Hortelã superior (Partie 1)

Ribeira da Hortela (Partie 1)

Create: 2023-11-20 21:30:02	**Update:** 2026-05-16 20:27:31	**Print:** 2026-10-30 12:10:24
Country: Portugal **Region:** Região Autónoma da Madeira / Madeira **Subregion:** Ilha da Madeira **Town:** Seixal		
Difficulty: difficult	**Grading:** v5 a3 IV	**Total time:** 7h20
Approachtime: 20min	**Tourtime:** 5h	**Returntime:** 2h
Altitude entry: 1400m	**Altitude exit:** 1080m	**Delta Altitude:** 320m
Canyon length: 1200m	**Highest rapell:** 75m	**Amount rapells:** 24
Transport: Car optional	**Rock type:**	**Drainage area:** km²
Season: November - May	**Orientation:** West	**Best Time:** 9-14 o'clock
Rating: ☆ 3.5 (5)	**Info:** ★ 2.5 (2)	**Belay:** ★ 2.5 (4)

Specialities:

Gear:
Ropes: 2x40m, 2x45m

Summary: (machine translated)
Usually dry at the start in summer, the canyon can become very aquatic in winter, when it is often cold, foggy and windy at the entry. Many rappels follow each other closely, can be combined with Hortela part 2 and other canyons.

Hydrology: (machine translated)
If a lot of water is already walking at the entry, the last belay at the C75 waterfall will be a very wet pleasure. Instead of MC5, C15, C20, C40, it is better to rappel the waterfall as MC5, C15, C60. This doesn't necessarily protect the ropes, but otherwise it quickly gets cold at the last (almost hanging) belay. In winter there are often a good dozen tributaries!

Access: (machine translated)
Park a car at the fish farm in the Chao da Ribeira valley at the very exit of the slope (see GPS data parking lot exit). Here you will find an information sign for canyoning.
With the second car, first drive along the VE2 DIRECTION Porto Moniz and then via Ribeira de Janela (be careful, the exit is directly at the exit of the tunnel dos Casais) along the ER 209 to the Rabacal plateau to the parking entry (see GPS data, 17.5 km distance from the end of the tunnel). Here you will find an information sign about the various canyons.

If you only have one car available and only want to do Hortela Part 1 or are very sporty, drive directly to the upper entry parking lot.

Approach: (machine translated)
Follow the wide track (Vereda da Terra Cha) that starts next to the information sign for a good 1000m, you will pass the Seixal canyon (wooden sign) and reach the Hortela canyon (wooden sign). Follow the watercourse briefly (when water is flowing), after a few meters a winding path leads through the undergrowth to the entry point of the tour. Unfortunately, the vegetation grows very lush due to the moisture, so what may be suitable for access one year may be impassable the following year.

Tour: (machine translated)
After various "smaller" abseils (mostly with rope railing access) up to 30 meters, which are often tackled in fog, especially in winter, you reach the large drop-off edge that characterizes all the canyons in this rich area. In the Hortela, the depth is 75 meters: MC5, C15, C20, C40. The intermediate belays only offer space for two people, the C40 belay in particular is very uncomfortable and the abseiling can be challenging, especially when the water level is high. After a total of 24 abseils, you reach the Levada do Norte, which starts here and flows directly into a tunnel.

Return: (machine translated)
Variant 1a (1 car)
Follow the Levada do Norte through a total of three tunnels, where a lamp is highly recommended. After a good 1.2 km, you will reach the "Vereda do Lombo Barbinhas" path, which leads back to the plateau to the right. At the exit of the ascent through the forest, follow the slope until you reach a crossroads. Here you turn right along the "Vereda da Terra Cha" slope back to the upper parking lot. Total time approx. 2 hours. Distance 5.2 km, 480 vertical meters
Variant 1b (1car)
Alternatively, you can continue down the middle section of the Hortela (section 2). Or the lower part of the Lombo do Queimado (Jungle rain). Both exit at the Levada do Seixal. You can also reach the upper car from here: follow the levada to the orographic right (the abyss is then on your left) against the direction of flow for 650m to reach the Vereda do Lombo Barbinhas ascent. This is not easy to discover. It leads via the Levada do Norte back to the Vereda da Terra Cha known from the access, which you follow to the parking entry. This option allows you to complete the entire tour in just one car. The way back then covers 5 km and 630 vertical meters and takes 2 hours 20 minutes, provided you can still manage a normal pace after the tour.
Variant 2a (2 cars)
You follow the levada orographically to the right (the abyss is then on your left) against the direction of flow for 710m to reach the Vereda do Lombo Barbinhas descent. Here you descend a steep and mostly slippery path to the main river in 30 minutes. Cross the main river to follow a small path through the forest out of the valley on the other side. This leads through the forest in a few minutes, cross the dam on the left and follow the slope across the meadows to the lower parking lot.
Variant 2b (2 cars)
Walk one of the canyons that start at the Levada do Seixal:
A) Seixal inferior, through the long tunnel, immediately afterwards the tour begins, downclimb next to the concreted water intake, alternatively a rope can be attached to a grid here.
B) Hortela inferior (section 3), directly in front of you
C) Folhado inferior, follow the levada towards the 520m descent, the first canyon, anchor at the levada outlet just before the waterfall
D) Vimieiro inferior, follow the levada towards the descent and past it 920m to the exit, anchor just before the waterfall
In all four cases, you should keep an eye on the length of the tour and the time and assess your fitness well. Especially in winter
Madeira gets dark early and, above all, very quickly. And, of course, bear in mind the height of each waterfall!!!

