

It's time to plan the Christmas and New Year's Eve holidays of your dreams in a unique place close to home: Madeira!

We invite you to enjoy the fantastic range of irresistible attractions and experiences Madeira has to offer, providing precious moments and well-being that will make your stay an unforgettable one!

Discover an island in celebration as it prepares body and mind for one of its richest annual traditions, followed by the glitz and glamour of the end-of-year festivity!



### **Christmas and New Year's Festivities** **December 1st to January 7th, 2018**

With the **opening of the decorative lights** across the streets of Funchal, the programme of Christmas and New Year's Festivities begins. These celebrations are part of a rich and extensive **programme of cultural, religious, ethnographic and artistic events** that run through the entire month of December, ending with the Twelfth Night Songs, or epiphany celebrations.

At this time of year, Funchal itself becomes a genuine nativity scene of life-size proportions. Music is a constant presence in the city's streets and squares, with **concerts and performances** by philharmonic and folklore groups. There are also many Christmas performances that present a

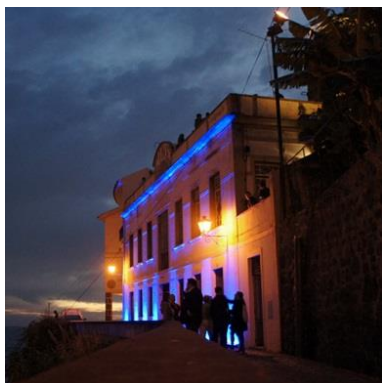
veritable tableau of the island's traditions, as Madeira gets ready for the festivities with a special spirit and energy.

The people of Madeira call their landmark Christmas celebrations "the feast". Beginning in early December, Madeiran households prepare **nativity scenes** and various **delicacies and Christmas sweets** with dedication and joy, namely the famous honey cakes and honey cookies, **homemade liqueurs** and one of the **season's most traditional dishes**, 'vinha d'alho' beef with garlic wine sauce.

Another lively tradition in this period is the **celebration of the 9 Childbirth Masses** to announce the Birth of the Child Jesus, which take place at dawn and are accompanied by popular songs and traditional seasonal refreshments.

On 23 December, the traditional **Night at the Market** takes place, where the Madeiran people take the opportunity to make **last-minute purchases** of regional products and flowers and taste the many typical seasonal snacks and drinks on offer.

After Christmas, the fun continues in the lead-up to the New Year's Eve celebrations, culminating in the **world-famous fireworks display** that was officially recognised in 2006 as the world's largest by the Guinness Book of Records. This impressive pyrotechnical spectacle takes place among the thousands of lamps that adorn the city of Funchal, providing a magnificent setting of rare beauty. With the ringing in of the 1st of January, the heavens light up with colour and hope as a new year begins!



### **Madeira Micro International Film Festival** **5th to 8th of December**

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Madeira Micro International Film Festival will take place at the ancient Cine Sol building, located in the village of Ponta do Sol.

This cinematographic festival, held in partnership with other organizations, such as the Estalagem da Ponta do Sol and the European cultural marketing company Digital Berlin, will also include some workshops.

More information at: [www.mmiff.com](http://www.mmiff.com)



### **Cinderella Ballet 15th to 17th December**

In December, the Madeira Dance Company and the Carlos Fernandes Dance School present the traditional Christmas ballet, inspired this year by the popular children’s story “Cinderella”.

This emblematic ballet will take place at the Baltazar Dias Municipal Theatre between the 15th and 17th of December, at 9 pm, telling the story of the young Cinderella who, after the tragic death of her father, finds herself at the mercy of her terrible stepmother and jealous stepsisters.

Transformed into a servant in her own house, the beautiful and kind young woman never loses hope for a better life. To get her wish and

change her destiny, she will need the help of her fairy godmother and her friends from the forest.

More info at: <http://teatro.cm-funchal.pt/>



### **Madeira Plunge January 1st, 2018**

The first event of the year will take place at noon, at Ponta Gorda Bathing Complex, also known as “Poças do Governador”.

The first plunge of the year is a tradition rooted in some cities of the country and the World, but it will take place for the first time in Madeira. The initiative aims to create an event that brings together locals and tourists who wish to be part of the ritual, with the condition of bringing a Christmas hat. If you wish to join this New Year celebration, and you are in good health, register in the following website:

<http://www.madeiraplunge.com/register.html>



### **Music in the Chapels brings together 40 musicians**

Comprising a series of 14 concerts that conclude in April 2018, the 5th edition of ‘Music in the Chapels’ is already underway.

Big Doubles Blues, DonaZica with Elisa Silva, Woodkey Trio, Franco & Cordofones Madeirenses, Elisa & Tiago, AncorPiù, Casual, Triângulo, Bossa Livre, ‘Ra’ o rei ‘Jão’, The Grumpies, EndlessGarden, Momentum and A voz de uma guitarra are the bands, artists and projects included in the fifth season of this musical event.

This initiative of the Retoiça Association takes place in Ponta do Sol, with 14 shows in the chapels of São Sebastião and Santo António in the historical centre of the village.

More information at: <https://www.facebook.com/Ecomusicalis>



### **Exhibition “The Islands of the White Gold”**

Until the 18th of March 2018, the Museum of Ancient Art of Lisbon will host the exhibition “As ilhas do Ouro Branco” (The islands of the White Gold).

The Madeiran Art Commission (15th - 16th centuries) “is the initiative that began as a celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Discovery of Madeira and Porto Santo and whose exhibition brings together a total of 86 works never before gathered in the same museum space, in a rich display of the Region’s artistic heritage.”

The exhibition covers six centuries of history and places a particular emphasis on the period of the introduction and large-scale development of sugarcane cultivation in the Madeiran archipelago in the late fifteenth

century and the early stages of its export to Lisbon and then to the rest of Europe through the ports of Flanders, Bruges and Antwerp, where merchants traded “white gold” for mostly religious art pieces, including sculptures, paintings and religious jewellery.

Highlights of the pieces on display include the “Virgin and Child” (15th century), the Altarpiece of the Magi (16th century) and the Triptych of Our Lady of Mercy flanked by Saints Christopher, Paul, Peter and Sebastian by Jan Provost of the Flemish school, dated 1529.

More information: <http://museudearteantiga.pt/exposicoes/as-ilhas-do-ouro-branco>



### **Madeira among the Top Destinations of Trips To Discover**

The "Trips to Discover" travel blog has included Madeira among the best tourist destinations for celebrating the New Year, recognising the emblematic tourism programme that takes place every year in Funchal Bay.

The article "TOP 12 Places to celebrate New Year's 2018" features many of the innumerable secrets that make Madeira such a prized travel destination, including its incredible landscapes and points of interest, the iconic Madeira wine and the extraordinary New Year's Eve celebrations, which take place in a magnificent setting of rare beauty and were officially recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records in 2006.

For more information: <https://www.tripstodiscover.com>