



Madeira

Pearl of the Atlantic

8 Days

Right in the middle of the Atlantic, the island of Madeira is famous for its natural beauty. Green rolling hills, exotic botanical gardens, volcanoes and rugged-cliff tops looking out over the crystal blue sea. With everything so close by, in just 8 days you can explore a vast range of interesting geo-biology. Walk along levadas, swim in lava rock pools and visit plantations. No visit to Madeira is complete without a whale and dolphin watching tour!



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)

Your Recommended Educational Journey

Day 1

Arrive in Funchal

LD

On arrival, we are met by our local STC Expedition Leader and take a short transfer to our accommodation in Funchal city centre. Our Leader will give us a briefing on what to expect from our trip. The rest of the afternoon will be spent settling in before our first traditional meal.

Day 2

Discover Madeira, above & under ground

BLD

Our discovery of Madeira begins as we take to the skies... literally! Our first visit of the day is to the highest sea cliff in Europe and the second highest in the world, Cabo Girão. At 580m the views from the skywalk platform are breath taking. Continuing along the coast we reach Seixal where we have a language lesson. Time for our cooking class! We learn how to make traditional dishes such as Espetada and Bolo do Caco and then enjoy a lunch of our own making.

This afternoon we visit Porto Moniz in the northwest of the island and can take time to relax in the natural lava swimming pools. From the coast we continue our journey underground and explore São Vicente Caves. The caves were formed 890 thousand years ago by a volcanic eruption in Paul da Serra. There is now an underground route running over 1km for us to explore as well as incredible 5-6m high caves and unique series of lava tubes. The Volcano Centre offers a range of educational displays showing the geological evolution of the Madeira Islands.

Day 3

Whale & dolphin watching

BLD

Today we have the opportunity to spot and observe some the 20 cetacean species that can be found in the Madeira, a short walk from our accommodation in Funchal. Although nature offers no guarantees, whales and dolphins are regularly seen during these half day tours along the south coast of the island. Local marine biologists will brief us on which cetacean species can be observed, safety measures aboard, how we respect the animals and rules of observation at sea.

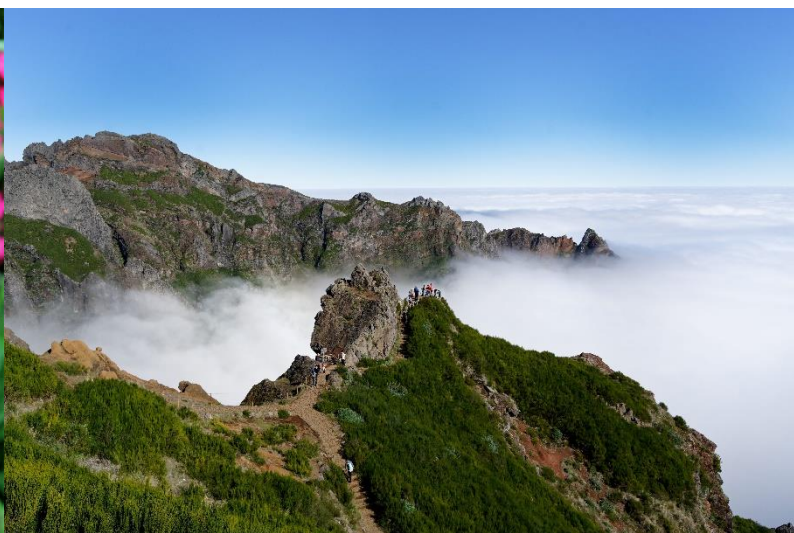
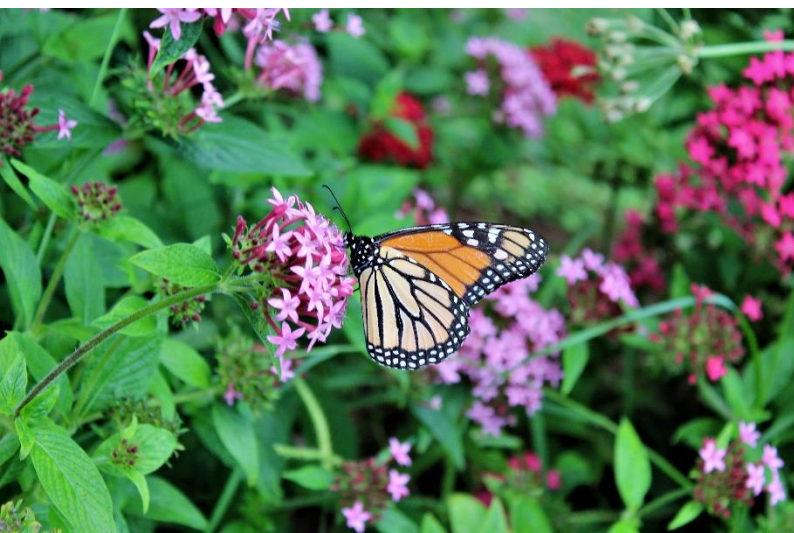
Spotted and Bottlenose dolphins, Pilot and Fin Whales are among the species we have the chance to see. Rare species are also spotted here such as the Rough Toothed Dolphin and Blainville Beaked Whale, which are the least studied animals in the world being a deep water animal. After the boat trip and a scenic picnic lunch, we have time this afternoon to explore the city of Funchal.

