Carnaval is coming to town!

CLICK HERE to view details of the Portuguese government initiative for UK visitors post Brexit (assuming no deal)
Carnaval season is here...and no one celebrates these pre-Lenten festivities quite like the city and people of Funchal on Madeira Island. For eight days, the city is decorated with festive colours and lights. Residents and visitors alike flood the streets in brightly adorned costumes. And pure joy and celebration radiates from the streets. Carnaval 2019 in Madeira runs from 26 February to 6 March.

While contemporary connections will bring to mind images of scantily clad Brazilian men and women, the origins of carnaval can be found in pious Catholic faith. The public celebrations that we refer to as carnaval today marks the beginning of Lent, the period of 40 days that precedes Easter during which devout Christians honour Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross by forgoing earthly pleasures and examining their own spiritual well-being. While the gluttony of carnaval is intended to deliberately contrast this period of penitence; for most people, including the many thousands who line the streets of Funchal, carnaval merely represents an opportunity to have a good time.

The Portuguese interpretation of carnaval was not particularly distinct until the beginning of the period of discoveries at the start of the 15th century. Only when Brazil’s Rio Carnaval became internationally famous in the middle of the 18th century did carnaval become a uniform and dominant event across the Portuguese territories. This Brazilian fusion of cultures from different sides of the Atlantic can now be observed at carnaval parades from Lisbon to Madeira, the unfamiliar quality of the music and costumes emphasised on the island by their difference to other notable street parades, such as those that can be seen during the flower festival.

The Madeiran carnaval, claimed by many observers to be one of the best in Europe and the biggest Portuguese carnival outside of Brazil, begins in earnest on the north of the island in Santana with a series of feasts at the beginning of February. The festivities then move south to Funchal in the second week. While it is apparent that carnival is underway throughout the city, the highlights are to be found on Avenida Sá Carneiro. This seafront road is home to a series of parades, the two most famous of which are the themed Saturday parade and the Trapalhão parade on the following Tuesday.

Trapalhão roughly translates to ‘Bumbling’ or ‘Clumsy’ in English, with the inhabitants of the island using the parade as an opportunity to satirise and poke fun at the more eccentric aspects (both political and cultural) of Madeira Island. The Saturday parade is far more representative of the glitzy Rio-style carnival.

The theme of this year’s Saturday parade is ‘Zodiac signs’. Away from the crowded Ave. Sá Carneiro, the hotels celebrate carnival, with dances and themed dinners. The clubs and bars offer guaranteed fun. Themed nights are also part of the Carnival tradition. The evening of the “Travesties”, in which men disguise themselves as women and vice versa, the “Hippie” night, allusive to the 60s, and the last night of the carnival, the “Enterro do Osso” brings much joy to this festive season.

Madeira Islands - four times a winner

Not only has Madeira won the ‘World’s Leading Island Destination’ for the fourth year running, but the island has also been chosen to host the 2019 World Travel Award Europe Gala on the 8th of June in Funchal, during the Atlantic Festival celebrations which officially marks the start of the summer season.

As a result of being chosen to host this year’s event, the Madeira Tourism authority has launched a new tourism campaign that emphasises the unique mesh of Madeiran hospitality and the natural beauty of the islands, which after all is why they have been voted Leading Island Destination in 2015, 2016, 2017 and now 2018.

In an announcement the Regional Secretary of Tourism and Culture, Paula Cabaço stated that ‘Hosting this event is of great importance, the relevance not just because of the honour in itself but the fact that representatives from all over the world would be attending this prestigious event thus allowing for an extraordinary and unprecedented opportunity to promote Madeira, as well as to optimise the islands tourism potential abroad.’
Being an expat in a foreign country can be challenging – you can feel isolated and lonely, and sometimes your only friends are other people from your home country. It can be difficult to learn the local language and integrate. But some countries are more welcoming than others, making the possibility of building a new life there more feasible. A 2018 survey from InterNations, the largest global network and information site for people who live and work abroad, has looked at data and comments supplied by almost 13,000 expats from 188 countries and territories to reveal which are the friendliest countries in the world to live.

Climbing nine places since 2016, Portugal claims the title of the most welcoming country for expats, edging out countries such as Taiwan and Costa Rica. One Australian expat said: “The local population is friendly and helpful,” while a Dutch expat said “people look after each other” here. Almost four in five expats (79%) describe the Portuguese as welcoming, and about three in ten (29%) state that locals make up most of their social circles. We’re just surprised it took so long to become official!

