



DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF 35 CLASSIFIED WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS



ART
AGORES ASSOCIAÇÃO
REGIONAL
DE TURISMO

AZORES INFORMATIVE GUIDE WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

FAIAL · GRACIOSA · PICO · SÃO JORGE · TERCEIRA · CORVO · FLORES

ART ASSOCIAÇÃO
AÇORES REGIONAL
DE TURISMO

**FAIAL
GRACIOSA
PICO
SAO JORGE
TERCEIRA**

AÇORES
INFORMATIVE GUIDE
WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

**CORVO
FLORES**

CORVO

FLORES

GRACIOSA

SÃO JORGE

FAIAL

PICO

TERCEIRA

SÃO MIGUEL

SANTA MARIA

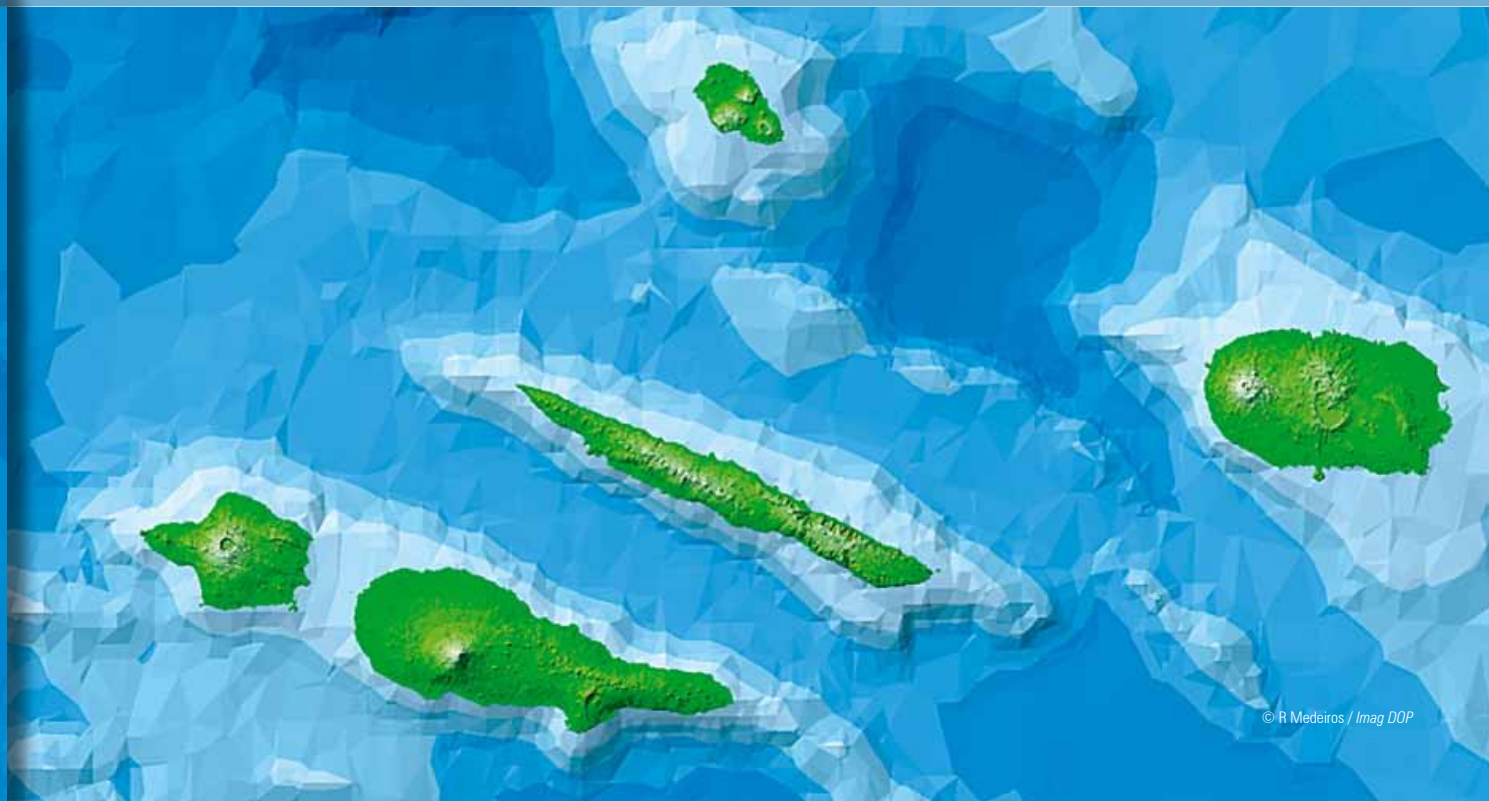
AZORES ARCHIPELAGO



WEST GROUP



CENTRAL GROUP

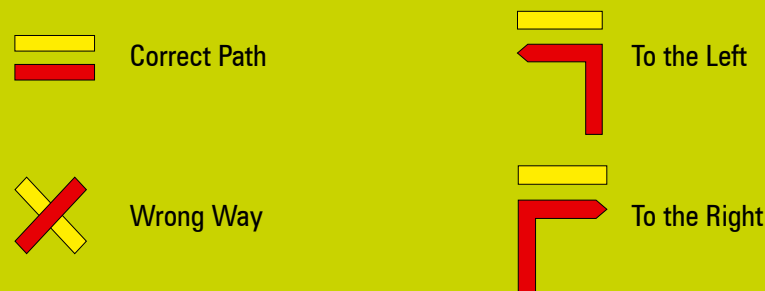


Code of Conduct

Although hiking and walking don't have specific rules, there are standards of conduct and care that should be taken when engaging in this activity.

- If possible, never hike alone;
- Let someone, possibly the reception of your hotel, know the route you will be taking and when you plan to return;
- Make sure that you have the right equipment and the necessary provisions;
- Avoid going off the identified trail, and don't take shortcuts;
- Respect the existing signs;
- Maintain a disciplined rhythm, and avoid perturbing the surroundings;
- Do not leave trash about. Take it with you to the nearest rubbish bin;
- Don't disturb the animals. Observe the wild fauna from an appropriate distance, especially during mating and nesting seasons. Domestic cattle, although gentle, don't like strangers approaching their calves;
- Do not collect or destroy plants or geological formations. Simply observe and take photographs;
- Respect private property. On cultivated fields, don't leave traces of your presence; always walk next to the walls or on the paths. Leave the property properly closed up, just as you found it;
- Alert other hikers, that you might come across, to the dangers that you may have found;
- Always be available to call for help or give help to other hikers who may need it;
- Interact with the local people that you come across, and get to know their culture and history;
- Protect the forest's resources. Report fires, vandalism and other environmental crimes.

Signaling (Small Route)



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INTRODUCTION

Editor's Note

It is with great pleasure that the Regional Tourism Association releases the second edition of the Informative Guide, Hiking and Walking Trails in the Azores. We do this with redoubled pleasure, because this second edition is indicative of the enormous success that was the first edition, and, because of the increased number of trails. There are new trails on the islands of the central group that have been developed and trails on the islands of Corvo and Flores, which make up the western group of the archipelago.

This book is for all nature lovers who like to walk and enjoy what nature has to offer. If you are one, this guide will be an indispensable tool in helping you select the trails that offer the type of hiking that you want to accomplish.

This new edition has 35 approved hiking and walking trails in the Autonomous Region of the Azores, more precisely those on the islands of the central and western groups. All the trails have something different to offer walkers, a landscape, an aroma, a sound or an emotion that will remain with you for many years. Anyone who has walked these paths will know what I mean, those preparing to walk these trails for the first time, will live an experience they will want to repeat.

All that is left to say is that this work was only possible because the Association Os Montanheiros accepted, once again, the challenge of continuing this partnership and contributing to the promotion of the best that the Azores has to offer. I conclude hoping that this second edition is an equal or larger success than the previous, and that whoever brings this guide under their arm has a nice walk in its company, with the guide as an interpreter of the places that they will pass, and telling the stories that nature cannot put into words.

President of the Regional Tourism Association (ART)
Sandro Paim

Interpretive Tours. Intertwining what the eyes don't see.

After the release in 2009 of the first edition of this guidebook, for the islands of the Central Group, we wondered how it would be received by its target audience. It was with pleasure that we watched tourists, around coffee tables, on park benches or on street corners, flipping through the guide and discussing which route to take. When there was an opportunity, we asked what they thought of the work, and although the Anglo-Saxon tourists gave more elaborate answers, from the other tourists there was always a "very nice".

We agree. This guide was at least nice, and the proof is in the fact that a considerable print run sold out, before the end of the second year after its release.

As good things happen, we were pleased to receive a new invitation, from the Regional Tourism Association, to collaborate on this new edition. The challenge, this time, was in describing 14 new routes in addition to the 21 already described, thus increasing by 66% the previous edition. Even more interesting was the expansion to the Western Group, with the inclusion of the islands of Flores and Corvo. This expansion allows a wider diversity, within the region, in the supply in terms of scenarios, and gives information about some of the most emblematic walking trails in the region.

We follow the same model as the previous edition, favouring the exchange of information and experience. Calling attention to details and complementing what we see with interpretative descriptions of living things, of lifeless things, of the natural phenomena, but also of man's relationship with the environment in the search for primary resources essential to their livelihood.

This product, as we have witnessed, was used by tourists both visitors and locals, but it was also used as guide in pedagogic environmental and cultural interpretation tours for schools and other entities.

We renew our thanks to the Board of the Regional Tourism Association for their vote of confidence in yet another successful partnership.

The President of the Board of Directors
of the Os Montanheiros Association
Paulo José Mendes Barcelos

FAIAL

PR1FAI Capelo - Capelinhos (*Pág. 12*) **PRC4FAI** Caldeira (*Pág. 26*)
PRC2FAI Rocha da Fajã (*Pág. 18*) **PRC5FAI** Hike to the Hillock of Castelo Branco (*Pág. 32*)



...On the volcano route, among deep calderas and dusty volcanic hills.

FAIAL
 GRACIOSA
 PICO
 SAO JORGE
 TERCEIRA
 CORVO
 FLORES

CAPELO – CAPELINHOS

PRIFAI



From Green to Ash

This trail takes you from the unpretentious urban sprawl of Capelo over volcanic knolls until you are at Capelinhos. The basaltic cones of the monogenetic volcanoes made by the volcanic eruptions are called “cabeços” by the locals.

The trail begins where the road *Caminho de Penetração do Cabeço Verde* meets the main road. Our main objective is to reach its summit. It is a climb that can be done in an automobile, since, after the paved road there is a network of secondary roads, one of which goes to the summit of *Cabeço Verde*. On the sides of the road grow plants both ornamental and wild. As we walk along the road, we see species such as *Oenothera* with large yellow flowers, Spanish flag (*Lantana câmara*), hydrangeas, the beautiful red of the irises (*Crocasmia crocosmiiflora*), honeysuckles (*Lonicera caprifolium*), blackberry thickets with their large berries, and currant bushes with their still green fruits.

At the intersection with a worn dirt road, turn left. The sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) and the cedars (*Cryptomeria*) give way to a growing number of other trees where we can see the *Picconia azorica*, the *Myrica faya*, laurels and tree heath (*Erica arborea*), with the endemic Azores ivy (*Hedera azorica*) climbing them.

Higher up, next to the road, the scars on the embankments of the hill reveal the true nature of this volcano. Under the superficial green forest we see red volcanic residue and severe boulders. On one side the Morro (Hill) de Castelo Branco personalizes the coast line, on the other side the Cabeço Verde



with its antennas mocks us.

We reach another crossroads. Turn right and start the climb. At this higher altitude the resident species are now the ferns (*Woodwardia radicans*) with long falling leaves mixed on the embankments with hydrangeas, Azores ivy and several other plants. Two signs appear suddenly: "Caldeirão" and "Furna Ruim". Keep climbing. On the way down you will be able to stop here.



When you reach the top, follow to the right a road that crowns the hill around its crater filled with vegetation. The highest point is at 488 metres. Down below, we see the cut-out of the bay, Baía das Cabras, and the houses of the Fajã da Praia do Norte before the land climbs to the top of the Alto da Baleia. Continue forward to see first, the Cabeço do Canto in the foreground, then, the entire south coast of the island. On the climb to the top of the caldera we see the *Cabeço do Fogo*, which was formed during the eruption in 1672. Now it's

easy to see that you are on top of an alignment of volcanic cones, the last of which formed fifty years ago, the Capelinhos.

Begin the walk down, now to the Furna Ruim and Caldeirão. From the road, follow a straight path with a rough staircase and handrail made of Tree heath (*Erica arborea*) wood. On the path among the holly, the Picconia azorica, the Berry bushes (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*), *Hypericum*s and *Woodwardias* we become aware that to our left the brush hides something dark and deep. We come upon a small viewpoint that is ready to reveal to us a portion of this creation of nature - the Furna Ruim (Wicked Cave). Two things catch my eye here - the dimensions of the lowland entrance to the cave with deep and scary inclines, and, right next to me, dressing the trees like curtains hanging from the branches, the *Neckera intermédia*, a rare moss in the Azores.

Keep going under the sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) for 20 metres and turn right on the darker straight path. BE CAREFUL the path on the far right will take you on a different course than the one we wish to follow. Reaching the sunshine again, there is a small viewpoint on the right. The crater, Caldeirão (Large Caldera) is at your feet and the volcanic hill a little farther on is the Cabeço do Canto, your next destination. In the distance the Capelinhos volcano starts to reveal itself. Flanking the Caldeirão, walk down another straight path, steep in some spots, until you reach the road.



Following the signs, cross the road and begin to climb again to reach the top of the hill, Cabeço do Canto. Climb under the cover of tall woods of Sweet pittosporums and Tree heath (*Erica arborea*) that shade the plants that invade the road: *Myrsine africana* L., ivy, and the uncommon (at least around here) *Pteris incomplete*, a fern whose leaves are divided at the base.

Get ready for the final ascent to the Cabeço do Canto, despite some wooden steps, the climb is steep and the path is slippery.

Once at the top, go around the summit to the right between the Tree heaths (*Erica arborea*) that form a hard path where almost nothing else grows. When you reach the triangulation pillar at 346 metres of altitude, you have an excellent view of the Capelinhos Volcano and the lighthouse that witnessed its creation. Don't miss this photo opportunity.

Return down the same path that you climbed and turn right at the road. Farther ahead, turn right again onto another path covered with ash and sand that make the ground unpredictable. This road connects to a path that goes straight down, between bamboos, fig trees and brushwood where the smell of *Lantana camara* L. pervades. The path reaches the road again from behind a building - the old Capelinhos Museum, closed in 2007. Follow the road to the right for about one kilometre and you will be at the CAPELINHOS VOLCANO where you can visit the Interpretive Centre opened in August of 2008. This project, which includes permanent expositions, a climb to the lighthouse tower and 3-D movies, is a must see.



CAPELINHOS

The Capelinhos Volcano is a surtseyan eruption and an integral part of the Capelo volcano complex. It is located at the end of a NW-SE cone alignment.

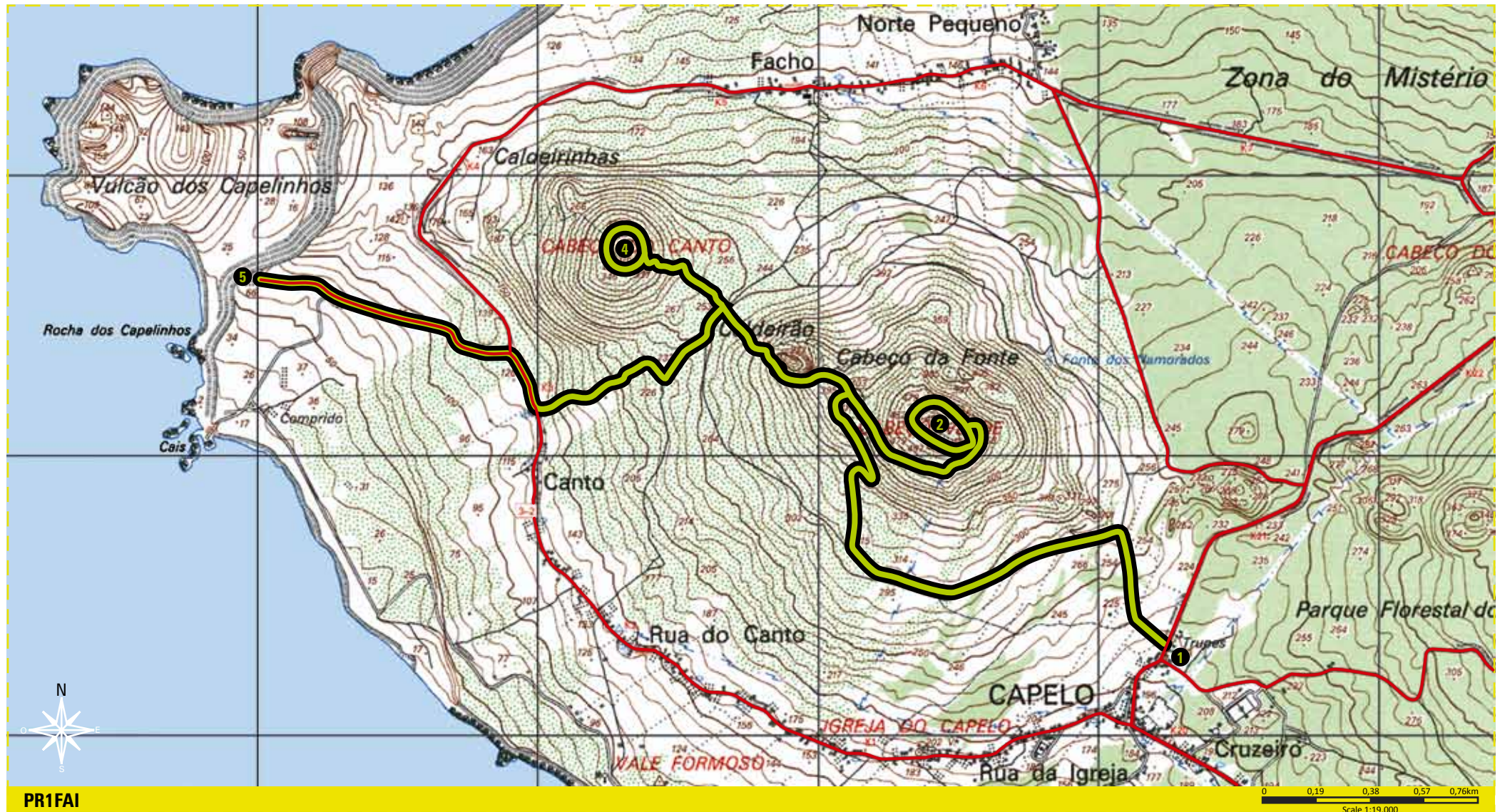
The eruptions that originated the volcano occurred from the 27th of September of 1957 to the 24th of October of 1958. No human losses were registered as a result of the eruption and related seismic activity. However, the eruption and the earthquakes destroyed homes and agricultural land in the neighbouring parishes. This loss resulted in emigration to the United States of America, and a 50% decrease in the population of the island.

The pronounced erosion in the fifty years since the initial eruption has reduced this volcano to 65% of its original size. However, this is still an active volcano that releases toxic gases and vapour through a volcanic vent.

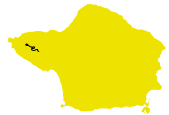
Because of the geological nature of the site, the volcano may only be visited using the marked trails and with a licensed guide.

The lighthouse that shows where the coast used to end can now be visited.



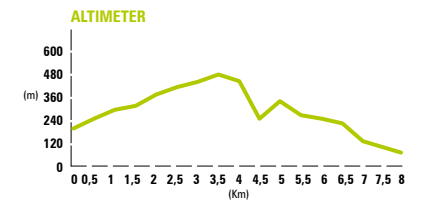


CAPELO - CAPELINHOS



1. Start of trail
2. Cabeço Verde
3. Furna Ruim
4. Cabeço do Canto
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 8 Km
- START: Cabeço Verde Road
- END: Capelinhos Interpretative Centre
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Caldeira and Capelinhos -
- Community Interest Site/Special Protection Area



FAIAL

ROCHA DA FAJÃ

PR2FAI



On the 1672 lavas

With the Cabeço do Fogo as a background, this trail begins at the parish of Praia do Norte where, on the regional road, begins the street Rua da Arramada. There, you will find the sign of the start of the trail. Pass the first houses and turn right onto the street Rua do Cemitério (Cemetery Street).



You will quickly find the cemetery with its chapel dating from 1889.

Continue down through apparently poor agricultural land. Here the cultivations are potatoes, pumpkins and predominantly corn, with a lot of bamboo thrown in.

Farther on, you reach a junction with two roads, one leads to the footpath that leads to the "fajã" (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris), and another that leads to the old footpath that will bring you back. We pass some water tanks with greenish water. However, instead of the normal sound of frogs we hear, instead, the machines working at the stone quarry of the "fajã".

We reach a small square pasture flanked by the arrowhead plant *Sagittaria acutifolia* and common box (*Buxus sempervirens*). This pasture is the entrance to the old footpath used to reach the "fajã" that was cut into the rock by Man's necessity. We see the first views of the houses and territories of the "fajã". Kites, the birds of prey, fly overhead. The most interesting flora are the tufts of *Carex hochstetteriana*, *Polypodium azoricum*, Azores ivy (*Hedera azorica*), *Smilax divaricata*, *Lysimachia azorica*, *Picconia azorica*, all endemic, and the fern with star-shaped leaves *Asplenium hemionitis*.



It is a very enjoyable walk down with the sun shining through the tree tops of a variety of species: Cryptomerias, poplars, Sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*), *Myrica faya aiton*, and black locusts (*Robinias pseudoacácia*). The zigzag descent is easy and safe, sometimes on stone steps, and others on gentle slopes. At each sharp turn that we make, sometimes with small detours, it is possible to take panoramic pictures of the houses on the "fajã" and the lavas on the coast.

Close to the end, we pass a 1937 fountain dedicated to Our Lady of the Crag, and start to see the semi-wild

grapevines creeping up the trees, holding on to the branches with their tendrils to avoid dropping the bunches of grapes.

We end the descent next to the Ribeira (Creek) do Serrado Novo. The trail continues through an area of orchards and quickly reaches a red basaltic pumice road that leads to the vineyards and

wineries. You will begin to hear the ocean beating against the stone of the beach and can finally appreciate the Rocha (Crag) da Fajã that we climbed down. You can see the V-shaped top, where the Ribeira (Creek) das Cabras lunges from the heights.



At the "fajã" some of the wineries are well restored and serve as summer houses for some of the residents of Faial. Others remain true to their origins serving as wineries. This is still a vineyard and winery area. There are also some permanent residents here.

You reach the car park for the sandy beach of the "fajã". As is obvious from the posted signs, this bathing area has no lifeguard on duty; however, it is very popular, especially for surfing. It has public bathrooms.

Following the coastal road a little further, you reach the Parque (Park) da Fajã where you can picnic under the shade of a willow or drink from the fountain.

Continuing the hike, you pass a tide well, from 1768 that belonged to the Cerca (the Hedge mentioned below), covered with a safety net after the 1998 earthquake dislodged stones.

Keep going until you reach the port, Porto da Fajã, with a table, a fountain and a water tank where the island

canaries and the sparrows come to drink. On the black lavas of the port, cemented footpaths allow fishermen to access their favourite fishing spots.

