
P&O CRUISES
VENTURA



The Port Briefing Series

Landfall

Funchal

Madeira's capital - a steep, flower-hung Atlantic city of wine lodges, wicker toboggans and the bluest of bays

Funchal in a Nutshell

A lush volcanic island 1,000 km out in the Atlantic, claimed by Portugal in 1419 and made rich by sugar and wine - now a mild, green resort, the birthplace of Ronaldo, and a gently uphill walk from the ship

Port Day

Wednesday 4 November 2026

A short orientation before you step ashore

Where in the World

An Atlantic Outpost

A Portuguese island far out in the ocean, a thousand kilometres from Lisbon and nearer the coast of Africa

A Vertical City

White houses climb the steep volcanic slopes in a great amphitheatre, from the harbour up to the peaks

Local Time - Same as the UK

In November Madeira keeps British time - no need to change your watch

0h	0h	+5h
vs GMT	vs UK	vs New York

The Facts at a Glance

250,000 Islanders

across Madeira, about 105,000 of them in Funchal, the capital

The Euro

Madeira is part of Portugal, in the eurozone - no money to change

Portuguese

the language, though English is widely and warmly spoken

Madeira Wine

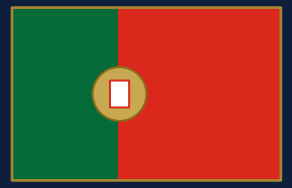
the fortified wine that crossed oceans and can outlast a century

A Volcanic Isle

a steep green island 1,000 km / 620 mi out in the Atlantic, nearer Africa than Lisbon

Eternal Spring

mild all year, hung with flowers and cloaked in a UNESCO laurel forest



The Portuguese Flag green for hope and red for the blood of the nation - charged with the armillary sphere of Portugal's great age of discovery

What Madeira Is Known For

Madeira Wine

The fortified wine, heated and aged, that sailed the world and toasts revolutions

The Wicker Toboggans

Carros de cesto, steered downhill from Monte by straw-hatted carreiros

Cristiano Ronaldo

The island's most famous son, born and raised in the back-streets of Funchal

Levada Walks

Footpaths that follow the ancient irrigation channels deep into the mountains

The Laurel Forest

The UNESCO-listed Laurisilva, a relic of a forest that once cloaked all Europe

Flowers and Spring

A mild climate year-round, gardens everywhere, and a famous flower festival

What Funchal Is Known For

The Cable Car to Monte

Cabins soaring over the red rooftops to the village high above the bay

Mercado dos Lavradores

The workers' market, loud with flowers, tropical fruit and scabbard fish

The Painted Doors

Rua de Santa Maria in the old town, its humble doorways turned to art

The Wine Lodges

Blandy's and others, where you taste Madeira among the ancient barrels

The Cathedral (Se)

A 15th-century church with a rare and beautiful ceiling of Madeiran cedar

Monte Palace Gardens

Exotic, tumbling gardens with koi ponds, grottoes and ocean views

A Famous Son of the City

Ronaldo

Born 1985

Born in Funchal in 1985 and raised in its steep back-streets, Cristiano Ronaldo rose to become one of the greatest footballers ever to play the game. His island celebrates him at every turn

The Record Breaker

Five Ballon d'Ors, and the all-time leading scorer in men's international football

A Funchal Boy

He played on these very streets before Sporting Lisbon, and then the world, called

CR7 Everywhere

A seafront museum and statue - and Madeira's airport named in his honour

Three Things They Will Not Tell You

1



The Walk Is Uphill

It's a pretty seafront stroll into town, but genuinely uphill - if the legs protest, the fixed 7.50-euro taxi to the centre is money well spent

2



Up by Cable Car, Down by Toboggan

The classic combination - ride the cable car one way to Monte, then let the carreiros slide you back down in a wicker basket

3



The Market Haggles Hard

The Lavradores market is a feast for the eyes, but the fruit-sellers upstairs quote startling prices - browse, photograph, and buy sparingly



Don't Mention... that Madeira is Spanish - it is proudly Portuguese, and though tomorrow's Tenerife is Spanish, the two are quite different places with their own language and character

