

 SACCHARUM

Ashtanga Yoga Retreat



27.11 - 01.12
2024

PARTNER



Yoga, wellness & sustainability in Calheta

The retreat includes accommodation, healthy meals, yoga sessions, yoga talks, meditation, breathwork, sound healing, relaxation, and mantra chanting, among other wellness activities.

Nestled in a small natural bay, Saccharum is a 5-star design resort located at about a 25-minute drive from Funchal, right by the sea. The hotel was designed to have minimal impact on the landscape, offering stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean and the surrounding hills.

To the sophisticated decor, inspired by the origin of this place where a sugar cane mill once stood, we added our commitment to sustainability. We value local and fresh products in our menus, using vegetables from the Chef's garden and offering greener, seasonal dishes that make the most of every part of each ingredient.

Saccharum Spa offers a wide range of Ayurvedic holistic treatments designed to revitalise and rejuvenate the body and mind. It is a unique sensory experience themed around sugarcane culture with the most relaxing atmosphere.

Care for your body and soul

Immerse yourself in a yoga retreat designed to clear the mind and strengthen the body. Learn about the practice of Ashtanga Yoga in a deeper way, from the postures to its philosophy. Mornings begin with an invigorating practice, followed by workshops and activities that encourage well-being and personal growth in the afternoons. Experience days of pure tranquillity and well-being in an environment that promotes inner peace and rejuvenation.

DAY 1

Opening circle (talk + Q&A), music and welcome drink
Lunch
Guided hotel tour (optional)
Chat and snack (Yoga Talk)
Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga Introduction Class: The Inner Practice
Dinner

DAY 2

Pranayama (optional)
Ashtanga Yoga-led class (Primary Series)
Brunch
Yoga Nidra (optional)
Activity or free time
Acro Yoga
Chat and snack (Yoga Talk)
Activity or free time
Dinner
Vipassana meditation (silence)

DAY 3

Pranayama (optional)
Ashtanga Yoga, Mysore style
Brunch
Yoga Nidra (optional)
Activity or free time
Dragon Vinyasa
Chat and snack (Yoga Talk)
Activity or free time
Dinner
Mantra chanting by the fire (optional)

DAY 4

Pranayama (optional)
Ashtanga Yoga, Mysore style
Brunch
Yoga Nidra (optional)
Activity or free time
Asana workshop
Chat and snack (Yoga Talk)
Activity or free time
Dinner
Meditation by the fire (optional)

DAY 5

Pranayama (optional)
Ashtanga Yoga, Mysore style
Brunch
Yoga Nidra (optional)
Activity or free time
Sound healing and meditation
Chat and snack (Yoga Talk)
Farewell surprise activity

Classes & Activities

Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga Introduction

Class: The Inner Practice

The first class is an introduction to Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga (AVY) and focuses on the components that define this practice as a “meditation in motion.” The goal is to show that the purpose of the posture sequences in the AVY series lies in the internal experience and practice. Theoretically and practically, participants will learn the concepts of Ujjayi Pranayama, Drishti, Bandhas, and Vinyasa.

Ashtanga Yoga (Primary Series) led class

This guided session allows participants to familiarise themselves with the rhythm of the practice, the order of the postures and the transition from one posture to another. Participants who already have an established practice and prefer to practice independently will have complete freedom to do so. However, they will not receive adjustments during the practice, and the guided class will be conducted simultaneously.

Ashtanga Yoga, Mysore Style

This format allows each participant to practice independently, following their own sequence and pace, with individualised support from the teachers, who will make adjustments and offer guidance as needed.

Pranayama

During these sessions, breathing techniques will be taught to improve respiratory health, mental clarity, and overall well-being and to enervise the body for the practice that follows.

Yoga Nidra

After brunch, participants will be invited to a “yogi nap,” also known as yoga nidra. This guided meditation practice leads to a deep state of relaxation and awareness situated between sleep and wakefulness.

Sound Healing

This therapeutic approach uses the sounds and vibrations from instruments such as Tibetan bowls and gongs to encourage relaxation, reduce stress, and balance the body’s energies. It promotes well-being, enhances focus, and harmonises both body and mind.