Day 4

Levada hike & bike tour

BLD

Besides its natural beauty, Madeira is also well known for its great network of irrigation channels - the Levadas. 3,000km of waterways or "Levadas" are a living reminder of the monumental effort of past generations to distribute water from the mountain springs to the lower slopes, agricultural land and valleys of the island. Our morning hike follows the Levadas through lush vegetation and indigenous forest. After a picnic lunch, the adventure cranks up a gear. Jumping onto mountain bikes, we cycle along quiet roads, paths and dirt tracks that wind through epic mountain landscapes. This is an easy to moderate mountain bike tour, suitable for all levels, and with its stunning mountain and Atlantic Ocean views, one we won't easily forget!



Day 5**Forest Conservation & Pico do Arieiro**

BLD

At the Ecological Park of Funchal, we receive a talk from the Ecological Park Team on sustainability. We then spend the morning volunteering with the current conservation activities taking place in the park. If our visit is between October and April, we can help with a reforestation project focusing on endemic plant species. Next we visit Pico do Arieiro, an extinct volcano and the third highest peak of the island standing tall at 1,818m. The incredible panoramic views from the top are a great backdrop for a team photo! From here we descend to Ribeiro Frio, meaning "Cold River". This is a natural park located in the north of the island, in a deep valley surrounded by mountains. A short Levada walk along an ancient water channel gives us the chance to spot different bird species such as the Madeira Firecrest and Trocaz Pigeon. The incredible Balcões viewpoint is a real highlight and we can see the Laurissilva Forest from here which is what gives the area World Heritage UNESCO status. We can also visit a nearby sugar cane factory to see how they produce molasses used in honey and rum!

Day 6**Bananas & beaches**

BLD

Green landscapes, a pleasant climate and the unique coastal environments make Madeira an ideal environment for growing exotic fruits. This morning we walk along banana fields to a banana factory and learn about the different types, growing stages and climate conditions. Lunch will be enjoyed in an exotic forest composed of ancient Mimosa, Eucalyptus and Acacia trees. Next we travel to Calheta which is famous for its sandy beaches. Here we take part in an Environment Clean Up project and clean a section of the beach. There will be time to relax on the beach before returning to Funchal for our last team meal.

Day 7**Hiking the Volcanic Peninsula**

BLD

Today we enjoy a full day hike along São Lourenço, a long and narrow peninsula at the eastern end of the island. The peninsula is volcanic in its origin, mainly formed of basalt, although there are some limestone sediment formations. The semi-arid climate and exposure to the north winds have sculpted the low vegetation and explains the lack of trees, which makes this part of the island very unique compared to what we have experienced so far. At the end of the trail we can enjoy a well deserved swim and relax in Sardinha port.

Day 8**Last goodbye & departure**

BL

There should be time for final souvenir shopping today before we catch our return flight to the UK.



Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. While we are far from perfect, we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>

Trees for Life

Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 2



Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 2



Expect to find local life broadly familiar to that in the UK, however aspects of the trip are likely to be in remoter areas where differences are more profound. Whilst English may not be the native language, you can expect it to be widely spoken. There may be some cultural differences and although western pallets should be well catered for there will be the opportunity to try new dishes.



