Ribeira da Igreja (integrale)

Arruda integrale

Create: 2024-03-25 19:03:04	**Update:** 2026-01-11 23:06:16	**Print:** 2026-11-10 02:11:46
Country: Portugal **Region:** Madeira **Subregion:** **Town:** Porto Moniz		
Difficulty: difficult	**Grading:** v5 a2 V	**Total time:** 7h20
Approachtime: 35min	**Tourtime:** 6h	**Returntime:** 45min
Altitude entry: 560m	**Altitude exit:** 0m	**Delta Altitude:** 560m
Canyon length: 350m	**Highest rapell:** 60m	**Amount rapells:** 25
Transport: Cablecar	**Rock type:**	**Drainage area:** km²
Season: October - May	**Orientation:** Northwest	**Best Time:** 9-14 o'clock
Rating: ☆ 4.2 (4)	**Info:** ★ 2.8 (4)	**Belay:** ★ 2.4 (5)

Warnings:
Observe tides / swell
Canyon is located on the coast. A safe way back is only possible at low tide and when the waves are low.

Specialities:

Gear:
Ropes: 2x60, 2x40, 1x20

Summary: (machine translated)
Vertical rappel canyon with a spectacular 200-meter waterfall through the cliffs in the northwest of Madeira.

Hydrology: (machine translated)
After long dry periods, the Igreja falls dry.

Access: (machine translated)
Park in Achadas da Cruz at the mountain station for the cable car (Teleferico) (1 car).
If you have a 2nd car:
Drive back up the road and after 1.2 km take the first right (Rua Juvenal Isidoro de Carvalho). Follow this asphalt road for a good 350 meters and park on the right just before the exit (2 parking spaces by an electricity pylon).

Approach: (machine translated)
If 1 car is available, take the path described above on foot (approx. 25 minutes).
Then turn right and walk the few meters to the exit of the concrete road, follow the path downhill. Cross the slope and continue downhill (the path gets a little lost here). Turn right at the ruined house and follow the more or less mown path. It leads along an edge slightly above former fields. At the exit, turn left downhill through the bamboo, past two ruins. Continue along the mown path, keeping straight ahead at any junctions, the left-hand arms are former attempts at access. Another ruin. Turn right here into the small "forest" and continue along the highest part towards the sea. A few sawn-off trees serve as a guide. Finally, you are at the edge of the sea, which breaks in waves on the pebble beach over 500 meters further down. Descend the dusty and slippery boulder field on the left and keep left at its foot through the bamboo towards the audible stream. Sawed-off branches and trees here and there can serve as orientation. (1 hour from the cable car station, 35 minutes from the 2nd car)

Tour: (machine translated)
The tour begins immediately with the first rope traverse/rappel combination, both from trees.
Further abseils follow in quick succession up to a height of 25 meters, here and there a few blackberry bushes grow in the canyon, garden shears can be helpful. The first rappels are abseiled over rope rings around trees. Finally, there are abseiling points where solid rock has made it possible to drill titanium anchors. After the second higher waterfall, a short walking passages follows and you stand at the edge of the huge waterfall, which is rappelled in 5 lengths: MC 8, C50, C40, small pool with some space,MC 8, C60, minimum walking passages, C10, C40.
This is followed by the Igreja inferior, there is a theoretical possibility to get out via an old path, but the path from here is extremely exposed and currently (October 2024) only accessible with a very high risk of falling due to landslides, often the path is not usable after landslides. This is definitely an EMERGENCY exit. It starts on the right bank between the knee-high plants.
In the Igreja inferior there are 9 more abseiling points up to 50 meters.

