Sé](#) - Funchal May - June 2012 (date to be announced)
[Atlantic Festival](#) – June 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th 2012 – Fireworks Competition
[Festival of the popular saints – St. John's altars](#) – June 12th - 29th 2012
[Volta à Madeira - Classic Rally](#) – June 22nd - 26th 2012
[Funchal Jazz Festival](#) – July 5th, 6th and 7th 2012
[Machico Gastronomy](#) – 27th July to 5th August 2012
[Madeira Wine Rally](#) – August 2nd to 4th 2012
[Monte Festival](#) – August 15th 2012
[Madeira Wine Festival](#) – 26th August to 2nd September 2012
[Columbus Festival - Porto Santo](#) – 13th to 15th September 2012
[Madeira Nature Festival](#) – 1st to 7th October 2012
[Lord of Miracles Festival \(Festa do Senhor dos Milagres\) – Machico](#) – 9th October 2012
[Funchal International Film Festival](#) – 17th to 24th November 2012
[End of the Year Festivities](#) – 1st December 2012 to 6th January 2013

HopOn Bus Tour

City-Sightseeing is the largest HopOn tour bus company in the world. I have been impressed with their service and pricing. It's only 12 euros for a tour around Funchal near the sea coast. Buses run on 30 minute intervals; the total route takes about 90 minutes. The bus makes 18 stops. Stop #3 at Avenida do Mar Marina is the closest HopOn bus stop to the cruise ship dock, about 1.8 Km (1.1 miles) from the dock.

The HopOn bus does not go to all of the tourist sites, particularly the locations higher up on the mountain near Monte. But the bus takes you all around the city and stops next to the Monte Cable Car in Center City.

HopOn buses are an easy, flexible way to tour the city.

Whether or not you are going on a HopOn bus tour, be sure to download the EXCELLENT, high resolution, pdf map of the Funchal area. It shows locations for 72 tourist sites and 72 hotels.

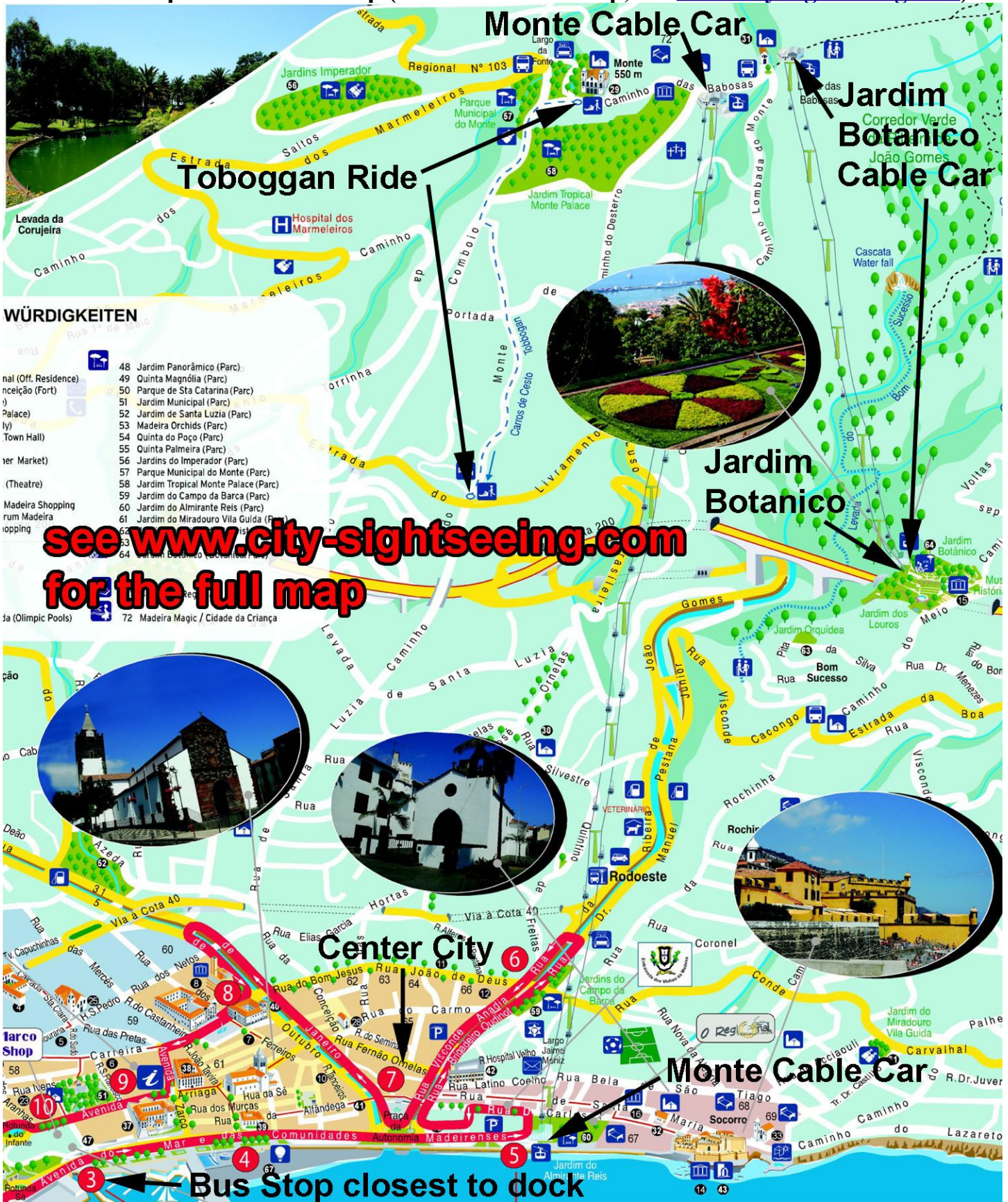
Use the link below, click on DOWNLOADS – Tour Map – Printable version (.pdf)

