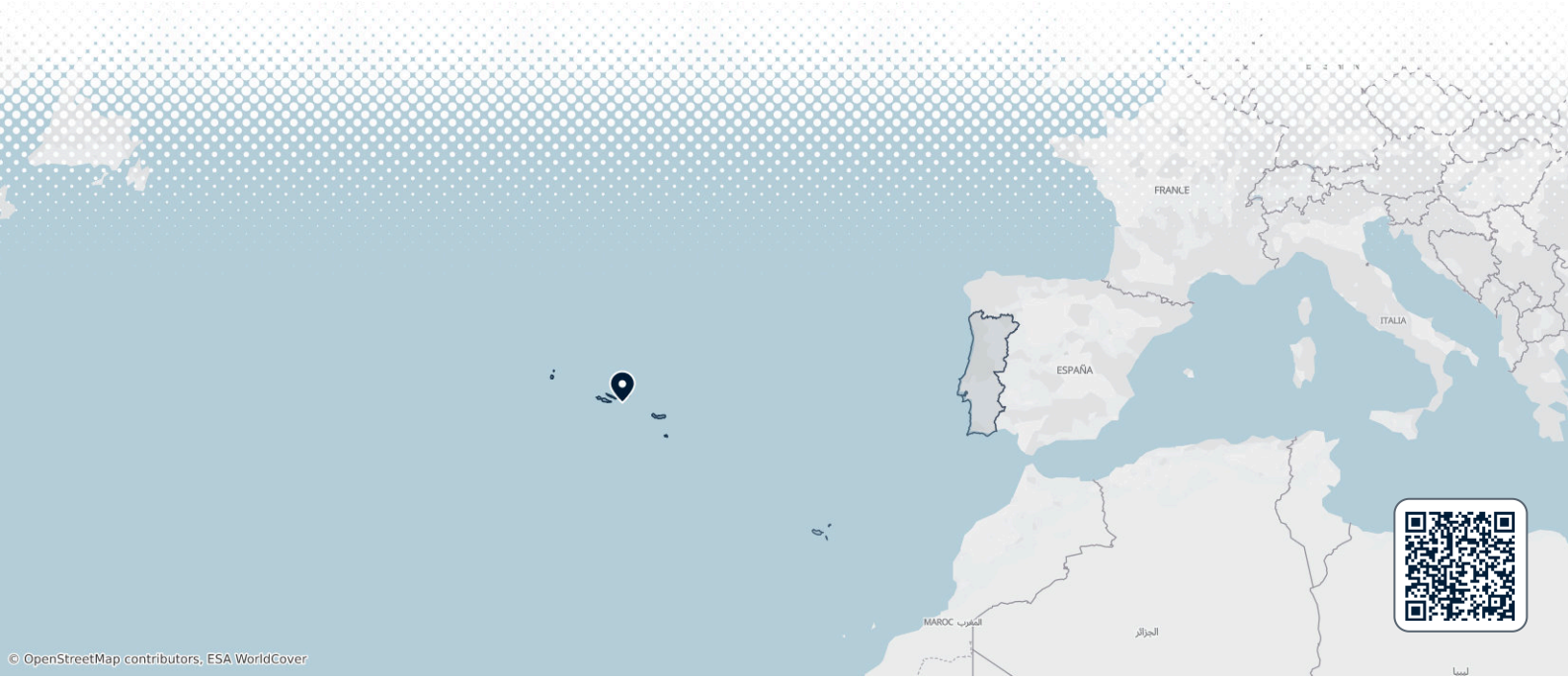


Azores

Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

The Azores are nine volcanic islands scattered across the mid-Atlantic, about 1,500 km from mainland Portugal. Green pastures run down to black lava cliffs, and each island has its own crater lakes, hot springs, or whale-watching grounds. Towns are small, roads wind along the coast, and much of the landscape is protected nature reserve or working farmland.

This suits hikers, nature lovers, and anyone who wants dramatic scenery without crowds — it is not known for beach resorts or nightlife. A week is enough time to explore one or two islands properly. Seeing several means short inter-island flights or ferries.

When to visit

Summer, from June to September, is the warmest and driest season, with the best odds of sun for hiking and boat trips. Spring and autumn are mild but rainy, and winter brings wind and rough seas.