**Friendly attitude towards expats:** 94% | **Ease of making local friends:** 58% | **Expats likely to stay forever:** 47%

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**Romance blossoms in Madeira**

Each week João Carlos Spinola, Public Relations Manager for Pestana Vacation Club hosts an afternoon social get together in the Quinta clubhouse at the Pestana Palms for members and guests who are travelling alone, bringing them together to meet, get to know each other and find common interests.

In the summer of 2017, PVC members Ludwik Seath and Janet Harrison from the U.K. were introduced at one such get together and Cupid took aim and hit them with one of his arrows! As just recently they have gotten engaged and plan to marry later in the year. We are sure that you will join us in wishing them both every happiness for the future.

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**Cyber criminals and scammers getting craftier by the minute**

Every day millions of people click on bogus links in phishing emails - messages designed to steal your password or make you download malware. These attacks are one of the most common threats to internet users’ security. Almost anyone can fall prey to a phishing email - as illustrated in 2016 when John Podesta, Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager, received a phishing email from Russian hackers that gave them access to his email account.

Internet giants - Google wants to help users prevent themselves from getting duped by hackers and Jigsaw, the company’s tech incubator has developed a new, online phishing quiz to help us identify possible threats. Just **CLICK HERE** and see if you can spot the fake mails.

Action Fraud - the UK’s fraud and cyber crime reporting centre, provide a central point of contact for information about fraud and financially motivated internet crime. The service is run by the City of London Police working alongside the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) who are responsible for assessment of the reports and to ensure that your fraud reports reach the right place. The City of London Police is the national policing lead for economic crime.

**Vishing** is the name given to cold-call telephone scams typically involve fraudsters deceiving people into believing they are speaking to a representative of a trusted company or agency such as a government department, a bank or even a police officer. Usually, the fraudster will convince an individual that they have been a victim of fraud and will ask for personal and financial information in order to gain access to their account. Some Pestana members have contacted us in regard to calls they have received from companies claiming to be working with, or authorised by Pestana to contact them with special ‘holiday’ offers. Unless specifically authorised by the member, Pestana Vacation Club does not provide personal information to any third party company. If you have any doubts about the legitimacy of the call and/or the caller please contact us here at Pestana Vacation Club to verify their claim.
When you visit the north of Portugal, you’ll discover a region where cities, nature and tradition come together. In Minho, famous for its handicrafts, you will find the birthplace of Portugal (Guimarães), the Rome of Portugal - Braga a city that dates back more than 2000 years, the oldest village in Portugal - Ponte de Lima, plus the awe inspiring Peneda-Gerês National Park.

In Trás-os-Montes you must visit Bragança, the beautiful Montesinho Nature Park, where you will find a village divided between two countries and the and the most beautiful part of the Douro. It was in Porto and in the North regions that Portugal was founded in the 12th century and the Portuguese became a people and a nation. In Portuguese, the name of the city is spelled with a definite article o Porto; Consequently, its English name evolved from a misinterpretation of the oral pronunciation and referred to as Oporto in modern literature and by many speakers. To all Portuguese people the city is also known as cidade invicta (unvanquished city), a historical reference dating back to national events in the 19th century.

Perched on the steep banks of the River Douro, Porto, a World Heritage city, is the gateway and departure point for a journey across the natural and cultural diversity of the region. It is known for the Port wine which is shipped all over the world and also for a heritage which combines ancient churches and monuments, such as the Cathedral and the Church of São Francisco.

The region is traversed by the River Douro which enters Portugal from its source in Spain between the ravines and mountains of the interior to flow through the entire World Heritage landscape where the world famous Port and Douro wines are produced. It is from here that the wine is sent downstream to the wine lodges at Vila Nova de Gaia, as the river cruisers touring the region make their way upriver. You should take some time to tour the port wine bodegas along the river’s banks and learn about the global wine trade that has shaped this country’s history.

In this area of mountain peaks and natural parks, the region’s heritage is seen in its castles, (such as the one in Guimarães) and its shrines and churches which are the stage for pilgrimages during the summer months. You will find the Baroque architecture of Northern Portugal in its stone and gilded carvings standing side by side with rural chapels. In its cities, such as Viana do Castelo, Braga, Lamego, Chaves and Vila Real, and in the manor houses and stately halls, you will find the genuine Portuguese people, who like to share their table, their customs and traditions. In Porto and Northern Portugal, the joy and gratitude for all we have and are is experienced in the most spontaneous way.