<http://www.city-sightseeing.com/?command=search&clear-search=true&destinations=Funchal>

A competitive HopOn Bus service offers a 12 euro tour of Funchal. Unlike the city-sightseeing tour, this company has a partnership with the public bus system such that the HopOn bus ticket is valid on yellow public buses in Funchal. This is a great DEAL.

For details, see this website <http://www.madeira-seekers.com/FunchalSightseeingBus.html>

Funchal HopOn Bus Tour Map (For the full size map, see www.city-sightseeing.com)



I have marked up this section of the map to show the Hop-On bus stops closest to the ship's dock, Center City, and the Monte Cable Car. I have also highlighted the two cable cars, the toboggan run, and Jardim Botânico.

Funchal Map (below)



It is 2.2 Km (1.3 miles) from the Cruise Ship Dock to Center City (#15 red asterisk on the map). You could walk or take a cab ~7.50 euro to the center of the city.

Embroidery Shops – see # 2, 10, & 11 on the map

Portugal is famous for intricate embroidery. Needlework by women of Madeira has long been admired by travelers and gained international acclaim after the 1851 Great London Exhibition. Madeiran embroidery has a distinctive combination of raised stitches and cut work. The shops demonstrate embroidery and sell a variety of products including wine, honey cakes, etc. If you show your cruise card, you may receive free wine tasting and a discount on purchases.

3 – The Old Blandy Wine Lodge see <http://www.madeirawinecompany.com/winelodge/>

Location: 28 Avenida Arriaga, 9000-064, Funchal, Madeira

Hours: Monday - Friday 10:00 – 18:30, Saturday 10:00 – 13:00 **Closed Sundays & Holidays.**

The tour takes 30-45 minutes and costs 5 euro/person. Some of the wine for tasting is free; but you have to pay ~ 5 euros/glass to taste the most expensive wines.

Madeira Wine Institute is the agency that controls wine production. It is located at 78 Rua 5 de Outubro and has a museum with information on Madeira wines. Admission is free.



4 – Municipal Museum

Location: Rua da Mouraria

Hours: Tuesday to Friday - 10.00 to 18.00 Saturday, Sunday and public holidays - 12.00 to 18.00

Exhibits on fauna, flora and geology of Madeira Island, an aquarium, and the Municipal Library.

5 - Museu da Quinta das Cruzes

Location: Calçada do Pico

Hours: Monday to Saturday: 10 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Sunday: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Former house of João Gonçalves Zarco, the Island's founder. Exhibits of furniture, porcelain, paintings and relics taken from ancient buildings. The site has beautiful gardens with many varieties of orchids.

