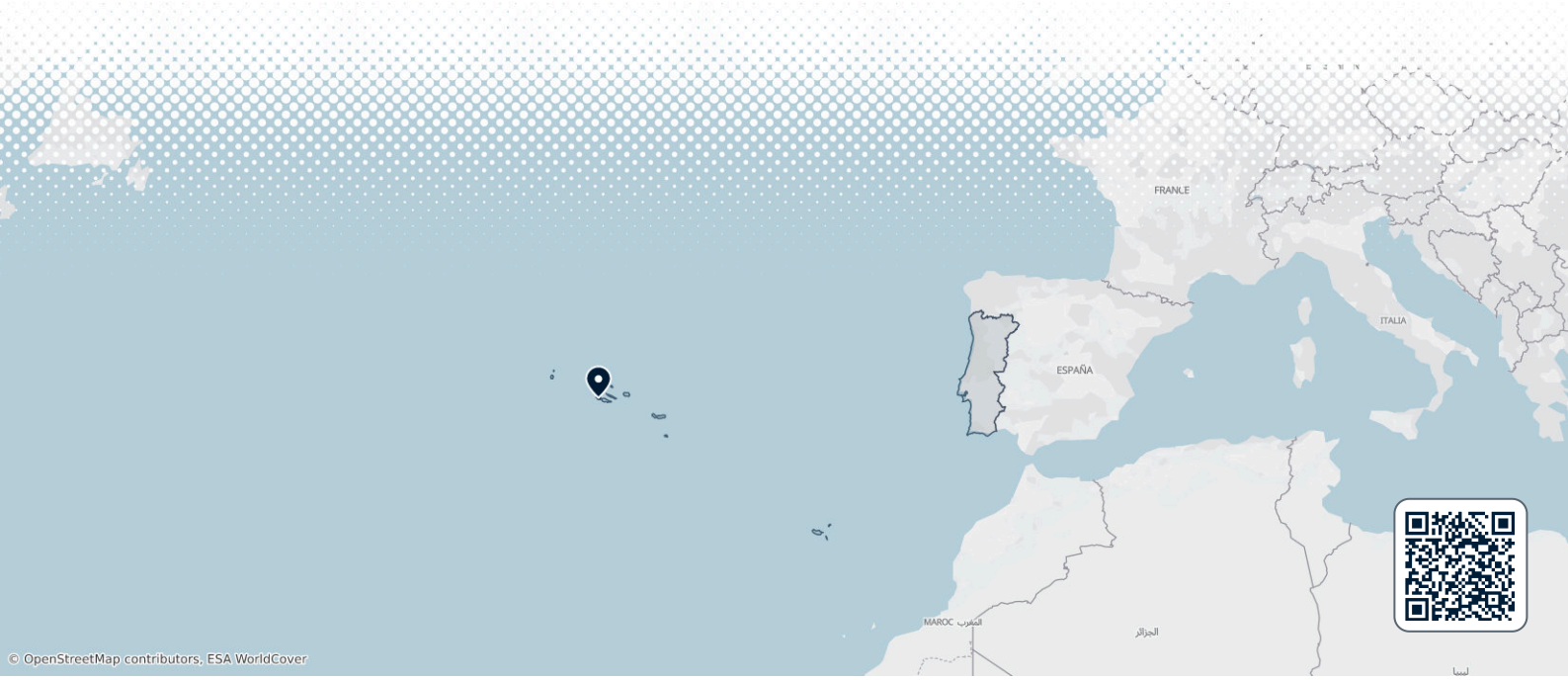


Faial Island

Azores · Portugal

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Faial is a small volcanic island in the central Azores. It is called the Blue Island because hydrangeas flower across the island in summer. Most of the island is quiet farmland and green hills, with a large crater in the middle.

Most visitors stay in Horta, the main town. Its marina is a famous stop for sailors crossing the Atlantic. The west coast has bare volcanic land that was formed by an eruption in 1957 and 1958. Faial suits hikers, whale watchers and anyone who likes boats and sea stories. Two to four days is enough, and many people combine it with nearby Pico.

