

# Madeira Archipelago

## 1 - Brief History

Portuguese navigators João Gonçalo Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira discovered the *island of Porto Santo* in 1418. The same navigators, accompanied by Bartolomeu de Perestrelo, discovered in 1419 the *island of Madeira*. These islands were uninhabited at that time. During this year will be celebrated the six hundred years of the discovery of the archipelago of Madeira (1418/2018).

Christopher Columbus/Cristovão Colombo/Colon, was born in 1451 and died in 1506.

On his first trip to America, 1492, year of the discovery of America (conquest of paradise), Christopher Columbus, sailed from Porto Santo island, passing through Cape Verde.

On the return from his first trip to America, he visited the king of Portugal, D. João II, in Lisbon, before accounting to the Catholic Kings, Fernando and Isabel, in Seville. Why? He made four trips to America. On his third trip to America, in 1498, he stopped at Porto Santo, and climbed the island of Madeira.

One said that Columbus have lived in Portugal between 1476 and 1485. During this period he spent some time in Lisbon, Alentejo (Cuba?) and on the island of Porto Santo.

In 1479/1480 Columbus married Filipa Moniz, daughter of the Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu de Perestrelo, Donated Captain to the island of Porto Santo, from 1446.

They had a legitimate son, Diogo Columbus and later a second one, Fernando Columbus. Vila Baleira can tell stories and legends of the distant and recent past, in fact a visit to the *Christopher Columbus Museum* will allow you to get to know the house in which he once lived.

## 2 – Geography and Population

This archipelago is formed by the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo, as well as the uninhabited *Selvagens* and *Desertas* Islands.

Madeira Archipelago is compound by two paradisiac islands, Madeira and Porto Santo. At the moment ,the population of the Madeira island is approximately 250 thousand inhabitants, the majority of Portuguese nationality.

Funchal is the main important city of Madeira island, with about half the inhabitants of the island (112 thousand inhabitants).

Porto Santo is a smaller island (about 6000 inhabitants) of the Madeira archipelago.

The friendliness and hospitality of its locals, the mild climate all year around, the spectacular unspoilt landscapes and the richness and variety of the natural, historical and cultural resources are just some of the reasons why you should discover this paradise yourself.

This archipelago lies in the Atlantic Ocean, at the south-western of Europe, about 500 km from the coast of Africa and 1000 km from Continental Europe. It takes around 1hr30 min to fly from Lisbon to Madeira or Porto Santo islands.

## 3 – Tourism/Health and Wellness Emergent Touristic Destination

It is a touristic destination crowded almost the year.

In Funchal there are many moderns and beautiful resorts, hotels, SPAs; several public and private health centers, asthetical clinics and a public hospital.

The archipelago of Madeira is a natural Health Resort, frequented by famous people, in the past, namely for respiratory and pulmonary treatments (climatotherapy).

This archipelago has a mild maritime climate, clean seawater, wonderful landscapes and many beautiful different and exotic flowers and fruits.

In these islands are available a diversified gastronomy : fish/shell fish, meat, vegetables, salads, exotic fruits. This healthy food is very important in health and wellness tourism. The attraction of these islands as tourist destination is also valued by the security and the safety.

In Porto Santo island there is a famous Vila Baleira Thalasso Center that among other treatments, use sea water, shells and sand (biogenitic carbonate sand) of this location.

There are studies that proof its therapeutics properties.

This island possess natural resources of great therapeutic potential for medical and cosmetic proposes.

Health and wellness of this magnificent beach as, in addition to its crystalline waters, its sands have rare therapeutic properties. The sand is soft, fine and smooth and consists mainly of calcium carbonate in the form of calcite, which has special thermal qualities.

A golden island, boasts 9 km fine golden sands ideal for sunbathing and swimming within a turquoise sea ,almost the year. In this place, peace and quiet reign supreme, a truly relaxing holiday.

The primitive beauty of the landscape enchants anyone walking the paths or cycling the island's trails.

The safety, along with the warm welcome of its locals, the pleasures that nature has to offer, the beautiful beaches of fine sand, and the calm sea currents, turn Porto Santo island into a privileged location amongst other similar destinations.