The Sanjoaninas festival fills Terceira Island for a week in late June, with concerts, traditional bull-running through the streets, and an island-wide holiday mood. It is worth visiting that week if you can.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	14° / 16° Feels like 9°	13° / 10°	14 rainy days · Dry air
February	Good Good for hiking	14° / 16° Feels like 8°	12° / 10°	12 rainy days · Dry air
March	Good Good for hiking	14° / 15° Feels like 8°	12° / 10°	13 rainy days · Dry air
April	Good Good for hiking	14° / 16° Feels like 9°	13° / 10°	12 rainy days · Dry air
May	Great Great for hiking	16° / 18° Feels like 12°	14° / 12°	
June	Great Great for hiking	18° / 20°	16° / 14°	
July	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 22°	19° / 17°	Humid air · UV 8 (Very high)
August	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 23°	20° / 18°	Muggy, humid air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 22°	19° / 17°	Humid air
October	Good Good for hiking	19° / 21° Feels like 15°	17° / 15°	15 rainy days
November	Good Good for wildlife watching	17° / 19° Feels like 12°	15° / 12°	14 rainy days
December	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	15° / 17° Feels like 10°	14° / 11°	16 rainy days · Dry air

Best months: July, August

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2); NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5; NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

On São Miguel, the largest island, Ⓐ Lagoa do Fogo fills a volcanic crater with intensely blue water, ringed by cliffs and reached by a short hike. Nearby, the twin crater lakes of Ⓑ Sete Cidades sit side by

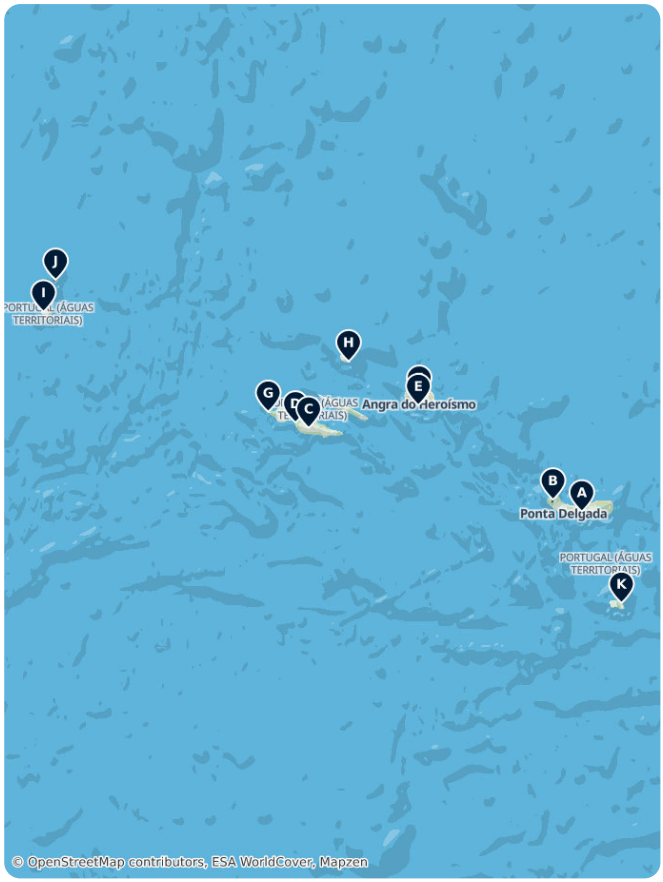
side, one tinted green and the other blue.

On Pico, C Montanha do Pico is Portugal's highest point at 2,351 meters, a dormant volcano that dominates every view on the island. Its lower slopes hold D Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture, a UNESCO World Heritage landscape of black stone-walled vineyards built to shelter grapevines from Atlantic winds.

Terceira's former capital survives almost intact at E Centro Histórico de Angra do Heroísmo, a UNESCO-listed old town of pastel facades and baroque churches founded in 1478. A short drive away, F Algar do Carvão drops visitors down a 338-step staircase into a huge volcanic chimney with its own underground pond.

On Faial, G Capelinhos Volcano is a stark, ash-grey landscape from an eruption that lasted 13 months in 1957 and 1958, still visible around a half-buried lighthouse. On Graciosa, H Furna do Enxofre is a cave holding an underground lake, reached through a natural chimney in the volcanic dome above it.

On Flores, I Poço da Ribeira do Ferreiro is a pond fed by waterfalls that drop 300 meters down a cliff face, reached by a hiking trail. On Corvo, J Caldeirão is a collapsed volcanic caldera holding wetlands and two lagoons at the island's summit, reached by a hiking trail from the village. On Santa Maria, K Baía de São Lourenço is a shell-shaped bay ringed by terraced vineyards on the clifftops, with a beach and natural swimming pools below.