Coordinates:
Canyon Start 32.7758 -17.1020
Canyon End 32.7789 -17.1068
Parking at Entry 32.7651 -17.1015
Parking at Exit 32.7967 -17.1141

Reports:

2026-10-19 | Isabella Rosenau | ☆ ☆ ☆ |🕮 ★ |⚓ ★ ★ ★ | Normal | Completed
We did all the sections of the Hortela today. It's set up great. The stream is very slippery all the way through. (machine translated)

2026-05-15 | System User | |🕮 |⚓ | High | Completed
Automatisch importiert von Descente-Canyon.com für Canyon Hortela (Partie 1) Je vais essayer de clarifier la description:Le tronçon désigné ici comme « partie 1 » correspond à la section du canyon allant du plateau jusqu'à la Levada do Norte et comprend 22 rappels pouvant atteindre 40 mètres de long ; la plus haute cascade mesure 75 mètres et se franchit en trois rappels. Si l'on quitte la descente à la Levada do Norte, on peut soit redescendre, soit remonter ; dans le cas d'une remontée, un seul véhicule est nécessaire. Attention, le chemin du retour passe par trois tunnels étroits, une lampe est indispensable.La section « partie 2 » correspond à la partie située entre la Levada do Norte et la Levada do Seixal, qui comprend 11 rappels pouvant atteindre 27 mètres. En raison des longs trajets d'approche et de retour, ce tronçon est très rarement parcouru seul.Le tronçon « partie 3 » commence à la Levada do Seixal et se termine au confluent avec le cours d'eau principal de la vallée, la Ribeira do Seixal. Il comprend 14 rappels pouvant atteindre 50 mètres de hauteur et constitue la partie classique.Nous n'avons parcouru que la première section et cela nous a pris 5 heures à 5 personnes, dont 3 porteurs. Nous avons rencontré un fort débit d'eau dès le premier descendeur, qui est généralement à sec. Au cours du parcours, une bonne douzaine d'affluents alimentent le canyon.L'équipement est en bon état, même si les anneaux ovales et étroits ne sont pas forcément les meilleurs, car la mise en place et le démontage des relais de descente en rappel sont très laborieux. (Quelle: https://www.descente-canyon.com/canyoning/canyon-debit/22140/observations.html)

2026-05-15 | Casa Vento Madeira | ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ |🕮 ★ ★ ★ |⚓ ★ ★ | High | Completed
A canyon that has a lot to offer: Lots of water (at least on our ascent), plenty of abseils, a high multipitch waterfall and a great, very green narrow passage. Unfortunately, the anchors in the first half are no longer up to date and the narrow oval rings sometimes make it difficult to ascend and descend. (machine translated)

2026-04-27 | System User | |🕮 |⚓ | Normal | Completed
Automatisch importiert von Descente-Canyon.com für Canyon Hortela (Partie 1) Relais ok ras (Quelle: https://www.descente-canyon.com/canyoning/canyon-debit/22140/observations.html)

2024-11-08 | Airmax | ☆ ☆ ☆ ½ |🕮 |⚓ ★ ★ ★ | Low | Completed
On access, always follow the path marked with a yellow and black flutter line. Even if the path is confusing. All anchors are in good condition. It is also advisable to use the small rope traverses, as otherwise it is difficult to tie yourself in and hang in the rope. (machine translated)

2023-03-09 | System User | ☆ ☆ ☆ |🕮 |⚓ | |
Daten importiert von https://www.descente-canyon.com/canyoning/canyon/22140/Hortela-Partie-1.html

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2022-10-07 | Bina | ☆ ☆ ☆ |🕮 |⚓ ★ ★ | Low | Completed
Everything OK. (machine translated)