



Ultimate Floating Seminar Cruise 2009 – Newsletter 10

Hello Again Fellow Cruisers

Guess what? On the day that I'm writing this version of the newsletter, we're down to 60 sleeps.

Please Let Us Assist You

Remember that we're here to assist, offer you advice and find solutions to any problems. Please contact us by phone or email when anything comes up that you feel we can help you with:

If you're one of the group who have booked more recently, and haven't been on the newsletter mailing list since the beginning, remember that to visit our website and download any that you have missed, just visit:

<http://www.cruisemarketer.com/> and click on "Newsletters" on the menu bar.

If you receive an invitation from us to join our mailing list, then please click on the link included in the invitation to automatically receive future newsletters.

Our fourth port-of-call – the port of Funchal on the island of Madeira.

By now, our trip has reached the mid-Atlantic.

The island of Madeira is lapped by the waters of the Gulf Stream with warm comfortable summers and mild winters that make it an enchanting holiday

destination all year round. Below you will find all the essential information you need if you wish to deepen your knowledge about the island and its inhabitants.



The photo above shows a view of the harbour from Santa Catarina Park taken via webcam yesterday. It certainly looks like an improvement on dust storms or winter rain!

Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal gathered together the country's finest cartographers and navigators at the beginning of the 15th century to extend the knowledge of the West African coast.

Two ships from the expedition were blown off course on their journey around the African coast and after many days at sea found land on a small island that they named Porto Santo

As a part of their explorations, they later discovered the bay of Machico, the threshold to the heavily forested island

that they named Madeira.

Prince Henry immediately organised the colonisation of the island, with the first families coming from the Algarve region of Portugal.

Madeira has remained a Portuguese colony since that time.

At the time of our visit to the island, the average temperature range is from 17°C to about 22°C.

If you look at the size of Madeira, you can hardly imagine that this island has so much to offer!

Ranging from historical monuments, squares and streets in the capital of Funchal to enchanting gardens, many picturesque villages, together with amazing landscapes, impressive volcanic caves, rugged coast lines, beautiful natural beaches and, last but not least, breathtaking views, there is so much to see that you will soon realize that one visit to Madeira (let alone one day) just isn't enough!

Since the 17th century, the Portuguese island of Madeira has produced some of the world's most famous fortified wines, commercially known all over the world as 'Madeira'.

For a little light entertainment, I recommend that you play the following YouTube video which offers a rousing rendition of the song "Have Some Madeira M'Dear":

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW_zi8n4HDQ

What can we do during our day in Funchal?

We arrive in Funchal on Sunday 29th November, and it seems that many of the local shops and the central market are generally closed on a Sunday. However, shopping centres may be open for any urgent requirements.

Royal Caribbean offers some 13 different onshore excursions at Funchal on its

website, but these may not all be operating during the time of our visit.

Many of these excursions include visits to the Farmer's Market, which as just mentioned doesn't trade on a Sunday, so there may be some changes in the schedule of excursions provided on the Royal Caribbean site.

One of the very popular activities for visitors to Funchal is to participate in the toboggan rides from the Village of Monte, located in the outskirts of Funchal, down to Livramento. Riding in large wicker baskets on metal runners, you will be guided down the slope by two traditionally dressed men.



Amongst the list of excursions are:

- Traditional Views
- Scenic Madeira
- Funchal, Monte & Botanical Gardens
- 4X4 Madeira Adventure
- Legendary Funchal Views
- City, Cable Car, Monte & Toboggan
- Taste of Madeira
- Emblematic Madeira & Ribeira Brava

- Funchal Highlights & Botanical Gardens
- Faial
- Tea at Reids
- Madeira Culture & History
- Camara de Lobos with Madeira Wine Tasting

For those who would rather “do their own thing” while visiting Funchal, a great place to visit is the ***Madeira Story Centre***.

This spectacular, interactive museum allows the visitor to go back in time on a virtual journey and ‘relive’ in chronological sequence the archipelago’s great historic events, from its volcanic birth 14 million years ago.

In human history terms, there is plenty of information from the times of the Prince Henry the Navigator to Napoleon and Churchill, and to the first hydroplane landing in Madeira.

The Madeira Story Centre also offers a multifunctional panoramic terrace equipped with telescopes, a theme café and a souvenir shop with exclusive Madeira-related articles.

Funchal also offers some beautiful gardens, some with spectacular views.

There are also numerous easy and appealing walks around Funchal itself.

Don't Lose Your Locks

If you feel the need to have locks fitted on any of your luggage items, then you need to be aware of the fact that whilst you are entering and travelling in the United States, you will need to have only approved locks fitted.

