



The relaxing Madeira Golf Retreat offers beautiful views of lush surroundings and its welcoming climate provides the perfect environment for those looking to enhance their natural golfing abilities

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The tranquil island of Madeira is a golfers' paradise that will give you a hole lot of heaven

Have you ever reached the point where you thought "golf is just too difficult", and even in your deepest, darkest moments considered packing it in? Maybe you're just trying too hard. Golfing anxiety coupled with tense, contracted muscles are bound to embarrass your golfing prowess. Leading pros and golf teachers alike all tell us that tension and anxiety are the leading swing-killers.

Don't worry. Help is at hand. On the tranquil island of Madeira, you can let go of your tee-box tensions, fairway phantoms and three-putt panics and discover a whole new approach to your game that will help you relax, both on and off the golf course, and probably take your game to a whole new level.

Renowned for its comfortable year-round

climate, friendly lifestyle and old-world charms, Madeira's lush backdrop is the ideal setting for a relaxing week of holistic workshops and on-course application that will encourage golfers to discover a more effortless approach to their game.

"As we all know, golf can be a struggle," says David J Whyte, the retreat's organiser, a golf journalist of 25 years who has written and produced dozens of instructional features and videos.

"These days, there are holistic approaches to the game that can change mental attitudes and approaches allowing golfers to achieve a more fluid swing in a much more relaxed manner.

"I've worked with some great golf teachers," says David, "including David Leadbetter, and a few of America's top-50 instructors. Through that, I learned a lot about technique, but always felt there was something missing, something that golfers, I believe, can achieve quite easily and naturally.

"The problem is we interfere with our natural abilities," David continued. "If we could let go of our results-oriented mentality we'd play better golf and enjoy the game a lot more."

To help golfers reach this rarified state, the Madeira Golf Retreat prescribes a programme

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of morning workshops with qualified instructors on yoga, tai chi, breathing exercises and mindful awareness. It's not all hard work. After the morning sessions, a lovely clubhouse lunch awaits with the most gorgeous views across the city of Funchal, and in the afternoon, players can put into practice all that they've learned on the golf course.

Non-golfers are also welcome, and while the golfers are striding the fairways, the non-golf group enjoy their own comprehensive agenda of outings and island encounters; such as an Old-Timer vintage tour of Funchal, afternoon tea in Reid's, a cable car ride followed by a downhill toboggan ride, a guided visit to Blandy Wine Lodges, a Levada walk or jeep safari – not to mention several "gourmet" lunches around the island.

Lodging and workshops are held at the elegant, five-star Casa Velha do Palheiro, with its nature estate and gardens. As well as being a secluded sanctuary high in the hills above Funchal, this is Madeira's choice golf resort, and the views from the course and clubhouse across the city are simply breathtaking. Casa Velha also offers a wonderful boutique spa.

Golfers can play as much golf as they desire on the par-72 championship course. Golf is also included at the world-class Seve Ballesteros-designed course on the neighbouring island of Porto Santo, where you sail in first-class comfort and enjoy breakfast on the return ferry. Play is also included at the nearby Santo da Serra Golf Club, a past venue of the Madeira Open.

"It's a truly wonderful week," adds David. "Madeira is a great place to come at any time of the year and for any purpose. But if you combine it with the possibility of discovering your inner golf game, it's going to be a transformative experience."



TRAVEL FACTS

The Madeira Golf Week costs £1,985 per person (golfers and non-golfers) excluding airfares. This includes seven nights in five-star accommodation based on two sharing a double Garden Wing room at Casa Velha do Palheiro, morning workshops, unlimited golf on the Palheiro course with further rounds on the island's two other courses, ground transfers, sight-seeing and activity/excursions for non-golfers including lunches, a dolphin and whale sightseeing sailing trip for all to the secluded Fajã dos Padres, six dinners including wine at some of the island's top restaurants and first-class ferry transfers with meals to Porto Santo.

The next dates for the retreat are from November 25 to December 2. For further information and bookings visit www.linksland.com, email info@linksland.com or telephone 07905 141316.

To get to Madeira, Jet2 (Jet2.com) flies to Madeira from Glasgow and Edinburgh every Monday.