6 – Santa Clara Convent

Location: Caminho Santa Clara.

Hours: Ring the door bell to be let inside.

The chapel is the final resting place of Zarco. The interior is famous for its beautiful tile work. The convent has been changed to a school run by Franciscan nuns.

7 - Collegiate Church of St. John

Location: R.C. Pestana near the university

This 17th century church was built by the Jesuits. It has an elaborate facade and beautiful baroque interior.

8 – Cathedral

Location: Rua da Sé

The cathedral has a plain exterior but an impressive carved wooden ceiling that describes discoveries by the Island's founders. It dates back to the 15th-16th century.

9 - Museu de Arte Sacra

Location: Rua do Bispo

An exhibit of religious sculptures and paintings from many of the island's churches, including a number of Flemish works originating from earlier connections with Flanders.

12 – Market - Mercado-dos-Lavradores

Location: Largo dos Lavradores

Hours: Monday to Friday from 07.00 to 20.00 h; Saturday from 07.00 to 14.00 h **Closed Sundays & holidays**

You will see women in traditional costume selling flowers, fruit, vegetables, wicker items. The Fish Market is next door. **To view a 360° virtual tour, see**

<http://www.360cities.net/image/madeira-funchal-mercado-dos-lavradores-1-portugal#-275.63,27.38,70.0>

13 – Story Center

Location: In the Largo Almirante Reis, in front of the Monte Cable Car Station in Center City

Hours: Open daily from 10.00 to 19.00 hrs **Closed on Christmas**

Admission (euros): 9.60 adult, 8.60 seniors 65 and over Show your cruise card to get a 15% discount

Plan on one to two hours to visit this center. It is an interactive museum covering the history of Madeira Island beginning with the volcanic eruption 14 million years ago. There is a shop selling local arts and crafts, embroidery, wicker products, Madeira wines, sweets, stationery, books, regional souvenirs and toys.

14 – Monte Cable Car base station

Location: Parque Almirante Reis at the sea front in Funchal City Center

Hours: 10.00 – 18.00 h (last boarding at 17.45 h)

Admission: 10 euro one way 15 euro round trip

The 15 minute cable car ride provides scenic views from city center to Monte 560 meters (1840 feet) above the Funchal. This website has good information and photos regarding the Monte Cable Car, walking directions, and tourist sites in the Monte area <http://www.love-madeira.com/funchal-monte-cable-car.html>

Public Bus System

The public bus system is very good. It is run by a company called Horários do Funchal.

Visit this website for routes, timetables, prices, and maps <http://www.horariosdofunchal.pt/index-eng.php>

The chart (below) shows bus routes for major tourist sites e. g. take bus 20, 21, 21A, or 48 to Monte



March 2012 Prices for Bus Tickets

On the bus, a ticket costs 1.90 euro per trip

Prepaid, rechargeable bus ticket/cards cost 4.40 euro/day for unlimited trips. An individual trip is 1.25 euro for each of 2-9 trips on the card. Each person must have their own bus ticket card which is called a “Giro Card”.

You can purchase bus ticket/cards at yellow Horários do Funchal kiosks in many areas, or in Post Offices, and in stores.

Two locations for cruisers to purchase bus ticket/cards:

The Marina at Avenida do Mar - about a mile from the cruise ship dock.

Mon-Sat 09h00-13h00 & 14h00-18h00

Sunday 09h00-12h00 & 13h00-18h00

Teleferico near the Monte Cable Car Station in Center City Funchal

Daily 07h15-23h30

Download the EXCELLENT local bus route map from <http://www.horariosdofunchal.pt/index-eng.php>

I have used sections of this bus route map on the following pages.