The US Transport Security Administration (TSA) screens every passenger's baggage before it is placed on an airplane. While our technology allows us to electronically screen bags, there are times when we need to physically inspect

a piece of luggage.

TSA has worked with several companies to develop locks that can be opened by security officers using universal "master" keys so that the locks may not have to be cut. These locks are widely available at airports and travel stores.

The packaging on the locks indicates whether they can be opened by TSA.

We strongly recommend that you should purchase locks with “TSA Approved” status if you do wish to lock your luggage. If you don't do so, then the chances of having your lock cut off and trashed are quite high.

Are your kids travelling with only one parent?

If you are travelling with any children and the other parent isn't part of your travel party, then you may need to obtain a written authorisation from the other parent for the child to travel.

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points.

These often include a requirement for documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

For this reason, we strongly recommend that you have a form filled out by the non-travelling parent and countersigned by you.

We have prepared a copy of a suitable form that you are welcome to download and use. You may download it by clicking [here](#).

Questions and Answers

Q: We would like to rent a car when we arrive at Fort Lauderdale. What options are available to us?

Most car rental firms are licensed to provide free shuttle service to and from the terminals to the Rental Car Center located at Fort Lauderdale. Here you can rent a car from [Enterprise](#), [Budget](#), [Hertz](#) or [Thrifty](#).

In addition to taking the cruise, you may want to later explore the sights in Fort Lauderdale and nearby cities. Miami is only about 30 miles away. According to the locals, renting a car is the best way to get around if you want to travel any distance.

[Priceline](#) is always ready to assist you so that you can find the deal to fit your budget.

Q: When will we get our cabin number

With the confirmation of your reservation on the ship, you will also receive information about the stateroom that has been allocated to you for the cruise.

We plan to send these out early next week.

Q: How do we register online for the ship?

Over the next few weeks, we'll be providing advice about the process of registering online for the cruise.

What should I do about travel insurance?

We believe that it is absolutely crucial that you have travel insurance to protect you against anything that may come up during your trip away from home.

The following advice comes from the Australian Government's "SmartTraveller" website:

In cases where victims are not covered by travel insurance, personal tragedies occurring overseas are further compounded by a long-term financial burden.

The cost of medical evacuations from the United States regularly range from \$75,000 to \$95,000

and sometimes up to \$300,000.

Unfortunately, not all of these cases involved travellers covered by travel insurance. **Travellers who are not covered by insurance are personally liable for covering incurred medical and associated costs.**

As a result, we have known instances where families have been forced to sell off assets, including their superannuation or family homes, to bring loved ones back to Australia for treatment.

We do advise: **if you can't afford travel insurance, you can't afford to travel.**

Another instance that we know of involves an Australian traveller in Europe who became ill and unfortunately died as a result the delay resulting from being unable to prove that a travel insurance policy was in place to cover medical costs.

You can search for a policy to suit your needs online, or ask your travel agent for advice.

Sites which summarises suitable policies in Australia are:

<http://www.travelinsuranceaustralia.com.au/>

<http://www.comparetravelinsurance.com.au/>

Sharing Your Stateroom

We're still looking for people wishing to share a stateroom with another member of our cruise group. Please email us at info@cruisemarketer.com

if you want to find someone to share with, contact us, so that we are able to match you with someone else in a similar situation.

"Fare Watch"

The table below summarises the fares listed on the internet as at Thursday September 24th.

Best fare deals discovered as at: Sep 24, 2009

	Fares from	
Sydney to New York		
Qantas	\$A 1508	via Los Angeles
United	\$A 1653	via Los Angeles
Sydney to Los Angeles		
Qantas	\$A 1284	direct
Delta	\$A 1242	direct
V Australia	\$A 1128	direct
Sydney to London		
Qantas	\$A 2100	via Singapore
Virgin Atlantic	\$A 2026	via Hong Kong
Etihad	\$A 1981	via Abu Dhabi
Malaysia	\$A 1929	via Kuala Lumpur
Los Angeles to London		
Air New Zealand	\$A 600 O/W	direct
New York to London		
Aer Lingus	\$A 598 O/W	via Dublin
Virgin Atlantic	\$A748 return	direct
Miami to Los Angeles		
US Airways	\$A 186 O/W	via Charlotte

You will see that prices for many of the routes listed have begun to rise quite significantly.

We'd strongly recommend that you lock in your fares quite soon (if you haven't already done so).

Remember that you always have the opportunity to leave this part of the trip to a professional.

If you wish to do this, we suggest that you should contact our recommended travel agent, the Flight Centre office at Waverley Gardens in Victoria.

Josh is away for a few days, but in the meantime, Samantha has all of the information about the cruise, and is handling travel requests on Josh's behalf.

You can contact Samantha by phone on (03)-8543-1777