The Pestana Hotel Group currently owns and operates four hotels in this cidade invicta, the latest opening in late 2018-the Pestana Porto – Goldsmith is a 4-star hotel located in the heart of the city, it is made up of five buildings dating from the 19th century which are listed as Municipal Heritage, the hotel is inspired by Portuguese filigree, the fine art of working gold, silver and other metals into twisted threads with intricate patterns and designs.

In one of the most vibrant cities in Europe, the Pestana Porto – Goldsmith is a one-of-a-kind project, which includes a Hotel, and a Museum with filigree workshops. Here, the discrete luxury is blended perfectly with the art of hospitality so typical of Northern Portugal, celebrating tradition, beauty and creativity.

In addition to its hotels, the Pestana Hotel Group also manage and operate a number of Pousadas de Portugal in the region and a fly/drive touring holiday, staying at various of their charming inns and hostelries is the perfect way to explore this beautiful and fascinating part of the country.
Algarve Nature Week is an annual 9 event devoted entirely to indulging in nature activities, such as whale watching, hiking, birdwatching and cycling. Taking place in one of Portugal’s most popular areas of natural beauty, the event was created to cater for active nature enthusiasts keen to do more than simply lie on the beach. There are plenty of activities on offer: work up a sweat pedalling up the Algarve’s mountains, explore the region’s underwater life with fellow divers or take to the water on a paddle board. Alternatively, get your binoculars and spot some of Southern Portugal’s many woodland and marine birds, guided by local experts who are more than willing to show you the area’s secret wildlife hangouts.

Floral species originating in many parts of the world bloom in Madeira, as the island meets specific climatic conditions that allow species from both tropical and cold regions to flourish. The Flower Festival is a tribute to spring, and the celebration of metamorphosis and rebirth, fertility and the abundance of the flowers that colour, perfume and inebriate the surrounding environment and that give value and take the good name of this tourist destination across borders. To find out more about what to expect from the Madeira Flower Festival visit - http://festadaflor.visitmadeira.pt/

The Madeira Atlantic Festival, an event that sets the beginning of the summer season in Madeira, is one of the most recent tourist entertainment events. It consists of a diverse set of initiatives spread throughout the month of June, with emphasis on the pyromusical shows; the Atlantic Roots Music Festival and the Regional Arts Week.

The pyromusical shows are held on four consecutive Saturdays of the month of June, at 10:30 p.m. at the pier outside Pontinha. These wonderful and exciting performances, lasting about 20 minutes each, combine fireworks and music in a unique experience for tourists and residents, to be held on June 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th, 2019.

If you are planning to visit Madeira during the month of June visit - http://festivaldoatlantico.visitmadeira.pt and view the full schedule of events around the island.

Algarve Nature Week - April 14th to 21st

Flower Festival in Funchal, Madeira - 2nd to 19th May

Festa do Atlântico, Madeira - month of June
Join the thousands of members who benefit from Recommending a Friend

To recommend a friend, work colleague or someone who you feel would appreciate all the holiday experiences you already enjoy as a Pestana Vacation Club member, simply contact us by telephone on +351 291 141 540 or, send an e-mail to - carmo.correia@pestana.com

For every qualified friend you recommend, you automatically receive 10 RC’s (Referral Credits). Should your friends accept our offer of a 7 night stay in a Pestana Resort in Madeira for just €150,00 then you will be awarded a bonus of 50 RC’s.

During their stay, your friends will be given a complimentary introduction to the Pestana Vacation Club concept. Should they decide to become members themselves, then we will credit you with 10 RC’s for every £100 they spend with us. You can then choose a reward.

Treat yourselves to an extra week at one of our resorts on Madeira ABSOLUTELY FREE!

- 7 nights in a Studio unit
  500 Referral Credits
- 7 nights in a One bedroom unit
  600 Referral Credits
- 7 nights in a Two bedroom unit
  800 Referral Credits

Many PVC members haven’t had to use cash to pay their annual Maintenance Fees for years! Instead, they use their Referral Credits*

*RC amount varies per resort. Request details.

For your next stay at a Pestana resort on Madeira, why not use your RC’s to cover food and beverage at the resort.

- 50 Euro Credit
  200 Referral Credits
- 100 Euro Credit
  300 Referral Credits
- 200 Euro Credit
  500 Referral Credits

7 nights in a Studio unit from 500 Referral Credits
7 nights in a One bedroom unit from 650 Referral Credits
7 nights in a Two bedroom unit from 780 Referral Credits