Buses to/from Monte and Tourist Sites North of Funchal



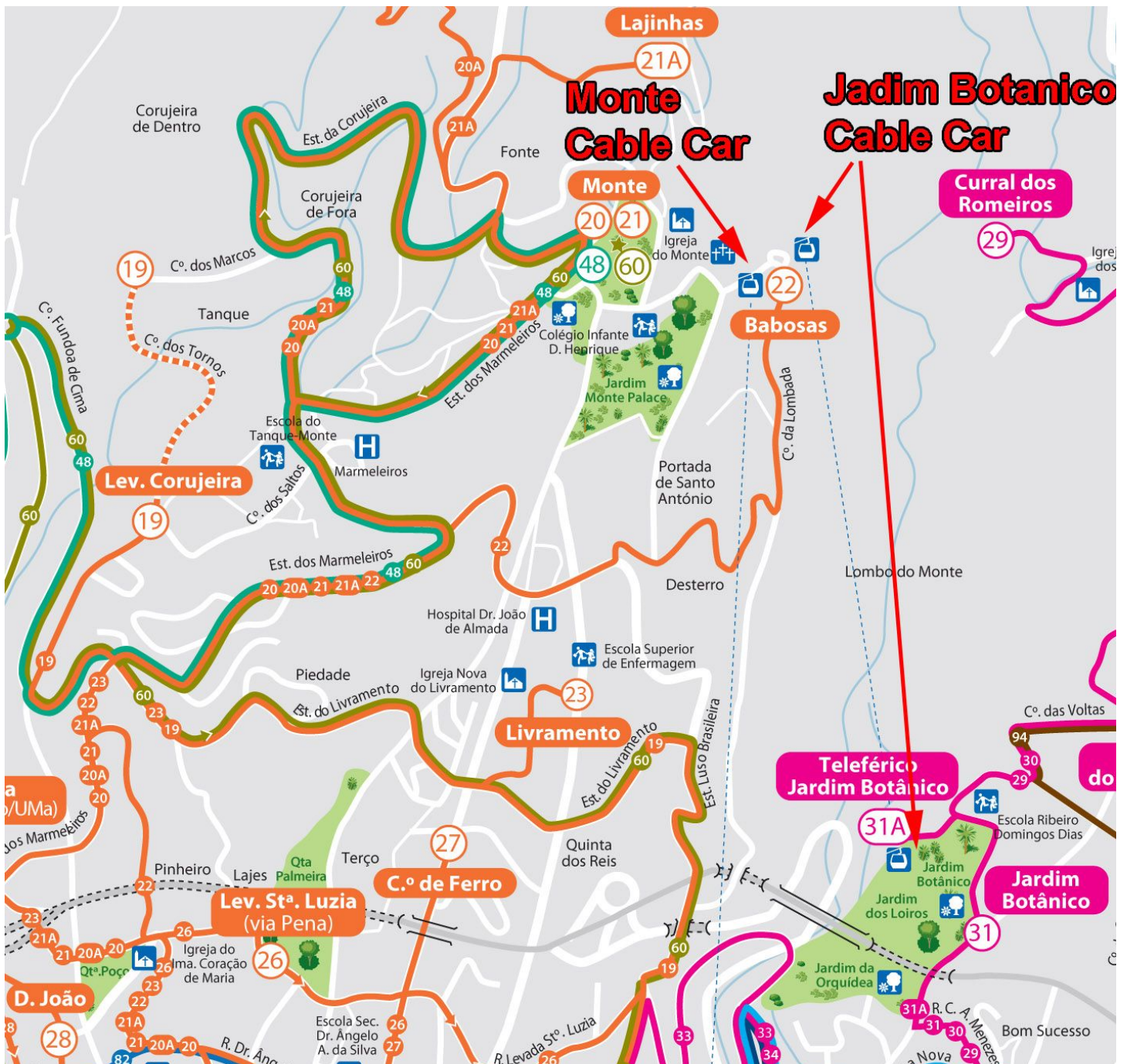
You do NOT want to walk up or down the mountain between Funchal and Monte unless you're an Olympic athlete. The Monte Cable Car runs between Funchal Center City and Monte. Public buses are an excellent, low cost, travel option to/from Monte tourist sites. I have listed the most popular bus lines & routes on the maps below.

Monte: The most popular bus lines = 20, 21, 21A, & 48.

The Monte Cable Car and Jardim Botânico Cable Car stations on top of the mountain are near bus 22

The Toboggan Sled ride ends in Livramento, use bus line 23 to go back to Funchal

Jardim Botânico is near bus lines 29, 30, 31A



Bus Stops & Departures in Funchal

To find the main bus stop or departure point for a bus line in Funchal, see the chart below from the bus company map. For reference, the **#1 Marina stop** is approximately one 1.1 mile from the cruise ship dock. At the Marina, you can purchase public bus ticket/cards or board the Hop-On bus for the Funchal area.

