



AllWays Traveller

Porto Santo, Portugal

[www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

# Unspoilt and utterly captivating

The Portuguese island of Porto Santo, which forms part of the Madeira Archipelago, is located in the Atlantic some 50 Km northeast of Madeira itself and 500km from the African coast.

It measures just 11km by 6km and has a resident population of under 5,000.

Unlike the lush landscape of Madeira, Porto Santo is an arid rock of an island with very little vegetation.

But what it does have is one of the best beaches in Europe – and one free of the trappings of mass tourism.

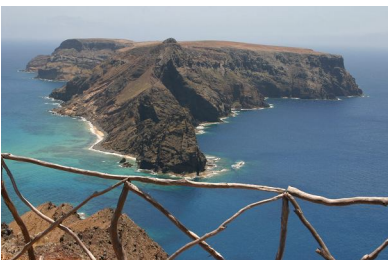
With the water warmed by Gulf Stream currents and a climate that seldom varies between 18F and 22F, Porto Santo can be enjoyed, almost year round, by those looking to get away from it all.

**Ashley Gibbins**

The International Travel Writers Alliance  
[www.itwalliance.com](http://www.itwalliance.com)



[www.porto-santo.com](http://www.porto-santo.com)



# Just chilling - it really does takes a whole lot of doing

by Ashley Gibbins



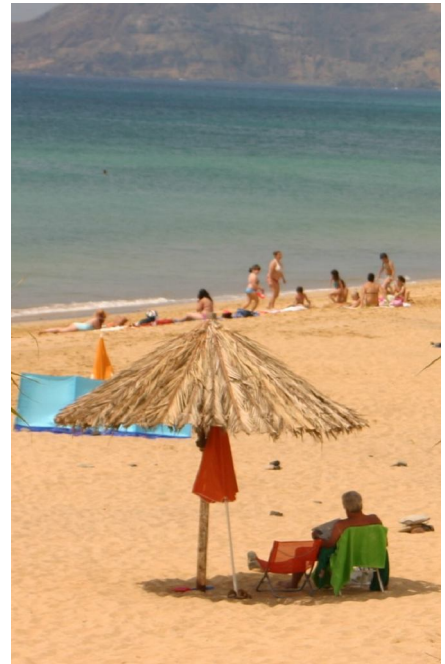
**In our hectic lives it is an admirable and very appealing objective to get away from it and chill out. Admirable yes - but not always one that is easy to achieve.**

No sooner do we arrive at the chosen destination when the bombardment of 'things to do and see' starts. And doubt inevitably sets in.

"Can we really come all this way and not go (up, in or around whatever)" we mutter, or "I've been told a day trip to (wherever) is supposed to be an absolute must".

How, can one be expected to relax with little more to contemplate than why that passing cloud resembles the Taj Mahal (or is it Winston Churchill), when one has that nagging feeling of missing out on something, somewhere close at hand.

### Porto Santo



### Getting to Porto Santo

#### By air

Most visitors to Porto Santo are likely to fly into Funchal international airport on Madeira.

There are then a number of daily 15 minute flights between Madeira and Porto Santo.

In summer, a number of airlines fly direct to Porto Santo from Lisbon and Oporto.

#### Atlantic Holidays

Atlantic Holidays, the largest independent tour operator to Madeira and Porto Santo.

The company also operates a weekly charter flight from London Gatwick to Porto Santo between May and July and during September.

[www.atlanticholidays.net](http://www.atlanticholidays.net)

#### By sea

The Porto Santo Line ferry service carries passengers and vehicles between Madeira and Porto Santo.

The daily crossing, which takes two and a half hours, leaves the port at Funchal early morning and returns early evening.

[www.portosantoline.pt](http://www.portosantoline.pt)



## A solution is at hand



A solution to this dilemma is Porto Santo.

This small, arid, rocky island has a beach and, well, that's about it. But what a beach! It's 9km long and one of the finest in Europe and deserving all plaudits tagged to it.

It is safe, clean, family friendly, unspoilt and long and with the constant crashing of those foaming Atlantic breakers upon it.

It is the beach that will draw you to Porto Santo and which will dictate and dominate your stay.

## Starting the day right



The day begins with a brisk stroll along the beach to garner an appetite for the al fresco breakfast and then a spell of reading (or musing on cloud formations) by the pool.

Around mid-day, an invigorating dip before a longer stroll to beach end at Ponta de Calheta. The reward, in addition to the exhilarating views, is a couple of cold beers at the restaurant waiting at 'lands end'.