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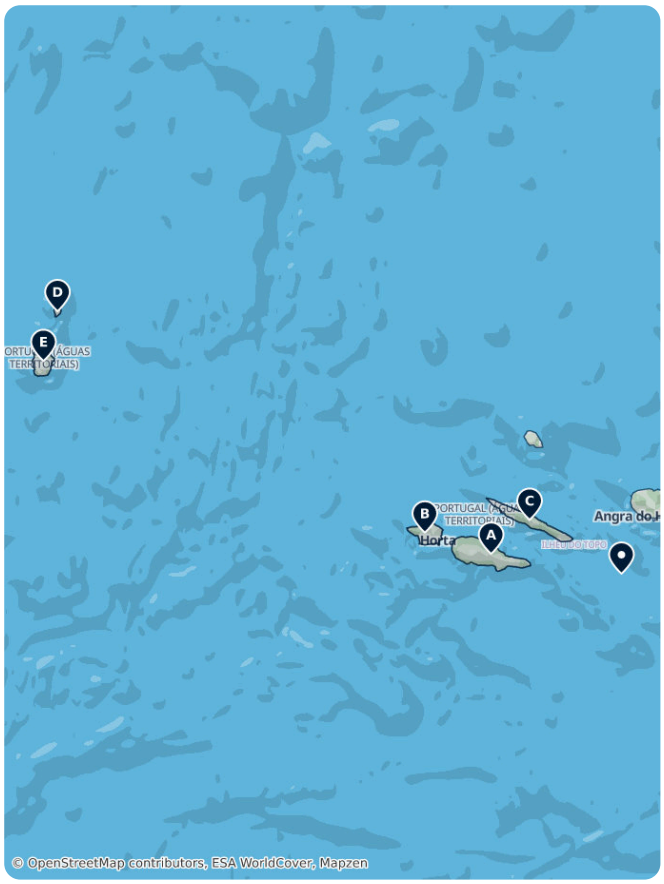
What to experience

- Soak in Poça da Dona Beija, four open-air pools in Furnas heated to around 39°C by volcanic springs, open for day and evening bathing.
- Swim where a hot spring meets the ocean at Ponta da Ferraria, a natural pool on São Miguel's coast warmed by geothermal heat even as Atlantic waves wash in.
- Tour and taste tea at Chá Gorreana Tea Factory, Europe's oldest working tea plantation, still run on nineteenth-century machinery.
- Join a boat trip to watch whales and dolphins. The deep waters around the islands attract more than 20 species, with sperm whales present year-round and easiest to spot in summer.

Day trips

Most travelers base themselves on one island and see its highlights, but a few short crossings make easy day trips.

- A Pico Island from B Faial Island — the car ferry between Horta and Madalena takes about 30 minutes and runs several times a day. An easy way to see Pico's vineyards and volcano in a single day.
- B Faial Island from A Pico Island — the same ferry in reverse, for a day around Horta's marina and Faial's hiking trails.
- C São Jorge Island from Pico — about 50 minutes by ferry, to see São Jorge's fajãs, flat lava ledges below tall cliffs. The ferry from Faial takes longer, around 1.5–2 hours.
- D Corvo Island from E Flores Island — a 40–55 minute boat crossing, weather permitting. Corvo's single village sits on the coast beneath the island's volcanic crater; most visitors see it as a day trip since the island has almost no accommodation.



Where to explore

The Azores split into three groups. In the east, São Miguel Island is the largest and most visited island, with Santa Maria Island a short flight south.

In the center, five islands sit close together: Terceira Island, Graciosa Island, São Jorge Island, Pico Island, and Faial Island. Ferries connect them in summer, making island-hopping easy.

Far to the west, Flores Island and Corvo Island are the most remote and least visited islands, reachable only by small plane or boat.

Getting there

- By air: João Paulo II Airport (PDL) in Ponta Delgada, on São Miguel, is the main international gateway, with direct flights from Lisbon, Porto, and seasonal routes from North America. The airport sits about 3 km from the city center; a taxi takes 10–15 minutes.
- Each of the other eight islands has its own small airport with scheduled flights from São Miguel, run by Azores Airlines — useful for reaching Terceira, Faial, or Pico directly without connecting through Ponta Delgada.
- There is no scheduled passenger ferry from mainland Portugal; flying is the only way in.

Getting around

- Public transit: each island has a local bus network, but service is infrequent and aimed mainly at residents. A rental car is the practical way to see the sights on any island.
- Inter-island travel: Azores Airlines flies between the islands. Ferries connect the five central islands — Terceira, Graciosa, São Jorge, Pico, and Faial — mainly in summer, and a separate boat links Flores and Corvo, weather permitting.
- Taxi: regular taxis operate on every island, but ride-hailing apps have little to no presence. Arrange a taxi by phone or through your accommodation.
- On foot: town centers are small and walkable, but distances between sights mean you need a car or an organized tour.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Low

Beyond each island's main town, sights are spread out and distances call for a car — walking alone will not get you far.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Steep volcanic terrain and narrow roads make cycling demanding, though it is a popular way to explore Pico and parts of São Miguel.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? Yes, for exploring beyond each island's main town — public transport is limited and sights are spread out.
- Parking is mostly free, on-street or in small car parks near town centers.
- No restrictions: there are no congestion charges or low-emission zones on any island.

