

The Nuns' Path

Eira do Serrado - Curral das Freiras

Time 1¼hr; Distance 4.8km/3ml; Difficulty Moderate

Terrain Path; Vertigo Some; Tunnels 0

Highest Elevation 1050m/3445ft; Lowest Elevation 620m/2034ft

Height Gain 55m/180ft; Height Loss 430m/1411ft

Equipment :- boots/sports shoe, waterproofs, sun hat

The walk follows the old Nuns' path, so called after the Nuns used it to escape from the marauding pirates in the early days. Before you start the main walk you must visit the Miradouro at Eira do Serrado where there is spectacular views of Curral das Freiras. This moderate grade short walk gives you an insight into Madeiran mountain walks.

1. Start : Catch bus No.81 Curral das Freiras (bus colour, silver with a yellow and white stripe), depart Monday to Friday 09.00, 10.00, 11.00; Saturday 10.00, 11.30; Sunday/Holidays 09.05, 11.40. The bus terminus is near the Funchal cable car station or caught en-route in front of the Palácio de São Lourenço or opposite the Pestana Casino Park Hotel or Savoy Hotel. **Ask for Eira do Serrado.** Arrive 40min later. The Miradouro path is left of the shops and Estalagem building (see photo, right). Once finished viewing, return to the bus turn-around point.



2. (20min) The Nuns' path starts beside the altitude signpost 1094m/3589ft (see photo, below). The path in summer is easy, in winter much more difficult due to the underfoot conditions of the rolled cobbled basalt staircase being slippery. The path meanders down the hillside with different aspects presenting themselves on every turn. Lower down the path see the old mountain road into Curral das Freiras, now closed.

3. (1hr 05min) Reach a staircase leading down to a Tarmac road. Descend to the Tarmac road then turn right. Continue to follow the road.

4. (1hr 15min) Arrive at the high street in Curral das Freiras. The bus stop/shelter is opposite the Nun's Terrace snack bar. If you have time in hand sample some of the local produce of Curral das Freiras in the restaurants and bars. Ginja wine (cherry brandy), Chestnut liquor, Chestnut soup, Chestnut cake (*my favourite*). Bus No. 81 Funchal depart Monday to Friday 12.35, 13.30, 14.45, 16.30, 18.00, 19.05, 19.45; Saturday 12.15, 13.30, 14.45, 18.00, 21.00; Sunday 13.15, 14.45, 17.50, 20.50.



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