Nothing in this "fajã" is from before 1672. If a "fajã" existed before that time, it was certainly much smaller and probably, judging from the cliffs, made from rock debris. The present terrain is a result of the lava flows from the eruption of 1672 at the Cabeço do Fogo. Where the Varadouro (name for an area of ramps and docks) is today, the lava also flowed. It spread in the ocean and formed raised horizontal platforms of bare rock, temporarily isolating from the rest of the island the Capelo area with its 45 houses and 160 inhabitants. Human ingenuity quickly took advantage of the adversity brought by nature. On the lava carved land grapevines were planted. Corn was planted on the more developed soils. Follow the path and leave the Porto da Fajã to enter the "Cerca" (Hedge). On the right side of the path are Pohutukawas and a very old barn that is still in use.



Upon entering the courtyard, surrounded by buildings and a large gate, through which you will leave, you have the feeling that you are inside a large private property - this was the heart of the HEDGE. Today, Mr. António Medeiros and Mrs. Maria Emília, the current proprietors of a portion of the land that comprised the old Hedge, greeted me. They have an infallible memory in spite of their advanced age and they kindly gave me a

guided tour.

Inside the winery, Mr. António calls to my attention the crossbeams and the screw from the winepress made of Brasilwood (*Caesalpinia echinata*) red and hard. The Brasilwood was brought to the dock at Horta by the caravels and other vessels and bought by "Men with enough wealth to afford it".

The corn was ground on the ground floor of the two storey mill, and on the upper floor were the sleeping quarters for the farm manager and some of the workers. A millstone decorated with limpet shells is still there serving as a tabletop on a cement pedestal. Mr. António used to go catch

limpets in a rowboat at a bank near the lighthouse... before there was a Capelinhos.

Isolated from the houses there is a reservoir with capacity for 109 casks of water (more than 45,000 litres). There is another reservoir next to the winery, which you can climb to enjoy the scenery. The second reservoir was used for the two stills that were installed for the production of the local spirit (aguardente).

Leaving the Hedge you come to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Crag of France. The story tells us that in eighteenth century France in a per-

secution of the Church, the Queen had the images of the saints boxed and put to sea. This is the explanation of how this image of Our Lady washed ashore on the beach of the "fajã". The inhabitants tried to carry the image to the church at Praia do Norte. Strangely the image became so heavy that the men who were carrying it could not carry it any farther. Interpreting this as a divine sign that the "Saint did not want to leave the fajã"; they turned back and in 1790 built this chapel.

Climb the street, Rua da Ermida, and turn left at Rua do Porto. Farther ahead, turn right again onto Rua de Portugal. Pass the last houses that you will see at the "fajã", and begin climbing on pavement until you reach an apparently abandoned water reservoir across the road from a collection of beehives. The sign to turn left appears a few meters before you actually turn left.

At the sign with "Praia do Norte 1,5 km" take the path known as, "Ladeira dos Burros" (Donkey Slope). This path leads back to the top with a gentler slope. This is an area of chestnut trees. We see reeds; some of which were probably used fairly recently to make fishing rods for coastal fishing. The footpath narrows as it zigzags between the poles for the medium-voltage power lines. You easily reach the top of the crag and the rural service footpath. The footpath is the access to several agricultural enclosures, the last of which is next to some of the oldest houses on this road and of Praia do Norte. Turn left through some turns, the last, crosses the riverbed of a tributary of the Ribeira do Serrado. A little farther up you can see the arches of the bridge built in 1886, probably as a substitute for a more basic bridge.

Soon you come to the road we already travelled. Retrace your steps back to your vehicle.



THE CERCA (THE HEDGE)

The Cerca has, perhaps, the oldest existing building in the "fajã", and was probably the first to be built in the 1760's. This property of about 14.5 hectares with a large ocean-front was so named because it was completely walled in by high stone walls, many of which still survive. The property had large entrance gates at several locations. One of them was next to the port, at the start of the road that will take you to the housing and agricultural buildings.

At night, all the gates, some with their typical hammer door knockers, were closed, thus isolating the Cerca from the rest of the island. One of them has inscribed, on the back side of the head jamb, 1761, probably the oldest that can be seen.

The main products were: wine, mainly verdelho, having produced as much as 30 casks of wine in one year, and corn, also with a large cultivation for bread making. There were many mouths to feed. Now in ruins, the ovens are testimony of the large amount of bread that was baked. Nowadays other products have joined the traditional ones: sweet potatoes, pumpkins and figs.

On your right is a group of buildings that were used as the winery (and still are) and the mill to crush the grain. Large stones have been placed on the exterior as benches. The largest stone was the head jamb of the Lower Gate that was the exit from this square to the street that you climbed. The others are from the first wine press, when the grapes were still crushed by the worker's feet. The first wine press was dismantled in the early twentieth century when a more modern press was installed.

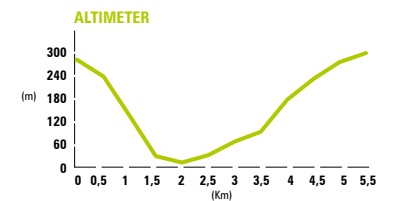


ROCHA DA FAJÃ



1. Start and End of trail
2. Praia do Norte
3. Fajã da Praia do Norte

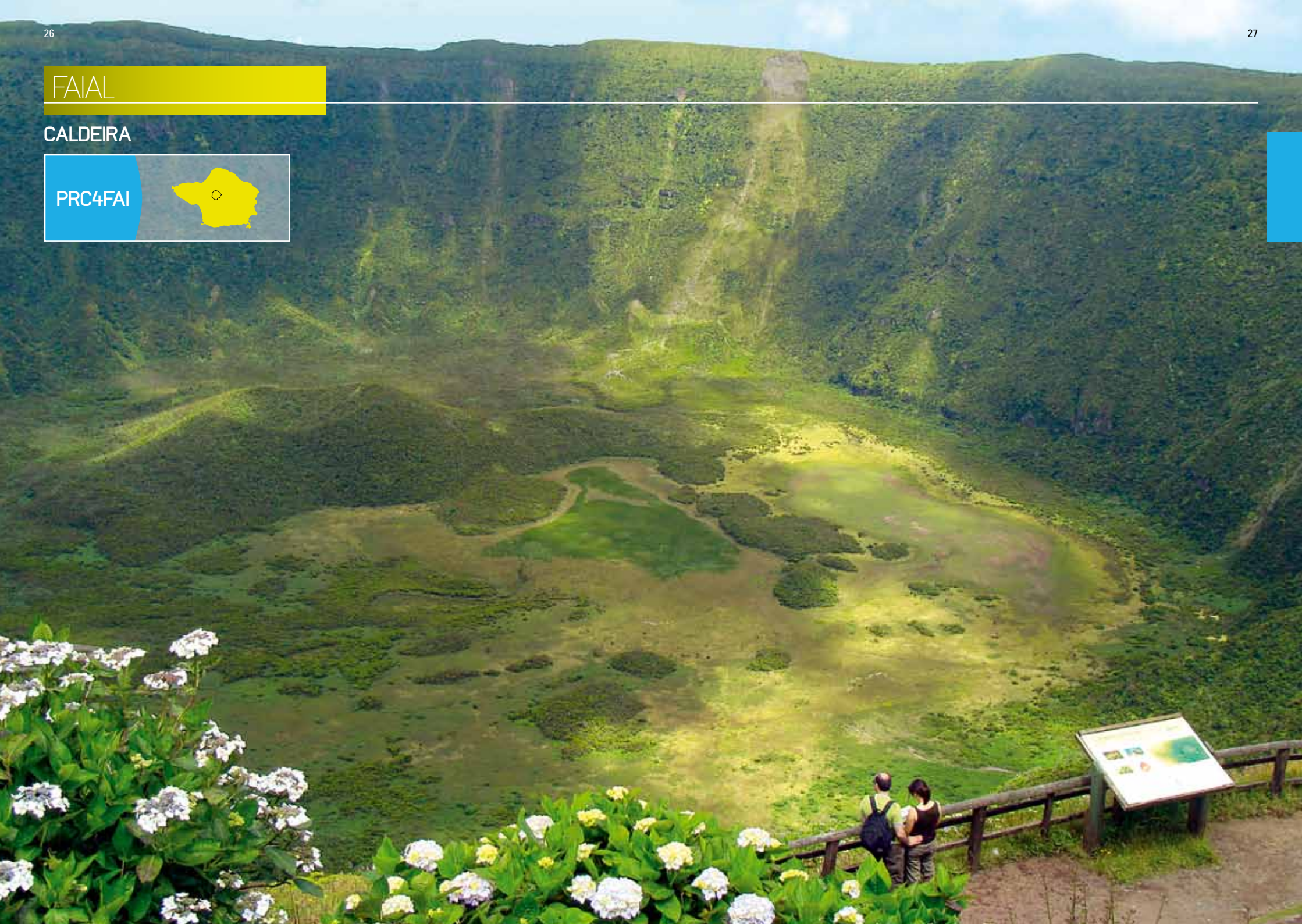
- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 5,5 Km
- START: Arramada (Road)
- END: Arramada (Road)
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Caldeira e Capelinhos -
- Community Interest Site/Special Protection Area



FAIAL

CALDEIRA

PRC4FAI



On the crown of the island

At the end of the road that accesses the Caldeira (Caldera) cross the tunnel for a first view of the landscape and to read the information on the plaque before you begin the hike. The plaque has precious information about this magnificent geological structure and its habitats.



The Caldeira (Caldera) is the result of the largest eruption of all the eruptions that contributed to the making of the Island of Faial. This trachyte volcano formed a large volcano that, in its final stage, post-eruption, suffered the collapse and depression of its interior walls and upper edges creating the gap we call caldera. The evolution of the materials that deposited on the bottom turned the surface and the under soil impermeable enough to create small lakes during the rainy season. It is unlikely that they will have water during the season that you visit.

This trail only has a sign marking the beginning of the trail. Because it is a circular trail around the summit on a well worn path, further signs are unnecessary. Since hikers are frequent on this trail, it is easy to see where we are going. The main security concern is that the trail should not be attempted if it is foggy. Besides, the fog would not allow us to enjoy the beauty of the trail. Although the trail is circular, we recommend that you walk in a counter-clockwise direction by going to the right. Looking from the exterior, we see the slopes of the Caldeira that go down to the sea, and the majestic island of Pico. The trail's dirt ground is marked with the footprints of visitors. If it is summer, you will be able to appreciate a true summer flourish. View the white of the *Panicles*, grass spikes, clovers and Centaury (*Centaureum scilloides*); the yellow flowers of the *Lotus*, *Parentucellias* and *Lysimachias*; and the purple of the *Prunellas* and thyme, with other colours and tones mixed in.

The exterior slopes of the volcano are covered by semi-natural pastures, sometimes delimited by hedges of *Cryptomerias*, hydrangeas or indigenous species that form patterns in the landscape. The grand reservoir of the island is the summit and the interior of the caldera. Here we find many species of natural flora of the

Azores, where many ENDEMIC species stand out. On the inside, where the cows don't reach, the slopes have multicoloured mountain pastures, sometimes with peat moss, *Sphagnum*.

Occasionally, the trail splits into two paths, which are parallel with a distance of 2 or 3 metres

between them, and then merges into one again a little ahead. We recommend that you always follow the higher path so that you can enjoy the beautiful view to the exterior.

After passing a wood and barbed wire gate, you realize that you have to share the path with some gentle multicoloured cows that are pasturing in some improbable spots. The trail may be degraded in spots from the cow's hooves, so it requires some attention to where you step.

At the bottom of the Caldeira, you can see a small volcanic cone from a later eruption.

In the middle of the trail we have, in front of us, the alignment of the volcanic cones (*cabecos*) that made the island grow. The last one is the Capelinhos volcano. You can see the deep gashes caused by erosion on the pumice stone of the exterior slope.

You are nearing the triangulation pillar of the Alto do Brejo. A little farther on, in front of the Alto do Guarda-Sol, above the trachytic dome named Altar, the interior slopes seem to have been ploughed.

You pass a small building in ruins, maybe an old shelter for the shepherds, and you reach the paved road that will take you to the top of Cabeço Gordo. When you pass between the two largest antennas have a last look at the landscape. You can already see the car park - walk down to it. And don't forget that Faial has more trails for you to hike.

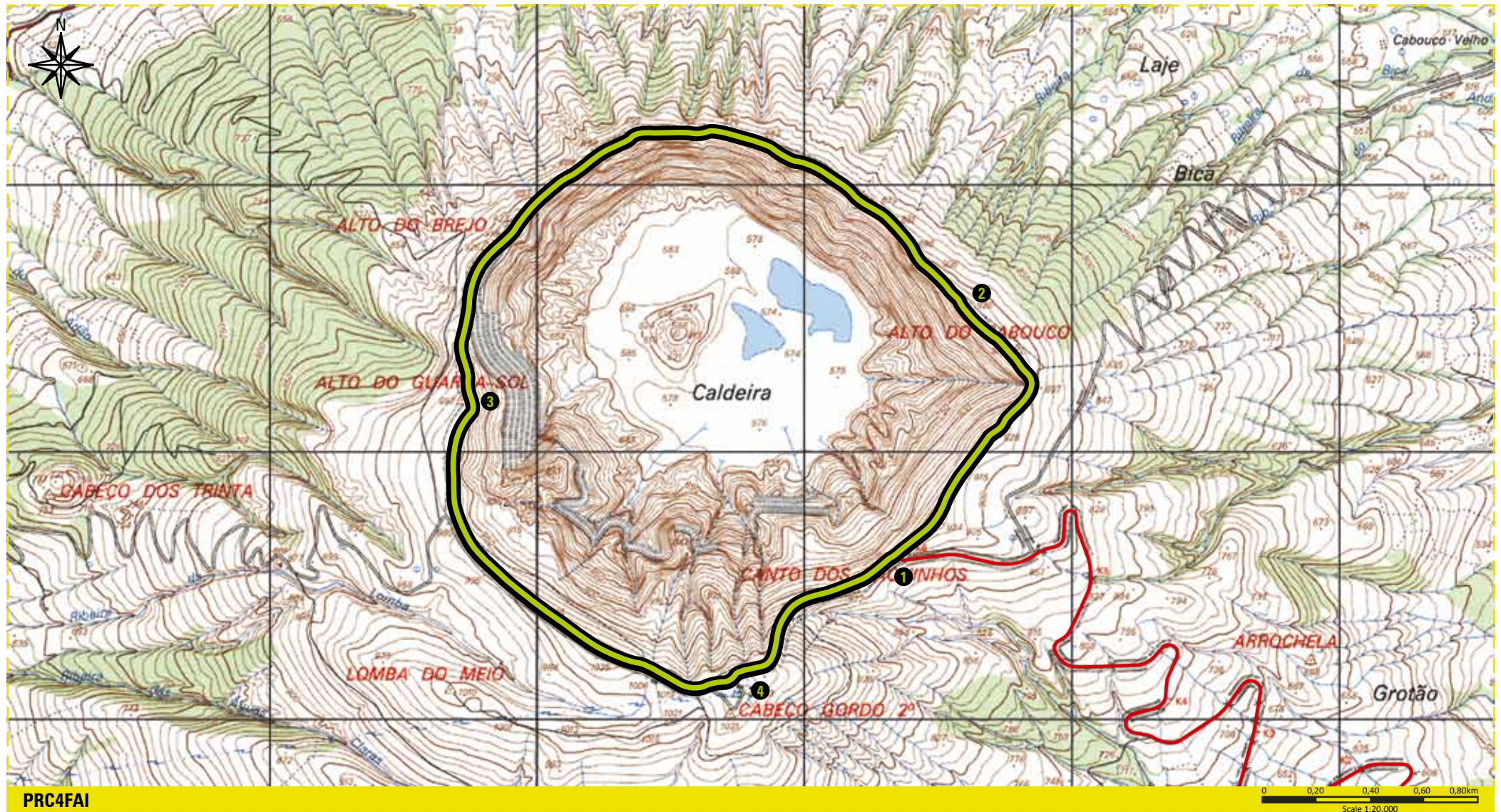


SOME ENDEMIC SPECIES

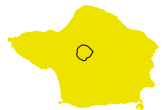
Of all the species that exist at the top of the caldera, it will certainly be possible to observe at least these: *Leontodon filii*, Evergreen spurge (*Euphorbia stygiana*), *Tolpis azorica*, *Lysimachia azorica*, Juniper (*Juniperus brevifolia*) curved by the ascending wind, *Vaccinium cylindraceum*, *Hypericums* (*Hypericum foliosum*), *Ranunculus cortusifolius*, Tree heath (*Erica azorica*), heather (*Daboecia azorica*), *Laurisilva* (*Ilex perado*), *Holcus rigidus*, *Angelica lignescens*, *Mirsine azorica*, *Festuca jubata*, and I believe I even saw *Cerastium azoricum* there.

Next to the cobwebs that look like balls of wool around rolled leafs made by the endemic spider *Pisaura acorensis*, the endemic moss, *Breutelia azorica*, forms dense tufts.

Among all these plants, the endemic butterfly *Hipparchia azorina* that looks like a common moth flies merrily.

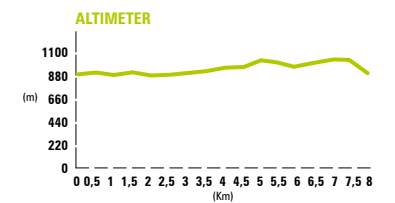


CALDEIRA



1. Start and End of trail
2. Alto do Cabouco
3. Alto do Guarda-Sol
4. Cabeço Gordo

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 8 Km
- START: Viewpoint at Caldeira
- END: Viewpoint at Caldeira
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Caldeira and Capelinhos -
- Community Interest Site/Special Protection Area.
Natural Reserve of Faial's Caldera - Protected Area



FAIAL

HIKE TO THE MORRO (HILLOCK) OF CASTELO BRANCO

PRC5FAI





Between bays

We begin at one of the rural roads at Lombega, in the Castelo Branco parish, next to a bus stop. You will have to pay attention to notice the sign that marks the beginning of the trail.

We begin by walking down an easy, but dusty, worn dirt path. On our right the Ribeira (Small River) da Lombega is of a modest size. The exposed slopes allow us to see the yellow pumice that makes up the soils of this area. In the summer they are cultivated with fodder corn, sweet potatoes and pastures that remain in winter as well. You may see the birds of prey, Kites, flying overhead.

After a few minutes of walking down we pass the first water tank. It is a good spot for a first stop to admire the first views of the Morro (Hillock) of Castelo Branco and, to its right, the tall and ample cliff forming a large bay that ends in the distance at Varadouro. Going down towards the coast you pass near the entrance to the Gruta dos Anelares (Ring Cave). This small lava tube with only 35.5 metres in length and 3.7 metres of maximum interior height has stalactites in the shape of rings. A singularity that is rare in Azorean caves and that gave this cave its name. Visits to the cave are not allowed, and should not be attempted.

When you reach the coastal cliff, turn left. Continue on the trail, where you will certainly see many Japanese beetles (*Popillia japonica*) resting on leaves. In spite of their bright colours this insect is a recent plague that damages agricultural crops.

The road that leads to the Morro de Castelo Branco is nearing. When you reach it, walk down and enjoy the beautiful views to the Varadouro side and to the

side of the port of Castelo Branco. The pretty bay that the hill forms, allows us to see the depth of the blue waters that become shallower only next to the isthmus, created by the collapses of the sides of the trachytic dome.

Small patches of Tree heath (*Erica arborea*) share the terrain with a pasture of *Festuca* grass invaded by opportunistic species that did not exist on these islands before Man came.

You will notice concrete lids on the ground. The electricity that powers an air traffic signal light on top of the hill passes through here.

Climb to the last lid, where the yellow deposits of the pumice stones give way to the floury white of the altered trachyte. The edge of the coast has the typical basaltic cliffs that are a result of the denser lava flows.

If you see a car parked here, and you can't see the owner, you can be sure he did not climb up the hill. He will have, instead, climbed down a dangerous access to the rocks on the bay to the left of the hill, using a tree heath (*Erica arborea*), a knotted rope, the small jutting rocks and a lot of confidence. I actually saw, with some surprise, fishermen making this descent.

A climb to the top of the hill is not allowed, and it would not be advisable, anyways, as it would be very dangerous. In the summer satisfy yourself with admiring it and hearing the calls of the terns that nest in the small cavities of the barren rock.

Return, always following the path of the electricity poles, and soon you will reach the road next to the Império (Holy Ghost Chapel) da Lombega. If you came in your own vehicle, follow the road until you reach it.



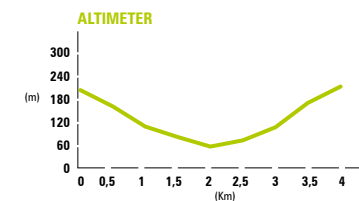


HIKE TO THE MORRO (HILLOCK) OF CASTELO BRANCO



1. Start and End of trail
2. Hillock of Castelo Branco

- DURATION: 1H 30M
- DISTANCE: 4 Km
- START: Lombega (Castelo Branco)
- END: Lombega (Castelo Branco)
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Fácil
- REMARKS: Hillock of Castelo Branco - *Community Interest Site*



GRACIOSA



FAIAL
GRACIOSA
 PICO
 SÃO JORGE
 TERCEIRA
 CORVO
 FLORES

...turning each walk into a discovery,
 of the landscape and the people who tamed it.

GRACIOSA

SERRA BRANCA – PRAIA

PRIGRA



Scenery and colours

The Serra Branca, along with Serra Dormida that is next to it, is a massive trachyte volcano that appeared about 350,000 years ago. It is in this context of antiquity that you are greeted by a worn plaque with the information for the walk, and three plane trees beaten by the strong winds that blow here.

The trail begins in the direction of the wind farm. It follows the forest path known as *Canadão da Serra* of red basaltic pumice and with large grassy sides on the highest plain of the island. Very close by is the highest coastal cliff of Graciosa that slopes precipitously 330 metres to the ocean - the Ponta Branca. The sounds that you hear are from the chaffinches (dark head, light yellow chest and unmistakable white spots on their back), the common starling (black and always in large flocks) and the rhythmic humming of the wind turbines from the wind farm up on top. The surroundings



are of semi-natural meadows of grasses with some clovers thrown in, and sporadically invaded by purple or yellow wildflowers that break the monotony of the green and white. The loose stone walls are identical to so many kilometres of others that decorate this island.

We reach the entrance to the wind farm quickly. Take a few extra minutes to walk around the *CALDEIRINHA DO PÊRO BOTELHO*.



All around the scenery is arrogant, and one of the best that Graciosa has to offer. From here you can see the largest extension of the whole island. In the landscape, you can distinguish the massive *Caldeira* (on the right) and the *Serra das Fontes* (in front). On the left, the eye descends the slopes to the low plain of Guadalupe, dotted through the years by small volcanoes. The light colours of the cows and the bales stand out in the meadows that occupy the limelight here.

As a bonus, you can spot all the islands of the Central Group of the archipelago: next to the *Caldeira* (Caldera) is Terceira; and don't forget to look behind you: São Jorge, Pico and Faial are there too.

In the air the "Buzzards" control the visitor with their "screams", similar to other related birds of prey. This bird (*Buteo buteo rothschildi*) became emblematic in the Azores with the honour of appearing on the region's flag.

