



What we do | Contact us | Can't find what you're looking for?



Register

Sign in

Search



Home

Find a Holiday

Special Offers

Reviews

Forum

Features

News & Events

## Madeira Wine Festival

Tweet



**Helen Jackson**  
Traveller and writer

### Madeira - an island with the name of a wine, a wine with the name of an island

Tasting madeira in Madeira and treading grapes at the country's [wine festival](#) was an opportunity not to be missed.

The 'Wine Village' at Praca do Povo, the Peoples' Square, promised Madeira wines directly from producers, harmonization with gastronomy, concerts, sunset cocktails, wine stories, and chef's dinner. With temperatures in the mid-twenties when it was raining at home, and with harbour views, this was going to be a tough trip.



Leandro Gouveia, from [Vinhos Barbeito](#), slipped confidently between Portuguese, French and English as he talked us through four glasses of madeira all made from the Verdelho white grape. He ended with his favourite, a 1992 vintage wine telling us that madeira, is pretty indestructible and lasts for years: an opened bottle, unlike port, is still drinkable after a year, and bottles from the late 1800s are not uncommon. He described the latter as drinking a sip of history. The structured tastings, 30 people for 30 minutes, were free but advance booking was essential. However there were lots of small wooden booths dotted around the village for more informal tasting and quaffing.



As we approached the cellar of D'Oliveiras, we could smell alcohol down the street and were told that 2 to 5% is lost in the



barrel to evaporation, known as the 'angels share'.

Lunch at [Quinta do Furo](#), a hotel and vineyard in the picturesque north-eastern town of Santana, hosted a large al fresco lunch which started with a refreshing, ice-cold cocktail of Madeira, lime and lemonade served amongst the vines. It was similar to Pimms and is a must try for next summer. Following an excellent buffet lunch and display of traditional dancing, we

took off socks and shoes, climbed down into a concrete trough filled with grapes and felt them squidge between our toes.

[Blandy's Wine Lodge](#), Madeira's most famous, oldest producer, had their own programme of activities including barrel making and the opportunity to make your own madeira blend for €10. At a festival dinner, we were welcomed by a brass band and presented with a necklace made from boiled sweets. Over flowing pre-dinner drinks (madeira of course, a fabulous pale-pink Atlantis rose, red and white wines, sangria and beer) we watched traditionally costumed dancers and men parading with animal skins full of wine over their shoulders demonstrating how wine would have been transported years ago. We declined another opportunity to tread grapes, but tried the unfiltered grape juice drawn off from a tap. It tasted ok and we banished thoughts of the smelly feet that had turned the grape into juice. Although a buffet dinner of salads, chicken, *espetada* (beef on a skewer) and pork soaked up the alcohol we were in fine fettle for the Academic Musical Group, the unexpected hit of the night. The ten-strong group of black-clad university students looked more like undertakers but their charisma, lively singing and music soon had everyone clapping and stomping their feet. Their dancing, involving lots of energetic jumping, high kicks and flag waving, which was slightly disconcerting for those gathered round them and only a couple of feet away. As they climaxed, there were many cries of *mais um* (one more).



Whilst the wine festival is well established, 2016 launched a 30-minute, Historical and Ethnographical Street Parade where our fabulous reserved seats were right behind Madeira's President. One float depicted the signing of the US Declaration of Independence which was toasted with madeira, and another

the Duke of Clarence who, in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, chose to die in a barrel of madeira after being sentenced to death.

If you too would like to squash grapes with your feet and sample the wine, Madeira's annual wine festival takes place from 28 August to 10 September 2017.

### More information

[Visit Madeira](#) has all the information you need for a trip to this fabulous island.

Monarch, the scheduled leisure airline, operates year round flights to [Madeira](#) from Birmingham and London Gatwick airports with fares, including taxes, starting from £59 one way (£109 return).

For further information or to book [Monarch flights](#), [Monarch Holidays](#) or [Monarch Hotels](#), please visit [www.monarch.co.uk](http://www.monarch.co.uk).

Silver Travel Advisor recommends [Sunvil](#) for holidays to Madeira.

### You may also find interesting:

- [Food and drink in Madeira](#)



- [Activities in Madeira](#)

Tweet

Why not read other articles and reviews possibly related to this one?

[Read more](#)

## What are your thoughts?

[Discuss this article on our Forum](#)

[Create a new thread](#)

[Comment on this article](#)

To leave a comment, please [Sign in](#)

The advertisement for STC Switzerland Travel Centre is a vertical banner with a red background. It features three distinct sections: a top text block, a middle image of a snowboarder, and a bottom image of a group of people. The text is white and sans-serif.

**stc**  
switzerland  
travel centre

**About Us**

STC is the destination expert, passionate about bringing Switzerland closer to you.

Our personal service and extra special touches make all the difference to your Swiss holiday.

Nobody knows Switzerland like we do.



[About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Useful Links](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Our work with Age UK](#)

Silver Travel Advisor is a UK registered limited company. Registration no.: 7408308. VAT no.: 100952746 Age-UK © 2015 SilverTravelAdvisor.com. All rights reserved.