

## MADEIRA

When the Island was colonised in the 15th century by the Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator, it was heavily timbered. Hence its name, which in English means "wood".

Three hundred years later, British Service families returning from India and Africa acquired the habit of stopping off on the island to acclimatise themselves to the English winter. With the advent of steamships, English merchants imported coal to make it an international coaling-station. Madeira's fortified wine became as popular with the English palates as were port and sherry.

Scores of little streams fed by regular rainfalls run down the steeply-terraced hillsides and provide a riot of colour in trees and shrubs, among them the scarlet of poinsettias and hibiscus, the blue jacaranda and wistaria and the purplish hues of bougainvillea. There are avocados, oranges and lemons to eat, eucalyptus if you catch cold and kapok to stuff your pillows with.

The chief products are embroidery, leatherwork\* and wickerwork. There are no sandy beaches on the island but every hotel has its own swimming-pool and when you are tired of sun-bathing a bus will take you inland to mountain peaks that rise to 6000 feet. At Camacho you can buy sturdy baskets for a few escudos and the local drink (you are restricted to one glass!) is the fiery "Poncha", a honey-flavoured rum made from cane sugar laced with brandy and lemon-juice and served hot.

Madeira cake ("Bolo do mel") is delicious, made with ginger, honey, cane sugar and raisins. (No cane sugar in England, so no recipe for "The Wychwood").

\*If you see a pair of feet twinkling down Shipton High Street encased in elegant untanned leather ankle-boots, you can confidently say, "There goes the Editor's wife!"

R.O.B. Long

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