When to visit

Summer is the warmest and driest season. The sea is warm enough for swimming from July to October, and hydrangeas flower in summer. Winters are mild but wet and windy, and boat trips are less frequent. Whale watching has its widest variety of species in spring. Sperm whales and dolphins are present in summer.

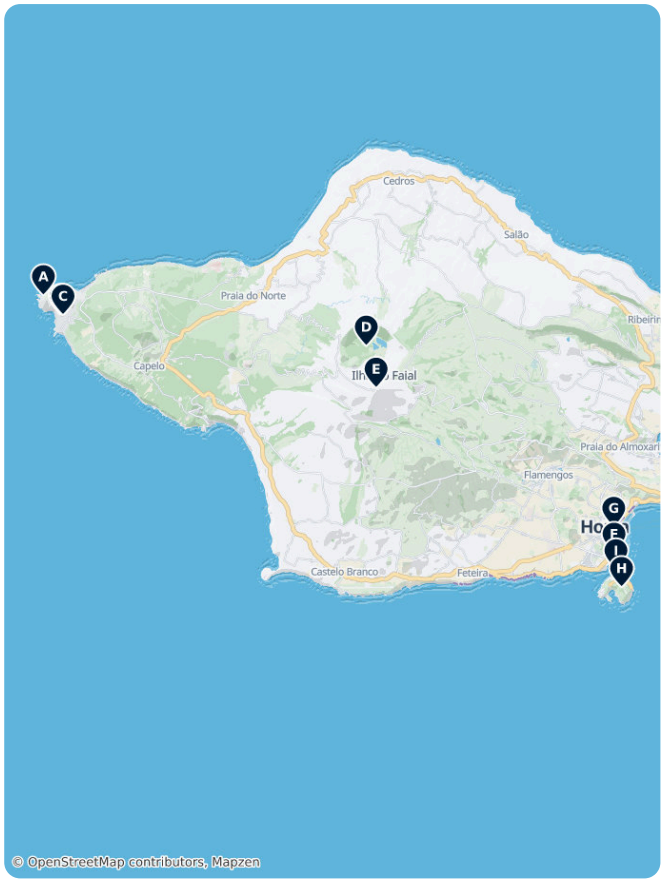
The biggest event is Semana do Mar, the Sea Week in Horta. It is held around the start of August, with sailing events, concerts and fireworks. Book rooms early if you plan to come then.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for wildlife watching	16° / 18° Feels like 11°	15° / 11°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Windy
February	Good Good for hiking	16° / 18° Feels like 10°	14° / 11°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Windy
March	Good Good for hiking	16° / 18° Feels like 10°	14° / 11°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Windy
April	Good Good for hiking	17° / 18° Feels like 12°	14° / 12°	13 rainy days · Dry air
May	Great Great for hiking	18° / 20° Feels like 14°	16° / 13°	
June	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 22°	18° / 16°	
July	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 25°	20° / 18°	Humid air · UV 8 (Very high)
August	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 26°	22° / 20°	Muggy, humid air
September	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 25°	21° / 18°	Humid air
October	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 23° Feels like 17°	19° / 16°	15 rainy days
November	Good Good for wildlife watching	19° / 21° Feels like 14°	17° / 14°	13 rainy days · Windy
December	Fair Fair for wildlife watching	17° / 19° Feels like 11°	15° / 12°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Windy