Money - What It Buys

The Euro

Madeira is part of Portugal - the same euros as much of Europe

£1 buys about **€1.16**

£1 buys about **$1.32**

Funchal is fair value - eating and drinking cost less than in much of western Europe

Carry some cash - the toboggan and the market are cash only, and a fixed taxi to town is 7.50 euros

Indicative mid-market rates, November 2026

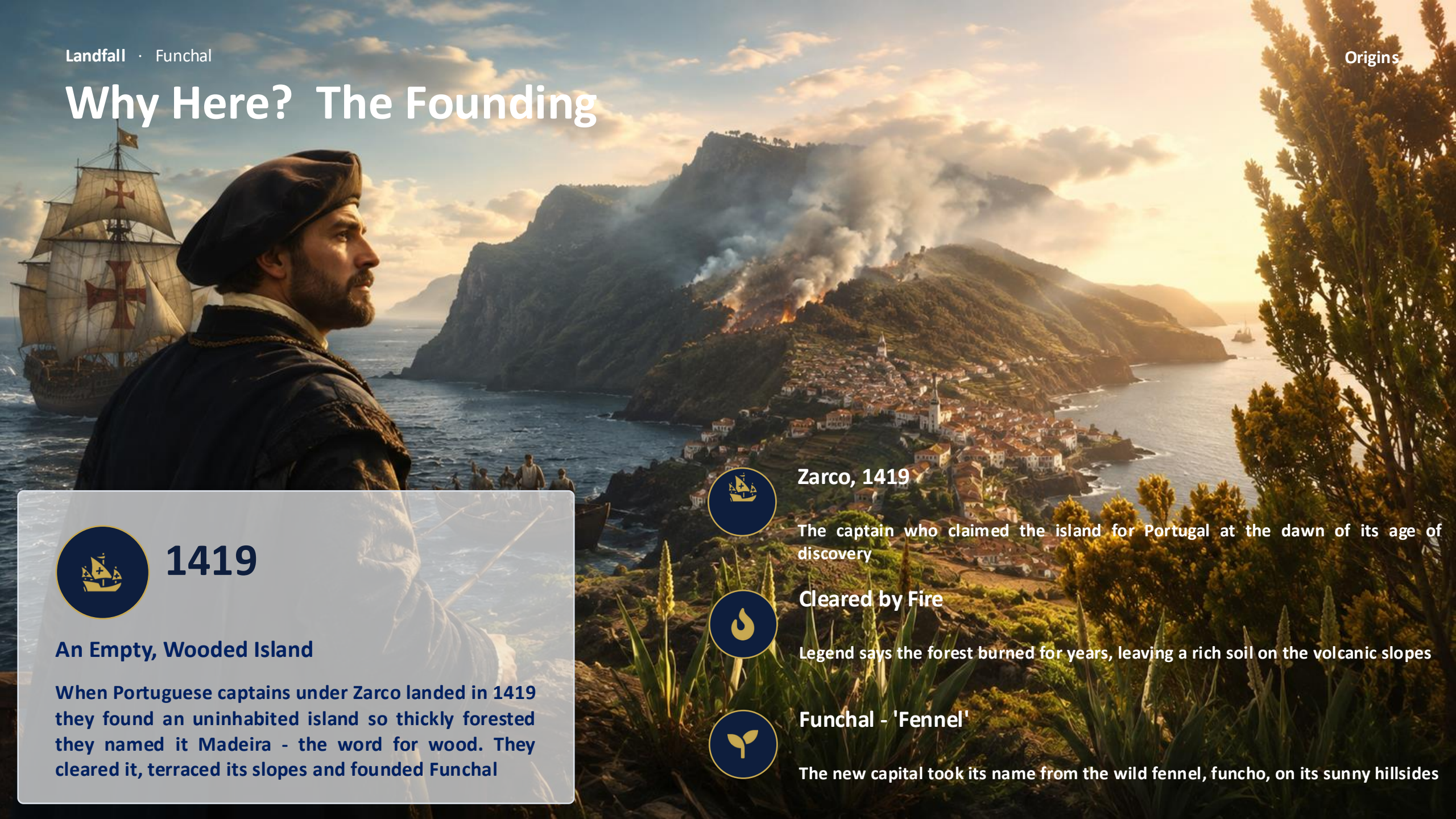
What You Might Reasonably Pay

Coffee (bica)	A Poncha	Glass of Madeira	Cable Car (return)
€1.00	€4.00	€4.00	€18.00
about £0.85	about £3.45	about £3.45	about £15.50