Continue your hike descending the steep slope that takes you to an antique set of structures - O TANQUE (THE TANK) - used for the capture and storage of water; a natural resource that was one of the large obstacles to the initial settling of this island.

In the summer this hike is escorted by the large white sun-shades of the *Daucus azoricus*, an endemic species that grows on the side of the roads.

In the distance you can spot the agglomerate of houses in the town of Santa Cruz, with its imposing (maybe centennial) Araucarias standing much taller than the church bell towers. Follow the rural road Grotão to the right, this road penetrates agricultural land, where you can watch, from a closer distance, the multicoloured cows that patiently pasture indifferent to the sun or the inclination of the meadows. The black and white cows have a better milk production ability and the yellowish cows are used more for meat production.

To your right, the Pico Timão, with its altitude of 398 metres and topped by the darker tones of the endemic heather (*Erica azorica*), is closer. The eruption that formed this peak and its associated lavas are attributed with being the most recent on Graciosa, with about 2,000 years. In front is the Caldeira (Caldera) with its sharp edges. Suddenly on your left where the Serra das Fontes ends, the Ilhéu (Islet) da Praia protrudes from the sea - that's where we are headed, but we still have much to see first.

Walk down the Canada Jorge Nunes carefully. Some parts of the ground have loose rocks that



CALDEIRINHA (SMALL CALDERA) DO PÊRO BOTELHO

Also known as Caldeirinha (Small Caldera) and Algar dos Diabretes (Little Devils' Cave).

This cave on Serra Branca has an extremely easy access at its opening, since it is possible to circle the entire crater by automobile. However, among all the caves on Graciosa, it is at the present time the only one that requires climbing equipment and qualifications to access its interior. In what was the first speleological exploration of this cave, the Os Montanheiros Association descended into it in 1964.

It has a depth of 37 metres and the bottom has another small linked cave measuring 41 metres.

can make you lose your footing. You can see enclosed fields of corn that is used as fodder for the animals and hear agricultural machinery here and there.

The ground changes to concrete when a tiny but diversified wood appears with eucalyptus trees, acacias, fig trees, Sweet pittosporums, oaks, poplars and even apple trees. In the shade of these trees grows tetterwort (*Chelidonium majus*), named so because of its acrid bright yellow-orange sap that can be used to remove warts. Some Cannas indica brighten the sides of the road with their red and yellow flowers.

Take the road on the right, which takes you to Feiteira. This spot is known as Barro Branco (White Clay), and it's not difficult to see why; just look at the embankments whitened by profoundly altered material, called "Feiteira's trachyte breach" by those in the know.

You can now appreciate some architectural examples of older blocks of houses with the use of stone still evident on the facades and with significant details typical of Graciosa, such as the roofs of the houses from high to low with uneven lofts and with the front of the house sometimes facing the street and others not facing the street.

Two white lines crossing the pavement don't always mean that it's a pedestrian crossing. They may be an indication that the residents of this island have already adopted the tethered street bullfights, imported from the neighbouring island Terceira, and that on the other side of these lines, on a feast day, danger is certain.

Turn left at the huge Araucaria (Monkey Puzzle tree) and a signpost that shows you are 4 km from Praia.

You will quickly realize that this road, now secondary, was once the main connection between Praia and Guadalupe.



There is much evidence of this - the ruins of modest centenary houses, unplastered and invaded by vegetation, whose holes in the walls have been secretly converted into dovecots. Portals with doorposts headed by large lintels made of prepared rock that served as the entrance to vegetable gardens and orchards, some of them restored, where apples, oranges, plums, grapes, chestnuts and more tropical products such as yams, strawberry guava, bananas and even pineapples grow. A closer look reveals other introduced species such as bay laurel, roses or large camellias trying to resist the rapid growth of the sweet pittosporums that invade all the abandoned sites.



At each fork in the road always turn left, keeping to the slope of the old Serra das Fontas, with a ripe old age of 620,000 years, where you will find reinvigorating cool shadows. You can hear the doves coo and the finches, starlings and blackbirds chirp. Here the "Buzzards" also glide looking for their prey: small rabbits and mice. Along the stone walls of this road you have certainly seen the Cape gooseberry plants

(*Physalis peruviana*), a tropical plant that produces a small yellow round berry, sweet when it is ripe and very appreciated by some to make jam or to eat natural on the spot.

On the right side of the road that descends, now only accessible to pedestrians, you will see deeper fields, where goats pasture. These fields were artificially deepened by the extraction of clay that used to take place here. Farther along the ground turns to stone and on it are engraved equidistant tracks sculpted by the continuous passing of the oxen carts, many times loaded with the aforementioned clay.

Some guarantee that there, cut into the stone ground, is a low relief cross, left in memory of a mortal victim, that in times gone by, was travelling with one of those oxen carts that turned over, but I did not see it. However, it doesn't surprise me, because now the ground is covered in eucalyptus and Canarian laurel foliage that formerly did not exist here. It is in this woody scenery that we quickly reach the intersection of the Canada do Nevoeiro with the road. We enter the other side of the same road, paved at first, in the direction of Lagoa.

In the stone walls, that sometimes hide orchards, the frantic, although invisible, twisting of the geckos is audible. On the left, up high, is the Quitadouro, partially

visceralized for the extraction of black and red scoria.

A less common tree, the Karaka (*Corynocarpus laevigatus*), exhibits its ripe bright yellow fruits to the birds that will come to feast as soon as possible. Farther down, on your right next to the road, the back of a CLAY TILE OVEN with more than 3 metres in height and the opening near the ground. Mr. Juvaldino Espinola says that here, Lagoa, was the place of clay tile ovens, clay bowl and mug ovens, quicklime ovens, windmills and tide wells - all this together gives us an idea of what "industries" were laboured here.



Pass the Ermida (Chapel) de Santana, very old, but recently restored, with its feast on the 2nd Sunday of July with rights to a moderate procession and country festival.

Now you are on the paved road that will take you to the town. Follow the road to the right and appreciate the architecture of the traditional houses, with curious details on the facade, such as the ring once used to tie the donkey and the step used by the rider to step up onto and down off of the donkey.

Pass an intersection of five roads and go down to the town of Praia, the second most important population centre of Graciosa. It certainly deserves a walk through its streets filled with history. It may be that you visit during the Feasts of São Mateus (Saint Mathew) that are celebrated here on the 3rd Sunday of July.

Here, you can enjoy a deserved break, relaxing with a swim, or sunbath on the gray sands, or at the outdoor tables of one of the restaurants or coffee shops.

Don't leave the town without tasting the confection that is made here, especially the famous "Queijadas (Sweet Tartlets) da Graciosa" that are star-shaped tartlets - and very sweet.



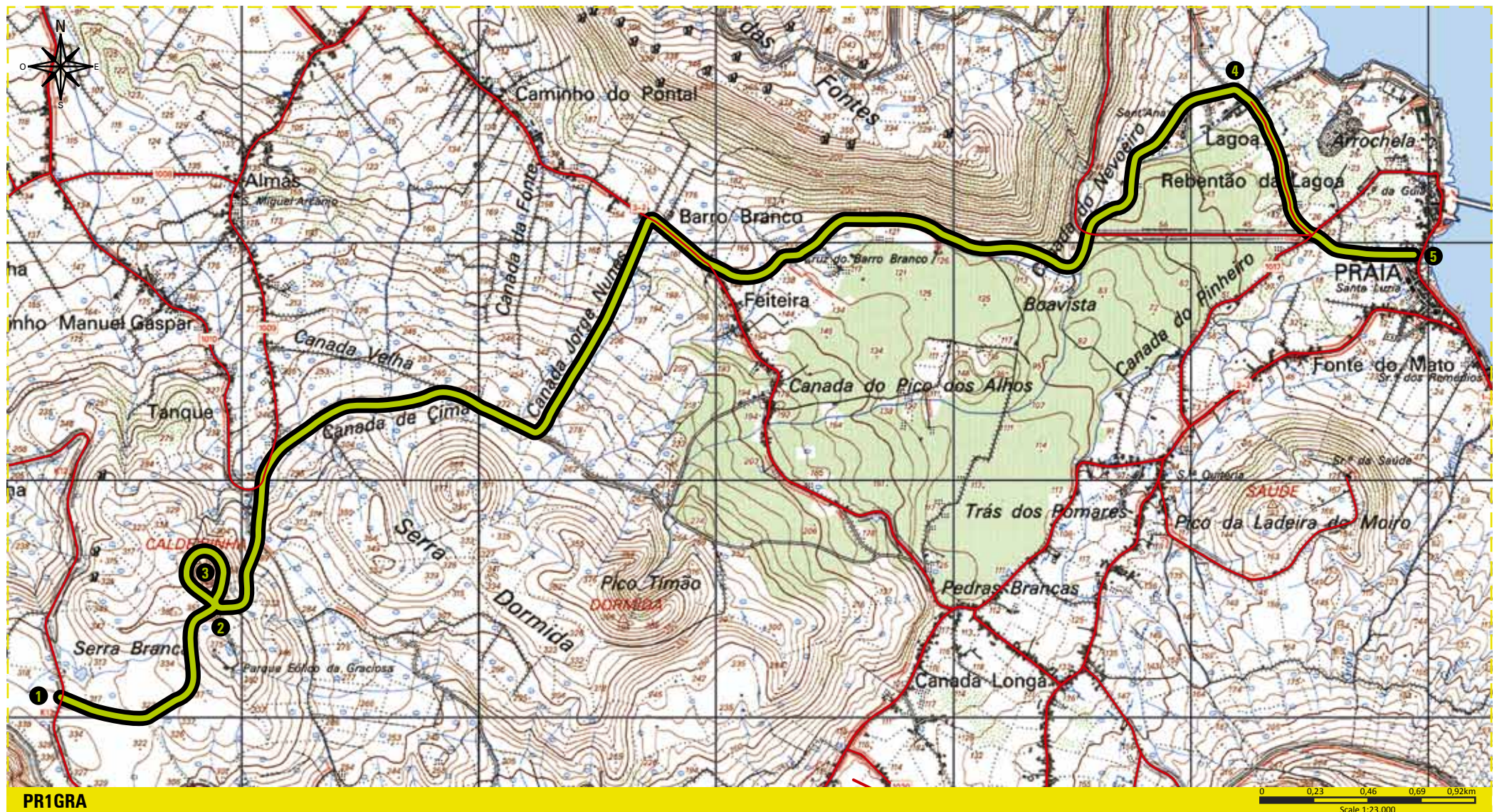
THE TANK

This fifteenth century construction for capturing and storing spring and rain water was a semi buried arched reservoir with three naves, and three spouts from where the water flowed to a large rectangular tank. From these three spouts the water was collected and transported to basins for the animals to drink, and to wash basins where the washerwomen washed clothes.



CLAY TILE OVENS

These slightly cylindrical structures normally made of stone and plastered only on the inside were two stories, with each storey accessible from a different side. The ground floor had a small opening to introduce and burn the wood. The clay tiles were placed on the second floor, through the other larger opening. Between the storeys but closer to the ground, long rocks that formed beams were placed supported by the circular wall and meeting in a slightly elevated centre that kept them from falling. The hot air circulated upward through the spaces left between these rocks.

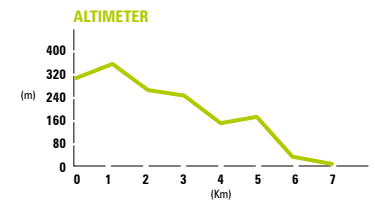


SERRA BRANCA - PRAIA



1. Start of trail
2. Wind Farm
3. Caldeirinha (small caldera)
Pero Botelho
4. Lagoa
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 7 Km
- START: Canadão da Serra
- END: Praia
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



GRACIOSA

STROLL AROUND CALDEIRA – FURNA (CAVE) DO ENXOFRE

PRC2GRA



Inside a volcano

This trail begins at the intersection of the road access to the Caldeira (Caldera), its interior and its exterior circumvallation. You will have to walk both. In these last houses handmade weathervanes are displayed and over the walls appear antique wood pieces, of structures with agricultural functions, probably a former winery.

The road climbs, steadied on rocky terrain, from the Páhoehoe lava flows that less than 12,000 years ago filled the interior of the Caldeira, forming an immense lava lake that overflowed the summit points, one of which formed on the spot of the well defined rocky section that can be seen on the top, and where the Furna da Maria Encantada (Enchanted Maria Cave) is located.

You reach a fork on the road where you can decide whether to visit the interior of the Caldeira (Caldera) or the exterior perimeter first - your decision may be dependent on the hours that the Furna (Cave) do Enxofre is open. (Monday through Saturday from 11AM to 4PM). At this fork in the road, turn right to the Caminho Florestal das Furnas (Furnas Forestry Road). The rocky outcrops, easily visible on our right, and the presence of the Furna (Cave) do Lavar (with 168 metres in length) that has two enormous skylights next to the road and the Furna (Cave) d'Água (with 29.6 metres in length) are proof of an event that carried these lavas to the South covering a good portion of the land where the parish of Luz is now located.

Begin to circle the Caldeira, clockwise, on a worn dirt path, taking only a few minutes to climb the 114 steps that will take you to the FURNA DA MARIA ENCANTADA (Enchanted Mary Cave), mentioned in the history of this island.

Go through the portal and cross the lava tube through which the wind steals. At your feet is the caldera, with a maximum top diameter of 1.6 km and maximum altitude of 402 metres. It is decorated with a great variety of arboreal species introduced by the Forestry Service that maintains a pleasant picnic area and a plant nursery. You can also see some large pastures at the bottom and at some points of the summit.

Returning to the outside of the cave, looking from left to right, your eyes travel from the parish of Luz to Pedras Brancas, with the Serra Branca, the Pico Timão and the Serra das Fontes in the landscape. You can see several of the traditional windmills of Graciosa Island, some in ruins, and others still have their characteristic bright red domes.

Back to circling the caldera you will be surprised with the magnificent view of the town of Praia that first, hides behind the Pico da Ladeira do Moiro with its Senhora da Saude Chapel, then, shows itself. The Praia islet, with pleasant outlines, has an earthy plain with about half a hectare of area. Its easy access favoured, for a long time, its use for recreation by the people of Praia, who would

spend the day there. Here in pits in the earth or between rocks, several important migratory marine birds nest and rear their young. The common tern, the Madeiran storm-petrel and little shearwater can be found on the islet, which led to its being classified as a Special Protection Area.

The worn dirt path alternates with pavement, and the species that occupy the sides of the road and the embankments, although all common, sometimes have a large enough size to give a good shade, which gives them even more value.

More to the south we begin to see other islets. The ISLET OF HOMIZIADOS (FUGITIVES), the largest, and the inaccessible islet of Baixo (Short), its neighbour, are guarded by the Restinga Lighthouse. In the ocean, in the distance, the islands of Terceira and São Jorge help integrate Graciosa in this archipelago.

Ahead you can catch sight of the buildings of the thermal springs and bathing area of Carapacho - and quickly reach the end of circling the Caldeira.

Return to the paved road and walk down to the fork in the road that you already know. Now turn right to enter the Caldeira, an area classified and protected as a Natu-

ral Monument. You will have to access the area through a tunnel inaugurated in 1953. That said; go forward to the Furna (Cave) do Enxofre. In the interior of the Caldeira the trees give you wonderful shades and edge the landscape helped by the large blocks of stone that loosened from the rocky slopes and came to mix with the trees.

In the final stage of the aforementioned eruption, the lava flowed down to the interior of the main conduct where the Furna do Enxofre formed. The experts say that this arched cavity may have originated from encased fluid lava, acquiring its current form as a result of the readjustments when the lava drained. (Gaspar, 1996).

The visit is dependent on the necessary safety conditions for it to be held, namely the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere of the interior of the cave. However, the need to close the cave to visitors is very rare. In 2009 the new Interpretive Centre will be ready to better receive visitors como já estamos em 2010 talvez escrever outra coisa como, Don't forget to visit the new Interpretive Centre, which opened in 2009.

The visit to this spectacular cavity with 98 metres of altitude - a Natural Monument created by DLR n° 24/2004/A - located in the interior of the Caldeira (Caldera) is obligatory. This lava cavern is considered unique in the international volcanic speleological panorama.

You reach the cave by climbing down 183 steps on a spiral staircase inside a 37 metre tall tower inaugurated in 1939.

The enormous cave left by the last eruption of this Caldeira has many diverse volcanic forms and secondary manifestations of the volcanism that created this island. The arched roof with small lava stalactites measuring up to 194 metres in length and 40 metres in height is joined by a freshwater



cold lake of considerable dimensions and, right next to it, a field releasing gases made up of a mud fumaroles and dry gas releases on the ground of the cave. It is even possible to see prismatic parting on the roof and walls.

This cave has been visited by renowned scientists since the nineteenth century, such as Prince Albert of Monaco, Ferdinand Fouqué and George Hartung.

Return by the same route, until you are again next to the tunnel that gives access to the Caldeira. Before you leave the caldera, at your right is the path that leads to the forestry park. It is outside the marked trail, but if you wish, you can take this pleasant walk, that will take you to a picnic site where you will find some animals and the plant nurseries of the Forestry Services.

End the hike where you began.

ILHÉU DOS HOMIZIADOS (ISLET OF THE OUTLAWS)

*...because it gave shelter to "outlaws"
Called this because of what happened there in 1541. Gaspar Frutuoso tells the story of seven*



young men who lived in Praia, that got together to spend the day on this islet (the larger of the two that are together). Since it was high tide they navigated their small boat into a pool marked out by the islet, and difficult to see from land. Here they delighted themselves with a feast of limpets, barnacles and crab. They forgot the time, night fell, the tide lowered, the wind picked up in the morning, and they were confined to this lump of land without a way out. On that day their relations came to get them on another boat. Nearing the islet they began to tease the unfortunate fellows calling them outlaws.

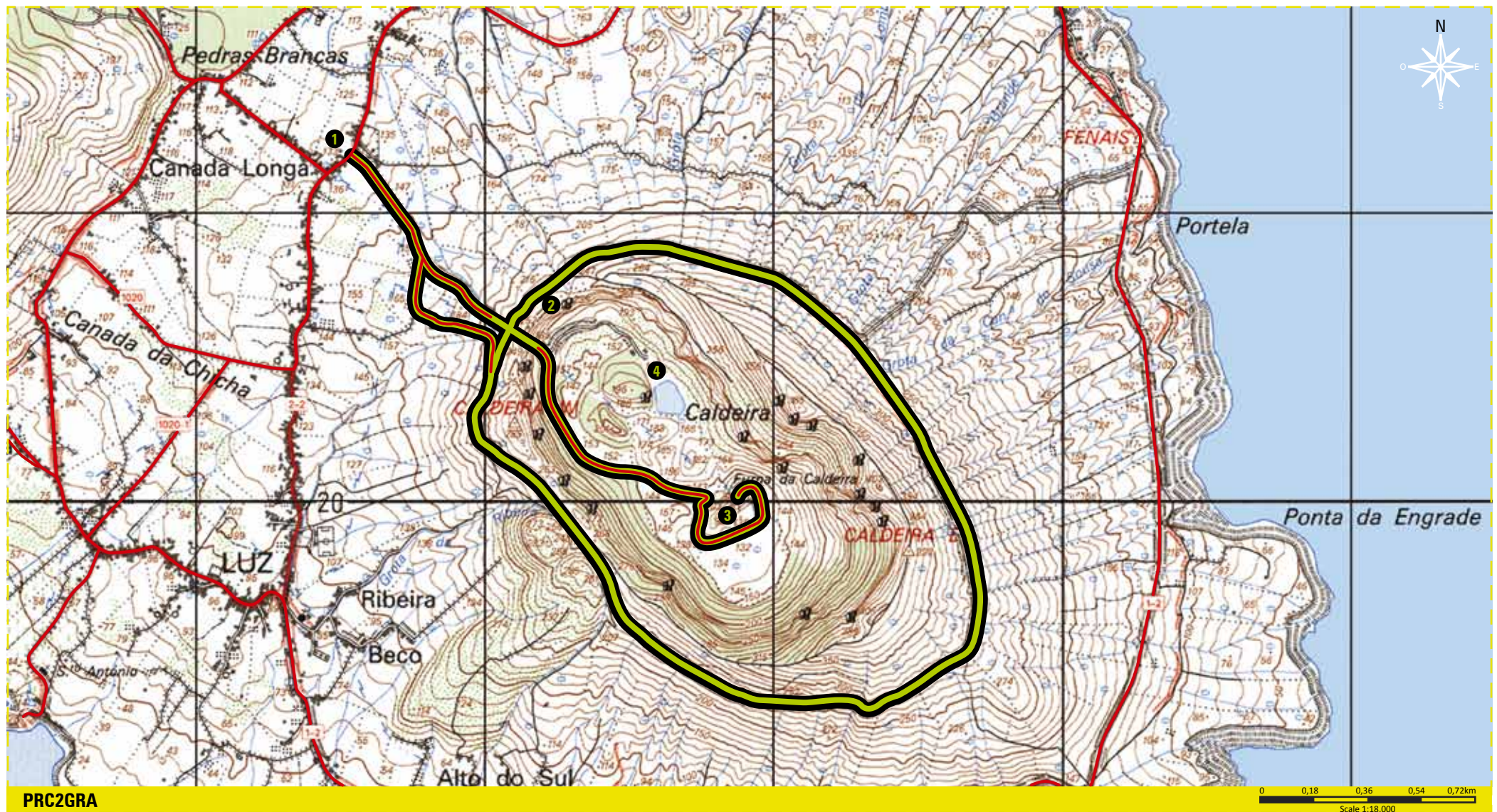
Maybe the name connected to this episode would not have stuck were it not for the unfortunate outcome of the rescue mission that resulted in the death of one of the young men...

THE LEGEND OF ENCHANTED MARIA

Maria and her husband were wealthy. They had many animals, including a rooster that



was a joy to hear in the morning. One day the rooster started crowing at an odd hour and differently, seeming to say: "Run! Run! Run!" Maria thought it was a warning and insisted that they leave. Her husband refused and so they stayed. A few days later the earth shook and a great eruption formed a volcano with an enormous caldera and on the spot of Maria's house a Cave was formed. The entire family disappeared, except Maria that had believed the warning, and there she stayed, pasturing her herds, enchanted forever. Maria also had chickens—the seagulls. Dishevelled and wearing traps she scared the children. Sometimes when the weather was clear you could see her clothes on the line, and when she baked bread, the Caldeira became foggy with smoke.

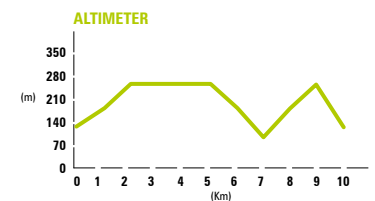


STROLL AROUND CALDEIRA - - FURNA (CAVE) DO ENXOFRE



1. Start of trail
2. Furna da Maria Encantada
3. Furna do Enxofre
4. Florestry Park

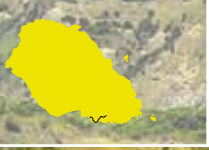
- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 9 Km
- START: Access to Caldeira
- END: Access to Caldeira
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy
- REMARKS: Caldeira da Graciosa Natural Monument
- Protected Area



GRACIOSA

FOLGA BAY

PR3GRA



From Wine to Fish

This walking tour begins at Largo 1st of December, or as the local population prefers to refer to it: Largo da Luz (Square of Light), because it is the social centre of this parish where the entire trail unfolds.