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Capelinhos Volcano is the island's most famous sight. The 1957–58 eruption added new land to the coast, and the ash left a bare landscape.
- The old lighthouse, B Capelinhos Lighthouse, stands beside the volcano. The land around it was buried in ash during the eruption.
- C Capelinhos Interpretation Centre is built mostly underground. It explains the eruption and volcanoes of the Azores, and it honours the people who lived through it.
- D Caldeira do Faial is the large crater in the middle of the island. It is about 2 km wide and 400 m deep. The viewpoint on the rim is the easiest way to see it.
- E Cabeço Gordo Viewpoint is on the crater rim, near the island's highest point. Clouds can cover it, so go on a clear day.
- F Peter Café Sport is a café-bar on Horta's waterfront. It opened in 1901 and took the name Café Sport in 1918. Sailors from many countries have met here for generations. The small scrimshaw museum is above the café.
- G Horta Museum has an exhibition on the Capelinhos eruption. It also has miniature models by *Euclides Rosa*.
- H Monte da Guia is a volcanic hill beside Horta. A viewpoint here looks over the town and the bay of Porto Pim.
- I Porto Pim Beach is a sandy beach in a bay next to Horta.

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What to experience

- Look at the marina murals. Visiting crews leave a painting of their boat on the quay walls, and sailors say it is bad luck to leave Horta without one. Visitors can look at the older paintings.
- Go whale watching from Horta. Spring brings blue and fin whales, and summer brings sperm whales and dolphins. Boats must keep at least 50 m from the animals, and swimming with whales is not allowed. Old lookout huts on the coast were used by whalers, and operators still use lookouts to find the animals.
- Visit the scrimshaw museum above Peter Café Sport. It shows portraits carved on whale teeth.
- Take part in Semana do Mar in early August. The week grew from a regatta between Portsmouth and Horta in 1975. It has boat races, a book fair, music and fireworks.
- Watch a Holy Spirit festival. These local celebrations are held in many parishes from Easter into late summer, with processions and shared meals.

Day trips

Faial is small, so the best day trip is by sea to the next island.

- Ⓐ Pico: the ferry from Horta to Madalena takes about 30 minutes. Pico has a huge volcanic mountain that you can see from Faial. Winter sailings are fewer and can be cancelled in rough weather, so check the timetable.



Where to explore

Faial belongs to the central group of the Azores. Other islands to explore:

- Nearest: Pico is across the channel, and São Jorge is a long, narrow island to the east.
- Central group: Terceira and Graciosa.
- Farther east: São Miguel, the largest island, and Santa Maria.
- Far west: Flores and Corvo.

The whole archipelago is covered in the Azores guide.

Getting there

- By air: Horta Airport (HOR) is about 9.5 km from Horta. Azores Airlines flies here from Lisbon. SATA Air Açores flies between Faial and other Azores islands, including São Miguel and Terceira.
- By sea: the ferry from Madalena on Pico takes about 30 minutes. Atlânticoline runs it, and tickets can be bought at the port. Check the Atlânticoline timetable for other islands.
- By yacht: Horta marina is a major stop for boats crossing the Atlantic.

Getting around

- Horta is compact, and the waterfront, the marina and Porto Pim can be reached on foot.
- Buses are run by Farias. They serve Horta and some island routes, so check the timetable before you rely on them.
- A rental car is the easiest way to reach Capelinhos, the crater and the villages. Car hire is available at the airport and in Horta.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

Horta is compact and easy to walk, but the main sights on the island are far apart and need a car.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Hills and winding roads make cycling hard outside Horta.

Driving

- Is a car worth it? Yes, if you want to see more than Horta. Capelinhos and the crater are far from town, so a car saves a lot of time.
- Roads: clouds and fog can cover the high ground near the crater, so allow extra time.

Food & drink

The island's food comes from the sea and the farm. Look for limpets, either grilled or in rice, and fish stew. Octopus stewed in wine and sausage with yams are other local dishes. Faial sweets include fofas, light pastries with cream. Local cheeses include Ilha Azul and Capelinhos.

Most restaurants are in Horta, around the marina and in the town centre. For a drink with history, try Peter Café Sport. Gin and tonic is its most popular drink.

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

Faial is a quiet and calm island. Use normal care with valuables, and lock your rental car at viewpoints and beaches.