Return: (machine translated)
When you reach the sea, turn orographic right (the sea will be on your left). If the high tide cuts off the path at the first rock ledge, you can climb it. There is an anchor at the top to rappel down the other side. After a good 15 minutes over rough scree, you can climb 2 to 3 meters up a bad staircase of boulders on the right. Follow the path at the top until it joins a paved road. Now turn left and walk to the valley station of the cable car (45 min).
Take this to the top. Pay attention to the travel times and don't forget to pay for your ride at the top (one way 3 euros (January 2026)). If the cable car does not run (wind, too late, broken), there is the option of climbing 200 meters northeast of the cable car via the Vereda do Calhau to the top station. The path initially leads up steep steps through the Ribeira do Tristao canyon. Keep right at the fork. (450 m, 75 min).

Coordinates:
Parking Entry and Exit 32.8527 -17.2098
Canyon Start 32.8449 -17.2209
Parking at Entry 32.8449 -17.2131

Reports:

2026-01-11 | Casa Vento Madeira | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ | 🕮 ★ ★ ★ | ⚓ ★ ★ ★ | ≋ High | 👍 Completed
A fantastic tour thanks to Clarissa's tip. Finally a reasonable water level. The access route is already beginning to overgrow again, but is still recognizable. The last rappel can either be done in one piece as described by Clarissa from the penultimate waterfall (over 60 meters), then you are in the watercourse with little wind, but also in the rockfall line. Alternatively, there are two orographic anchors at the front of the edge on the left (so you have to cross the water line). These are located behind a small rock outcrop and are therefore difficult to find. From there it is a good 20 meters to two more anchors, which protect the rope and make it much easier to pull off. In windy conditions, you can rappel here in the spray of the waterfall. When there is no wind, it is more likely to be dry. Picture 2 shows the last waterfall before the 300 m edge, picture 1 shows the last waterfall from the "dry" line. (machine translated)

2026-01-08 | Clarissa Linder | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ | 🕮 ★ | ⚓ ★ | ≋ High | 👍 Completed
Spectacular view! Great water level after several days of rain. For the access, it's best to follow the photos exactly, then it works. Long ropes recommended in case an intermediate belay is overlooked and also for the last rappel (could not find the anchor points, fresh rock fall, thus approx. C70 away from the penultimate belay). Remaining belays top. Were at the exit at about 14.00, at this time the way back on the beach was easy. (machine translated)

2025-08-17 | Casa Vento Madeira | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ | 🕮 ★ ★ ★ | ⚓ ★ ★ ★ | ≋ Low | 👍 Completed
An incredible panorama awaits you from the edge of the high waterfall, before which you walk through an easy canyon that is sometimes a little overgrown and equipped with titanium glued anchors throughout. However, these are sometimes difficult to find, especially in the lower part, as they are similar in color to rock. The pictures show: 1) The rope traverse to the C60 2) C60 from below 3) Views over the coast 4) The sea is close (machine translated)

2024-10-21 | Casa Vento Madeira | ☆ ☆ ☆ ½ | 🕮 ★ ★ ★ | ⚓ ★ ★ ★ | ≋ Dry | 👍 Completed
The canyon is now fully equipped, in places there are still old anchors from the first ascent, these will be removed soon. Some abseiling points are still equipped with fixed ropes, all high waterfalls except for one C25 with titanium glued anchors. (machine translated)

2024-03-06 | Christian Balla | | 🕮 | ⚓ ★ | ≋ Low | 📈 Emergency exit
We tried to find an alternative to the extremely dangerous access to the Ribeira da Igreja (inférieur) with lots of equipment and ropes. From the starting point of the Igreja inferiore it is clear to see that there is an upper part. This can also be seen on maps. However, we didn't get very far. It was all extremely overgrown. We made our way through the bushes for the first few meters. Another attempt must follow at some point ... ATTENTION: - CANYON IS NOT YET SET UP! - FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR IGREJA INFERIORE! (machine translated)

Parts:
Ribeira da Igreja (inférieur), v5 a2 V, 1h30+2h30+45min
Ribeira da Igreja (integrale), v5 a2 V, 35min+6h+45min

First descent: 21.10.2024 by Michael Jordan, Casa Vento Madeira