Travel Safety & Other Pre-Travel Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to this educational journey. Topics covered will include:

Responsible Tourism workshop

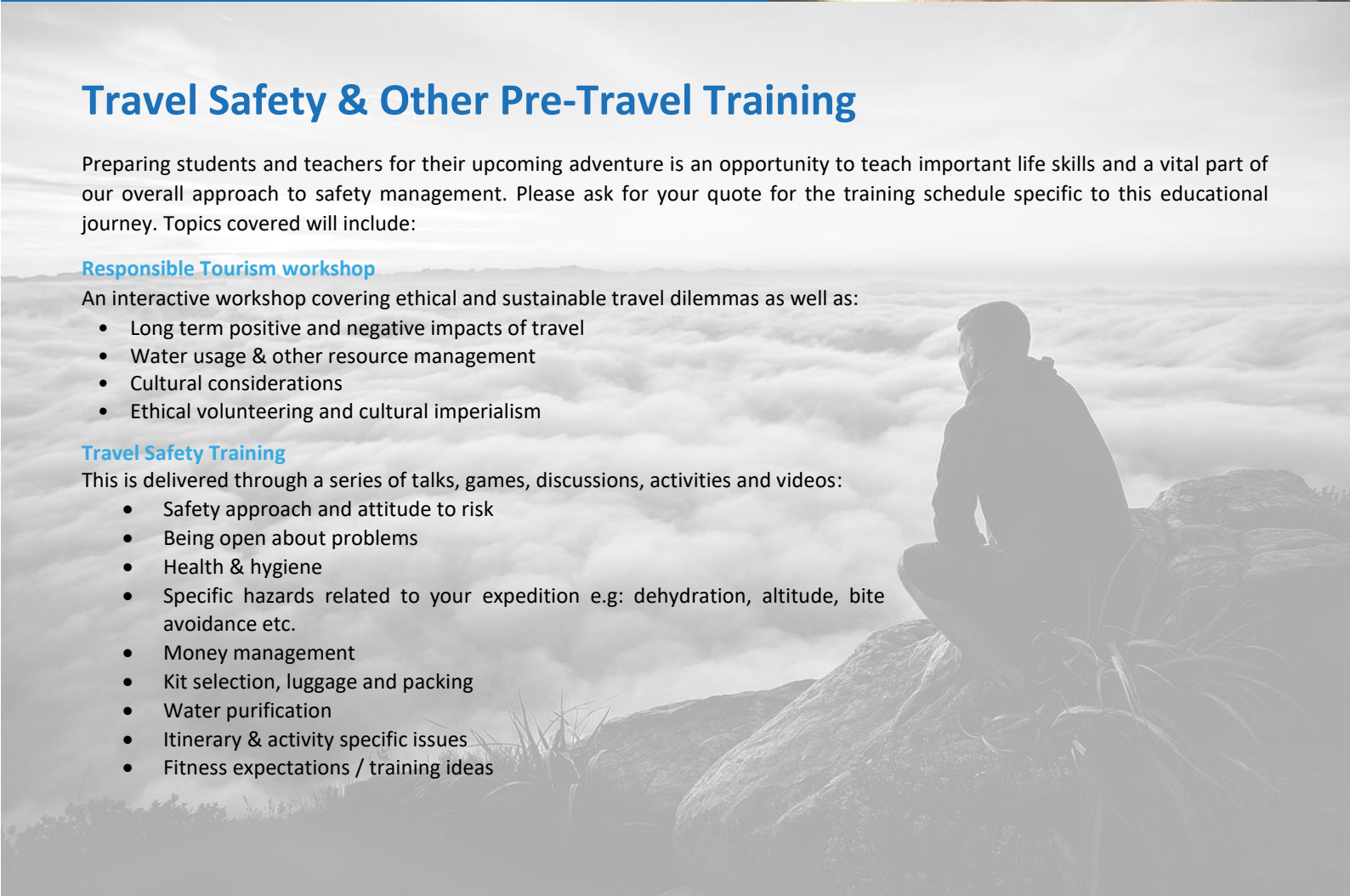
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey

1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your adventure itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your trip approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

3 Arrange a trip launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with comprehensive information covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."

Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick

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