The weather changes fast. Fog and rain can come in quickly on the high ground. If you walk around the crater, wear good shoes and take a waterproof jacket, a hat, sunscreen and water. The path down from the crater viewpoint is steep. Tap water is safe to drink.

History

- The first settlers arrived in the 1460s, and the town of Horta grew around the harbour.
- From the late 1800s Horta was a base for undersea telegraph cables. The first cable to Lisbon was laid in 1893, and cable stations worked here until 1969.
- Horta became a stop for Pan Am flying boats that crossed the Atlantic after 1939. The harbour and the marina still link the island to the ocean.
- Whaling was an important trade in the Azores until it ended in 1984. Scrimshaw is a craft from that time, and the museum above Peter Café Sport shows it.
- In 1957 the sea off the west coast began to erupt, and the island grew by about 2.4 km². Many people left Faial for North America. The story is told at Capelinhos Interpretation Centre and Horta Museum.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Portugal at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



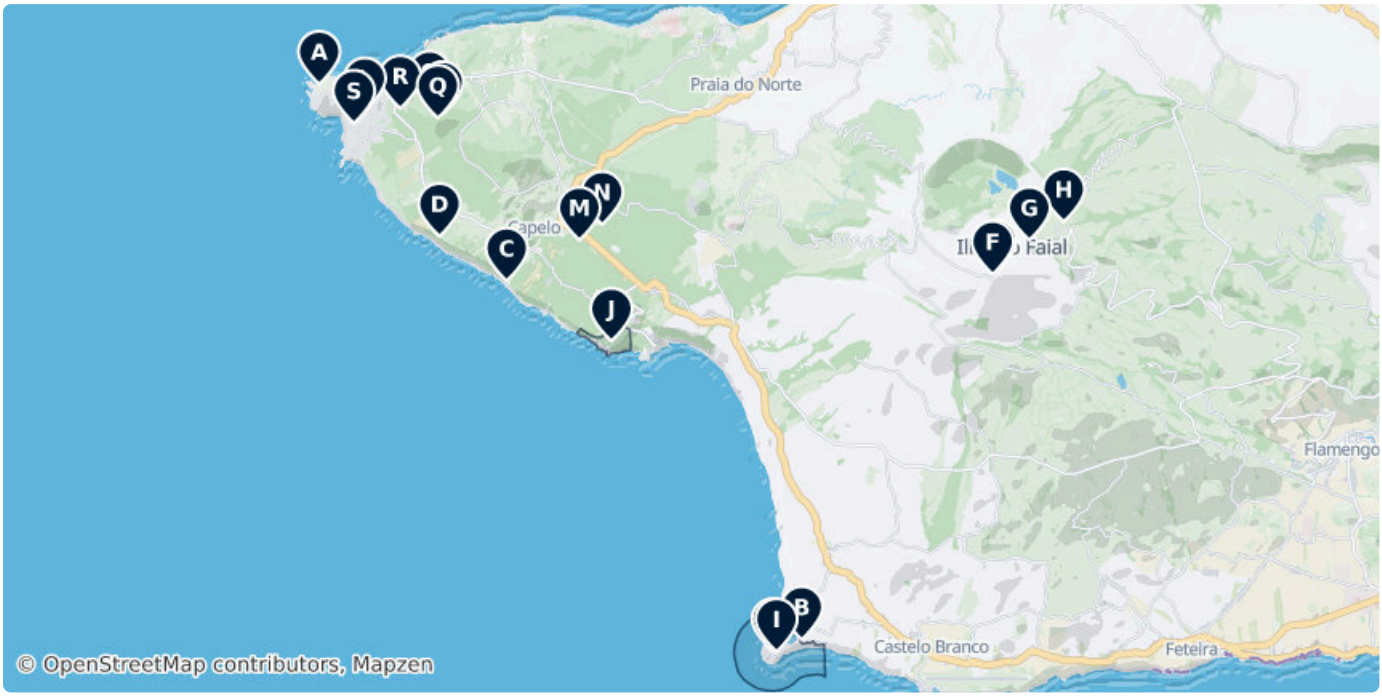
Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Portuguese

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Volcanic Views & Nature Reserve

This collection highlights Faial's volcanic landforms and coastal viewpoints: the Capelinhos 1957–58 eruption site and lighthouse area, high caldera rims and peaks like Cabeço Gordo, marine cliffs and whale lookouts, plus protected conservation zones and lava caves in the Capelo parish. Coordinates and accessibility notes included where available.