Select the bus line of interest to you from the map on the previous page. Use the chart below to find the stop in Funchal. For example, for buses 31 & 31A to/from Jardim Botânico, board the bus at stop **#2 Cais**. Bus 23 from Livramento near the end of the Toboggan Ride arrives at stop **#4 Museu** in Funchal.

CAVEAT – Bus routes, schedules, and prices are subject to change.

PARTIDAS DO CENTRO DO FUNCHAL / DEPARTURES FROM TOWN CENTRE



SERVIÇO INTERURBANO
INTERURBAN SERVICE
Para / to: Camacha, Poiso,
Ribeiro Frio, Santana,
Curral das Freiras

PARAGEM / BUS STOP	CARREIRA / ROUTE NUMBER
1 Marina	a 27 28 b 42
2 Cais	a 31 31A 32 34 40 b 19 26 33
3 Pinga	a 29 30 37 b 22 38 39 c 7 36 36A 47
4 Museu (EEM)	a 12 23 b 13 46
5 EEM	a 01 02 04 6 b 9 15 15B 24
6 Autonomia	a 20 20A 21 21A 60 b 13 49 c 17 23 27 28
7 Alfândega	a 10 10A b 11 14 92 92A c 8 8A 16
8 GNR	01 02 04 6 9 12 15 15B 24 46 49 61 62
9 P. São Lourenço	01 02 04 6 9 24 61 62
10 Galerias	8 8A 10 10A 11 12 14 15 15B 16 46 49 92 92A
11 Conselheiro	44 45
12 Dias Leite	3 8A 9 10 10A 11 12 14 15 15B 16 44 46 49 62 92 92A
13 Infante	01 02 04 6 8 24 45 61
14 Saca	a 103 110 112 b 56 114 138 c 77 129 d 81 85 111

Monte & Tourist Sites North of Funchal

Monte

Monte is a small village 3.7 KM (2.2 miles) north of Funchal and 560 meters (1800 feet) higher elevation. This website has good information and photos regarding the Monte Cable Car, walking directions, and tourist sites in the Monte area <http://www.love-madeira.com/funchal-monte-cable-car.html>

Monte Palace & Tropical Gardens

Location: Next to the Monte Cable Car station.

Open everyday except Christmas

Visiting hours of the Garden: 9.30am to 6.00pm.

Visiting hours of the Museum: 10.00am to 4.30pm

Admission = 12 euros for adults. I've heard the ticket also gives you a free public bus ride down to Funchal

The site is 70,000 square meters (17 acres) with a lake for black swans, fish, etc. Ducks, peacocks, and chickens walk freely in the area. The gardens have tropical flowers and plants from around the world including many orchids. There is also a museum with African art. You'll need ~ 2 hours to properly tour this site.

See the "official" website for information <http://www.montepalace.com/default.asp?lang=en>



Nossa Senhora do Monte Church (photo left)

There are many steps ascending to the church, but the views are great from the top. Inside the church, you will see the statue of Our Lady of the Mountain, beautiful glass chandeliers, and the tomb of Charles I of Hapsburg. This church is an important pilgrimage site with processions every August.



Levada Nature Trails

The public bus company suggests bus lines 22, 29, and 37 to access the Levada Nature Trails. These trails are to the east of the cable cars in an area where there are steep ravines. I could not find detailed hiking trail maps, but I know you can purchase books with trail maps. Also there are tour companies which specialize in nature walks, see <http://www.madeira-seekers.com/MadeiraWalks.html>

Also see <http://www.madeira-web.com/PagesUK/levadas-uk.html>

Most of the walks take at least half a day.

When you are done touring in the Monte area, you'll need a means to return to Funchal. It's impractical to walk down the mountain because of steep slopes and steps. In addition to cabs and public buses, you can take:

- The Monte Cable Car, the Jardim Botânico Cable Car, or
- The Toboggan Ride.

Jardim Botânico Cable Car Monte Station - Babosas Square Entrance

See <http://www.telefericojardimbotanico.com/> for details on the cable car, Botanical Gardens, etc.