Food & drink

Azorean food comes from what the volcanic soil and surrounding ocean provide. The signature dish is cozido das Furnas, a stew of meats and vegetables slow-cooked for hours in pots buried in geothermally heated volcanic ground — ask locally about tours that include a cozido lunch. Fresh tuna, limpets, and barnacles appear on most menus, and Pico's volcanic-soil vineyards produce distinctive mineral white wines worth trying.

Tipping and dining customs follow mainland Portugal: rounding up or leaving 5–10% is appreciated but not expected.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Caldo Verde
A simple, comforting soup of shredded kale, potato, and slices of chourico sausage.

Francesinha
A hearty Porto specialty: a meat-stuffed sandwich covered in melted cheese and a spiced tomato-beer sauce.

DINNER

Bacalhau
Salt cod, Portugal's national dish, said to be prepared in hundreds of different ways across the country.

Sardinhas Assadas
Charcoal-grilled sardines, especially popular in summer street festivals and along the coast.

Arroz de Marisco
A rich, soupy seafood rice, similar to paella but wetter, packed with shellfish.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Pastel de Nata
A small custard tart in flaky pastry, best eaten warm with cinnamon and sugar.

DRINKS

Vinho Verde
A young, light, slightly sparkling white wine from northern Portugal, meant to be drunk within a year of harvest.

Port Wine · Vinho do Porto
A fortified wine from the Douro Valley, aged in cellars around Porto, ranging from sweet ruby to complex aged tawny styles.

Ginjinha · Ginãa
A sweet liqueur made from sour cherries, traditionally served in a small cup, sometimes with a cherry at the bottom.

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Safety & health

The Azores are very safe for travelers; petty crime and scams are rare even in tourist areas. The main risks are natural rather than criminal: crater rim trails can be slippery and exposed, coastal rocks are often wet and dangerous to swim near, and sea conditions can turn rough with little warning. Roads are narrow and winding in the interior, so drive carefully and watch for livestock crossing.

History

The islands were uninhabited until Portuguese sailors settled them in the 15th century, during the early Age of Discovery. Centro Histórico de Angra do Heroísmo grew into one of the Atlantic's most important ports, a stopover for ships sailing between Europe and the Americas. It briefly served as the seat of the Portuguese crown during the Liberal Wars in the 1830s.

Whaling shaped island life for centuries; the Whalers Museum traces this history through the tools and boats once used to hunt sperm whales by hand. The 1957–58 eruption at Capelinhos Volcano buried farmland and homes in ash. It set off a wave of emigration to the United States that still shapes Azorean communities in New England today.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Azores Essentials

The Azores archipelago features a landscape shaped by volcanic activity, from the massive twin craters of Sete Cidades to the thermal gardens of Furnas. This collection highlights the 18th-century architecture of Ponta Delgada, the only tea plantation in Europe, and natural geothermal pools where volcanic heat meets the Atlantic. Visitors can explore ancient lava tubes, historic whaling museums, and high-altitude viewpoints overlooking endemic forests and crater lakes like Lagoa do Fogo.





A Lagoa do Fogo

Volcanic crater lake situated at an altitude of 575 meters within a nature reserve. It is one of the largest bodies of water in the region and is characterized by its blue waters and surrounding endemic vegetation.

9680, Portugal (37.76263, -25.47455)



B Vista do Rei Viewpoint

Viewpoint overlooking the Green and Blue Lakes within a volcanic crater. The site is recognized as one of the 7 Natural Wonders of Portugal and features a large caldera lake formed by volcanic activity.

Estrada Regional 9, 9555, Portugal (37.83939, -25.79489)

visitazores.com/en



C Boca do Inferno Viewpoint

Lookout point offering panoramic views over the Sete Cidades caldera, including the Blue and Green lakes and Lagoa do Canário.

9555, Portugal (37.84293, -25.76361)



D Terra Nostra Garden

18th-century botanical garden featuring a massive iron-rich thermal swimming pool and one of the world's largest collections of camellias.

(Unnamed Road), 9675, Portugal (37.77066, -25.31254)

Mo–Su 10:30–16:30

parqueterranostra.com



E Caldeira Velha

Nature reserve featuring thermal pools heated by volcanic activity and a waterfall set amidst lush ferns and endemic vegetation.