Top Tips to Save

- The seafront promenade and old town cost nothing to wander
- The cathedral is free to enter - only the tower charges
- The painted doors of Rua de Santa Maria are a free open-air gallery
- The Lavradores market is free to roam - a feast for the senses

Why Here? The Founding



1419

An Empty, Wooded Island

When Portuguese captains under Zarco landed in 1419 they found an uninhabited island so thickly forested they named it Madeira - the word for wood. They cleared it, terraced its slopes and founded Funchal

Zarco, 1419

The captain who claimed the island for Portugal at the dawn of its age of discovery

Cleared by Fire

Legend says the forest burned for years, leaving a rich soil on the volcanic slopes

Funchal - 'Fennel'

The new capital took its name from the wild fennel, funcho, on its sunny hillsides

The Wine That Crossed Oceans

A Happy Accident of the Sea

Madeira wine was found to improve, not spoil, on long tropical voyages - heated and rocked in the holds of ships. It became the prized drink of the Atlantic world, poured in London, Charleston and the Caribbean, and raised in a toast at the signing of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. For centuries, every ship called here to fill its casks



The heating that mimics those voyages is still used - it is called estufagem (esh-too-FAH-zhengh)

Two Hundred Years Ago

1820s

The Wine's Golden Age

Two centuries ago, Funchal was a genteel wine port at the height of its fame. British merchant houses - Blandy's among them, founded in 1811 - shipped Madeira across the world, and the mild climate began drawing well-to-do visitors to winter here

British wine houses

Families like the Blandys ran the trade, and their lodges still pour Madeira today

