

WORLDWIDE

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2024 TAKE THE 'FERNWEH' TRIP

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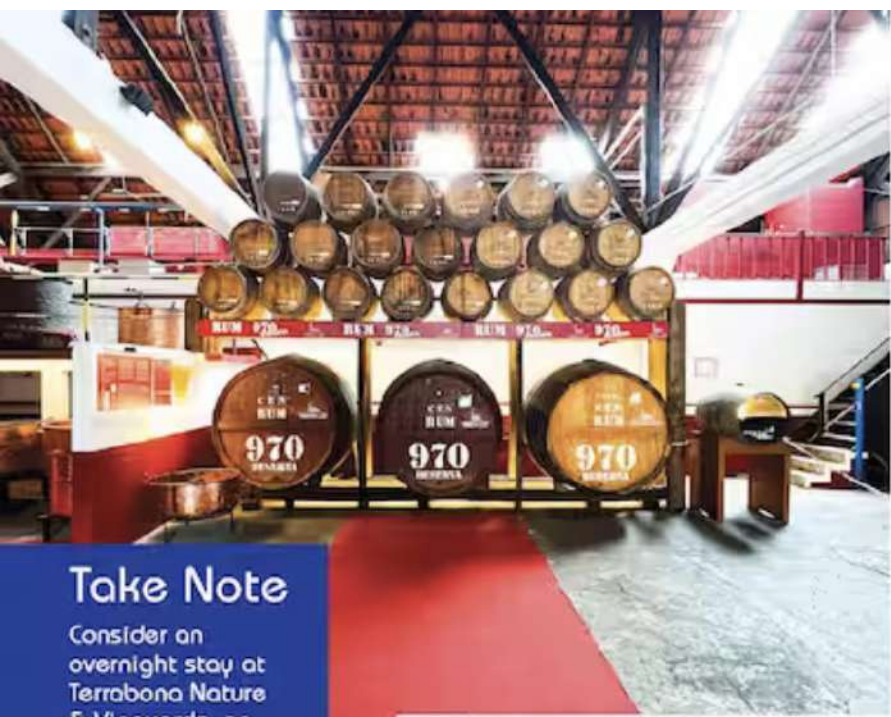
IT'S SPRING FOREVER

Words Rahul Jagtiani

Perched on the North Atlantic Ocean, the Portuguese island of Madeira is the perfect inspiration for faraway holiday brochures and billboards. With a breathtaking landscape warmed by the Atlantic sun, crystal-clear waters perfect for a splash and soak, age-old traditions and a burst of local flavours, Madeira is often hailed as the "Island of Eternal Spring". The tiny volcanic paradise is as well-known for its adventure allure as it is for its laid-back rural settings and gorgeous vineyards.

Old Town

Funchal, the capital and cultural epicentre, is home to half of the island's population, where chic boutique hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants coexist with ancient fortresses and cathedrals. Discover the Old Town in Funchal with a wine and food tour, during which affable tour guides will help you soak in the charms of the place, unveiling Madeira's rich history, architectural wealth, and gastronomic treasures. A must-stop is Uaucacau, where artisanal



Take Note

Consider an overnight stay at Terrabona Nature & Vineyards, an exclusive retreat with a micro winery that produces around 1,500 bottles annually. It has earned acclaim from the Robert Parker Wine Advocate, a Michelin group subsidiary. The brainchild of Marco Noronha Jardim and Maria João Velosa, the micro winery is a testament to Madeira's potential in crafting exceptional white wines.



Images: Rahul Jagtiani

chocolates are handmade with native ingredients. Try the one with local cherry *pitanga* and passion fruit. Sip on *poncha*, a traditional alcoholic drink made from sugarcane, honey, and orange or lemon, before making a final stop at Mercado dos Lavradores, the bustling farmer's market.

Star power

But Madeira's star is 'local boy,' the legendary footballer Cristiano Ronaldo. Unsurprisingly, the football icon draws millions of fans every year to the island.

Water power

After your Ronaldo moment, head over to the marina close to the Old Town for water sports. Enjoy captivating whale and dolphin watching tours across Madeira Island and see the marine animals in their natural habitat.

Lunchtime

To elevate an incredible day, pick Fajã dos Padres for lunch - a verdant oasis nestled between land and sea, that is only accessible by boat or a cable car. As the boat eases into the secluded bay and you disembark at the pier and walk along a narrow rocky beach, the restaurant comes into view, perched beneath a towering cliff and offering a panoramic spectacle of the Atlantic! Here, time stands still as you will see tourists either lounging in the sun or indulge in leisurely lunches. The menu features the freshest catch of the day cooked in traditional flavours, seamlessly paired with vegetables plucked from the on-site organic farm and washed down by Madeira wine.

Island tour

The best way to explore the island is in a rented car. Navigating along winding roads, every bend unveils picturesque villages that appear straight out of a postcard. Pause at the charming cafes, indulge in an espresso, and feast your eyes on sweeping views of lush landscapes.

A highly recommended pitstop is Cabo Girão, offering a mild adventure where you can stroll on a glass skywalk at the edge of a high cliff - one of the loftiest in Europe.

On the northern coast stands the town of Porto da Cruz, a haven for adventure sports enthusiasts. The consistent swell and black sands of Alagoa and Maiata, the two main beaches here, offer excellent conditions for both beginner and intermediate-level surfing.

The quaint Engenho Do Norte, one of the last living testimonies of the historical sugar production on the island, is a must-visit. Established in 1927, it still operates with machinery from that era to produce sugarcane spirit, or rum! The air carries the rich aroma of aged rum, a testament to the island's time-honoured craft.

Meet the author



Rahul Jagtiani is a multifaceted entrepreneur with a brand of travel and lifestyle accessories, and also has a self-produced and hosted travel show. He is equally passionate about emerging technology and its myriad use cases within the travel industry.
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