Then it's a late afternoon snooze in the sun.

And after an evening's casual dining, off come the shoes for a moonlight stroll along the same stretch of beach.

A tedious routine you say? True chilling I reply.

## Vila Baleira



Apart from the beach, Vila Baleira makes for a pleasant couple of hours and the chance to stock up on provisions.

It is also the only place on the island where one will find 'lively' night-time entertainment scene.

### What to eat

Given the size of the island there is no shortage of good places to eat with the menu likely to offer relatively simple yet delicious dishes.

The wine, particularly the Portuguese and Madeira wine, is of a very good quality.

A good starting point is to look for busy beachside restaurants or those that, while tucked away, are full of characters (and locals).

Other things to see and do

### Christopher Columbus House Museum

The Christopher Columbus House Museum, in Vila Baleira, looks to recreate the type of house the explorer would have lived in.

There are portraits of Columbus dating from the 16th to 20th century and maps of the different routes that he sailed.

### A tour of the island

Those wishing to leave the confines of the beach can enjoy a half day tour of the island run by Dunas Travel.

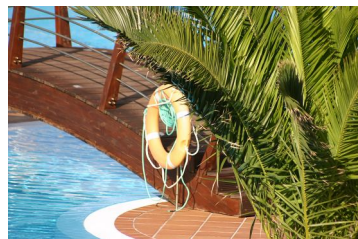
[www.dunastravel.com](http://www.dunastravel.com)

## A place to stay



Finding the right accommodation in a place like Porto Santo is key to being able to really relax.

The hotel must compliment the location and enhance that 'busy doing nothing' philosophy.



The five-star Pestana resort fits the bill perfectly and has that top notch level of service one should expect from a resort of this calibre.

This hotel, which is right on the beach, comprises low-rise blocks spaced in extensively landscaped gardens, surrounding two large pools.

The Pestana also has its own stretch of beach with umbrellas and wind breaks, for those who just cannot get enough of it.

And with four excellent restaurants and three bars, including a poolside bar, one need not venture beyond the confines of the resort itself, except (of course) for the excursions onto the beach.

[www.pestana.com](http://www.pestana.com)

## The windmills



Examples of the traditional Porto Santo windmills, are scattered throughout the island.

They were first built during the 18 Century to exploit the wind (that blows in all directions) to grind the grain to make bread.

## Active pursuits



For the more active the island has an international golf course and its rugged interior provides a series of more rugged walks.

There's also horse-riding, diving, sand-yachting, para-gliding and top class game-fishing on offer.



## Healing qualities

Finally, the sands are much sought after for their therapeutic properties. Recent studies have shown that the erosion of some Atlantic corals produces hydro-carbonated sand, rich in magnesium and strontium.



This has been successfully used in therapies to treat joint and muscular ailments to beneficial effect.

The 4-star Hotel Porto Santo Geomedicine Centre and Spa is one of the first in the world to offer sand spa treatments, including sand baths.

These treatments are used to treat chronic pain and to accelerate recovery from accident or injury.

Conditions treated at the spa include chronic neck and back pain and osteoarthritis.

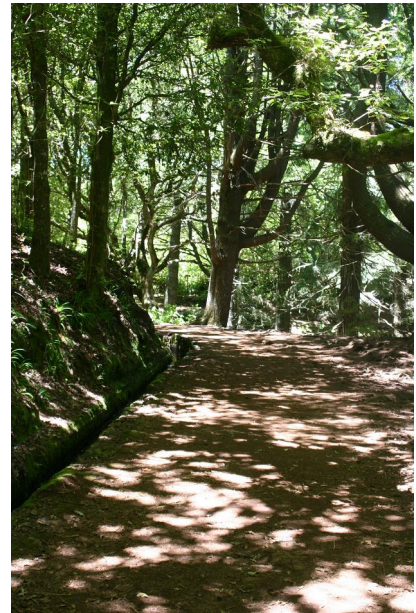
Conventional Spa treatments are also offered at the hotel and spa to combine rest and recuperation with physiotherapy.

[www.hotelportosanto.com](http://www.hotelportosanto.com)

## More information

[www.madeiraislands.travel](http://www.madeiraislands.travel)

## Madeira



With Porto Santo's close proximity to the splendid island of Madeira it might make sense combine the two in a slightly longer break.

[www.madeiratourism.org](http://www.madeiratourism.org)

See : *AllWays traveller to Madeira* at [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com).

## The International Travel Writers Alliance



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**The International Travel Writers Alliance**

[www.itwalliance.com](http://www.itwalliance.com)

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