

Portuguese Celebrate Flower Festival in April and May

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Paradise (Noun) /'pærəˌdaɪs/ a perfect place or state
Example: I feel like I'm in paradise.
2. Bloom (Noun) /blu:m/ a state or period in which a plant's flowers appear
Example: The cherry blossoms are expected to be in full bloom at the end of March.
3. Decorate (Verb) /'deɪkəˌreɪt/ to make something more beautiful by adding things to it
Example: She enjoys decorating the tree at Christmas.
4. Float (Noun) /fləʊt/ a platform carrying a display that is mounted on a vehicle
Example: The marching band played lively music as the carnival floats made their way down the street.
5. Volcanic (Adjective) /vɒːl'kænɪk/ relating to or caused by a volcano
Example: A large volcanic eruption has claimed four lives.
6. Represent (Verb) /ˌrɛprɪˈzɛnt/ to be a symbol or sign of something
Example: To many, the Statue of Liberty represents freedom.



Often called the "floating garden in the Atlantic," the Portuguese island of Madeira, about 500 kilometers north of Tenerife, is a paradise of plants and flowers. And for those wanting to see the best of the island's nature, the spring flower festival is a must-see attraction!

Taking place over several weeks in April and May, the island's Festa da Flor — Portuguese for "flower festival" — is a celebration of Madeira's beautiful plants and flowers during full bloom. One of the festival's main events, called the Allegorical Flower Parade, takes place in the capital city of Funchal. Here, the streets are filled with color and music as dancers in costumes and floats decorated with flowers pass by.

The celebrations include concerts, a classic car parade, and even a competition for the best shop window decorated with flowers. Local artists can also be seen building carpets of

flowers on the streets in beautiful patterns. The celebrations start with the Wall of Hope Ceremony, during which thousands of children walk toward the historic part of the city carrying flowers that are then placed on a wall. The tradition, which has been celebrated for over 40 years, represents hope for world peace.

With its volcanic soil and warm weather, Madeira is home to over 3,000 types of flowering plants, which can be found growing wild or in the island's many gardens. But it isn't just flowers that Madeira has to offer. Home to mountains, forests, clear waters and volcanic sand beaches, there's something for everyone even after the spring festivities have ended!

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on Madeira's Festa da Flor?
2. Would you like to visit Madeira someday?
3. Have you been to any interesting festivals abroad?
4. Are there any springtime festivals or celebrations where you live?
5. Are there any flowers that are important in your country or culture?