9600, Portugal (37.78210, -25.50048)

visitazores.com/en/explore/caldeira-velha, +351296704649



F Sete Cidades Massif

Civil parish located inside a massive volcanic caldera, known for its iconic twin lakes and the Neo-Gothic Church of São Nicolau.

9555, Portugal (37.86440, -25.78294)

visitazores.com/en/explore/lagoa-das-sete-cidades-parks...



G City Gates

18th-century three-arched gate constructed from volcanic stone. Originally built on the harbor, it now serves as the symbolic entrance to Ponta Delgada.

1 Praça de Gonçalo Velho, Ponta Delgada 9500063, Portugal (37.73953, -25.66847)

visitazores.com/en/explore/portas-da-cidade



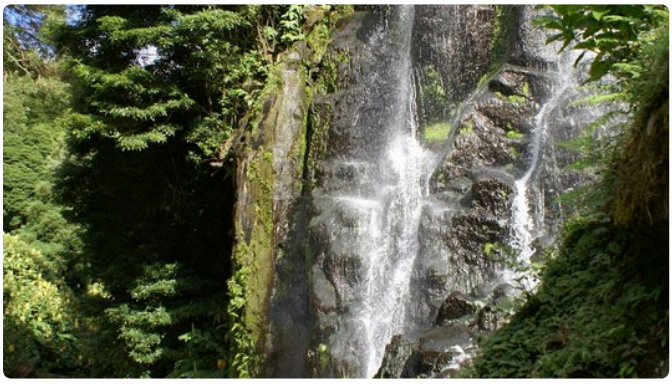
H Gorreana Tea Factory

Europe's oldest and only remaining tea plantation, operating since 1883. It produces organic black and green tea using 19th-century British machinery.

Maia 304, 9625-304 Maia, PT (37.81842, -25.40243)

Mo–Fr	08:00–18:00
Sa–Su	09:00–18:00

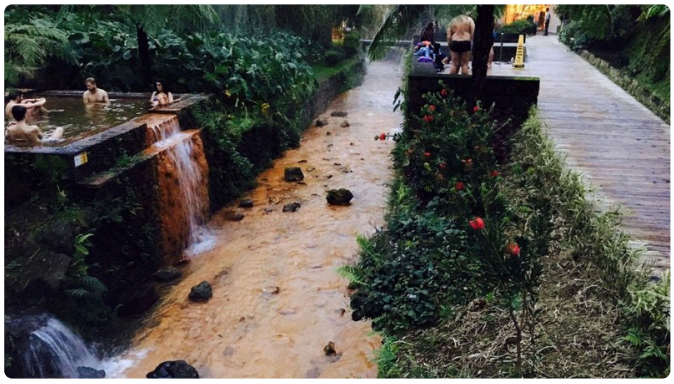
gorreana.pt, +351 296 442349



I Parque Natural da Ribeira dos Caldeirões

Protected area in Nordeste featuring several waterfalls, restored traditional water mills, and a valley filled with tree ferns and hydrangeas.

ER 1-1ª, 9630-011 Achada, Portugal (37.84352, -25.26840)



J Poça da Dona Beija

Set of five outdoor thermal pools in Furnas with iron-rich waters heated to 39°C by a natural geothermal spring.

1 Lomba das Barracas, 9675040, Portugal (37.76948, -25.31977)

Mo–Su	08:30–23:00

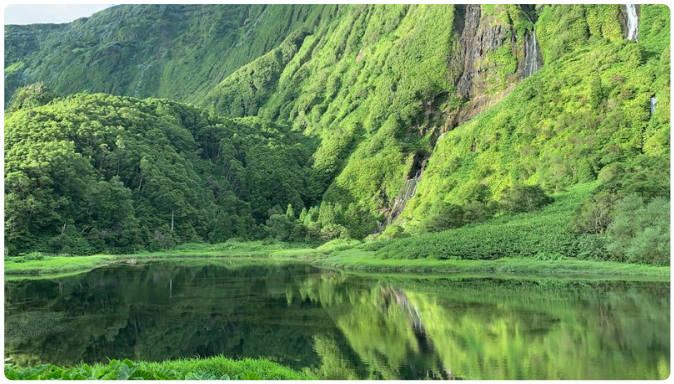
pocadonabeija.com



K Lady of Peace Chapel

18th-century Baroque chapel and pilgrimage site featuring a monumental staircase with 100 steps and 10 landings decorated with religious imagery. The site serves as a viewpoint overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and a nearby volcanic islet.