This is a “small trail”, with only 2.1 Km. It has some peculiarities - it begins near Supermercado Melo, a well stocked supermarket that is ready to provide you with whatever you may need for your walk, and at the end, at Folga port, you will find a well known restaurant and pub awaiting you.

Leave the square and begin walking downhill on the main road. Right away on your left you will see an old arch and water tank. Someone told me it is “where the oxen used to drink”. Have you noticed that on Graciosa all the house numbers are well pre-



served? And that they are all from the same mould? This is a curious fact when we are faced with houses in ruins and a shiny tile with a house number.

An old stone gutter follows the road. Enough rain to justify improving and maintaining this conduit is no longer imaginable. So it stands today as a reminder of the time when the water dug the water conduits that are visible on the island. Nowadays, the intervals between large torrents are ever longer.

A signpost points the way to the port at Folga. Climb the ramp that begins Canada Nova (New Rural Route) - certainly it was in a distant past.

On the right side, the stone wall has some strange orange lichens that appear to like the sun since they are primarily on the sides exposed to the sun. Small enclosures follow - some abandoned others with corn or vineyards, or even with Mr. João do Outeiro's cucumbers and sweet potatoes. Mr. Outeiro is now the only resident of this area and lives in the house on the left. All the others have been abandoned. He tells me that the area after



his house is called "Pedregulho" (Boulder), until it converges with Canada dos Padres, where we will turn left towards the ocean.

Looking around we realize the importance of the vineyards in this area, much more in the past, it's true, just like the ORCHIN that grows abundantly on the rocks of the walls - far from the rarity it used to be.

In the landscape of the mountain we see what's left of the windmills that also proliferated here.

A constant buzzing in the background seems to indicate that there must be a beekeeper nearby.

In the distance, Serra Branca, with its wind farm, slopes precipitously to the ocean on the crag of Ponta Branca.

We quickly arrive at the coast where the black lavas outline the blue waters that murmur quietly in the small cavities worth looking at and listening to more attentively. Continue to the right, on the road bordered by willows, among the sparse vegetation so typical of the coast where the salt conditions its specific habitat. We have seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*), spiny rush (*Juncus acutus*), *Rhaphiolepis umbellata* and the endemic *Euphorbia azorica* and *Spergularia azorica*.

We now begin to see the port of FOLGA in its best perspective for a photograph - don't miss it. After passing some fishing equipment stores, an important activity that still takes place here, you reach the port; next to Mrs. Maria do Carmo's restaurant. If

You have time, go in and order a *Caldeirada de Peixe*, fish stew, or her famous *Molho à Pescador* (fish broth) with a touch of safflower seasoning, however, she tells me that "foreigners and emigrants also really enjoy my fried or grilled fish with wine sauce". You choose - and enjoy!



ORCHIN

Orchin is the common name of the lichen Roc-cella tinctoria, a fungus-alga that has a brownish colour and is common on the coastal rocks



and stone walls on the seaside of the islands of the Azores.

Orchin produces a purple or violet blue dye used to colour textiles. The extract of the orchin, now called the litmus test, continues to have wide use in chemistry and the lichen dyes have wide use in microscopy.

The preparation of the dye, by the Flemish who imported the raw material from the Atlantic archipelagos, was a well kept secret for many decades. Only later was it revealed that the lichen were fermented with urine.

Orchin was one of the most important exports of the Azores in the beginning of its history continuing from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. The market value was so high that it became a royal monopoly, with severe punishment for smugglers.

However, gathering the orchin was especially difficult and dangerous because it required access to cliffs and slopes which caused some falling deaths.

FOLGA

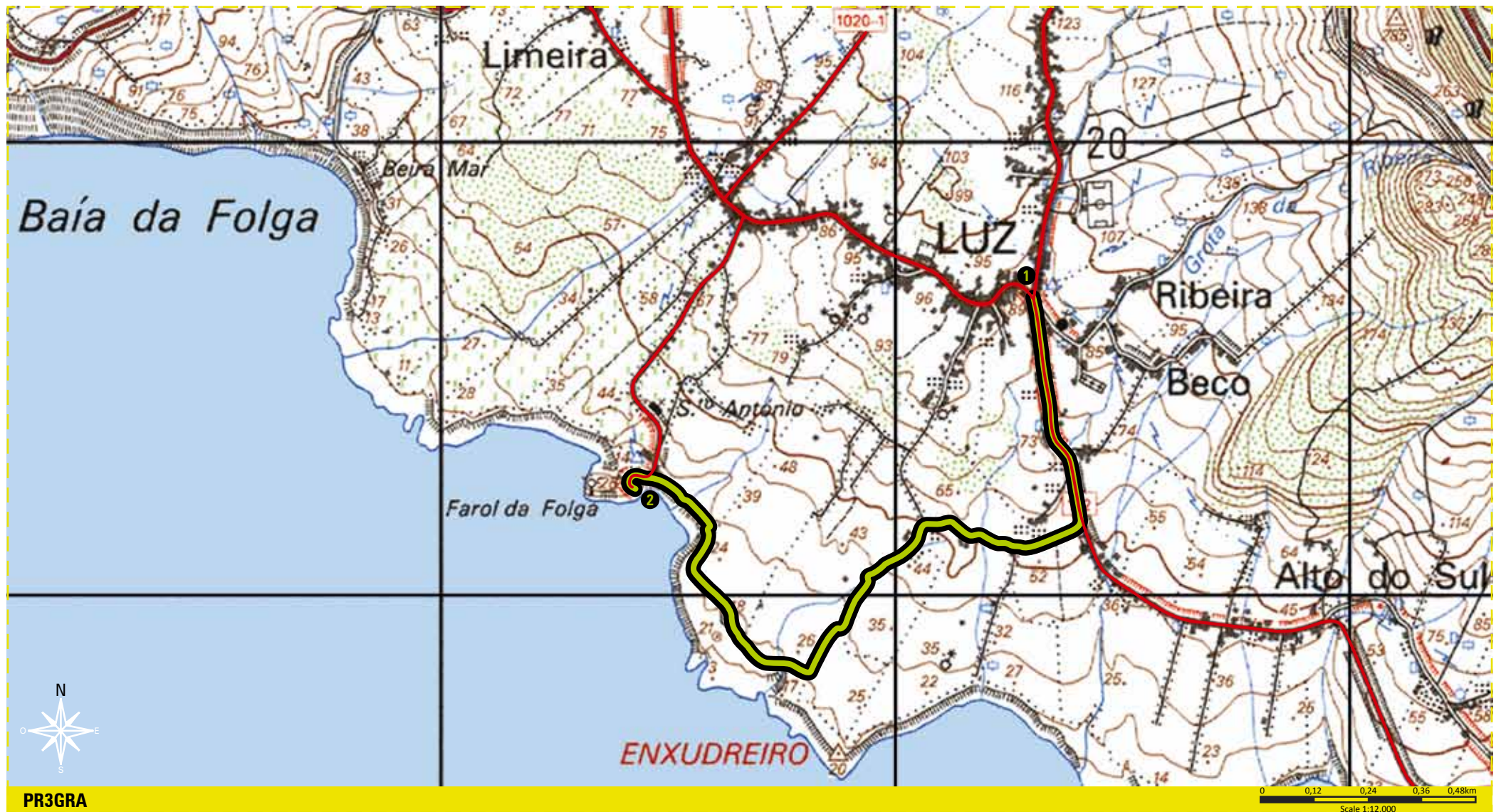
The agricultural occupation of this spot was slow. The terrain from Praia to Folga is known as "biscoitos" because it is from recent lava flows and has volcanic breaches. Although in the seventeenth century this terrain was already filled with vineyards from sea to sea; it was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when wine and the local spirit (aguardente) became more valuable that as a result the population and viticulture grew.

The relative poorness of the soil had to be compensated with fishing from the start. The easy access to the sea at Folga bay was taken advantage of to build a relatively protected port that became one of the main fishing centres of the island.

Folga is a small fishing and vineyard settlement that until the existence of the modern port in the town of Praia was the main fishing port on the island. It is still home to several fishing industries and as a testimony to the importance that viticulture once held, there are still a number of small wineries in the area. It has a chapel dedicated to Saint Anthony built in the



later part of the nineteenth century, which is accessed by a long staircase. The Port of Folga was often used as an alternative port for cargo and passengers when the sea conditions did not permit entry to the Port at Praia and the ports at Santa Cruz, which have northern exposure. The importance of the port in the nineteenth century led to the construction of a branch from the old royal road to Folga.

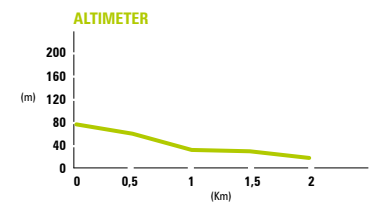


FOLGA BAY



1. Luz Parish
2. Folga Port

- DURATION: 1H 00M
- DISTANCE: 2,1 Km
- STAR: Luz Parish
- END: Baía da Folga Port
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



PICO



PR1PIC Roads of Santa Luzia (Pág. 62)

PR2PIC Cam. Burros (North Side) (Pág. 68)

PR3PIC Ponta Ilha (Island Point) (Pág. 74)

PR5PIC Criação Velha Vineyards (Pág. 80)

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PR11PIC Calheta do Nesquim (Pág. 110)

PR12PIC Lajes do Pico (Pág. 118)

PR13PIC Lagoa do Capitão (Captain's Lake) -
- São Roque (Pág. 126)

FAIAL
GRACIOSA
PICO
SÃO JORGE
TERCEIRA
CORVO
FLORES

...with the mysteries that unfold
in stone and in grapes.

ROADS OF SANTA LUZIA

PRIPIC

**Wine made from Lava**

This trail is in the parish of Santa Luzia. It is officially marked with a distance of 10.5 km. However, we opted to reduce it to almost half its length by excluding the portion on the regional road, which we consider to be of minor interest.

The trail crosses the **VINEYARD CULTURE PROTECTED LANDSCAPE**, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It leads to the Lajido (meaning thin lava stone slabs in whose cracks the vines are planted) where the elements that led to the name are evident.

We begin at the crossing of Rua da Eira with the road at Fetais. Go down this asphalt-paved road. It passes through agricultural lands with maritime pines, or orchards with a little of everything; lemon

guava, plum trees, orange trees, olive trees, medlar trees, vineyards, fig trees and chestnut trees. Some ornamental plants such as hydrangeas, camellias and marigold embellish the extremities of the fields. There is still more...



After going down 500 metres, leave the road, which would take you to Lajido do Meio, and follow a very straight footpath on your right that will take you to Lajido. Although the footpath is straight, the ground is very irregular without the use it once had. This footpath takes you through agricultural land that has seen better days. Here and there, the stones from the walls mix with the lava stone slabs of the ground. Farther on, the pine needles cover the ground hiding it completely.

Where the footpath turns into a wide red basaltic pumice road, you reach a renovated stone house, with the typical stones supporting the clay tile roof.

In another 250 metres, the vineyards now look well

cared and you have reached the first houses of Lajido. The closed stone walls forming a square or rectangle protect the vineyard. Because of the diseases that appeared later and weakened the vineyard culture and quality, fig trees were planted (protected by the half moon stone walls that you may see). The figs were used to make the local spirit "aguardente" which was also used as an additive for some of the wines.

Cross the paved road and follow the path until you are next to the sea. Look around and remember where you are (we'll call it Point A), because you will have to come back here.

Now, turn left it is time to visit Lajido the old housing and agricultural centre that has well preserved and restored architectural structures. In addition to visiting the recent Interpretive Centre, you can also visit houses, wineries that still have wine presses and distillers, warehouses, fermentation tanks for the figs, the Salgueiros Manor House, tide wells, the Chapel of Our Lady of Purity (Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Pureza) and other structures. All of these buildings and structures have been carefully restored under a plan by the Regional Department responsible for the Environment. We are within both a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Protected Landscape of the Government of the Azores.

Once you finish your visit to Lajido, return by the same path back to Point A. There, next to the path that brought you to Lajido, you will find an old communications route that connected the coastal road Lajido/Arcos to Santa Luzia. You still have to cover 2,250 metres before you reach the regional road.

Although they are more visible at certain points, on almost the whole path you can see the tracks of



VINEYARD CULTURE PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

The Pico Verdelho (a white wine grape grown in Portugal) was internationally famous for over two hundred years, namely in England, the Americas and Russia, where it was drunk by the



Czars. From this intense activity, which demonstrates a perfect adaptation of Man to his environment, there remains an important cultural and physical heritage. Examples of buildings that are part of this heritage are, among others, manor houses, wineries, warehouses, tide wells, cask rolls, ports, convents, and chapels.

In 1996 the Azorean Government, classified 987 ha as PPIRCVIO - Vineyard Culture of the Island of Pico Protected Landscape of Regional Interest. An additional 1,924 ha surrounding this area are a buffer zone. Later a few areas representative of the vineyard culture were made candidates to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These areas were either being restored or were abandoned, at the time, and show the diversity of the production buildings and structures, and are good examples of the farmer's adaption to the landscape, soil quality and weather. In July of 2004, the area was listed as a World Heritage Site. Later a Technical Office was created to define objectives and implement an integrated land use plan that allows the protection of this important heritage, prevents the disappearance of this activity and brings better awareness to the population.

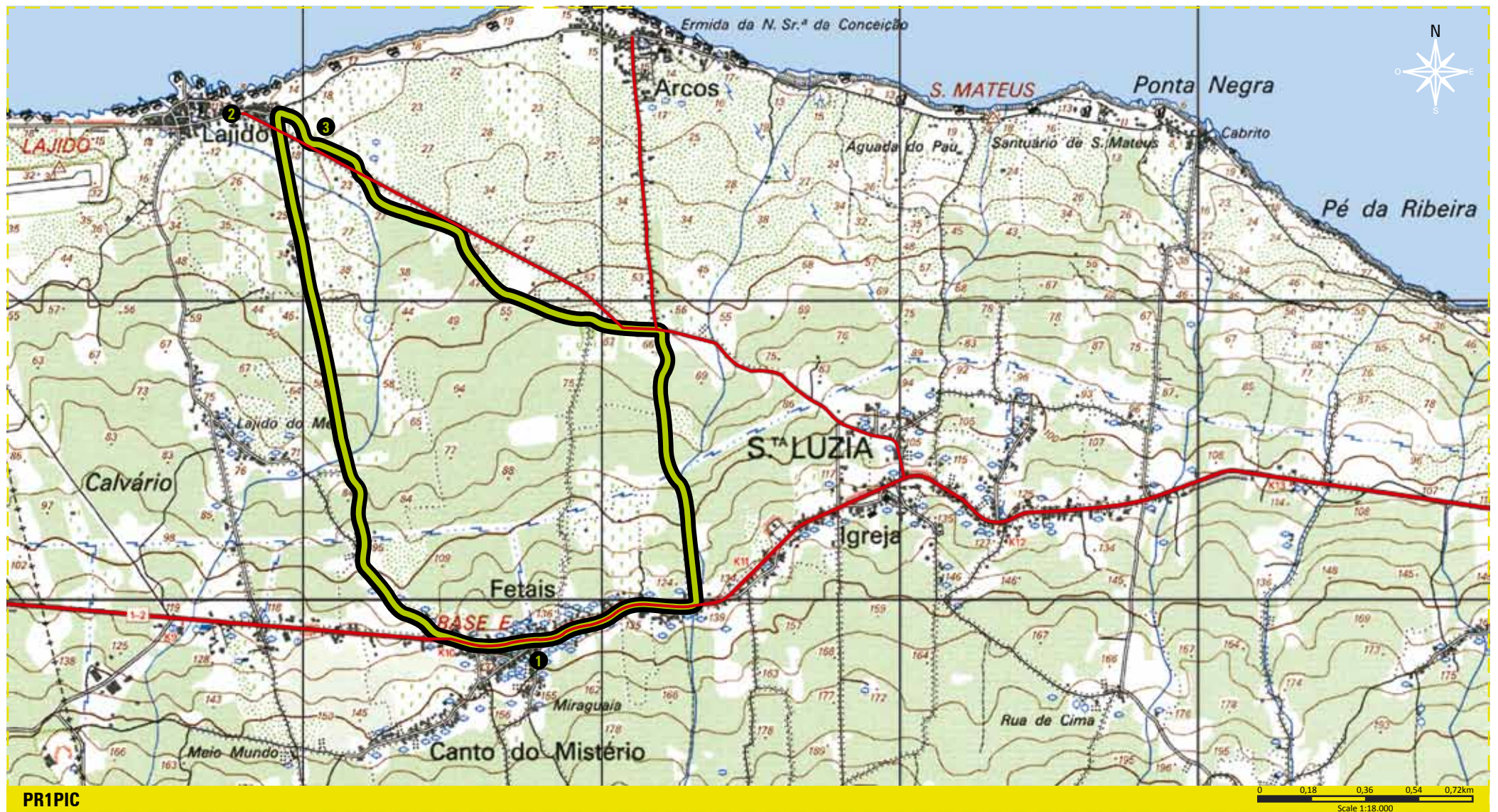
the oxen carts, which transported the wine, worn into the basaltic rock of the road. The continuous turning of the wheels over many decades engraved on the stone the evidence of how difficult things were then. It was a tough life - tougher than the stone.

This road (parallel to or below the current road) that originated between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is almost always fairly wide and paved by the natural stone or with small slabs of stone. Along its length, it has high dry stonework walls that are interrupted at intervals throughout its length by ruins of large gates and some constructions. When we look attentively, we are surprised by how some of the obstacles of this road were overcome.

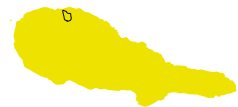
You will pass near the ruins of Forno dos Frades (Friar's Oven) with its imposing stone chimney. Some say it was used to dry figs whose production was closely linked to the vineyard. Others say it was part of a building belonging to the Franciscans that was used for wine production.

You will reach a crossroads - continue climbing. You see more oxen cart marks before the new fork in the road; continue forward a few metres until you reach the paved road Rua do Lajido de Baixo. Go a little farther until you reach the beginning of the road Rua dos Arcos. Turn right and climb the red basaltic pumice service road until you reach the regional road. The landscape of this area is similar to the one at the beginning of the trail. If you left your vehicle next to Fetais, turn right and you will find it.

Please do not take any fruit from the orchards, however, if you see the owner you are free to ask, and you will most certainly be compensated.

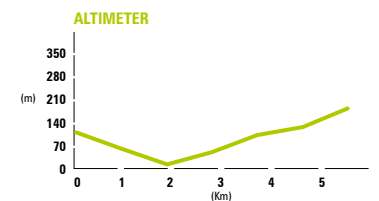


ROADS OF SANTA LUZIA



1. Start and End of trail
2. Lajido
3. Oxen Tracks

- DURATION: 2H 00M
- DISTANCE: 5,5 Km
- START: Fetais
- END: Fetais
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: World Heritage Site - *UNESCO*.
Vineyard Culture Protected Landscape - *Protected Area*



CAMINHO DOS BURROS (NORTH SIDE)

PR2PIC

**On the lavas of history**

This hike begins on the plateau that forms the crest of the island, and takes you on a descent to the sea. We are facing a height difference of 800 metres. The singularity of this trail lies in this altitude difference because we pass a variety of habitats, geological phenomenon, vegetation and human occupations of the land.

The Caminho dos Burros (Donkey Road) is an old path for people and animals that was widely used by those who had to travel between Lajes and São Roque do Pico. A large portion of this path can still be made out. We walk on the same ground that our ancestors walked.

The trail begins through a gate that protects the service road on which we will walk. Ahead, before the road that leads to the small volcanic hill in front, pay attention. You have to leave the road and follow the path on slabs of lava rock to your right. Follow along the scar on the vegetation. Pass next to the volcanic cones that gave us the Mistério da Praínha (Praínha's Mystery) during the longest historic eruption since the Azores were settled, it lasted from 1562 to 1564. You will walk on these lava stones for some time.

We are in a mountain habitat, where the exposed stones are still being colonized by the surrounding flora. It is an area rich in flora. It is dressed with a low mountain forest, with a mixture of Azores juniper, Curare vines (*Chondodendron tomentosum*), *Viburnum treleasei*, holly (*Ilex perado*), tree heath (*Erica arborea*), Cape myrtle (*Myrsine africana* L.) and *Hypericum foliosum* on top of which grow ivy and *Arceuthobium azoricum*. Under the *Tolpis azorica*, *Dryopteris azorica*, and *Hypericum foliosum* grow the endemic orchid (*Platanthera micrantha*) and *Festuca jubata*.

Here and there, the chaffinches and the black birds sing a touching tune.

In a short time, the trail of slabs of lava stone and stone takes you to the end of this irregular plateau. In front, you have the always long island of São Jorge and the deep ocean channel. Its mirrored waters hide the giants of the seas. It's a sublime view...enough said! It is truly unforgettable.

When we begin to go down there is an explosion of the plant *Euphorbia stygiana*, they are everywhere. This rare endemic plant has a surprising growth here.

We are now on the footpath that goes down the slope of the island. The habitat changes, the species also change. The forest of clouds gives way to fragments of Laurissilva (*Laurel forest*) where

the shrub species are more etiolated. We begin to see Azorean buckthorn (*Frangula azorica*), laurel (*Laurus azorica*), the endemic bramble, ferns such as *Elaphoglossum* and mosses (*Sphagnum*).

You will certainly find the apple trees in the middle of the path as strange as I did. Curiously, there is a reason for the apple trees being there. I was told that they were planted many years ago by those who used this path, Caminho dos Burros, with the intention that, during the proper season, those who passed could serve themselves.

In the first opening that the vegetation gives you, you will see a road. To your left, next to the ocean, is the Vila de São Roque. The descent becomes more noticeable and the slopes have pastures divided by hedges of vegetation. The bird song is more intense.

When you reach the asphalt; turn right. Ahead, between two curves in the road, there is a red basaltic pumice road. Follow the red basaltic pumice road, but be careful on the slippery ground. On this path, we have thickets of *Cryptomeria* (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and Australian

Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) mixed with *Myrica faya*, sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) and *Canna indica*.

Notice that you are on the border between the lavas of the mystery of Praínha to your right and the older terrain to your left. On these borders, depressions or water threads are common.

At the crossing with the road called Meia Encosta, turn right. We see lacy tree ferns (*Sphaeropteris cooperi*), Azores wood pigeons (*Columba palumbus azorica*), a protected subspecies of the Azores, and rabbits.

When you reach a fork in the road, take the path to the right in the direction of the Baía de Canas. This is a tranquil path where the most intense sound is that of your boots on the red basaltic pumice which drowns out any other sound.

Farther ahead there is a sign to leave the road and enter a thicket of Australian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) bordered by large ferns (*Diplazium caudatum*). In this dense thicket, the trees die standing up, but then they fall in a tangle of wood, half alive, half decomposing. Here the most intense sounds are of the pigeons taking flight. More pine trees appear, their needles accentuating the monochromatic mixture of leaves on the ground of the path.

You have reached the Regional Road, cross it and follow the access path to the Parque Florestal da Praínha (Forestry Park of Praínha).