Acro Yoga

Acro Yoga is performed in pairs and combines yoga, acrobatics, and massage. It involves collaboration between two practitioners, where one assumes the role of the base and the other the flyer. This practice strengthens trust, communication, and balance while providing a fun and interactive way to explore yoga.

Meditation

Meditation is a practice designed to calm the mind and increase awareness of the present. It helps to reduce anxiety, improve mental clarity, and promote a state of inner peace. It offers an opportunity to connect with yourself and explore introspection, fostering emotional and spiritual balance.

Dragon Vinyasa Yoga

This is a class dedicated to Dragon Vinyasa Yoga, adapted by Professor Francisco Rodrigues. This dynamic and fluid sequence of postures combines elements of Ashtanga Yoga with a style that is almost dance-like or martial arts-like. Dragon Vinyasa Yoga offers a continuous flow that creatively and energetically connects postures, providing a fun and engaging challenge.

Asana Workshop

If participants wish to deepen their alignment and technique in postures, one or more classes can be dedicated to asana workshops. These workshops focus on precise alignment and correct execution of postures, allowing practitioners to advance in their practice and correct essential details. It is an excellent opportunity to receive individualised guidance and improve understanding of the postures.

Chat and Snack

The snack will be light and served informally, providing a space for interaction among participants. During this time, relevant yoga topics, such as the history and philosophy of yoga, anatomy, or Ayurveda, will be discussed. This gathering offers an opportunity to deepen knowledge about yoga and share experiences and insights with other participants.

Other activities available during free time, if participants wish:

Complimentary access to Saccharum Spa

Spa treatments (additional cost)

Yoga Therapy (additional cost)

Yoga therapy is based on an individualised study of the patient, which includes assessing specific problems, lifestyle analysis, and general profile. Based on this assessment, a personalised program of postures, movements, and breathing techniques is created.

Visit to the Chef's Garden (free of charge)

Calheta Tour (free of charge)

Uncover Calheta's wonders with our guided bus tour. Delight in the beautiful landscapes of Madeira Island, from mountains to the sea. Along with the most charming local spots, visit iconic landmarks with our guide and enjoy a short walk.

The tour includes:

Arco da Calheta and the viewpoint overlooking Madalena do Mar, Loreto, Atouguia (stop at the church), Prazeres (stop at the levada), Fajã da Ovelha (stop for poncha tasting), Ponta do Pargo lighthouse, and Paúl do Mar (a 10-minute walk from the church to the pier).

The teachers



Cristiano Pestana

His journey in yoga began in 2010, marked by overcoming hernias and disc troubles through dedicated practice. In 2015, he started as a yoga teacher and completed his Teacher Training at Manu Yoga School in 2018. That year, he founded Cristiano Yoga School, where he began his mission to spread the teachings of Ashtanga Yoga.

He learned from notable teachers such as Nancy Gilgoff, Mark Robberds, Deepika Mehta, Gonçalo Alcântara, Bianca Oliveira, Nuno Vintém, and more recently, Alyson Simeone and Simon Loughlin, with whom he completed an additional 200 hours of Teacher Training.

His dedication extends to Yoga Therapy, deepened during an immersive experience of observing and assisting a yoga therapist in Goa, helping with injuries and illnesses.

His approach harmonises scientific precision with holistic well-being. He leverages a diverse background in sports and martial arts to foster a deep mind-body-spirit connection among his students and unlock the transformative potential of Ashtanga Yoga.



Matilde Silva

Matilde's unexpected journey with Ashtanga Yoga began in April 2023. In May of the same year, she joined Cristiano Yoga School, where she dedicated herself to practice, exchanging her work for teachings under Cristiano's guidance.

In October 2023, Matilde started her training at Asturias Yoga School under the guidance of Alyson Simeone and Simon Loughlin, completing her first 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training in July 2024.

She was awarded a scholarship for another 200-hour Yoga Teacher Training, completed in October 2024 (a collaboration between Yoga Roots and the University of Bedfordshire).

At the beginning of 2024, she began observing private classes and assisting in group classes at the school, enriching her understanding of Yoga Therapy and Adjustments.

Her odyssey as a yoga teacher officially began in May 2024 with the inauguration of her first class at Cristiano Yoga School.