Escadaria da Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Paz, 9680-130 Vila Franca do Campo, Portugal (37.72858, -25.43144)

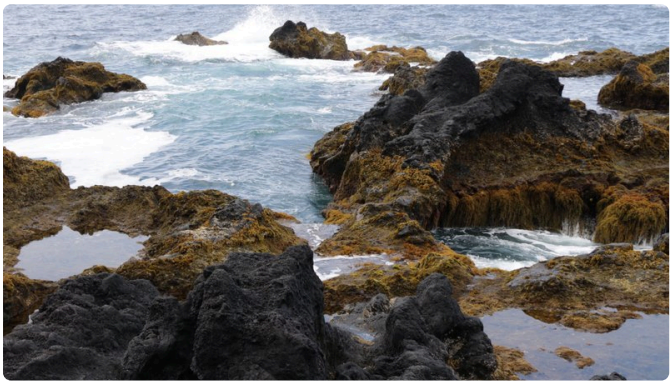


L Ribeira do Ferreiro Pond

Natural site on Flores Island where dozens of waterfalls cascade down a high cliff into a peaceful pond surrounded by greenery.

Trilho PR2FLO, 9960-438 Fajã Grande, Portugal (39.43708, -31.23865)

rotas.azores.gov.pt/en/itinerary/santa-cruz-e-faja-grande/



M Ponta da Ferraria

Coastal area featuring a natural ocean swimming hole where geothermal springs heat the seawater, creating a unique warm-water bathing experience.

Portugal (37.85827, -25.85233)

N Whalers Museum

Whaling history museum housed in a 19th-century complex of former boat warehouses and blacksmith workshops. It displays specialized tools, equipment, and scrimshaw art created from whale bones and teeth.

Rua dos Baleeiros 13, 9930-143 Lajes do Pico (38.39631, -28.25342)

Tu–Su 10:00–17:30

visitazores.com/en/explore/museu-dos-... , +351292679340



Gruta do Carvão

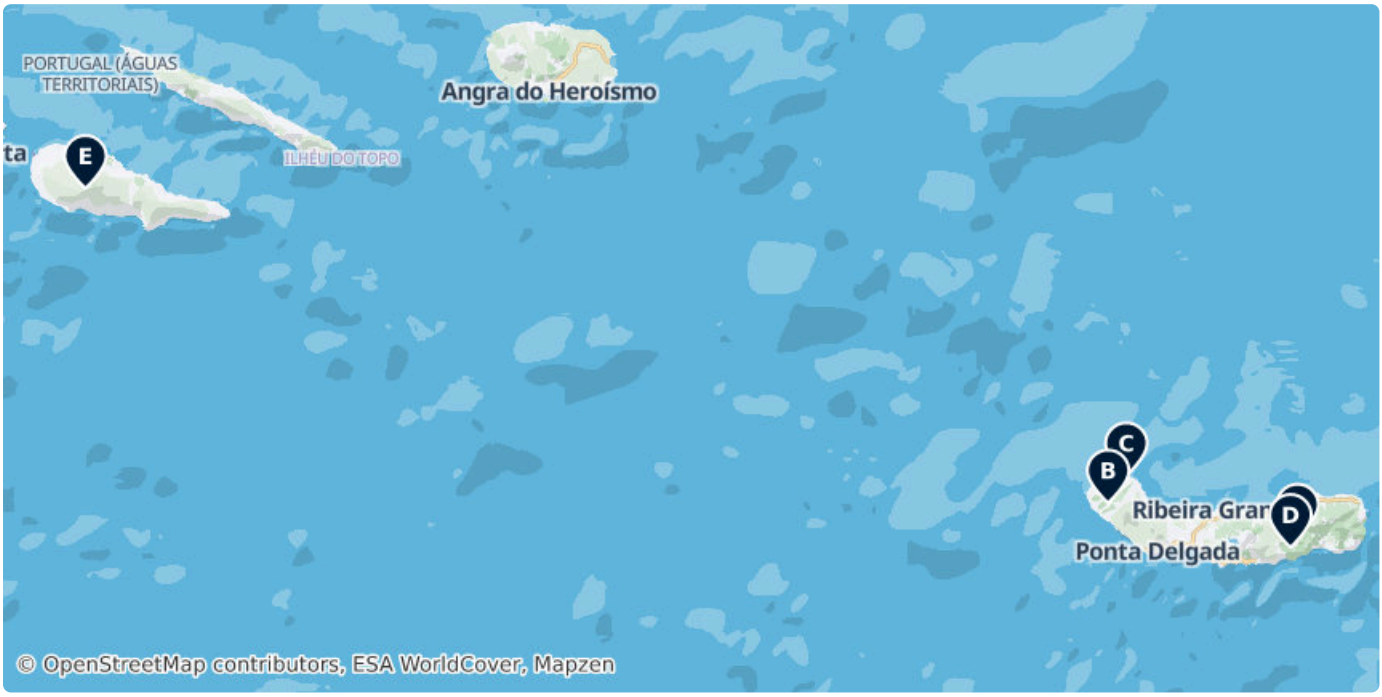
The Gruta do Carvão is an ancient lava tube located on the outskirts of the municipality of Ponta Delgada on the island of São Miguel in...