A Capelinhos Volcano

Site of the 1957–58 Capelinhos eruption with volcanic ash fields, a museum detailing the eruption and a stark lunar landscape extending to the sea.

Trilho do Vulcão, Horta, Portugal (38.60232, -28.83249)

mi.visitazores.com/en/venues/capelinhos-volcano-interpr...

B Miradouro para o Morro de Castelo Branco

Clifftop viewpoint overlooking the Morro de Castelo Branco area; accessible viewpoint with paved areas and panoramic sea views.

(38.52536, -28.74692)

C Miradouro do Escorregadouro

Coastal viewpoint offering views across recent lava flows and the basalt shoreline.

(38.57505, -28.79925)

D Miradouro do Farol do Vale Formoso

Viewpoint near the Vale Formoso lighthouse area with coastal vistas and nearby walking routes.

(38.58123, -28.81119)

E Miradouro do Cabeço Gordo

High-elevation viewpoint adjacent to the central ridge, providing expansive views toward the caldera and surrounding peaks.

Caminho Florestal da Caldeira, 9900-302 Horta, Portugal (38.57621, -28.71256)

F Cabeço Gordo

Cabeço Gordo is the highest point in the island of Faial, measuring 1,043 metres above sea level.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Portugal (38.57598, -28.71308)

G Miradouro da Caldeira

Lookout on the caldera rim with paved access and designated spaces for wheelchair users.

(38.58069, -28.70657)

H Alto do Cabouco Viewpoint

Elevated roadside viewpoint on Alto do Cabouco offering clear views into the central caldera and across Faial.

(38.58324, -28.70048)

I Morro de Castelo Branco Special Area of Conservation

Protected conservation zone around Morro de Castelo Branco; open 24/7 and managed for habitat preservation.

9900, Portugal (38.52367, -28.75140)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/SDF.aspx

J Ponta do Varadouro Special Area of Conservation

Coastal protected area at Ponta do Varadouro, designated for conservation and accessible at all hours.

Canada do Alexandre, 9900, Portugal (38.56670, -28.78069)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/SDF.aspx

K Morro do Castelo Branco

Extinct volcanic cone forming part of the Morro de Castelo Branco complex.

(38.52369, -28.75207)

L Costado da Nau

Sea cliff formation composed of layered basalt known locally as Costado da Nau, offering vertical coastal exposures.

(38.59862, -28.82441)

M Gruta do Cruzeiro

Lava tube cave located in the Capelo parish on Faial, formed by past volcanic flows.

(38.58070, -28.78635)

N Gruta do Parque do Capelo

Lava cave within the Capelo park area; unrestricted access and no entrance fee.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Portugal (38.58286, -28.78233)

O Gruta do Cabeço do Canto

Lava cave on the slopes of Cabeço do Canto in the Capelo freguesia.

9900, Portugal (38.59957, -28.81293)

P Cabeço do Canto

Volcanic cone feature forming part of the Cabeço do Canto complex.

(38.59811, -28.81062)

Q Cabeço do Canto

Peak situated on the caldera rim, marking the edge of the central depression.

9900, Portugal (38.59761, -28.81145)

R whale lookout

Former whale-spotting lookout positioned on coastal cliffs for cetacean observation.

(38.59894, -28.81812)

S Miradouro do Vulcão

Clifftop viewpoint named for its proximity to volcanic formations and lava fields.