Hours: Open every day, **except Christmas**, from 9.00 a.m until 6.00 p.m (The last entrance is at 5.30 p.m)

Admission: Cable car one way = 8.25 euros.

On page 8 of this guide, there is a map showing the cable car stations at the top of the mountain near Monte. Here is some additional detail.

Babosas – Monte Station is the top station for the Jardim Botânico Cable Car (photo at left below).

This station is accessed via a path that begins at the circular Babosas Square, next to the Babosas' Chapel (Chapel of Our Lady of the Conception).

The Botanical Garden Station is closer to Funchal (photo at right below).



The map of page 8 shows the bus stops near the Jardim Botânico cable cars. Take a bus to Center City. A cab from Jardim Botânico to Center City will cost ~ 6 euros. It is not practical to walk downhill to the city.

Jardim Botânico

Location: Quinta do Bom Sucesso, about 3 kilometers North of the center of Funchal City

This location is at the Southern End of the Botanical Garden Cable Car from Monte

Hours: Open every day, **except Christmas**, from 9.00 a.m until 6.00 p.m (The last entrance is at 5.30 p.m)

Admission: ~ 3 euros to enter the garden. Prices are subject to change.

This is one of the most famous tourist sites in Madeira. The garden is committed to conserving native plants of Madeira which are very rare and extinct in the wild. It is 35,000 square meters (8.5 acres) with 2500 exotic plants, from around the world designed into a mosaic. Displays include indigenous and endemic plants; an arboretum with plants from the tropics, succulants from South America, fruits such as mango, avocado, papaya, and coffee and sugar cane. There is also Loiro Park with a collection of 300 exotic birds including dwarf parrots, macaws, etc. You will also see peacocks and a large tortoise.

Toboggan – Sledge Ride from Monte to Livramento

Location: The ride begins near the Nossa Senhora do Monte Church and continues through the public streets 2 Km (1.2 miles) to Livramento.

Hours: Monday to Saturday: 09h00 to 18h00 Sunday: 09h00 to 13h00 **Closed on Holidays**

Prices **per sled (euros)**: one person = 25, two people = 30, three people = 45. Operators expect a tip

This is a popular ride with tourists. Passengers sit upright in a wicker chair that has wooden “skis” which are greased to slide downhill on paved, public roads. The basket is controlled by two men who pull the basket with ropes to guide it, run along side it, or stand on the back of the “skis” to steer it using their rubber soled boots as “brakes”. The ride is 2 Km (1.2 mile) long down the paved, public streets. People debate the speed of the toboggan. I'm sure it depends on the energy level of the two men who are pulling and pushing the basket. I have not been on this ride, but people on our cruise ship said they thought the ride involved fairly high speeds which some estimated at 30 mph.

Accidents Can Occur on the Toboggan Ride.

CAVEAT – I am NOT advising you whether or not you should ride the toboggan, that is your decision. My intent is to provide information which you may not find elsewhere re potential risks of this ride and the legal position of cruise ships re passenger injury on shore excursions.

See this, or one of the many other videos, on YouTube to understand what the ride involves

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pEEH96yJE4>

Risk

Because the chair-basket has a high center of gravity and is steered/controlled remotely by men running down the hill, there is a risk that the basket might tip over and eject the occupants if one of the men falls, lets go of the rope, etc. This happened when our Emerald Princess ship docked at Madeira on April 20, 2008.

Three passengers were in the basket. The accident was the “talk of the ship”. I did not see the accident, but spoke with two of the three people who were in the basket that tipped over and several people who had witnessed the accident. This is a summary of the accident.

One of the men running beside the basket lost his hat and reached back to grab it. In the process, he let go of his rope. The basket proceeded down the hill with only one person steering it. It flipped over ejecting all three passengers onto the hard surface street. The passenger who landed on the bottom of the pile sustained facial lacerations and bruised/cracked ribs. I believe there was also a broken collar bone.

The people who were in the basket described our ship's doctor as “not wanting to get involved”. He simply said, “Go home, you won't enjoy the rest of the cruise”. Fortunately, the passenger who returned home had insurance to cover the 5000 mile trip.

Cruise Lines DENY liability for shore excursions they advertise, promote, and sell.