(Unnamed Road), 9500230, Portugal (37.74816, -25.68707)

grutadocarvao.amigosdosacores.pt, +351 961 397 080

Hidden Gems of the Azores

The Azores archipelago features diverse volcanic landscapes and historical landmarks. This selection includes the 18th-century Terra Nostra Garden, known for its geothermal pool and botanical collection, and the neo-Gothic Chapel of Nossa Senhora das Vitórias on the shores of Furnas Lake. Natural highlights include the Sete Cidades caldera at Vista do Rei, the northern coastal views from Miradouro do Pico Vermelho, and Mount Pico, Portugal's highest point at 2,351 meters. These sites represent the region's unique blend of tectonic activity and curated heritage.





A Terra Nostra Garden

An 18th-century botanical park featuring a large thermal swimming pool filled with iron-rich mineral water. The grounds contain one of the world's most extensive collections of camellias, alongside centuries-old trees and endemic Azorean flora.

(Unnamed Road), 9675, Portugal (37.77066, -25.31254)

Mo–Su 10:30–16:30

parqueterranostra.com



B Vista do Rei Viewpoint

Viewpoint overlooking the Green and Blue Lakes within a volcanic crater. The site is recognized as one of the 7 Natural Wonders of Portugal and features a large caldera lake formed by volcanic activity.

Estrada Regional 9, 9555, Portugal (37.83939, -25.79489)

visitazores.com/en



C Miradouro do Pico Vermelho

Provides panoramic views over the northern coastline of São Miguel and the surrounding volcanic landscape. The site overlooks the village of Bretanha and the characteristic red soil of the nearby hills.

305 Rua da Grota Grande, 9545, Portugal (37.89429, -25.74837)



D Chapel of Nossa Senhora das Vitórias

The Chapel of Nossa Senhora das Vitórias, dedicated to Our Lady of the Victories, a small funerary chapel on the southwestern corner of...

(Unnamed Road), 9675, Portugal (37.75023, -25.33071)