(38.59689, -28.82635)

Sacred Sites of Faith

This collection groups twenty religious sites across Faial Island, including parish churches, small mountain hermitages (ermidas) and local Holy Spirit ceremonial buildings. Entries note parish location (Horta, Capelo, Cedros, Feteira, Pedro Miguel, Flamengos, Praia do Norte), architectural type and—where recorded—historic or community functions tied to local religious traditions.





A Nossa Senhora Ajuda Church

Parish church serving Pedro Miguel within the municipality of Horta on Faial; local Roman Catholic place of worship.

3 Rua da Igreja, 9900427, Portugal (38.57529, -28.61855)



B Igreja de Santa Catarina

Portuguese Roman Catholic parish church located in the parish of Castelo Branco, municipality of Horta.

133 Largo Padre José Correia da Rosa, 9900323, Portugal (38.52511, -28.72611)



C Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Esperança

Roman Catholic parish church in the locality of Norte Pequeno, within the parish of Capelo on Faial.

37A Estrada Regional 3-2A, 9900, Portugal
(38.60312, -28.80339)



D Church of Santa Bárbara

The Church of Santa Bárbara is a church in the civil parish of Cedros, municipality of Horta, on the Portuguese island of Faial in the...

91 Estrada Regional 1-1A, 9900, Portugal
(38.63534, -28.69298)



E Igreja de Nossa Senhora de Fátima

Roman Catholic church located in Ribeira Funda in the parish of Cedros, municipality of Horta.

Estrada Regional 1-1, 9900-347 Horta, Portugal
(38.61866, -28.73121)



F Church of Our Lady of Anguish

Roman Catholic church situated in the Angústias parish of Horta, part of the island's historic religious quarter.

60 Rua das Angústias, Horta 9900018, Portugal
(38.52819, -28.62701)



G Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Carmo

Roman Catholic church serving the municipality of Horta on Faial Island.

Largo do Carmo, Horta 9900171, Portugal (38.53884, -28.62889)



H Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Penha de França

Small hermitage on the Fajã da Praia do Norte, associated with the Praia do Norte parish and local devotional practices.

Rua da Ermida, 9900, Portugal (38.60900, -28.76487)



I Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Saúde

Hermitage located on the Fajã do Varadouro in the parish of Capelo; a local Roman Catholic devotional site.

1 Caminho da Formosinha, 9900302, Portugal (38.56941, -28.77977)



J Ermida de São João da Caldeira

Hermitage positioned in the parish of Flamengos within Horta municipality on Faial.

Estrada Regional 1-2, 9900-404 Horta, Portugal (38.56177, -28.66213)



K Igreja ao Divino Espírito Santo

Roman Catholic church located in the parish of Feteira, municipality of Horta on Faial Island.

53 Rua da Igreja, 9900361, Portugal (38.52403, -28.67377)



L Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Caridade da Feteira

Local Holy Spirit ceremonial building serving the Feteira parish community in Horta.

55 Rua da Igreja, 9900361, Portugal (38.52409, -28.67404)



M Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Coroa Velha

Holy Spirit ceremonial building located in the Castelo Branco parish (Coroa Velha area) of Horta.

142 Rua da Igreja, 9900323, Portugal (38.52532, -28.72662)

N Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Ribeira do Cabo

Holy Spirit ceremonial building situated in the Ribeira do Cabo area; functioning as a local place of worship.

Estrada Regional 1-1A, 9900302, Portugal (38.57238, -28.77063)

O Império do Divino Espírito Santo do Farrobim

Holy Spirit ceremonial building in the Farrobim area, used for local religious festivities and worship.

15 Travessa do Farrobim, 9900, Portugal (38.52966, -28.69393)

P Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Atalaia

Holy Spirit ceremonial building located in the Atalaia area of Faial; serves parish devotional events.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Portugal (38.53307, -28.68240)

Q Império do Divino Espírito Santo de São Pedro

Holy Spirit ceremonial building serving the São Pedro area; part of local Roman Catholic community rituals.