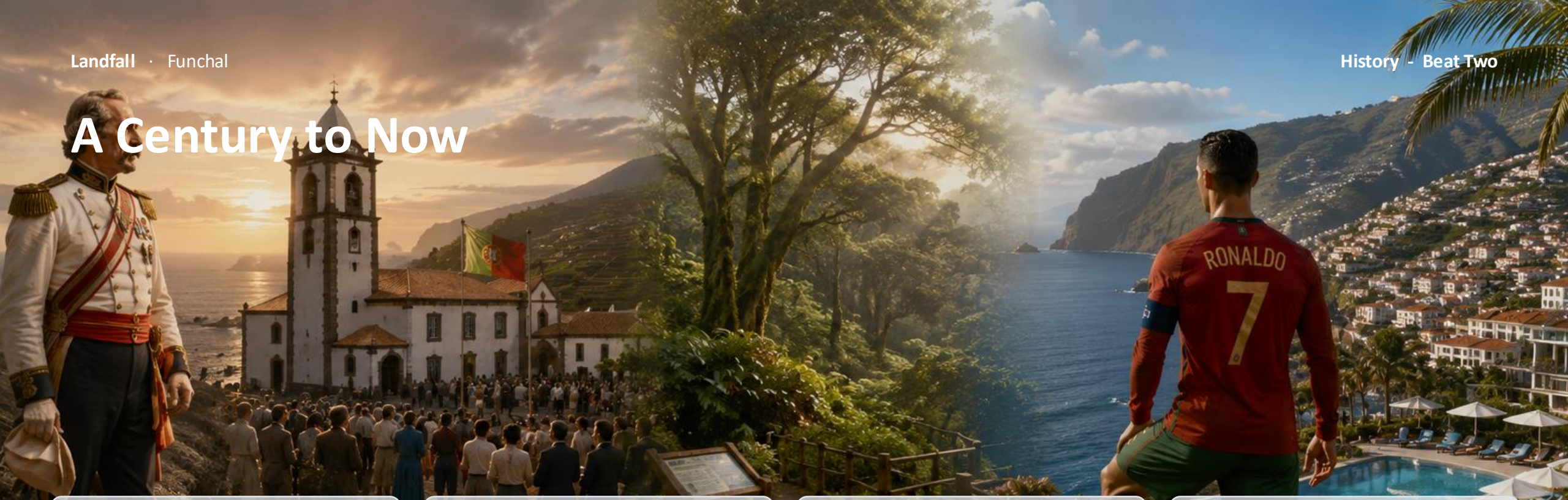
A winter cure

Invalids and aristocrats came for the gentle climate - the island's first tourists

An island apart

Reached only by sea, weeks from Europe, its life turning on the wine harvest

A Century to Now



1922

An Emperor's Rest

The last Habsburg emperor, Charles I, died in exile at Monte and lies there still

1976

Autonomy

Madeira became a self-governing autonomous region within democratic Portugal

1999

World Heritage

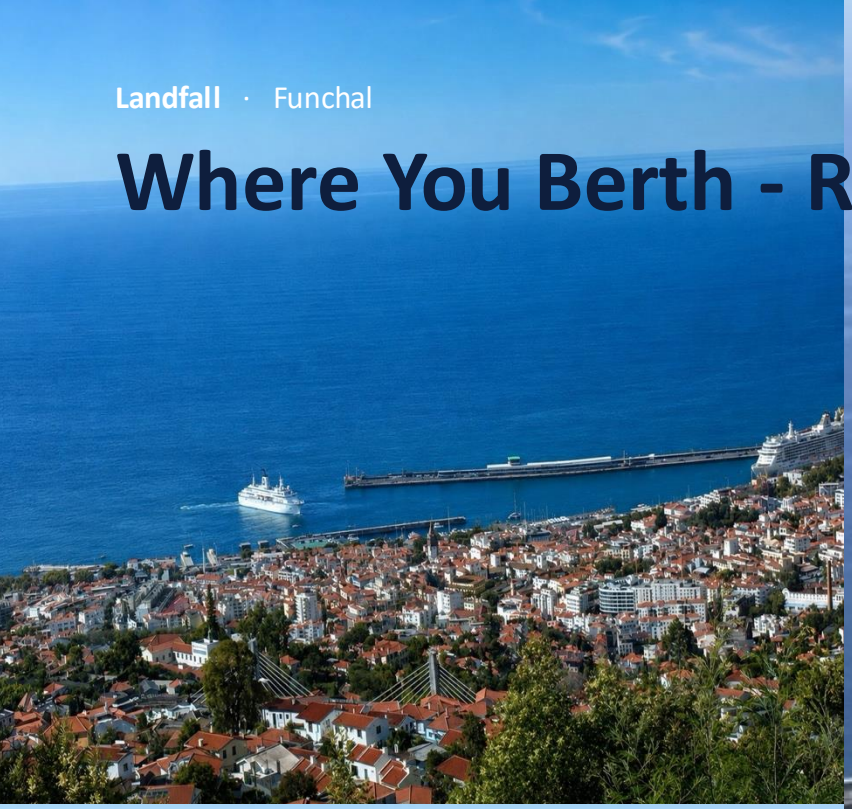
The ancient Laurisilva laurel forest was named a UNESCO World Heritage site

Today

Ronaldo's Island

A green, mild Atlantic resort - and home to the world's most famous footballer

Where You Berth - Relatively Central





Alongside the Breakwater

We berth on the Pontinha breakwater that shelters the harbour - no tender, and the ship visible above the whole day

A Seafront Walk In

A gently uphill 15-20 minute stroll along the promenade reaches town, passing the Ronaldo statue - or a fixed 7.50-euro taxi

Landfall · Funchal - Berth from Town front



The Best View - and the Walk

The Best View

Up to Monte by Cable Car

The cabins climb 560 m over the rooftops to Monte, the whole blue bay and its ring of hills unfolding beneath you - about 18 euros return, bought at the seafront station