When this accident occurred, I read the fine print regarding the cruise line's liability.

See http://www.carnival.com/cms/static_templates/shoreexcursionstc.aspx

Here is an excerpt from the Carnival website above re “Responsibility” (Carnival owns Princess)

Carnival is not responsible for any losses, damage, death, injuries, or claims whatsoever arising from, connected with, or related to any activities engaged in by guests while off Carnival's ships or tenders in any port of call. This includes all shore excursions, whether booked online, sold on-board or sold by third parties ashore. Guests engage in all such activities off the ship at their own risk.

Carnival acts only as an agent for the independent tour operators supplying excursions or services. Independent contractors operate all shore excursions, including any related transportation. Carnival neither supervises nor controls their actions, nor makes any representation either expressed or implied as to their suitability. Carnival sells tickets for all excursions as a convenience to guests only. Tour operators, transportation providers, and their employees are neither agents nor employees of Carnival, notwithstanding their use of any signage or clothing which may contain the name “Carnival” or other related trade names or logos. It is understood and agreed that Carnival assumes no responsibility for, nor guarantees performance of, and in no event shall be liable for, any loss, damage, injury, or death in connection with said excursions or transportation. Please review your ticket for further information regarding your rights and obligations as well as those of Carnival.

Bottom Line = We Are Responsible for Our Safety on Shore Excursions

As individual travelers, we are responsible to make decisions re the safety of the shore excursions we choose. Please don't send me emails arguing that the toboggan ride is safe. If you say it is safe, I will accept “it is safe for you”. Each of us should make our own decisions and accept the potential consequences.

Public Bus Route Map Funchal Center City North to Jardim Botânico (below)



This is the bottom half of the bus route map shown on page 8 of this port guide.

Tourist Sites Outside of Funchal



Madeira is a mountainous island with many beautiful, scenic places. Considering the short time a cruise ship is in port, it is not possible to see much of the island. The tours tend to focus on sites relatively close to Funchal. The map above shows some of the most popular tourist sites outside of Funchal. **Note that public city buses go to Pico dos Barcelos.**

See the following pages for a description of these sites.

Tourist Sites Outside of Funchal

There are villages around the perimeter coastline of Madeira Island and many popular sites in the mountains. These tourist sites are close to Funchal so they can be included when the ship's time in port is limited. I have included map coordinates so you can find these sites in Google or Bing Maps.

Pico dos Barcelos photo at right

Map coordinates = 32.660044,-16.938858

This is a favorite spot for photos from the mountains down to the city of Funchal. This site is 335 meters (1165 feet) up on the mountain northwest of Funchal.

Funchal city bus lines 9, 12, and 48 stop at this tourist site.



Cabo Girão

Map coordinates = 32.659818,-17.00425

This is described as the second highest sea cliff in the world at 589 meters (1840 feet). But the statisticians argue there are five higher cliffs than this in Europe. Not to worry, it is a scenic area to visit and photograph. It is located about 11 miles west of Funchal. This aerial photo (below) shows the cliff.



Câmara de Lobos

Map coordinates = 32.648662,-16.97598

Câmara de Lobos, wolves' gorge, named after wolf fish, is a small fishing town just east of Cabo Girão. You can walk down to the beach and photograph the cliffs. See photo below.



There are terraced fields in many areas of Madeira (photo below)



Eira do Serrado

Map Coordinates = 32.710358,-16.962676

Eira do Serrado is at the head of the pass to Nun's Valley overlooking the village of Curral das Freiras.

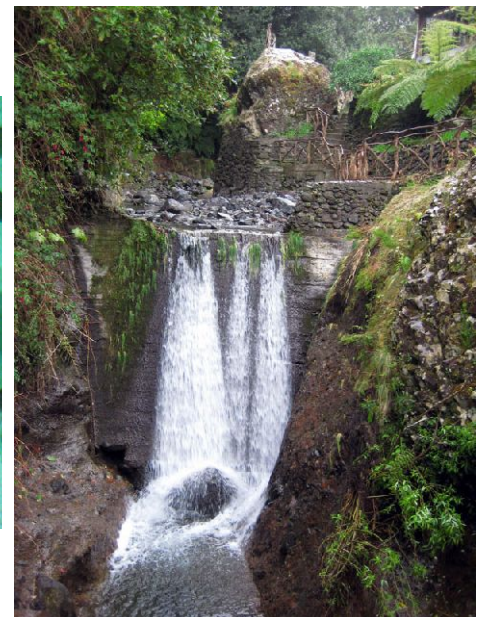
Photo below



Ribeiro Frio

Map coordinates = 32.733357,-16.883368

Ribeiro Frio (cold river) is an attractive area in the mountains with a trout farm, a souvenir shop, and a small chapel. It is also a popular place to begin Levada trail walks if you have the inclination and the time.