27 Rua de São Pedro, 9900, Portugal (38.53188, -28.68343)

R Império do Divino Espírito Santo das Grotas

Holy Spirit ceremonial building in the Grotas area, used for traditional community religious observances.

45 Rua da Portela, 9900361, Portugal (38.53786, -28.67572)

S Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Portela

Holy Spirit ceremonial building located in the Portela area; a parish-level place of worship.

15 Rua do Algar, 9900, Portugal (38.53667, -28.66387)

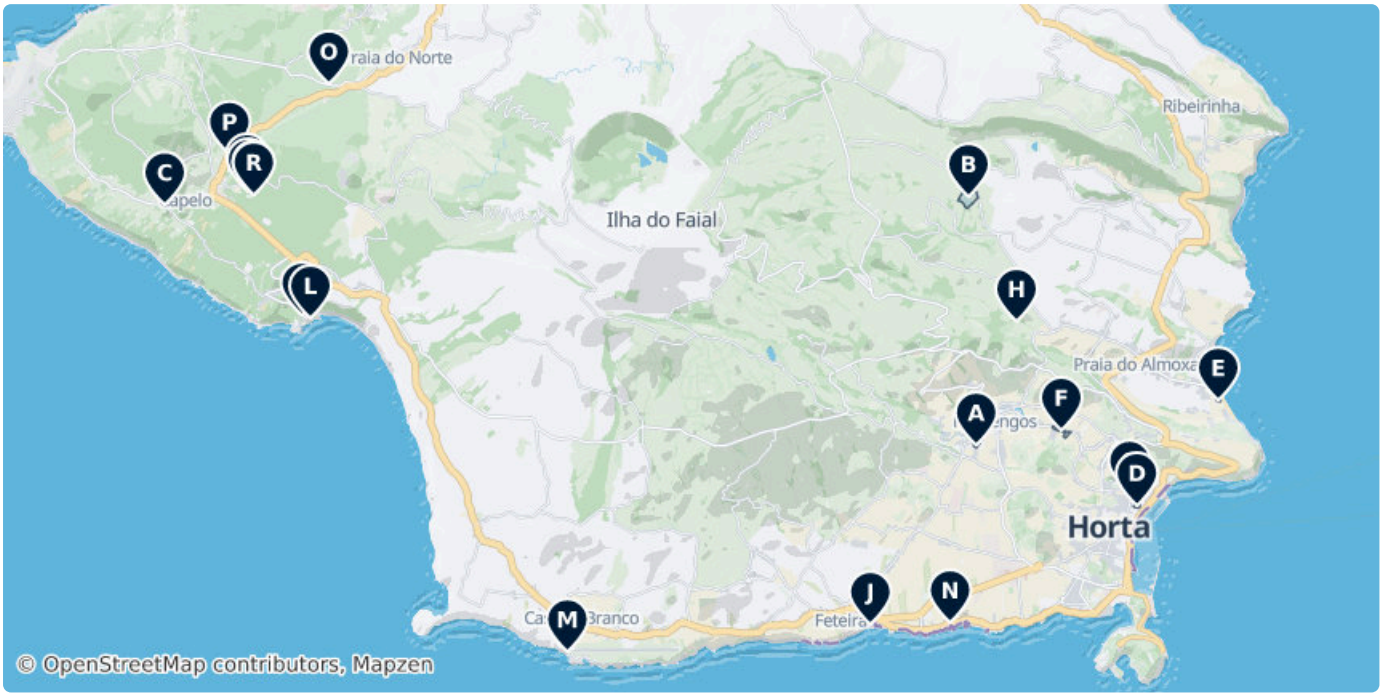
T Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Cruz

Holy Spirit ceremonial building in the Cruz area, associated with local Roman Catholic festivities.

19 Rua do Lameiro Grande, 9900, Portugal (38.54676, -28.65617)

Parks and Gardens

This collection maps 19 green spaces across Faial Island, from the 8,000 m² Faial Botanical Garden and its Pedro Miguel nucleus to small municipal gardens in Horta and purpose-built forest parks in Capelo and Chão Frio. Entries include formal botanical collections, planted civic gardens, designated picnic areas with covered shelters and accessible facilities, and developing woodland parks used for leisure and local conservation.