Cable Car to Monte - the classic ride, the bay unfolding beneath the cabins

Pico dos Barcelos - a free viewpoint above town, the whole city at your feet

Cabo Girao - Europe's highest sea-cliff skywalk, glass over a 580 m drop (excursion)

The Seafront and Old Town

Terminal to the CR7 statue

0.6 km / 0.4 mi · 8 min · seafront

On to the centre and cathedral

1.6 km / 1.0 mi · gently uphill · shops, squares

The old town and painted doors

Rua de Santa Maria · wander · cobbled, colourful

The market and Sao Tiago fort

2.1 km / 1.3 mi · eastern end · fish, flowers, fort

Tip - taxi to the far end and walk gently back downhill to the ship, letting gravity do the work

Two Sides of Funchal



Up to Monte

The Classic Funchal Day

- The cable car, soaring over the red rooftops
- Nossa Senhora do Monte, the pilgrims' church
- Monte Palace Tropical Garden, exotic and tumbling
- The wicker toboggan ride back down

The Old Town and Market

At Sea Level, On Foot

- Mercado dos Lavradores - flowers and scabbard fish
- Rua de Santa Maria and its painted doors
- The 15th-century cathedral, the Se
- Blandy's Wine Lodge for a Madeira tasting

Funchal on a Budget

The Promenade

The palm-lined seafront walk into town is free, and lovely in the morning light

The Cathedral (Se)

Free to enter and admire the rare 15th-century ceiling of Madeiran cedar

The Painted Doors

Rua de Santa Maria's doorway art is a free open-air gallery in the old town

Lavradores Market

Free to wander - loud with flowers, tropical fruit and the day's catch

Pico dos Barcelos

A free viewpoint above town, the whole city and bay laid out below

Santa Catarina Park

Gardens above the harbour, with fine sea views, for nothing at all

For the Cultured

The Cathedral (Se)

The island's 15th-century mother church - free, with a beautiful cedar ceiling

Blandy's Wine Lodge

A tour among the ancient barrels with a Madeira tasting (from about 8 euros)

The CR7 Museum

Ronaldo's trophies and story, on the seafront by the marina (about 5 euros)

Monte Palace Gardens

Exotic gardens, grottoes and koi ponds, a wine tasting included (about 18 euros)

Botanical Garden

Madeira's flora and the famous geometric flowerbeds over the bay (about 10 euros)

Fortaleza de Sao Tiago

A sunny yellow 17th-century sea fort guarding the edge of the old town

If You Do One Thing

Ride Up, Slide Down

Take the cable car up to Monte for the view - then come down the old way, in a wicker toboggan. Two straw-hatted carreiros run alongside, steering and braking with their boots as you slide down the winding streets. Joyous, unique, and utterly Funchal



Cable car about 18 euros return (or 12.50 one way) - the toboggan is 35 euros for two, cash only

One Drink, and One Dish





If You Have One Drink

Poncha

Poncha (PON-shah) is the fisherman's drink - sugarcane aguardente, honey and lemon, stirred with a little wooden whisk called a caralhinho. Warming, deceptively strong, and poured in every old-town bar

If You Eat One Thing

Espada com Banana

Espada (esh-PAH-dah), the fearsome-looking black scabbard fish from the deep waters off Madeira, comes as a tender fillet with fried banana - a sweet-and-savoury island classic. Have it with bolo do caco, the garlic flatbread