This recreational park is not only very pleasant, but, as you will see by the number of people that come to spend a few hours here, it is also enriched by the traditional

activities, habits and customs of the people of the island. Right at the start, next to the "winery" is a viewpoint that allows you to appreciate the large lava platform formed by the lava of the Cabeços do Mistério - exactly where you began the hike. To the right of the lava delta, where the noisy



seagulls nest, you get your first look of the Baía de Canas (Reed Bay) with its small beach, where the round stones insist on hiding a good portion of the sand. Above the viewpoint, there is a picnic zone with barbecue grills and water closets. Here you will find the winery. Keep going down, passing an area of identified endemic plants. Pass through the threshing floor, where the grains were separated, next to a typical house with a manual mill and yard. Around you are recreational structures and equipment such as a playground, an enclosure with fallow deer and a camping site.

There is another pleasant geobotanical composition, with a corner of endemic plants, large blocks of red scoria and many trees that give a pleasurable shade.

Continue forward, cross the main road that leads down to the Baía das Canas and continue on the other side where the road is closed to vehicle traffic. This road is perfumed by the central divider that poses as a rose garden.

The road curves, and a little farther on, the signs show where you should go to find the path that will take you to the ocean. When you reach this path, turn right immediately. **Don't walk forward.** The irregular ground and the stone walls give evidence to the advanced age of this footpath that hides in the sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*). The final portion of the path is less steep. The high walls that border this footpath with a basic ground and the slabs of stone carefully placed in the middle of the path, the best place to step, show the importance that this path held for the population. This was the only access to the BAÍA DE CANAS (REED BAY). You reach the first houses. Go down using the old access to the beach. A peculiar staircase made of round stones taken from the beach. Without a doubt, it is uncommon and shows the ingenuity and skill of whoever built it.

Next to the ocean appreciate the beach and relax with a swim in the waters of the channel.



BAÍA DE CANAS (REED BAY)

The Baía de Canas is part of the Vineyard Culture Protected Landscape in the Natural Park

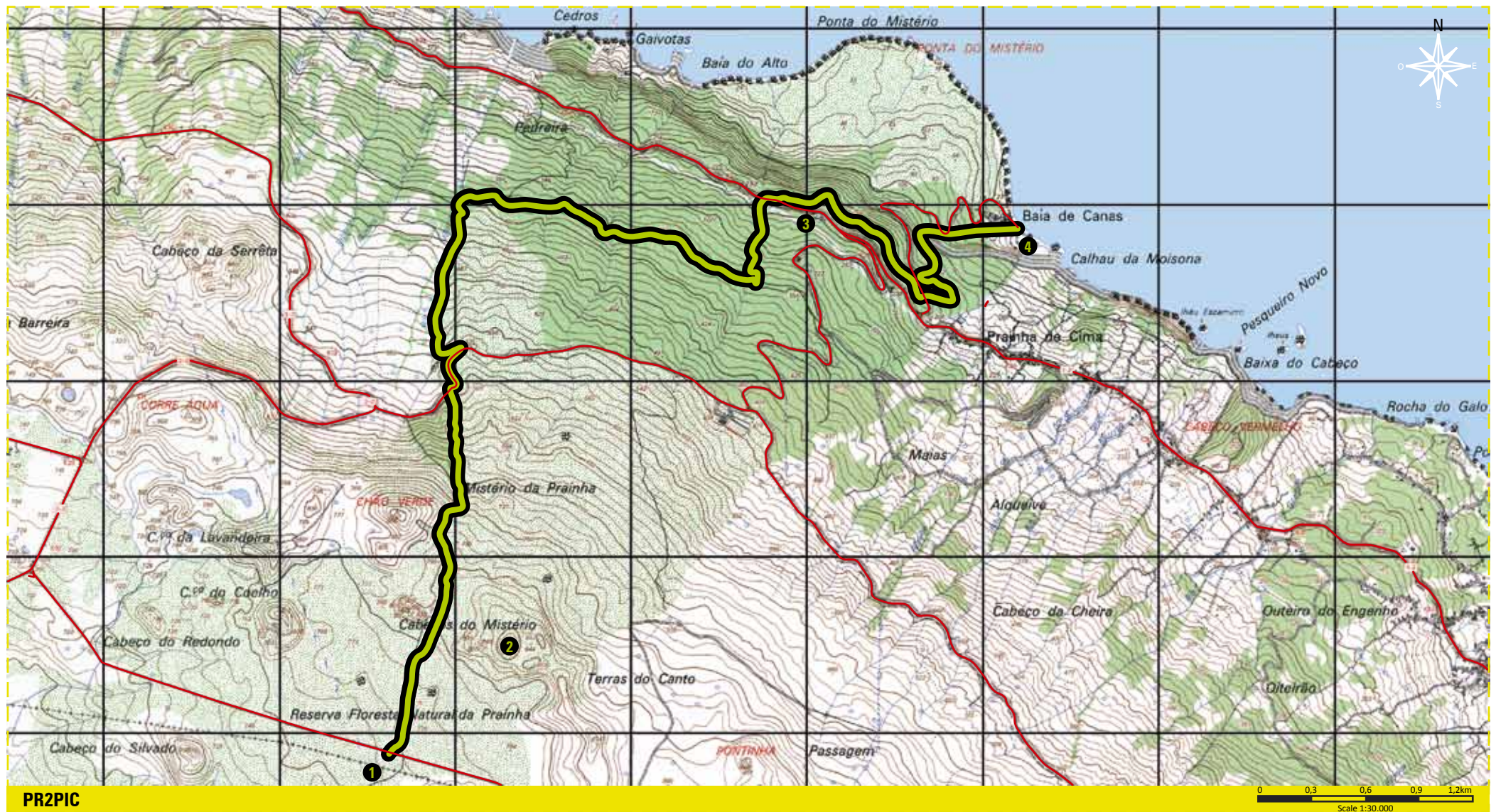


of the Island of Pico.

This cluster of houses linked to the vineyard culture began in the seventeenth century. It has some wineries restored from ruins, stone enclosures for the vines and stone paved access paths.

An additional point of historical interest is the Convento dos Frades (Franciscan Friars Monastery). It is a small monastery made up of the Ermida da Boa Viagem or Ermida das Dores (Chapel of the Good Voyage or Chapel of Sorrows) and a restored housing complex: dormitory, cafeteria, kitchen, water closet and vineyard enclosures.

It was used by the friars during the grape harvest season.

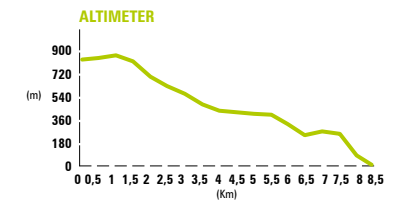


CAMINHO DOS BURROS (VERTENTE NORTE)



1. Start of trail
2. Cabeços do Mistério
3. Praínha Forestry Park
4. End of trail

- DURATION: 3H 30M
- DISTANCE: 11,2 Km
- START: Pico's Central Plateau
- END: Baía de Canas (Reed Bay)
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Pico Mountain, Praínha and Caveiro - *Community Interest Site*. Pico's Central Zone - *Special Protection Area*. Praínha Natural Reserve - *Protected Area*.



PONTA DA ILHA (ISLAND POINT)

PR3PIC

**From the rock to the lighthouse**

This trail goes from one port to another, on the point of Pico, where the island begins and the sun rises first.

On a delta of lava is the place of Calhau, a part of the Piedade parish and its main port. On the low cliff, not particularly pretty because of the houses that are above, grow plants that are atypical on these cliffs.

Named Calhau probably because of the many round rocks on its rocky beach. On the asphalt of the port, a volleyball court was drawn, probably by the youth of the Cultural and Recreational Centre of

Calhau. The coffee shop of the Cultural and Recreational Centre is right there and you can acquire provisions for the hike.

You will be climbing to the top of the cliff. Go on the road. Some restored rustic houses and others more modern. The signs for the trail take you on the road on top of the rock. The stones rounded by the ocean were taken from the beach and given a variety of uses. They were used as decoration on the houses, to make staircases, to make artistic statues and other more adventurous pieces of art.

We pass the small chapel of Our Lady of the Top of the Rock (Nossa Senhora de Cima da Rocha) built in 1854. Leave the paved road and follow along on red basaltic pumice. You will pass near the end of the Canada do Morgado, but keep going along the coast. Notice some well restored houses where even the cement connecting the stones blends in.

Here the vegetation is repetitive. Among the vineyard enclosures with the plastics being held by the stones of the walls, the *Picconia azorica* stand out among common species. The *Canna indica* and the

Pericallis malviflora, partially camouflaged by the dust from the road, keep their intense characteristic colours.

The rurality of the lands is not only in the old architecture of the houses, but also in the use of the yards; they are used for farm animals and traditional vegetable gardens. The stone walls are decorated with objects brought by the ocean: buoys and seashells.



The ragged coastline is formed only by black lava flows. Although they occurred before the island was settled, they don't appear to be very old and appear to be much more recent than those that formed the island of São Jorge in front of us.

You reach the square of the Gaelgo port. Keep going on the cliff, using stone shortcuts or roads where the oxen carts used to pass. The Rushes, tree heath (*Erica arborea*), rock samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and grass pastures make up the vegetation that sparsely covers the rocks.

After you pass "Adega da Avó" (Grandma's Winery), one of the many structures that with the vineyard en-

losures were initially built as part of the vineyard, you start to see Castelete. It is easy to see that this elevation next to the ocean is a small volcano that was then surrounded by lava from more recent eruptions.

The species we see most frequently, along with the grapevines, are *Euphorbia azorica*, *Silene maritima*, fishtail fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*), sea spleenwort (*Asplenium marinum*), some seaside gold-enrods (*Solidago sempervirens*), Azores junipers (*Juniperus brevifolia*), tree heath (*Erica arborea*) and Fayas (*Myrica faya*).

Get ready, the trail ends and the signs lead you to the black rocks colonized only by *Spergularia Azorica*, *Polypogon Maritimus* that grow in sandy deposits in the cracks of the rock, a few lichen and little else. The hike becomes more difficult now, be very careful where you step and keep a calm pace.

Down in the tide area, the crabs rest in the sun on beds of seaweed that sticks to the rocks. Next to Castelete, we start to hear the TERNs.

On the lava stone slabs, some smoother, others rougher and broken, you should step where it appears easier to step. Keep walking on the easiest route.

With the ocean so close, it is not surprising to find limpet shells, discoloured from the sun, on the lava stone slabs. In some spots it is possible to access the ocean, something that the inhabitants of Pico indulge in be it for the limpets or for the crabs. At the top of the lava cliff, fish scales and small holes the size of a hand, to prepare the bait, give evidence of someone who fishes from this spot.

The ocean carves the lava cliff, sometimes making strange shapes, like the natural archway that appears on the path, opened by the violent waters that a little farther ahead pushed large rocks onto the



stone. We can see small cavities in the rock from differential erosion and wood remnants, washed and gnawed by the ocean on their marine journey.

The hike now takes you from the lava, to your right, towards a house you can see on the top. Next to the house, you reach a red basaltic pumice road that you should follow. As you move away from the ocean, you are passing an area known as Engrade. Turn left at the next intersection. Don't forget to look at the constructions some locals make on the walls.

At a new fork in the road, turn left to the ocean and go to the Baía do Engrade (Engrade Bay). From here, follow the coast on a footpath that, here and there, may need careful attention to where you step. On this last part on the way to the ISLAND POINT LIGHTHOUSE, you will have to adhere strictly to the signs on the trail. You are passing near a very important colony of terns. Soon you will see the Island Point lighthouse. Walk near the buildings and if you see the lighthouse keeper ask him if you can climb the tower. By following the paved road, you will quickly reach Manhenga where the hiking trail ends. If you wish, ask for the Ponta da Ilha restaurant. It is relatively near and you can enjoy a good meal or simply regain your strength as you wait for transportation.



TERNs

The terns are migratory birds that come to the Azores to nest in coastal habitats from April to August.

There are two species in the Azores. They are

the common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and the roseate tern (*Sterna dougallii*). The roseate tern is distinguished by its completely black bill at the beginning of the mating season.

They are well adapted to quick flights and an active lifestyle. They are medium sized, about 25 cm long, with long wings and thin bills. They feed by plunge diving for fish and are frequently seen arriving at the nests with fish in their beaks.

They are gregarious birds that form large, noisy and active colonies. They tend to nest in inaccessible rocky spots; a small depression in the rock is enough for a nest, where they lay three to four eggs. If they are disturbed, generally, they abandon the nest. For this reason, it is important to minimize all actions that may have an impact on the colonies.



ISLAND POINT LIGHTHOUSE

The Island Point Lighthouse is on the eastern-most point of the island.

It began operating on 21st July 1946. It has a white prismatic tower measuring 19 metres in height, topped with a red lantern at a height of 29 metres above the sea level. The tower is part of the main building. There are also support buildings in the complex.

In 1959, the lighthouse was connected to the settlement of Manhenga by a road.

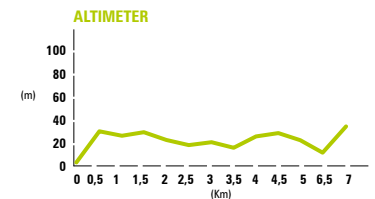


PONTA DA ILHA (ISLAND POINT)



1. Start of trail
2. Castelete
3. Island Point Lighthouse
4. Manhenha

- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 10 Km
- START: Calhau Port
- END: Manhenha
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Difficult
- REMARKS: Ponta da Ilha (Island Point)
- Community Interest Site/Special Protection Area



PICO

CRIAÇÃO VELHA VINEYARDS

PR5PIC



Vineyard and salty enclosures

Go to the Porto do Calhau (Calhau Port) where the sign identifying the walking trails is next to four small equipment houses. Facing the sea, go to your right staying on the coast.

You pass a large house in front of which is a tide well. You will see more along this hike. These wells were the only resource of drinkable water that was available during the driest seasons. Containers tied to ropes were sent down to the well to catch the water emerging from the aquifer

at the bottom. Normally these springs are on the coast and below the high tide. They are only visible or usable during the low tide. During the low tide, the freshwater contains less saltwater and is appropriate for consumption. The road that you are travelling is a very old road, as is evidenced by the remains of the walls that were built on the side facing the ocean. These walls marked the end of the vineyards and the service paths coming from the interior. Like many other roads, after it was improved, it became a desirable area for urban construction, though limited, with new buildings cropping up.

Through the length of this trail, you can admire the singular walls that human effort built. The walls served two purposes; they cleaned the land of surplus rock and protected the grapevines from the strong winds and the salt from the ocean. And so the enclosures “currais” emerged. These are small parcels usually at right angles with less than 10 m² that have been used in the vineyards for centuries.

Continue towards the Cabeço do Pé do Monte, the hill in front of you. Where the hill meets the ocean a small bay emerged, the Pocinho (Small Pool), which, with time, became a desirable place to spend a few relaxing hours with the right to an ocean swim or a football game. There is a high quality rural tourism es-

tablishment located here.

Go down to the Pocinho and climb the road that takes you around the Cabeço do Pé do Monte. On the other side of the walls we see vineyards, many of them invaded by sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*), tree heath (*Erica arborea*) and Faya (*Myrica faya*)

On the other side, a bathing area is awaiting you. It has a small semi-natural pool well adapted to ocean baths by the parish board of Criação Velha that is also responsible for the building that is available for use by visitors.



Continue walking on the coast. We see only green keeping time with the black of the walls and the red of the ground. The heat rises from the large basalt slabs and from the fragmented blocks that are on them. With the exception of willows and *Metrosideros*, we don't see other trees planted by man able to survive these conditions of sun and salt. With regard to birds, they are awaiting the arrival of the grapes.

I think that we are at the best protected landscape of Pico Island. What it lacks in winery architecture is more than made up by the vineyard structures. It is without a doubt one of the most expressive landscapes and views that this island has to offer to its visitors.

Some picturesque signs show you what you should do--climb among the vineyards looking for a windmill.

Small constructions here and there are used for storage and when necessary shelter. The road passes the service footpath on which many men have carried kilos and kilos of verdejo grape on their backs.

You reach a wider road, the Canada do Monte, probably the oldest road connection between the parishes of Criação Velha and Monte. Turn left.

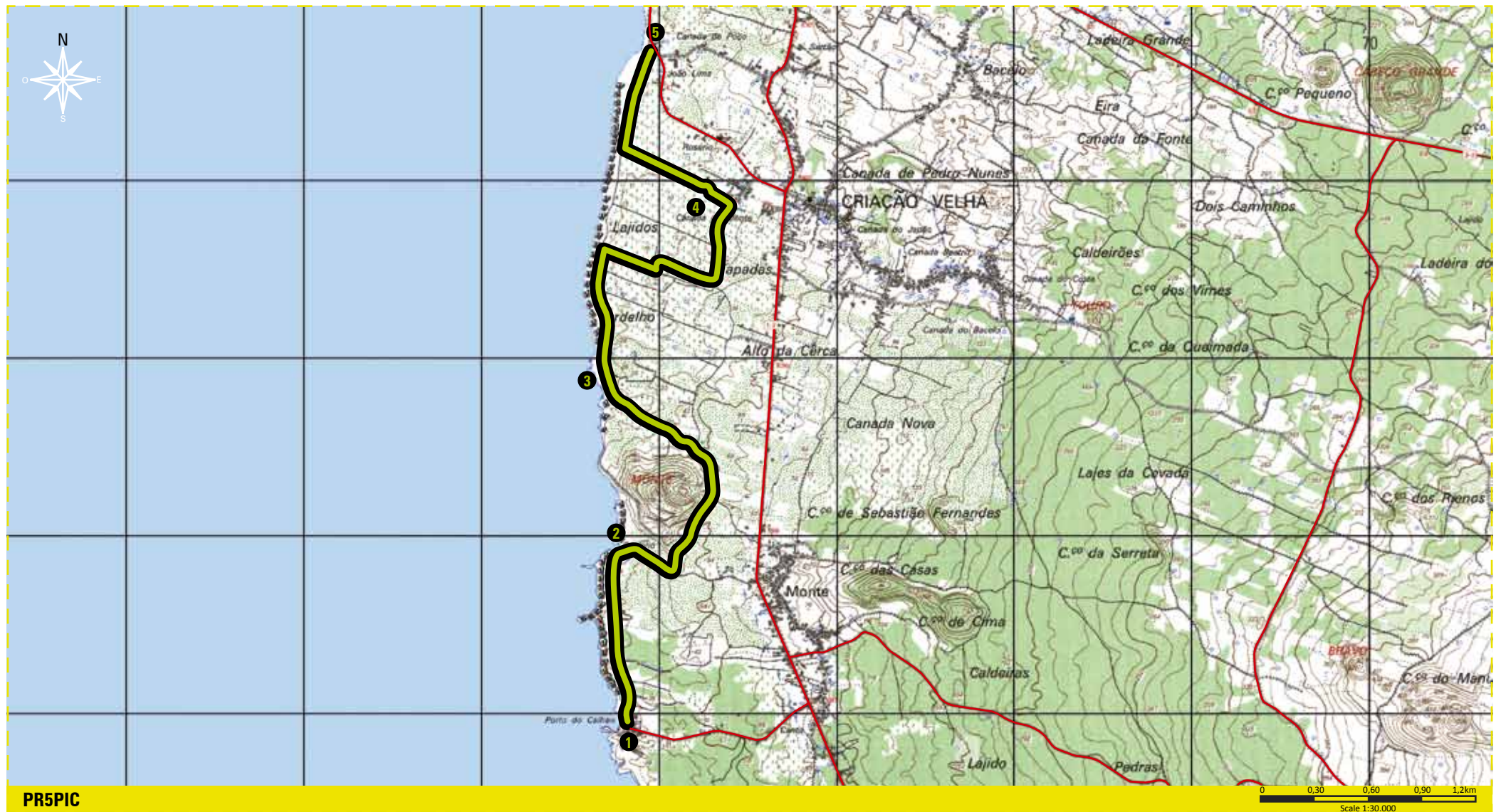
At the entrances to the enclosures, you will see curious portals made from the reused stakes of old wine casks. I can't determine how old they are. I would like to be able to say that in times gone by they held the wine that made it to the tables of Czars, but that was probably from other casks, from other times.

On some houses, in the space between the rocks, grow special carnations in the dust that falls in the cracks. This is a special variety of carnation that grows almost hanging from the walls. You reach the asphalt next to some houses, it is time to turn the corner and head to the windmill that stands out in the landscape.

This windmill made of wood moves in a circle on a stone base. It was restored by the Technical Office Responsible for the Vineyard Culture Protected Landscape. The windmill is not only a landmark in the landscape; it has taken on the role of viewpoint and reception area offering typical local products for sale. Because of this, we recommend the climb to it.

Return to the road and go to the coast by turning right. It is impressive to see some of the round stones that the sea placed on the lava stone slabs, waiting for a new tide to move them somewhere else. Farther ahead, after green oceanic pastures of *Spartina*, the hike ends on the paved road next to the Saldanhas manor house. We recommend that you continue on the road flanked by distinguished antique houses until Areia Larga. Here we have a small inlet with a wharf where you can see an unusual crane. They are the privileged view for those that wish to enjoy a meal at the restaurant Ancoradouro. Don't leave Pico without having a meal here.



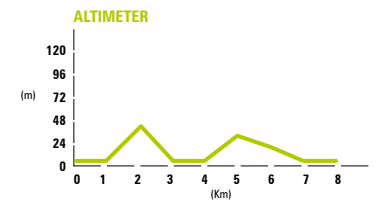


CRIAÇÃO VELHA VINEYARDS



1. Start of trail
2. Pocinho
3. Bathing Area
4. Windmill
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 8 Km
- START: Calhau Port
- END: Saldanhas Manor House
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy
- REMARKS: World Heritage Site - *UNESCO*.
Vineyard Culture Protected Landscape - *Protected Area*



PICO

CAMINHO DAS VOLTAS

PR7PIC

**At the Gates of Neptune**

Those who follow the regional road eventually find the Viewpoint of Terra Alta (Miradouro da Terra Alta) easily, between two metrosideros, guardians of the viewpoint. At the top of the 11 steps to the viewpoint is a concrete platform, partially suspended at the end, but with serious cracks that are a safety risk. It's not surprising that access is limited. There is a limited view of the densely green high slope that goes all the way to the ocean. The island of São Jorge and the channel of sea that connects it to this island do stand out; it is a view that reappears in many spots on this route.

Leaving the viewpoint, turn right, pass through the makeshift parking area, continue a few more meters and you will find a path that goes down - Caminho das Voltas (Turns Road). After a stretch of straight road the turns begin. The turns are smoothed by steps here and there. The path is on the rock, corrected in some places with pavement. In other places an earthy, leafy carpet covers the ground. We were told that this was the path used by the residents of Santo Amaro and surrounding areas to

access the upper zone of the island. There is no evidence of the passage of any animal-drawn vehicles, except the very reasonable width of the road, but some of the slopes are too steep. However it would be perfect to take the cattle to graze or bring firewood on the back of a donkey.

After the first valley, begin the Cryptomerias that leave their mark on the ground. Farther ahead, when the path evens out, laurel leaves cover the ground. In the second valley, which is deeper, one can guess a waterfall during more intense rains.

Under an awning of vegetation, this is a cool and shady path where mushrooms and mosses have a good chance at success. Some holly and *Picconia azorica* intrude on a forest with many ferns where the most unusual are *Doodia caudata* and *Adiantum hispidulum*.

As you come upon the first of several chestnut trees, the beautiful countryside kisses the sea. Cross the *Ribeira do Salto*. On the top of the hill you can see the ruins of a typical two storey house. Go onto

the red basaltic pumice path. You will reach the asphalt, the first houses of and the beginning of the streetlights. The uniqueness of the local houses is marked by stones on the roofs that prevent the fragile tiles from being thrown onto the taros that grow in vegetable gardens here and there.