A Jardim Público dos Flamengos

Public garden in the parish of Flamengos with planted trees and walking paths.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Portugal (38.54842, -28.65370)

B Jardim Botânico do Faial - Núcleo de Pedro Miguel

Satellite nucleus of the Faial Botanical Garden located in Pedro Miguel, housing curated plant collections.

9900, Portugal (38.58296, -28.65509)

C Jardim das Laranjeiras

Municipal garden in the Laranjeiras area with ornamental plantings.

(38.58180, -28.79812)

D Jardim da República

Civic garden in Horta used for public recreation and local greenery.

7 Rua dos Bombeiros Voluntários, Horta 9900, Portugal (38.54001, -28.62510)

E Jardim Cónego Silva Reis

Garden named after Cónego Silva Reis, a planted urban green space.

1 Rua da Igreja, 9900451, Portugal (38.55466, -28.61062)



F Faial Botanical Garden

Botanical garden of Faial covering about 8,000 m² in Horta, featuring organized plant collections and visitor facilities; entry is paid.

Rua de São Lourenço 23, 9900-401 Flamengos (38.55048, -28.63857)

parquesnaturais.azores.gov.pt/en/faial-... , +351 292948140



G Jardim Florêncio Terra

Located in Horta, this garden contains municipal plantings and urban landscaping.

5 Bairro da Vista Alegre, Horta 9900, Portugal (38.54173, -28.62641)



H Parque do Poço das Asas

Forest park at Chão Frio (Poço/Poça das Asas), a developing woodland area for conservation and leisure.

Poço das Asas, 9900, Portugal (38.56560, -28.64652)

I Parque Florestal do Capelo

Capelo forest park—a wooded recreational area on Faial's western side.

Caminho do Parque, 9900302, Portugal (38.58365, -28.78326)

Jun 01-Jul 31 Mo–Fr	08:30–16:30
Jun 01-Jul 31 Sa–Su	08:30–21:00
Aug 01-Aug 31 Mo–Su	08:30–21:00
Oct 01-May 31 Mo–Su	08:30–16:30

J Parque de Lazer de Feteira

Recreational park serving the Feteira community with open green space.

(38.52348, -28.67253)

K Parque de Lazer do Varadouro

Picnic and leisure area at Varadouro with seating and open lawns.

(38.56649, -28.77371)

L Poço de Maré

Picnic site known locally as Poço de Maré, adjacent to coastal Varadouro features.

(38.56605, -28.77218)

M Zona de Lazer de Castelo Branco

Designated picnic and leisure zone in Castelo Branco.

(38.51967, -28.72646)

N Parque de merendas da Lajinha

Picnic area at Lajinha with tables and informal rest facilities.

Estrada Regional 1-1A, 9900, Portugal
(38.52371, -28.65837)

viewpoints.azores.gov.pt/viewpoint/110

O Parque de Merendas do Cedro

Cedro picnic area providing sheltered tables and outdoor seating.

Caminho da Fajã, 9900473, Portugal (38.59861, -28.76892)

viewpoints.azores.gov.pt/viewpoint/105

P Parque de Merendas de Santana

Santana picnic site with basic rest-area amenities.

Caminho Goulart, 9900302, Portugal (38.58885, -28.78660)

viewpoints.azores.gov.pt/viewpoint/104

Q Casa de Merendas

Covered picnic shelter with wheelchair access and fixed seating.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Portugal (38.58333, -28.78229)

R Casa de Merendas

Covered picnic shelter providing accessible seating and protection from weather.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Portugal (38.58318, -28.78224)

S Casa de Merendas

Covered picnic shelter with wheelchair access and communal tables.

(38.58435, -28.78347)

DATA SOURCES

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