Ribeira Brava

Map coordinates = 32.671171,-17.065029

Ribeira Brava is a small town on the coast with cafes, shops, and scenic views. It is located where rain water used to flow from the mountains providing drinking water to the residents. I haven't been there, but photos of the village indicate it has very attractive views of the coast and cliffs.

Climate & Weather

Madeira has a warm, mild climate year-round with a near perfect temperate range of 64-75 F.

Average monthly rainfall (inches):

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
4.0	3.5	3.0	1.8	1.0	0.4	0	0.2	1.1	3.0	4.0	3.0

It is no wonder that people want to visit Madeira.

We've been to Madeira twice. As an amateur photographer, I have found there can be fog or mist in the mountains which adds to the charm, but makes it difficult to take pictures. The solution is to spend more time in Madeira than the brief half day a cruise ship is in port. Put Madeira on your vacation "bucket list".

Madeira Touring Options

There are many things to see and do in Madeira. For self-guided touring, you have the option of walking to Funchal City Center from the cruise ship and using the public bus system to explore the area. There are also HopOn buses and other bus tours along the coast of the island. Cabs are plentiful and there are cable cars in some areas.

We tend to take the ship's excursion tours which are fine.

An advantage of private tours is that you can focus your limited time in port on the tourist sites your small group wishes to visit and you have the flexibility to change the schedule during the tour.

My good friend Carol Mills prefers to hire a local cab company for touring.

Her contact is Eusebia Freitas bia@danielmadeirataxis.com at www.danielmadeirataxis.com

Carol was met by the driver next to the ship holding a sign with her name.

The tour was a half day (4 to 4.5 hours) covering:

Monte

A Toboggan Ride (extra cost)

- Pico dos Barcelos - a viewpoint to see Funchal and all the suburbs
- Eira do Serrado - for the lookout over Curral das Freiras
- Câmara de Lobos - small fishing town.
- Cabo Girão - the highest sea cliff in Europe and second highest in the world.

The April 2012 price for the half day tour including an English speaking driver is 95 euros plus tip for up to 4 people or 140 euros plus tip for 6 people. Eusebia Freitas can also book 8 and 15 passenger vans and 40 and 55 passenger buses.

Because this tour company has a good reputation and Carol Mills had a good experience and highly recommended them, we've booked a tour with them for our 2012 April cruise to Madeira. Our itinerary will be slightly different than the one Carol used.

Goal of Port Guides - Your Feedback Is Important

Goal

Port guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation

by providing information, which I believe to be accurate, such as:

- Where the ship docks,
- Whether you can walk to the nearby town,
- Things to see and do,
- Options for self-guided or organized tours, and
- Travel issues unique to the port area.

Knowledge of ports is important because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship arrives in the port. You can use this port guide as a source of information, but you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information you use to plan your vacation.

Why feedback is important

User feedback helps me make corrections and fine tune the subjects included, the length of guides, format, etc. I welcome offers to collaborate with me by providing information for inclusion in the guides.

The guides serve as an introduction to a port and are not intended to answer every question about the details of each port and tourist destination. There are other sources of information such as www.CruiseCritic.com for your detailed questions. Knowledgeable CC members will share their information.

Help “spread the word” about my website

The only negative feedback I get is, “I wish I knew about your port guides before my vacation”. My website was created in April 2011, and it is unknown to most cruisers. If you see value in my port guides, tell your friends, post a reference to my guides and my website on the blogs, etc. And if you wish to receive email notification when new port guides are available, send your email address to me at

TomsPortGuides@gmail.com

I wish you a great cruise vacation.

Regards,

Tom Sheridan

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