At the first fork in the road continue straight instead of climbing. Advance 800 meters, past the house of a craftsman who makes wicker baskets, to a larger electricity pole (with an adapter) on your left.

On the right is a secondary road that is also paved. Take this path for about 10 metres, and go down a footpath on the right. Pass by a stone house, once a butter factory and now forgotten amid the vegetation. The descent continues its steep turns amid the sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) on the slope until the road Debaixo da Rocha where a small cluster of quaint summer cottages stand at a place called O Canto (The Corner). Continue down, now on the road, until you find a narrow footpath on the right. Follow the footpath until you come to a, normally dry, stream that will lead you the ocean rocks at the Baía do Canto (Corner Bay). Go to the left on the rocks. You will find a tidal pool and a small viewpoint made with rocks from the bay. Return

on the paved road going straight. This is an area of vineyards, protected in their stone enclosures. O Canto is a holiday spot with typical wineries. It is popular in the summer, because of its proximity to the sea, and for swimming and late afternoon snacks.

You will reach a crossroads where you should turn right onto Rua do Caisinho, which will take you to the bathing spot with the same name. The first shipyard of Pico Island was here. Leave the red basaltic pumice square where you arrived, behind you and continue to the left on a shortcut along the sea. While enjoying the *Azorinas*, *Festucas*, parsleys and heaths colonizing the black rock and without realizing, you reach the Parque da Furada: a fully equipped picnic area. Leave the park and climb the Caminho da Furada road. Turn right at the first junction until you reach Rua Amaro Justino de Azevedo Gomes road. Go down to the right, up to the white seawall that separates the sea rocks from the road and follow it to the end of this route.

On this road, 60 metres before the entrance to the church square, the Handicraft School (Escola Regional de Artesanato) of Santo Amaro is on your left, and is well worth a visit. Around the square of the Church of Santo Amaro are the Império (Holy Ghost Chapel), the school, the parish centre and hall, the cemetery, and the headquarters of the Sociedade Filarmónica Recreio Santamarense.

Leave the square towards the port. Along the way, in July to September, you can visit A Loja where Antonio Duarte Pimentel, a son of the mountain island long settled in continental Portugal, exhibits on canvas his artistic ability and creative sensibility. Affable



like everyone from Pico he will be happy to show you his work, which you can also purchase. He has paintings with various themes at the price of one week of work. Your journey is coming to an end, but not before visiting the Maritime Museum, tribute to the strong and unique tradition of shipbuilding which still exists in Santo Amaro. You will see that it is worth your while.

The hike ends next to the port, whose ramp led whaling and fishing vessels, who made history in navigation in the Azores Archipelago, to the sea and which also received the whales that were melted here.

HANDICRAFT SCHOOL (ESCOLA REGIONAL DE ARTESANATO) OF SANTO AMARO

Be sure to visit the museum on the first storey of this cottage from the end of the nineteenth century. The rooms, with period furniture, depict the experience of days gone by and togeth-



MARTITIME MUSEUM OF SHIPBUILDING (MUSEU MARÍTIMO DE CONSTRUÇÃO NAVAL)

José da Silva Melo, after a life in foreign lands where he continued to be involved in the art of shipbuilding, came back and decided to honour



er with the exhibited crafts help to teach and preserve the memory of the local culture.

A small box at the entrance suggests that one contribute with a donation to help keep the museum open.

After the museum, visit the ground-floor where the school operates. The school was inaugurated on 10th September 1986 and has over time received apprentices of diverse ages and backgrounds.

In a family atmosphere, the artisans develop their arts: embroidery and lace; fish scale flow-ers; papyrus; fig tree pith works; hydrangea designs; parchment; regional dolls made from wheat straw and corn husks; the "labregas do mato" dolls with their typical clothes; hats and rugs made from straw and dragon tree leaves. Some of the crafts on display are available for purchase.

his father and his father's art. And so the mem-ory of such an important activity in the tradi-tional economy of Santo Amaro is preserved.

*Some of the models on display were built with pine and cedar wood in the USA, based on old projects, photographs and José Melo's memory. Others were built in Santo Amaro using sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) and laurel. In addition, the museum has a collection of tools and even some curious rails mounted on the floor. This spot was originally a shipyard, then, it became a workshop where the tools and machines were kept, and now, it is a museum. The Museum opened in 2004 and is usually open every day, whenever José Melo is there. Admission is free, but one can always contrib-ute by purchasing some of the crafts available for sale or by making a donation.*

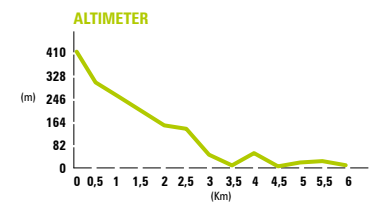


CAMINHO DAS VOLTAS



1. Start of trail
2. Terra Alta
3. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 00M
- DISTANCE: 6,3 Km
- START: Miradouro de Terra Alta
- END: Santo Amaro
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



PICO

LADEIRA DOS MOINHOS (MILL SLOPE)

PRC8PIC



Faith and Bread

This hike is a short route, which aims to raise awareness of the physical space that was settled by the people of this parish and some of the details of their rural activities, which is indeed well done.

We begin at *Igreja Matriz* (Mother Church) of São Roque, whose building began in 1714, an imposing church in the context of the island, with a superb interior where the paintings and the gilded carvings in the main chancel, the side chapels and the pulpit stand out. The upper side stained-glass windows, the shell that is still used in the baptistery and that superb lectern (a bookcase with four inclined shelves on the sides for books) with magnificent inlays; the richest I've ever seen. If it is open, be sure to visit this church. It is certainly one of the most valuable elements of religious heritage buildings on this island.

Leave the church square and head east on Rua das Dores towards the cobblestone bridge ahead. Here

the waters of the Ribeira de Dentro and another of its tributaries join, and since the bridge has a central pillar, each stream passes under its own arch, coming together downstream. Once you cross the bridge, turn right and climb a few meters on the paved road, to shortly turn right again onto Ladeira dos Moinhos (Mill Slope) that climbs next to the stream.

On this sloped road, which still has the original cobblestone in many places, there were supposedly a set of five water mills that worked in a series, hence the name. However, we only found the ruins of three mills, all on the left side immediately after the trough passing under the road, which lead the water to the casters. On the steepest part of the climb, if you take a byway to the left, you can visit the ruins of one of the mills. There is little left and we are not even able to discover what each

milled. Maybe there was one for corn and another for wheat, after all, the wheels had to be different depending on what you ground. Almost at the end of the path, you can see the Moinho da Paciência (Patience Mill). The building was recovered, but I do not know if the gears were as well.

On the regional road take a short detour to the bridge to see the Vila (Town) de São Roque. Go back and climb the hill next to a large rudimentary water tank, the Depósito de Água da Baleia, that stored water essential to the transformation of the whales into commercial products at the factory on the pier.

On the climb, next to a stream, you may see the

small parcels of land planted with pasture or corn, the two are normally rotated because of the economic benefit. When you reach a municipal road, cross it and keep climbing on a road paved in places with concrete. You will notice a circular structure across the river; take a quick detour up to this old threshing-floor, which would have been used to dry or thresh some cereal or legume, and see if you like



the views. Back to the path continue to climb until you reach a fork in the road: take the left, which is narrower and darker. This footpath to higher pastures is known as the Caminho do Engenho (Mill Path).

It comes out at a road halfway up, turn right walking toward the noise and smoke of the Pico Power Plant which supplies power to the entire island. The many finches (*Fringilla coelebs*) that fly around here do not seem bothered by the noise and smoke. A byway that follows the Ribeira da Laje on this side crosses this road after 700 metres, take this path down. This small river of torrential regime has a large number of large specimens of *Picconia azorica*, an endemic tree that in the past occupied significant portions of the islands at this altitude. Ploughing for agricultural use gradually eliminated many of them, and the riverbanks are one of the places where they still exist.

Farther down, on your left is another water mill. Go down the stone steps for a brief visit. Although it is not restored, which is a pity, this mill is reasonably well conserved and the fundamental pieces are in the right place. On the top floor are the runner stones and the bedstone, and, beneath, the horizontal wooden wheel. When you reach the asphalt paving, cross the bridge and turn immediately right continuing down, on the sides of the river or on the riverbed. This path continues across the regional road, and becomes a narrow footpath. When you reach a bypath, turn left until the stream bed. Here is a descent that follows the small river until it ends near the bridge where the hike began. If by chance you have to leave this shortcut, come back to it as soon as possible. Now just a few more meters back to the *Igreja Matriz* (Mother Church) square.



WATER MILLS

Water mills became popular in almost all the islands of the Azores, where the first settlers found a wealth of streams and creeks with enough flow (now much changed) to ensure



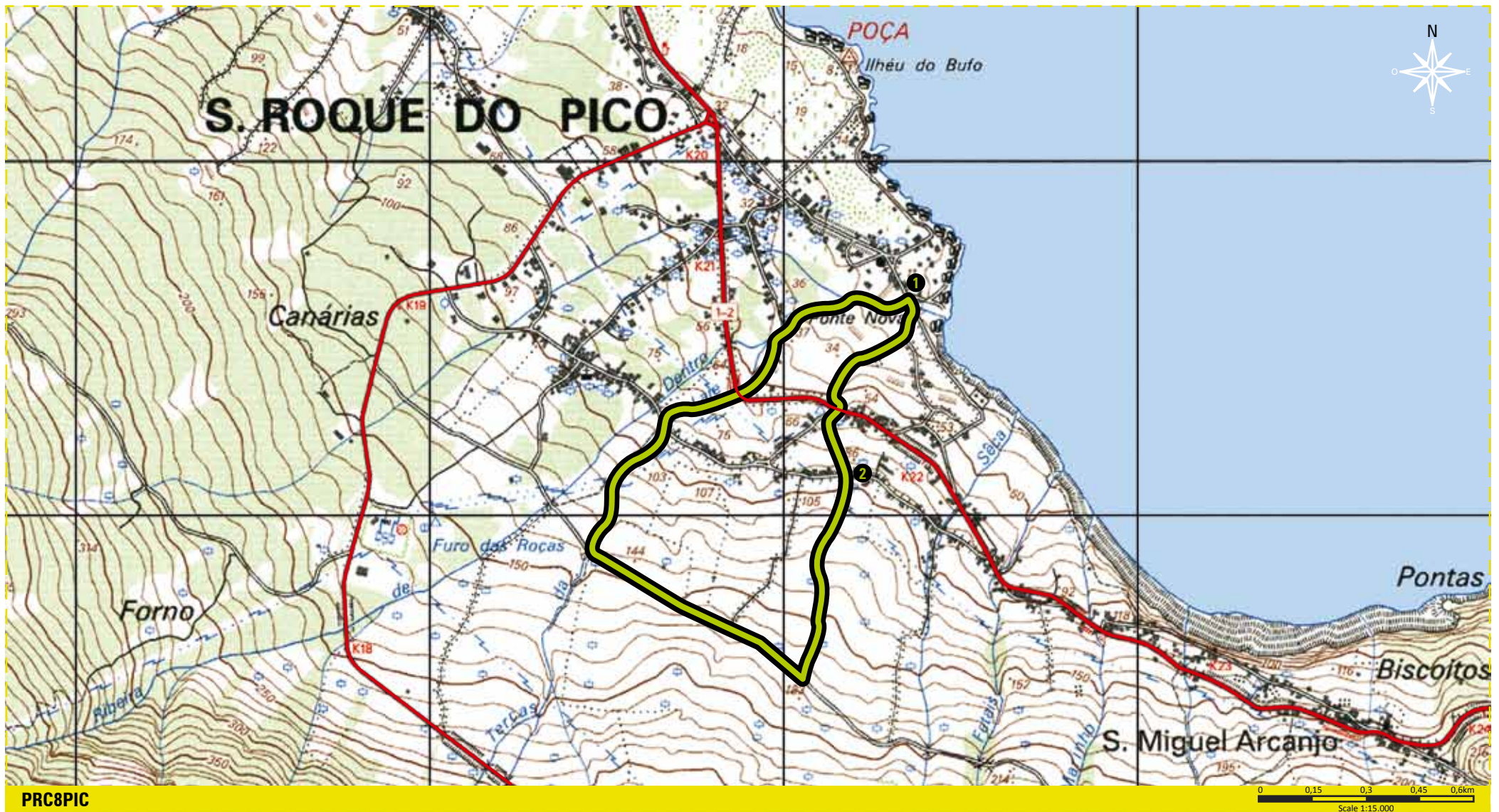
that the mills would work at least through much of the year.

The control of the flow of water that reached the mill was possible through a simple system of locks and channels or troughs usually made of masonry or stone.

Water mills had two possible ways of moving the gears and millstones: vertical or horizontal wooden wheels. The gear turned the upper grindstone that ground the grain that fell between it and the lower grindstone.

The harvest (mainly of wheat and maize) coincided with the onset of the rains when the streams, such as this one where the hike is, had enough flow to work the mills.

Some of these mills had several owners (local farmers) who decided among themselves the days that each would make use of the mill.

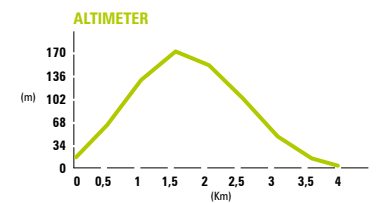


LADEIRA DOS MOINHOS (MILL SLOPE)



1. Start and End of trail
2. Depósito de Água da Baleia

- DURATION: 1H 15M
- DISTANCE: 3,4 Km
- START: Junto à Igreja Matriz de São Roque
- END: Junto à Igreja Matriz de São Roque
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



PRAINHA DO NORTE

PRC9PIC

**Traces of history**

The hike begins at the parish of Prainha at *Largo Dr. José Machado Serpa* square, most certainly a remarkable person who, however, took the name of the commonly known Largo do Império (Holy Ghost Chapel Square), in the heart of this parish, where the main services are located. We have the Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Ajuda (Church of Our Lady of Help), the Império (Holy Ghost Chapel), the headquarters of the Parish Council, the headquarters of the *Filarmónica União Prainhense* with a space for large events, the bandstand and retail shops. The architectural setting of the surrounding area, where we can also see buildings from the eighteenth century, with uncommon traces and size denouncing families of wealth and social status is worthy of mention. Prainha is one of the oldest settlements on Pico and the second to be built on the north coast of the island.

Leave the square Largo do Império by way of Rua do Caminho Novo (New Way Street) that as the

name suggests also has recent homes. Walk 650 metres, passing by two workshops, an auto shop and a metalwork shop, on the right. You will find a paved road, also on the right, on which you will walk for only 20 metres. Then continue on the old road on your left. Ahead is a tunnel underneath the road that links the two sections of the old road. You can walk through the tunnel. However, if it bothers you that this passage only has a height of one metre at the end, then there is an alternative in the form of a narrow slope right next to the tunnel leading to the roadside of the regional road. Cross the road here, next to the 33 km milestone, and continue to climb this ancient path upstream. At the first fork in the road take the left on a stone paved path, and at the next fork continue straight.

On the way you will probably see banana trees, taros, Cattley guava trees (*Psidium cattleianum*), citrus trees and other things belonging to more tropical climates. A traditional barn, which you can visit, closely guarded by a large holly (*Ilex perado ssp. azorica*) and an elegant *Myrica faya*, comes into view. Next to the water tank, which is in front of you, Prainha do Norte can be seen with its imposing church and agricultural fields. Return to the path and make a 90 degree turn under the chestnut trees and then straight ahead, ignoring the byways on the right. Ahead, turn left, past *Azores laurel*, *Picconia azorica*, *Myrica faya*, sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) and under a great oak, an uncommon species in most islands of the Azores, to begin the descent next to the stream Ribeira de Nossa Senhora (Stream of Our Lady) on your right. Cross the stream bed to arrive at the housing cluster believed to be the oldest in the parish, with its origins in the end of the seventeenth century.

At least two stone bridges deserve your attention: one, with a pillar in the middle, has large stone slabs to cross the two flows of water and the other, a bit farther down, with a stone vaulted arch, which gives shelter to bats whose high shrieks can be heard. They are completely different solutions and styles and no doubt both will have seen several generations pass on the way to the comfort that these ancient stone houses could give. Unfortunately these old bridges are a type of heritage in the Azores which is often forgotten or overlooked. However, it certainly is not the case here, because of an undergoing recovery project for these old houses for

Turismo de Habitação (lodging in private homes ranging from wonderful farmhouses to manor houses). Soon more wineries and wine cellars will appear here, maybe even without ever having held that role. Back to the regional road, cross it and continue down an asphalt path always beside the stream, until the road crosses the stream just meters from the sea. NOTE: before continuing left, on the road, you should cross the pasture on your right (which may have corn), or, as in my case, can go down the mouth of the river and then go through the last portion of land. On the other side you can visit the Canto da Areia (Sand Corner), a small niche of houses, which got its name because of the small cove surrounded by two streams that flow into here, where the sand remains between the gravel on the beach, delightful for the few who come here to bathe.

Go a few meters on the road by the beach, towards Ponta da Rocha and you will find Casa do Fio (House of Cable): A small building of about 2 meters square with a single door and a curious domed cover, a counter curved profile, with a stone spire on top. This was a support station for submarine telegraph cable communications in the twentieth century; it was used in both world wars. Go back,



through the pasture again and continue on the road. Pass by the Chapel of São Pedro (St. Peter), usually closed, an eighteenth century building where it is worth noting the human face carved from a block of stone that underlies the cross that finishes off the facade. Under this face are two crossed keys under a mitre, whose meaning seems obvious since this is the Chapel of St. Peter: the first Pope of Christendom to whom Jesus Christ gave the "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven".

At your left the countryside consists of a core of farm support buildings for the storage of farming equipment, agricultural products and feed. Continue straight ahead for 250 meters. When the path curves to the left and climbs, it is time to turn right onto an old path that leads to Baixio, a coastal zone where the sea comes rolling against the rocks that lie on the sand and the beginning of a new paved road that leads to the port.

Here and there you will see well-kept vineyards and wineries restored to their rustic style. We arrive at Porto da Prainha (Prainha Port), where a concrete wall for coastal protection along the road that you will take was built recently. Here, along with other seabirds, you can see one of the most restless waders: the common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), scavenging for insects, larvae and worms.

Pass the lighthouse and continue along the path between the football field and the lavas from the sea, where the ruins of an old windmill can be seen. A lone millstone and remains of wooden gears rest on the conical stone masonry base. We are nearing a bathing and leisure area, with a beach volleyball court, a picnic area, a strange circle of benches, and, of course, the Poça Branca (White Pool), the reason for all this. This is a well-defined natural pool, frequented by locals, with a snack booth to receive you. I did not have the luck to find it open, and therefore could not consume a needed refreshment. Too bad. If you have time for a swim, don't hesitate.

Leave by climbing up the asphalt path to the right, and later take another right. Turn left onto a red basaltic pumice path and walk to the next to last lighting post, among these forests, to reach the sea again. From here you can see a basaltic arch and the Rocha do Galo (Rooster Rock), of which I could only make out the cockscomb. In the background is the Baía de Canas (Reed Bay).

Go back to the bathing area and take the path leading over the volleyball court. Again stone is king on the houses you pass. Some vineyards dot the landscape. At the next intersection go up the road farther to the right towards the church, pass by a closed tide well, and follow the creek Ribeira do Império, with small bridges that look ancient. Finally, take a tour inside the *Igreja Matriz* (Mother Church), rebuilt in 1787 as it appears today.

Complete the course at Largo do Império square with a minute's rest in the small terrace of Café do Sr. Hélder (Mr. Helder's Coffee shop, which is not always open, or at Café do Lopes (Lopes Coffee shop) where you have a little more to choose from.



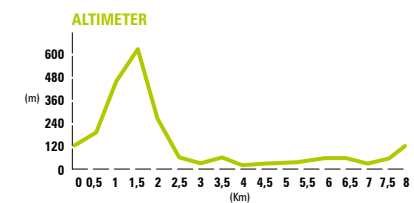


PRAINHA DO NORTE



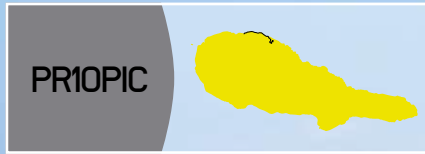
1. Start and End of trail
2. Baía da Areia
3. Ermida de São Pedro

- DURATION: 2H 50M
- DISTANCE: 8 Km
- START: Largo Dr. José Machado Serpa
- END: Largo Dr. José Machado Serpa
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



PICO

SANTANA – LAJIDO



On the lava road

The walk begins near a building that holds an electrical voltage transformer, where a sign marks the entrance to Sant'Ana (when coming from São Roque). Enter the secondary road that comes off the regional road here, and see if you can find the narrow cemented entrance to a footpath between the houses number 7 and 9. You'll have to come up this way but only later.

First, continue straight ahead, turning right shortly afterwards, on a sloping path, which begins on asphalt and becomes a dirt path. After climbing 190 meters turn left at a fork that goes down gently. You reach a wider area where an embankment of this Cabeço da Queimada (hilltop) shows its basaltic nature, in shades of red and black. Immediately following is a pedestrian walkway, rudimentary steps cut into uneven terrain, that leads to the recuperated Vigia da Baleia (Whale Lookout Station), which is now surrounded by too much vegetation to maintain its original purpose. It is rectangular, with a faceted front, white, like they all are, with an awning to block the sun that otherwise would invade the long and thin window. This was the old post where the watchman controlled a part of the Atlantic and at the smallest sign of a whale, launched a firecracker rocket. *Foguete no ar... Baleia no mar* (Firecracker in flight...Whale in sight). The tasks on land were abandoned and the whalers of Pico ran to the sea to try their luck on a whale. The boats were always ready, because at the shrill burst of a firecracker rocket there was no time to waste. The first to reach the announced whale earned their living. At sea,



time has a different pace: catching an animal that size could take several hours. The frenzy of whaling was mainly in the summer months. Because of the seasonality and uncertainty, this hunt was not the whaler's main activity; agriculture was usually the other livelihood.

From this watch point on the north coast, it will certainly be easier to see the lavas of Santa Luzia, at Cabrito and Lajido, where this walk will end, than to spot a whale. So, if you didn't bring binoculars and if the Acacias and other vegetation that limits the view have not yet been trimmed, then don't wait any longer and return the same way, to the footpath referred to at the beginning ("between the houses number 7 and 9"). This old trail continues to climb, becoming wider, for more than 600 meters, until finally reaching asphalt at a spot where inert materials are extracted from the hilltop Cabeço da Queimada.

Turning right, walk down this path, between small agricultural plots planted mostly with low productivity pasture or uncultivated. Pass by the first homes, a small cluster of typical stone houses, and you reach Rua de Cima de Santana, where you turn right. At a house on the left, the owner seems to like carving stone work as can be seen by sculptures on the wall. Farther ahead, a shed besides the road is home to an oxcart from the last century. Soon after, you will find on your left a secondary path with a reddish hue paved with cement and coarse gravel. Follow it until you reach a house, after which it becomes a footpath that leads to the regional road. Here, turn slightly to the left and go down behind the house with the number 80, that has a sign with *Centro Social Padre Alberto*. This secondary path divides immediately after. Go to the left here and at the upcoming forks. The ground, at first covered with grasses begins to show its rocky nature, where the grooves from the past are engraved on the basalt.

