

Madeira

Our last port of call is one we have visited before, and will always be pleased to return to. Previously we have explored the whole island by hire car, and coach excursions, and we have not spent much time in the beautiful capital of Funchal.

The Van Gogh sailed into port at 5pm on a sunny Sunday evening, and slipped out again at 11pm on Monday evening, which gave us ample time to dine ashore on both days, and walk the streets and see the sights

A beautifully Portuguese atmosphere, with a wealth of preserved buildings - not on show but being used for many purposes. Compared with some of the smaller islands on the cruise, Funchal was busy with traffic, trade, and many people on its streets.

Two other cruise liners were in port as well - the Arcadia, and a Thompson ship called the Destiny. Both these larger vessels were doing short cruises, and it seemed a little strange that our little tub (by comparison - see the pictures) had navigated the globe! In fact, there were so many cruise passengers in town that the ATM machines ran out of cash



Funchal is very clean, tidy, well run, and very friendly. Flowers, plants and shrubs are everywhere, which gives a lovely garden effect. All the pavements are tiled, some in different colours, and depict many shapes and figures - must have taken ages to set out!

Not surprisingly, we ate both nights in a Chinese restaurant - the first night on our own, and the second night with a group of fellow passengers. The food was excellent, the drinks too, and the bill was not painful at all!

All in all - a place we can thoroughly recommend!