With Fair Winds

Funchal in a Slide

Ride up, slide down - the cable car and the toboggan

Wander the painted doors - the colourful old town on foot

Raise a glass of Madeira - the wine that crossed oceans

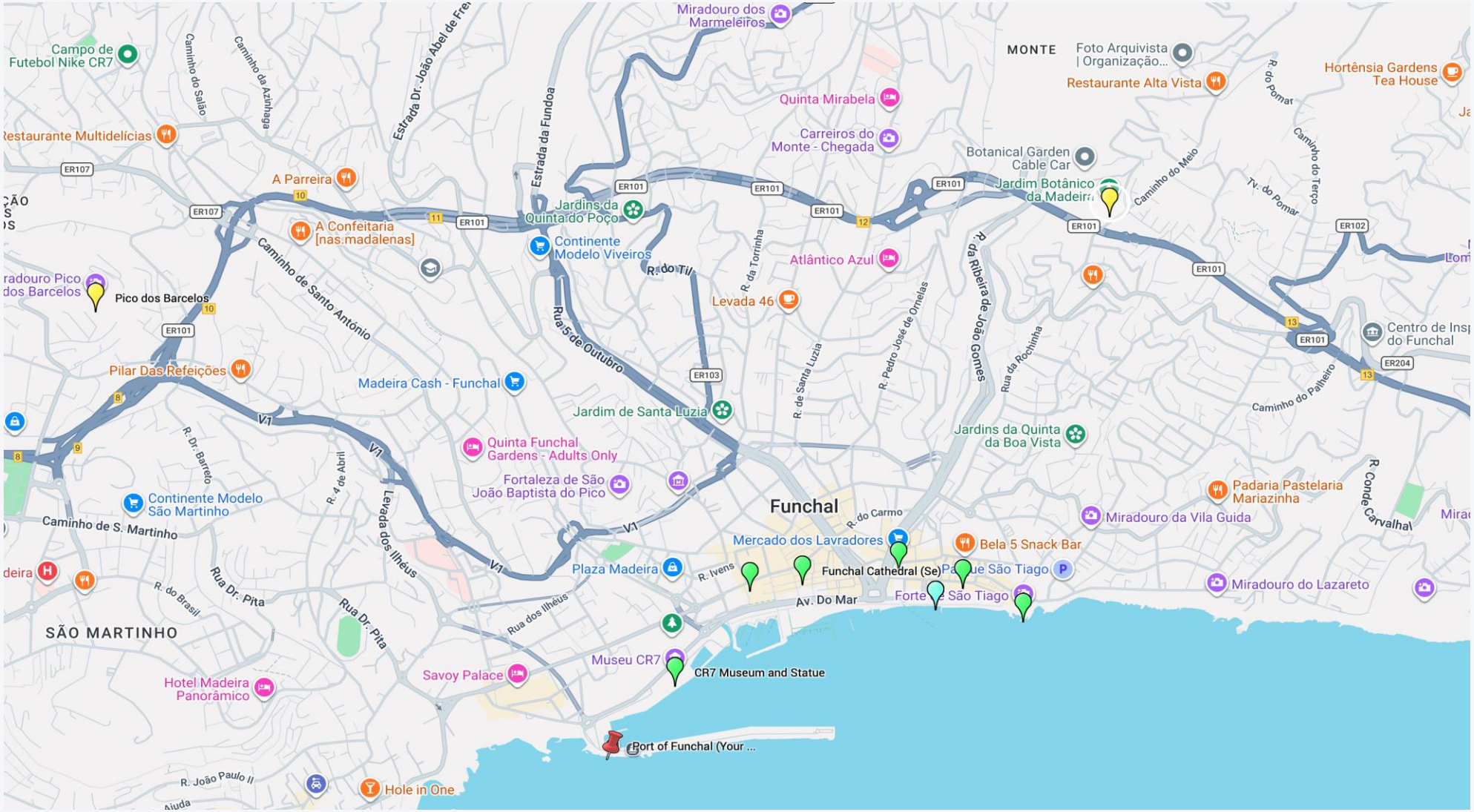
All Aboard c. 1700 - Sail 1800 an overnight passage south to Santa Cruz de Tenerife

Funchal in Motion



Expedia's Guide to Madeira

The Lie of the Land - Funchal



The Lie of the Land - Funchal



Apps Worth a Download

A few apps to smooth and enrich your day ashore - grab them on the ship's wi-fi before you step off

Google Maps

Pin the terminal, the cathedral and the cable car - and save Funchal to use offline

Bolt

The reliable ride app - handy if the uphill walk or the hills defeat you

Cable Car Tickets

Buy online at madeiracablecar.com to skip the queue when a ship is in

Your Cruise App

The all-aboard time in your pocket - and the walk back is gently downhill