If you come in September you can pick grapes from the bunches hanging over the path; they are irresistible. When you reach the asphalt paving, keep going down. When the road makes a wide curve to the left (the asphalt ends 10 metres ahead) go down by a shortcut on the right which soon becomes an ancient cobbled slope that will take you to Baía do Gasparal, a pleasant spot, with some wineries and of historical importance, because it was a wharf for the casks of Verdelho wine produced here. Turn right and you will find some significant traces:

- (1) a tide well from 1815, with a square wall composed of four stone slabs perfectly fitted with each other, and two washing basins nearby
- (2) a considerable cobbled area which allowed an easier transport of the casks to the warehouse;
- (3) a high wall, which is ruins of the old *Armazém das pipas* (Cask Warehouse), with some stones in the ground with carved details, depicting the work that was done here;
- (4) a natural ramp access to the sea (a sloped slab that can be seen beyond the warehouse), which



served as a loading dock, on which the casks were rolled to near the water, and from there the casks were rolled to the boats using wooden planks.

Of course the weather and sea have "worked" the site, leaving only a few traces of that past. Leave this pleasant place, not by the dirt road but rather always following the route along the sea, over the lava stone slabs or on the slag placed on the ground to rehabilitate the path. Here the old coastline was replaced by new lava flows, leaving abandoned cliffs visible in some areas. There are many endemic plants here: such as *Picconia azorica*, heathers, *Myosotis marítima*, *Festuca petraea*, and other species such as parsley. This cliff is also an important Cory's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*) nesting site.

Soon the ruins of a large home, where there was a winery on the lower floor, come into view. You have arrived at Cabrito, where some beautiful willows grow on the rock slab near a tide well. From here, follow the paved road with the murmur of the ocean hitting the rocks for company. Here and there several lava formations deserve attention, such as some elegantropy lava and rare lava tumulus with an arched and fissured surface crust. Leaving the Cabrito you come to Ermida de São Mateus (Saint Mathews Chapel), built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which you should walk around to admire its impressive facade. It is a stone masonry chapel with the masonry in full view which is a rarity on this island. On the facade there is an illegible inscription and high-reliefs decorated with excellent floral motifs. By its orientation it seems the sun never enters within. In another few hundred metres you reach Arcos, with a modest bathing area and a chapel around which the *Festas de Nossa Senhora Rainha do Mundo* (Feasts of Our Lady Queen of the World) take place on the last week-end of August. On the left, immediately after the chapel, there is tide well that has the peculiarity of being attached to a turret. Part of the water that came out of this well was brought up to the top of the turret, and, through a suspended pipe, flowed by gravity to the nearest house where a still worked. Back on track; go to Lajido, where this enjoyable walk ends, across the lava fields that are partially covered with Festuces, on the coastal road, which has beautiful views over the sea.

In Lajido visit the Centro de Interpretação da Paisagem da Vinha da Ilha do Pico (Vineyard Landscape of Pico Island Interpretive Centre) and the many historical buildings that were restored here: houses, cellars with their respective wineries and stills, warehouses, fig fermentation tanks, the Solar dos Salgueiros (Willows Manor), tide wells and the Ermida de Nossa Senhora da Pureza (Chapel of Our Lady of Purity), with its feast in the 1st week of September. With a visit to this museum, where the cultural heritage of this community is preserved, one understands how vine cultivation, and wine and aguardente (firewater, a strong local alcoholic beverage) production became one of the main sources of wealth in the economy of the municipality. One also understands the colossal human effort that was needed to conquer these rocky fields.

That said all that remains to do is wait for your ride. You can pass the time in a friendly bar that you will discover.

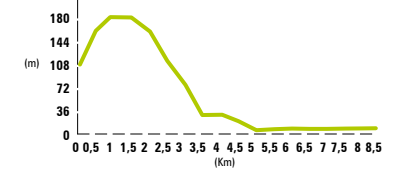




SANTANA - LAJIDO



1. Start of trail
 2. Vigia da Baleia
 3. Gasparal Bay
 4. Cabrito
 5. Arcos
 6. End of trail
- DURATION: 2H 50M
 - DISTANCE: 8,7 Km
 - START: Estrada Regional entre Santana e São Vicente
 - END: Lajido
 - DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



PICO

CALHETA DO NESQUIM

PRC11PIC



Whale Spotted!

This is a circular route, which can be done in both directions, so we chose one that we recommend. It begins in the church square, which is now called Largo do Terreiro Capitão Anselmo Baleeiro (Whaler Captain Anselmo), a son of this land in whose memory a statue was also erected next to the church, which says: "Captain Anselmo da Silveira / 1833-1912 / Founder of Whaling on Pico Island". It is dated 28th April 1876, the founding of the first whaling station. Calheta do Nesquim was the first whaling centre on Pico Island; you will have a chance to see traces of this history along this walk.



locality who saw their youth leave to an uncertain fate. There is a fountain on the church wall that is still working.

When leaving the square, in the direction of the port, you pass by the Casa dos Botes (House of Boats). It is a twentieth century building consisting of two large contiguous bodies almost entirely in stone masonry. As the name implies the boats that left to the sea to capture the giants of the seas were (and are) kept here, but now, they only leave for feasts, to participate in regattas with their counterparts. You will be very lucky if you see them in the water, and somewhat lucky if the Casa dos Botes (House of Boats) is open. Otherwise go around this impressive building on the

Around us are some of the more important structures of Calheta do Nesquim: the bandstand, topped by an appropriate lyre; the Império do Divino Espírito Santo (Chapel of the Holy Spirit); the multipurpose pavilion; the wharf with a crane and 10 beached boats; and, of course, the church whose construction was finished in 1860, with the remarkable effort and commitment of the people. The church has a single nave, with southern exposure which allows a nice view from the churchyard, hanging over the rocks of the harbour. If you go in, the image of *São Sebastião* (Saint Sebastian), patron saint of this parish awaits you. There is a feast in January that attracts many outsiders, but the largest festivity takes place on 6th August in honour of Senhor Bom Jesus (Good Lord Jesus), with a natural size image from another altar in this church.

On the exterior wall of the church, there is still a placard that honours the 36 men that left Calheta do Nesquim to fight in the Portuguese Colonial War; only 1 died in combat. These memorials are repeated on several islands of the Azores, usually the initiative of Parish Councils, and show how deeply this war marked the experience of the people in each

left, passing behind it, to better appreciate the port area, which you can walk through, returning again to the path you have to climb. Where the road curves, on your left you can see the Football field. After the first Metrosideros, go down a narrow path marked by a placard that reads, "*Zona de Lazer/Parque Infantil*" ("Recreation Zone / Playground").

This well recovered leisure space, takes advantage of a raised coastal zone called Morrição (certainly a corruption of "Morro do Cão", which means literally Dog Hill) that separates the football field from the sea. Red basaltic pumice covering the ground and the recovered stone wall topped with a white wood fence give a nice look to this enclosure. In addition to the playground and the pleasant view from here, there is the completely outwardly recovered mill, an image worthy of registering. Notice the curious detail (or perhaps not) of the whale-shaped weather vane on top of the mill. On a wall on the sea rocks, you come to the 1ª Vigia da Baleia a céu aberto (First open air whale lookout station) of Calheta do Nesquim, and probably of the island. Leave the white fenced enclosure and after the gate, walk towards the Zona Balnear da Poça das Mujas (Mule Pool Bathing Area), with a sand field perfect for beach volleyball or football and with a nice bar with a terrace.

Leave this area by going up the dirt road and turn left. Continue walking on this road by the sea, above the rock. This area has a countryside marked by an extensive network of stone walls that form longitudinal vineyard enclosures and by the related support infrastructures, built during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Scattered over the land, the many stone wineries, some in reasonable state of repair others clearly improved, serve perfectly their intended functions in the vineyard or as holiday homes. At sea, one can see terns using the bare rocks in the vicinity to make

their nests. The path takes you past the cemetery, while seeing the houses of the parish of Ribeiras on the outline of the island and farther off the houses of Santa Barbara. It seems common, in some places on this side of the island, to place the cemeteries at a great distance from the dwelling centres. For sure, the legacy of old fears, which had a strong popular belief in "witches" and "souls from another world".

Go up the asphalt road, only during a few dozen metres, until you reach a house on your left side where you can see the inscription "Varandas das Canadas" and signage indicating the *Circuito Pedonal* (Pedestrian Trail) that leads to Vigia da Baleia (Whale Lookout Station). It is a gravel footpath used primarily to access some old homes, the vineyard enclosures and the lookout station. After passing a few sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) you reach the lookout station, recuperated by the Parish Council. Here you may find Paulo Jorge Silva, a man who has had a strong connection with the sea for more than 20 years: 11 years on a tuna boat (like many other people from Pico) and the last 10 at this lookout station, every day that there are clients for Whale Watching and the conditions allow going out to sea. He uses a radio to communicate and powerful binoculars coupled with a compass and a vertical "bar" to estimate at what distance



the cetaceans are.

A few metres above the lookout station you come out on a secondary path with a good view over Calheta do Nesquim. Turn left and follow this path towards the Cemitério (Cemetery), a volcanic cone that has taken the name as a result of its proximity to the cemetery that you passed. But a



little before reaching this peak, on your right, you will find a path with the wall on the right rather higher than the left.

Go up this path, with the highest peak on the left. This path becomes wider at the top; the ground becomes stony and shadowed by the sweet pittosporums. Shortly after, you reach the regional road. Walk a few steps to the right and climb again on the first footpath that you come to, until you reach an asphalt road again that you should also climb until it divides itself in the form of a "T". Turn right and follow the pavement for some time. Only after passing an electricity pole of medium voltage, the kind

that have a transformer box attached, turn left up a rural service road.

Keep walking straight ahead without ever turning right. Corn and pasture will give rise to the forest. After a tight left turn, the path becomes flatter and you can find a few rare lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) plants, a mint with a delicious lemon scent, used in aromatherapy and as a medicinal tea. Not to be confused with horehound, a weed of a lighter green that is also present here. Ahead, there is a large acacia planted in the middle of the passage. Do not turn right and continue forward a little farther to the next fork. Here you should continue straight up the middle of a forest of sweet pittosporums, which later become Cryptomerias. Some Kites (*Buteo buteo sp. rothschildi*) fly over.

Come out at the bottom of some steep pastures where there is a rudimentary road for agricultural tractors and pick-up trucks. Walk to the left making a ring and come back almost to this location, then, in the pasture on your right, follow this path a few meters until you reach to the metal gate. But before that, go to the left first, passing by a plantation of Cryptomeria stumps. Go up until you reach quite close to a high rock, with vegetation on top of it. These are, apparently, the remains of the chimney of a small volcano. Ten metres from this rock, known among the locals as Pedra Aguda (Sharp Rock), is a small water tank, pass next to it and find the best route to go down again. Meanwhile enjoy the views the countryside has to show.



Now, go to the metal gate and come out on the red basaltic pumice path. Continue your walk until you reach the asphalt. Go down 20 metres and turn left, again on a dirt road. Pass by the

aggregate extraction that cut into a red cinder cone, and continue climbing until the next fork, where you should go to the right, to start going down. After the red basaltic pumice you finally reach the asphalt of *Rua dos Fetais*. Turn right and go straight until the next fork in the road, then, at the asphalt, turn left and go down to the Regional Road. Turn right again here, and, after an entrance to a pasture on the left side, turn left onto the secondary path with grassy ground and cool shade from the sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*).

Farther down the path branches, turn right and keep going down until you reach a few cement steps that take you to the pavement. I could tell you to start down this road; however, on the opposite side is the rest of this ancient path, which leads down to the church of Calheta Nesquim. Therefore, go down only about 50 metres and take a beautiful photo of the centre of the parish and the port. Meanwhile on your left you will find an exit that leads back to the road. Certainly you are not interested in shortening this nice walk, because if you were, you could simply continue down to the church.

Go down the Canada das Torresmas and follow it until you reach the main road. Turn left and go straight ahead, passing the road Canada do Mourro. The landscape here consists of some homes, handmills, threshing floors and grazing and crop lands. When you reach house number 12 belonging to *Família Fontes* go down on the road that is next to the gate. After a staircase near the end of the road you will come out at the asphalt road of Feteira. Turn left, walk a few metres and go down to the port of Feteira de Baixo and bathing area of Portinho, with a lifeguard, picnic park and beach volleyball. Continue along the red basaltic pumice path by the sea, with Calheta de Nesquim in the distance positioning itself for a photograph. Come out at the asphalt, and turn left, and then go straight. When you reach the main road, turn left again, and go down on this road until you reach the church where the walk started.

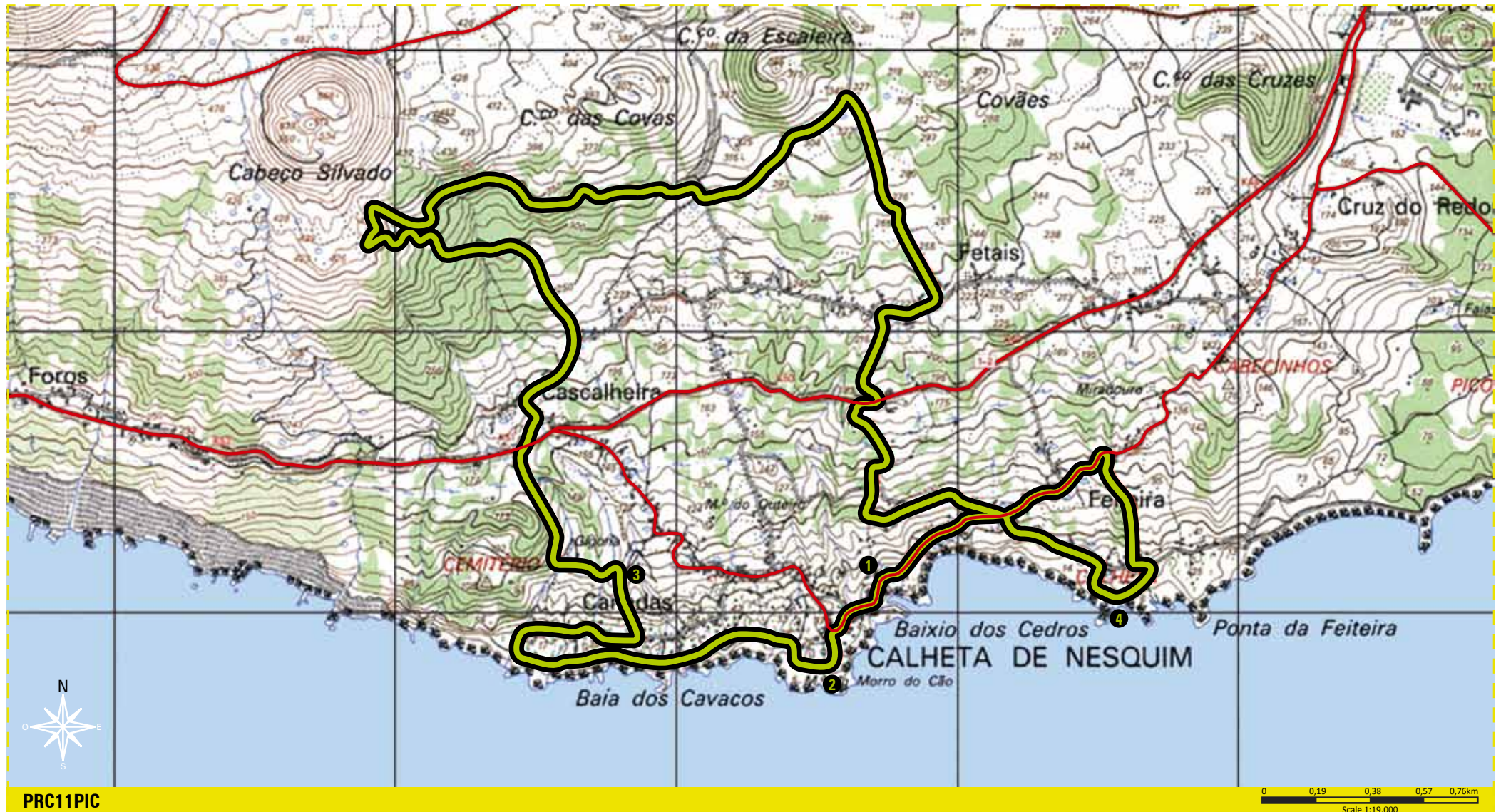


STORY OF THE DOG "NESQUIM"

In the sixteenth century, on a dark and stormy night, a drifting boat, coming from Brazil, laden with timber, sank off the south coast of Pico. Three of the crew managed to save themselves guided by the ship's dog, named Nesquim. With his barking, the dog guided the

three men to an inlet. Which, due to the dog's name, was renamed "Calheta de Nesquim". Along the coast there is a very high hill called "Morricão" and this is the hill where Nesquim jumped to land thus saving the three castaways.

The dog earned the right to appear on the coat of arms of the parish, next to a whale.

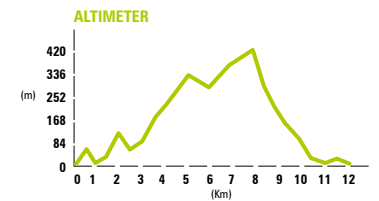


CALHETA DO NESQUIM



1. Start and End of trail
2. Morrição
3. Vigia da Baleia
4. Portinho da Feteira

- DURATION: 4H 00M
- DISTANCE: 12 Km
- START: Largo do Terreiro Capitão Anselmo Baleiro
- END: Largo do Terreiro Capitão Anselmo Baleiro
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium



PICO

LAJES DO PICO

PRC12PIC



Whaling Town

This is a circular route that begins and ends in the heart of this old town. You can begin the walk at any point on the marginal road, although it is suggested that you begin next to the signs that begin the trail.

Located at the base of a cliff that reaches 150 metres, the Vila das Lajes is on a basaltic platform caused by lava flows, which flowed about 500 metres into the sea, from a secondary volcanic cone in the vicinity of Vulcão do Topo, the oldest of the island. Nearly half of these lava flows lie on the outside of the protection wall on the right. The coastline here is very irregular and indented, forming several small peninsulas and inlets.

Always follow the town's marginal road, towards the south, until it makes a tight left turn. There, on



the ocean's rock platform, a pontoon was built to give easy access to an enjoyable bathing area, the Poça do Pano, a quite indented inlet of calm water.

On the back of that pontoon is the Maré (Tide), an extensive mirror of water, green from the reflection of the slope. The rarity of this type of lagoon system in the Azores is worth noting. This site is an important refuge and nesting site to many of the resident and some migratory, especially marine, birds. Of the 40 species of birds spotted here, 21 are an accidental occurrence, 10 are migratory and 9 are regular residents. Many species are waders, taking full advantage of this particular ecosystem, where the salt and fresh water mix to create a habitat that is excellent for the proliferation of worms, insects and other similar life forms.

Rounding the Maré (Tide) on the road you come to the Largo de São Pedro where a monument was erected. It was here at Lajes, probably at this location, even before the year 1460 mentioned in this evocative monument, that fearless navigators, from a caravel at anchor off the Castelete, launched a small boat and the first settlers of the island of Pico stepped onto land. Soon after, on this site, the first nucleus of the primitive town of Lajes was founded,

Just ahead, you reach the Ermida de São Pedro (Chapel of St. Peter), the first temple on the island, which also appears in the early days of settlement. The chapel "covered with thatch, nearly lapped by the waters, where the sea is still" was the only temple until 1535, when Igreja Matriz (Mother Church) of Lajes was inaugurated. The first Igreja Matriz (Mother Church) was the predecessor of the current church which was expanded and built on the same spot. It was in this chapel that Frei Pedro Gigante baptized the first child born on this island. If you do not know who this worthy friar was, the next time that you go to a restaurant ask for a bottle of Frei Gigante. It is a magnificent regional white wine whose name is a tribute to the one who is said to have been responsible for the introduction of the vineyard on



this island: By God's Grace! To the right of the chapel are three homes from the seventeenth century in a reasonable state of repair.

In a few more metres on the left is the entrance to the camping grounds, keep going up the road. On the side of the ocean you come to the old access road to the town from the east side of the island. Today there remains only a small section that was not swallowed by the current road, and that gives access to three houses and serves pedestrians who pass here. The steepest part of this ancient path is still paved with primitive stone where the grooves made by ox-carts and wagons are quite visible.

As you reach the road don't miss the opportunity to turn around and photograph every outline of this lava "fajã" (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris), with the colossal mountain as a backdrop. A little ahead, you will find a fork in the road; go right onto Caminho da Queimada. This is an area of shops located next to the Castelete: the chimney of a much eroded submarine volcanic cone. This natural promontory in red tones, along with an adjacent section of cliff, is an important nesting area for Cory's shearwaters (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*), which are very common in these cliffs.

After 900 metres on this road, where the paved road gives way to a dirt road, on the right, you come to a stone staircase that leads to another road that takes you to the upper road. Roughly halfway up, at a high spot, is the only two-storey whale lookout station of the island. During the summer, from May to October, this white lookout station with a blue door is usually with a lookout from a local Whale Watching company.

You reach the regional road and on the other side continues the narrow path which leads to Caminho das Terras, a secondary paved road. Turn left and go down. This is the old connection between Lajes and Terras. The countryside is made up of grazing and cultivated enclosures, roads, agricultural infrastructures where hand mills predominate, threshing-floors and farm storage buildings. The initial construction goes back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with many buildings still in a reasonable state of repair. Some have been restored and adapted to other uses.

You reach a fork in the path next to a water reservoir. Turn right and go up on the asphalt, with the Vulcão (Volcano) do Topo in front. This volcano formed the island's oldest geological complex. The imposing mountain is in front when you reach a new fork in the path. Don't go up any more; go straight on the recently restored road Acima da Canada. Keep going until, next to a small river, you find a placard from the Serviços Florestais (Forestry Services), which, among other information, has the following: *Almagreira / Transversal e Cabeço do Geraldo / Terras e Lajes*. Leave the road and go down there, to the left, on an old stone footpath on the margins of the river Ribeira Fernão Álvares (also known as Ribeira da Burra). Fernão Álvares is considered the first settler and founder of this town and probably the first that put both feet on this island.



It is a small river with many and beautiful specimens of *Picconia azorica* as well as the inevitable sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*). Suddenly the footpath is the rocky bed of the river, but only for a few meters. Go onto the well-defined footpath again, on the right, to a steep staircase along the small river, which is growing deeper. The staircase takes you to the regional road next to the houses of Ribeira do Meio. In the landscape, facing the mountain, to the right is the winding road that climbs to Almagreira. It was here that the land was first cleared and ploughed. Today there are pastures and corn fields.

After the descent you can see two large chimneys between the houses on the left: one stone and the other brick. Just after, leave the road, near a bridge with the inscription: OP1878. On the other side, go down 15 steps to the old street. Just below, turn left, walk about 50 paces and go down Grota do Alqueve on the right. Don't be surprised to see boats along this route from now on, both at sea and on land.