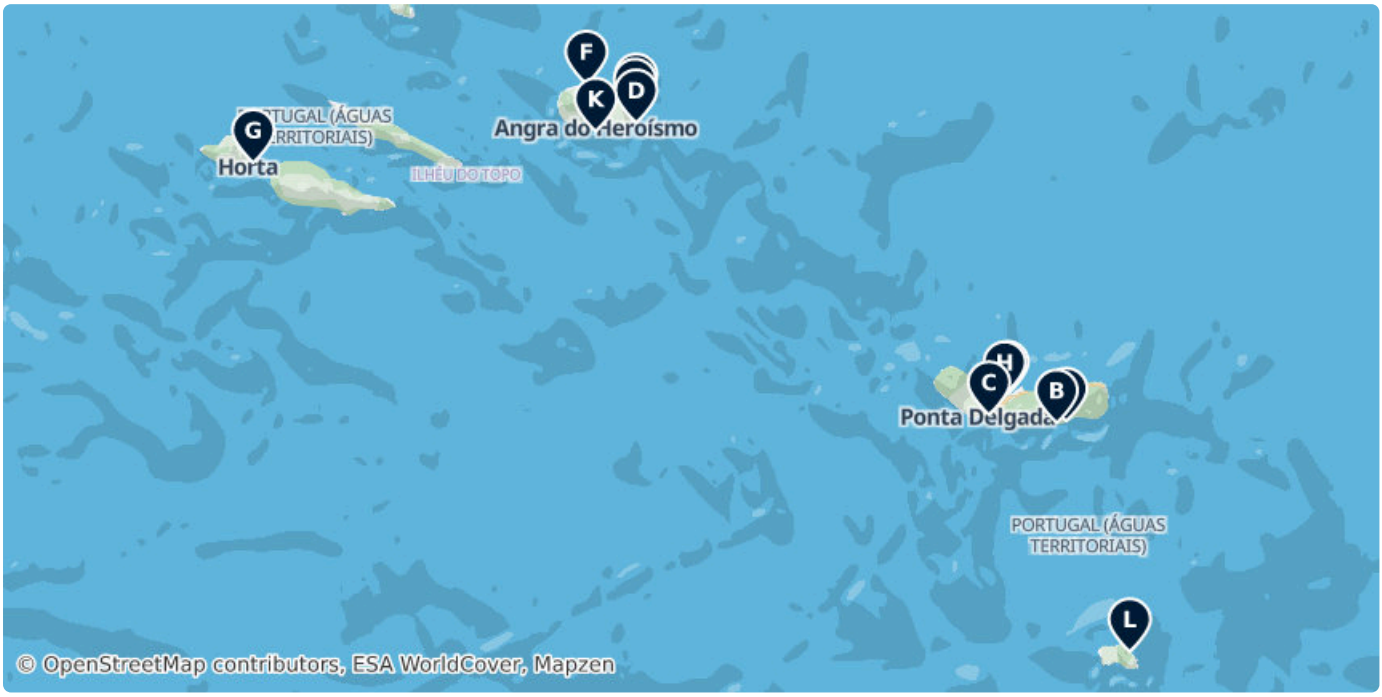
E Mount Pico

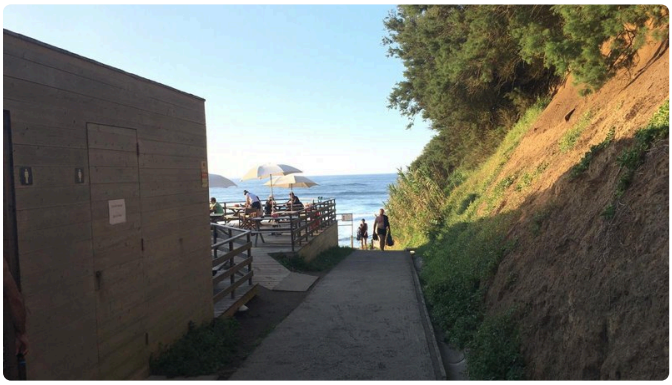
Mount Pico is a currently dormant stratovolcano located on Pico Island, in the mid-Atlantic archipelago of the Azores.

9950, Portugal (38.46872, -28.39928)

Best Beaches and Coasts

The Azores archipelago offers a diverse range of coastal environments, from the volcanic black sands of Praia das Milícias and Praia do Almoxarife to the natural basalt swimming pools of Calheta dos Biscoitos and Porto Martins. On São Miguel, Praia do Fogo features waters warmed by hydrothermal vents, while Santa Maria's Praia de São Lourenço is framed by terraced vineyards. These locations provide varying conditions, including world-class surf breaks at Areal de Santa Barbara and sheltered sandy bays like Prainha.





A Areal de Santa Barbara

A long stretch of dark volcanic sand on the north coast of São Miguel, known for hosting international surfing competitions and its consistent Atlantic swells.

9600, Portugal (37.81654, -25.54864)



B Praia da Amora

A secluded beach located at the base of high cliffs in Ponta Garça, accessible via a steep walking trail or by boat.

Portugal (37.72471, -25.34976)



C Praia das Milícias

One of the primary volcanic black sand beaches near Ponta Delgada, featuring accessible facilities and wide shores.

9500, Portugal (37.75093, -25.62451)



D Piscinas Oceânicas de Porto Martins

Natural swimming areas on Terceira Island formed by volcanic rock formations, featuring concrete sunbathing platforms and access ladders.

Caminho Velho da Ponta Negra, 9760, Portugal (38.68053, -27.05537)



E Praia dos Oficiais

A small sandy beach located in the parish of Santa Cruz within the municipality of Praia da Vitória on Terceira Island.

(Unnamed Road), Praia da Vitória 9760, Portugal (38.73111, -27.05518)



F Calheta dos Biscoitos

A complex of natural swimming pools formed by black basalt lava flows, equipped with walkways and infrastructure in the northern part of Terceira.

9760, Portugal (38.80293, -27.25730)



G Praia do Almoxarife

A beach composed of fine dark sand and pebbles on Faial Island, notable for its clear views of the Pico Island volcano across the channel.

Avenida Unânime Praiense, 9900451, Portugal (38.55450, -28.60924)



H Santana Beach

A volcanic sand beach on the northern shore of São Miguel, frequently used for surfing and bodyboarding near Ribeira Grande.

9600, Portugal (37.81458, -25.56074)



I Praia do Fogo

Located in Ribeira Quente, this sandy beach is known for naturally warm seawater caused by the presence of underwater hydrothermal vents.

Portugal (37.73034, -25.31018)



J Praia da Riviera

An undeveloped sandy beach on the eastern coast of Terceira, situated near bird-nesting cliffs and natural dunes.

(38.71481, -27.06052)



K Prainha

Prainha is a landmark in the Azores. It is located in Angra do Heroísmo, on the island of Terceira.

Angra do Heroismo (38.65374, -27.21996)



L Saint Lawrence Beach

A white sand beach on Santa Maria Island set within an amphitheater-shaped bay and surrounded by steep, terraced vineyards.

Estrada Regional 3-2A, 9580114, Portugal (36.98719, -25.05334)

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