You reach the old public washing basins. The Pocinho, with a curious octagonal tide well, with a circular cartouche with the inscription CM1942, from where water was withdrawn and placed in a receptacle that would feed a pipe, which supplied the 10 basins that are still there. Continue along the coast, towards the centre of Lajes. On a pebble beach, where the azorinas bloom, there is a

ramp that the seawall prevents us from accessing. Here the huge cetaceans were towed to the old Fábrica da Baleia – SIBIL (Whaling Factory), opposite where the Centro de Artes e de Ciências do Mar (Centre for Ocean Arts and Sciences) is now. Be sure to visit and learn a little more about the socio-economic activity that marked and still marks the lives of the locals. In another 50 metres and on the left is the abandoned building of the Empresa de Conservas do Pico Lda. (Pico Canning Company), owner of the large brick chimney, and built last century.

Next is a visit to the Forte de Sta. Catarina (also known as Castelo de Santo António or simply as Castelo), an old fortification from the eighteenth century for coastal defence. In late 2004, the municipality of Lajes recovered the fort and the surroundings with a well integrated and quality project that gave new use to the fort as a Tourism Office and leisure area. It is open everyday to greet and orient visitors. Here it is also possible to purchase books, some curiosities like the “basanitas” (a sculpture on basaltic stone), handicraft, other local products such as spirits and different types of knick knacks. The terrace is a social space, where shows take place, and a prime spot to enjoy the beautiful fit of the sea in this bay known as Lagoa de Cima.

This visit done, we leave Rua do Castelo on the approach to the town. On the regional road we pass next to the Convento dos Franciscanos (Franciscan Convent) and the Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Church of Our Lady of the Conception) annexed to it. Presently the city hall, the police and the Finances Department have their offices there. We see buildings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that are on a higher plane in relation to the road on your left.



Farther ahead you go down a cobbled street, adorned by an avenue of Platanus, which could take you to the town centre, but after the first

steps, the boats and whales that had kept us company on the cobblestones of this coastal walk, give way to a helm, next to the sign of the Zona Balnear da Lagoa and some stairs that lead down to Rua de San Francisco. These stairs are known as “the whaler’s path” because the fearless hunters looking for a boat ran down here from Ribeira do Meio, Silveira and elsewhere. A huge white “Moby Dick” in the cobblestones leads you to the Casas dos Botes Baleeiros (Whaling Boathouses) next to the ramp access to the sea. This is a group of five buildings from the nineteenth century consisting of houses for the storage of the typical boats that were built on the island. It is possible that some boats may be dry-docked and waiting for you to take a photograph. Presently this is the headquarters of the Clube Náutico das Lajes do Pico (Nautical Club of Lajes do Pico), an institution that streamlines shipping activities and works to keep the whaling tradition alive.

The sea in front of you was once called Lagoa de Cima. This false lagoon is a sheltered marine system, with unique features in the Azores, which allows for a rich and abundant fish fauna. Protected by its shallowness, a little deeper in a narrow zone that leads to the open sea, the Caneiro, is an important nursery for fish species of high commercial and conservation interest, namely dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*) whose juveniles appear here in uncommonly high numbers, and also red mullet (*Mullus surmuletus*), common seabream (*Pagrus pagrus*) and groupers (*Mycteroper-*

ca fusca). The juveniles live the most vulnerable part of their lives in these spots, sheltered from predators, migrating to the open sea as adults. At high tide, schools of fish arrive. Some of the species are white seabream (*Diplodus sargus*), Salema porgy (*Sarpa salpa*), grey mullet (*Chelon labrosus*), silverfish (*Trachinotus ovatus*), yellowtail (*Seriola* spp.), juvenile white trevally (*Pseudocaranx dentex*) who find food in the algae that cover the rocks on the ocean floor and octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*).

The Town of Lajes is a very nice county seat to explore, promising interesting features that will occupy the rest of your day. Don’t forget to visit the Whaling Museum, a building from the eighteenth century made up of three whaling boathouses, a blacksmith tent that preserves its tools and utensils and a recently built section to expand the museum. The first maritime tourism company is also here. It offers Whale Watching, and other activities. Even if a sea outing is not in your plans be sure to visit the office/shop of this company, and of other companies here, because you will surely find points of interest, such as, the purchase of a book, a souvenir or simply information. You will not have any trouble finding a place to take a nice meal or a coffee and conversation with someone who may recount the history of the invasions of the town by the waves caused by large storms that would periodically bring the sea into the houses. If you have the time, walk through the streets of the historic centre of Lajes. Throughout the town you can see well preserved residential buildings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. You can also visit the Igreja da Santíssima Trindade (Holy Trinity Church), the current mother church of Lajes, which is an example of religious architecture from the nineteenth century.



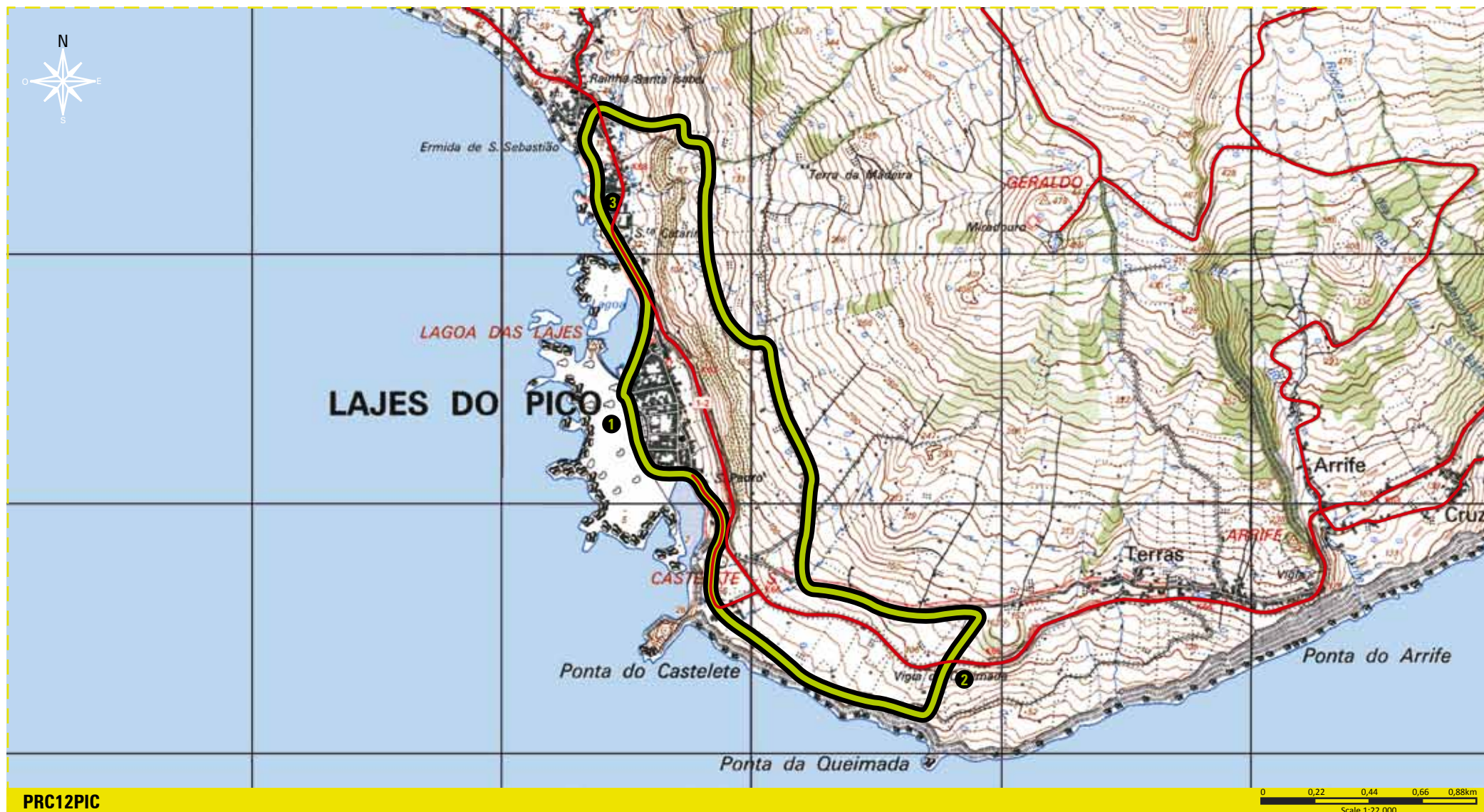
CENTRE FOR OCEAN ARTS AND SCIENCE

The Sociedade de Indústria Baleeira Insular, Lda. (Whaling Industry Insular Society Ltd) was incorporated in 1948. The factory began its operations in June 1955. It exported oils,



flour and the valuable ambergris all over the world. It ceased its operations in the early eighties. In 2005, the municipality of Lajes do Pico began a recovery and reuse project. The manufacturing structure was kept and existing equipment was recovered, with the objective of preserving the memory of the whaling industry and creating a marine science research centre with a cultural and artistic side.

On 27th January 2008, the Centro de Artes e de Ciências do Mar (Centre for Ocean Arts and Sciences) opened its doors to the public. It can be visited Monday to Sunday from 10 AM to 7 PM. The following can be visited: the permanent exhibit Giants of the Sea (covering the ecology and biology of large whales); multimedia presentations about the factory and the transformation processes; the events area; the coffee shop and terrace; the gift shop; and other services.



LAJES DO PICO



1. Start and End of trail
2. Vigia da Baleia
3. Forte de Santa Catarina

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 6,7 Km
- START: Vila das Lajes do Pico
- END: Vila das Lajes do Pico
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy
- REMARKS: Lajes do Pico - *Community Interest Site - Special Protection Area.*

PICO

LAGOA DO CAPITÃO (CAPTAIN'S LAKE) – SÃO ROQUE

PR13PIC

**Between waters... fresh and salt**

This walk begins at Lagoa do Capitão (Captain's Lake). The semi-natural pastures cut and spotted by dark green cedars, holly and heathers, mirrored in the waters of the lake, form a beautiful natural setting sought out by many visitors throughout the year.

Going back on the access path to the lake, turn right at the first fork in the road onto the dirt road, where the beauty of the majestic mountain will follow you as you walk through bog, soaked by rain and fog. On the ground the cattle grids help to prevent cows from passing, but not you, so that soon you can admire to your right the fault scarp of Lagoa do Capitão (Captain's Lake). This is a habitat of several endemic species of flora, namely, *Euphorbia stygiana*, holly (*Ilex perado ssp azoricã*), *Viburnum treleasei*, Azores juniper (*Juniperus brevifolia*) and on the juniper, the aerial parasitic plant, *Arceuthobium azoricum*, which is very common in the area of the Lagoa do Capitão (Captain's Lake).

To your left, a road with a metal gate leads to the ruins of a former cheese factory, at the foot of *Cabeço do Teixeira*. The cheese factory, where the traditional Pico cheeses were made, only operated during the summer months to benefit from the coolness of the mountain. The Pico cheese has a thickness of only 2 to 3 cm, and so is thinner than any other in the Azores. Be sure to taste this cheese with the traditional Bolo de Tijolo (Brick Cake), a thin bread, made with sweet potatoes, unfermented and traditionally cooked in clay pots.



Keep walking. Just ahead, take a bypath to the right that goes around Cabeço dos Piquinhos. Walk 50 paces beyond a water tank and you reach a natural viewpoint where you can appreciate a breathtaking view over Vila (Town) de São Roque and the hill that you will go down to get there. This site is also a much frequented take-off spot for lovers of paragliding.

Go back and resume the walk down the dirt road about 750 meters. After passing under a power line, walk until you reach a gate and go another 30 paces. To your right, you will find an opening to a pasture with a water tank. Cross the pasture for about of 200 metres. Follow the signs carefully, until you enter a low wood. You have to be very careful during this portion of the hike and in case of poor visibility, or if you think you cannot find the entrance into the wood, please do not hesitate to turn back.

From here you begin an easy descent, under a thick gallery of vegetation where you can see the following species: heather (*Erica azorica*); Azores blueberry (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*); Azores juniper (*Juniperus brevifolia* (Seub.) Antoine); sanguinho (*Frangula*

azorica); holly (*Ilex perado* Aiton ssp. *azorica*); colicwood (*Myrsine*); sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*); maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*); Azores laurel (*Laurus azorica*); *Picconia azorica*; faya (*Myrica faya*); *Rubus hochstetterorum*; *Sanicula azorica*; daisies (*Bellis azorica*); *Cardamine caldeirarum*, and the endemic orchid (*Platanthera micrantha*). A few dozen meters down, this trail leads to an old footpath with rough stairs marked by small stone walls. Someone with a trained ear may be able to distinguish the Atlantic canary (*Serinus canaria*); the blackbird (*Turdus merula azorensis*); the chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs moreletti*); the goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*); the black-capped warbler (*Sylvia atricapilla atlantis*); and the grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea patriciae*).

As one descends the path becomes steeper with increasingly irregular ground and always in stone. Although it is tiresome because of how you must place your feet, you should be extra careful. It is, however, a pretty sight: the large sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*), fallen from the force of the wind and the weak roots because of the bedrock, with moss carpets lining the rough walls and ground. An old and rusty horseshoe, which is probably still there, suggests the likely passage of donkeys that came here to get firewood. Still in the sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) wood, near the end, if it seems that there are two alternatives go right. You begin to hear the noise from the power plant more clearly, and, finally, see the sky and the sun, two things that had been missing for a while. Continue down on the overturned gravel, until you come out onto paved road. Walk up to a small square, cross the wooden bridge over Ribeira de Dentro and walk another few meters to the water abstraction from the Fonte (Source), a structure from the eighteenth century.

The water at this Fonte (Source) comes from the top of the hill. The water flows on the slope into artificially water-proofed cement gutters and are then led into the reservoir. You can see it by going up the hill next to the big tank. In summer, water shortages forced women to come here to



do the washing and get water to take home. These pilgrimages made this a place to meet and talk. Later the water was piped; giving rise to the old system of piped water to the fountains of Cais do Pico and São Pedro do Outeiro. Presently it is not part of the municipality's water supply, and I was unable to check if the aforementioned fountains still have water.

Back to Caminho da Fonte, go down. Farther down the road, cross the asphalt road that you will come across, and continue on the other side on an old path covered with sweet pittosporum leaves. At the fork in the path turn right on the red basaltic pumice path. At the next fork in the road, next to some farm buildings, turn left and go down passing by an improvised junkyard. When you reach another road, turn left and keep going down. You are at Canárias (Canaries). You will pass a stone circular structure, enclosed with a fence, which is the entrance to Gruta das Canárias (Canaries' Cave), a recently discovered volcanic cave which is not open to visits. Keep going down until the next junction which is the main road. Turn left and stay on this road about 450 metres, until you reach the Convento Franciscano de S. Pedro de Alcântara (Saint Peter of Alcântara's Franciscan Convent). It is an eighteenth century building built by the Franciscan friars that came to keep hope alive and to help rebuild what the seismic and eruptive forces of nature had destroyed. Presently, it has been converted into a Pousada de Portugal, but you can visit the church. Follow the marginal road in the direction of the centre of Vila de São Roque.

Pass by the Cais Velho (the old port) where from the top of his pedestal, the King Dinis (protector of navigation), looks on a quiet port, without the fervour of old. After about 60 years of hauling boats, quartering whales and melting the fat in boilers, in the 1940s everything changed; the new whaling factory, 500 metres from here, took with it the boats and the whales. Next is the Multimedia Centre of the town, the Tourism Office, the office of the Regional Tourism Association, the pharmacy and the post office. When you reach the port, if it isn't Monday, visit the Museu da Indústria Baleeira (Whaling Industry Museum). It is right across the Monumento ao Baleeiro (Monument to the Whaler) that depicts that singular moment when the boat harpooned the whale.

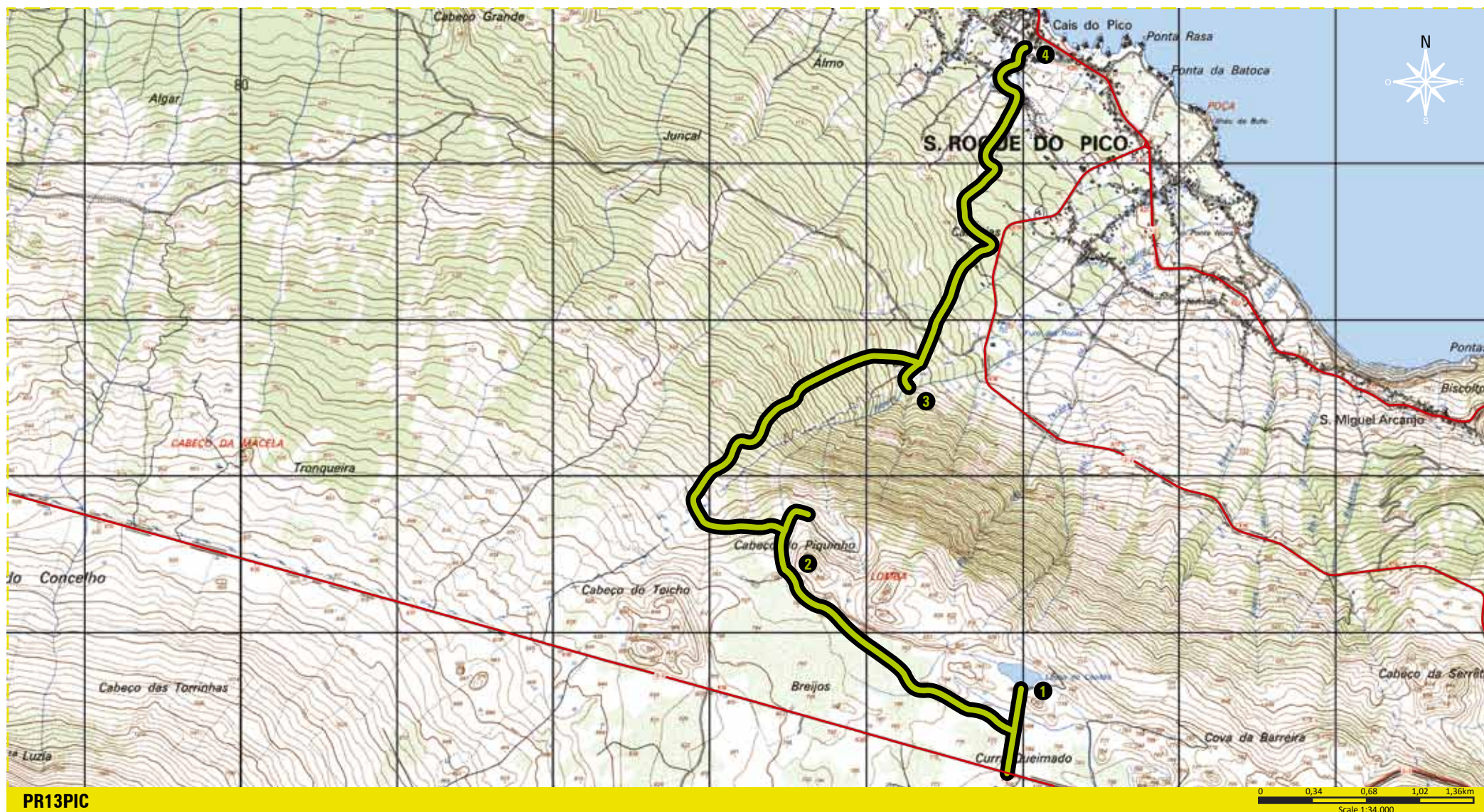
Finish the tour with a refreshing drink at the always busy Clube Naval de São Roque.

GRUTA DAS CANÁRIAS (CANARIES' CAVE)

Gruta das Canárias is a lava tube that measures about 800 metres in length, has a maximum width of 10 metres and a height of 4 metres. It has three known entrances. This is the main entrance, however, it is restricted.

The interior is rich in speleothems, featuring a wide variety of geological structures, with particular emphasis on the presence of lava tree molds, stalactites, stalagmites, lava columns, lava balls, enamelled formations, side terraces, ropy pahoehoe, lava sinkholes, gas bubbles and limonite stalactites. It also has a few endemic insects, such as Cixius azopicavus (planthopper) and Rugathodes pico (spider).





PR13PIC

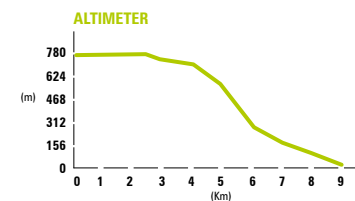
0 0,34 0,68 1,02 1,36km
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LAGOA DO CAPITÃO (CAPTAIN'S LAKE) - SÃO ROQUE



1. Start of trail
2. Cabeço do Piquinho
3. Fonte
4. End of trail

- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 9,2 Km
- START: Lagoa do Capitão (Captain's Lake)
- END: Cais do Pico
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Montanha do Pico, Prainha e Caveira -
- *Community Interest Site.*
Zona Central do Pico - *Special Protection Area.*



SÃO JORGE



PR1SJO Caldeira (Caldera) de Santo Cristo - Fajã dos Cubres (Pág. 134)

PR2SJO Serra do Topo - Fajã dos Vimes (Pág. 140)

PR3SJO Fajã dos Vimes - Lourais - Fajã de São João (Pág. 146)

PR4SJO Pico do Pedro - Fajã do Ouvidor (Pág. 152)

PRC5SJO Fajã do Além (Pág. 158)

PRC6SJO Norte Pequeno (Pág. 164)

FAIAL
GRACIOSA
PICO
SÃO JORGE
TERCEIRA
CORVO
FLORES

...where the "Fajãs" came down from the cliffs,
to blend with the ocean.

SÃO JORGE

CALDEIRA (CALDERA) DE SANTO CRISTO – FAJÃ DOS CUBRES

PRISJO



On the lagoon route

I don't have any doubts that the Fajã da Caldeira de Santo Cristo is the main destination for the majority of the people that decide to hike in São Jorge. A "fajã" is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris. However many people choose to go from Cubres to Santo Cristo and back. Maybe this is because they wish to end where they began - next to their vehicle. However, it is not the same thing. Going down the cliff is incomparably more. It is everything.

The walking trail begins at the Serra do Topo next to a service road that leads to the pastures. Go straight, and when you reach the end of the road at a footpath bordered by hydrangeas, turn right. This footpath, with stairs cut into the earth or made of stone, takes you down the cliff to the Fajã da Caldeira de Cima. You will pass a shelter dug in the rock most certainly used by travellers as shelter from the rain.

The natural vegetation is typically mountainous; it is full of Azores juniper (*Juniperus brevifolia*). The area is rich in vegetation and it would be tedious to list the species that can be found there, however, the moss (*Sphagnum palustre*) and the *Sanicula azorica* caught my attention. The views of this deeply cut valley, in a succession of ups and downs covered with mountain woods, pastures and pasturing cows, are spectacular. The hill at our backs, the wind playing with the clouds making them spin, the

ocean as if it was spilled into the depth, and a view that forces our eyes down the slopes to where the rivers seem to unite - it is simply fantastic. All the turns and cliffs that jut out to sea are like viewpoints inviting the inevitable photograph.

The walk down is on an ample path, with harmonious views between the spots of natural forest and the patchwork of the pastures here and there spotted with large tree heaths (*Erica arborea*). It looks like the tree heaths (*Erica arborea*) invade the pastures as a revenge for the invasion of the hydrangeas on the natural colours.

The swing gates made from v-shaped tree trunks are adorable; some of them even have springs to force them closed again. If they don't close automatically, please leave them as you found them.

We continue to go down and start to hear new sounds: the Azorean goldcrests singing on the Lauris-silva (*Laurus azorica*), and the water falling on the rocks. Meandering through the landscape, we will get there.

The house we have been seeing since the top is becoming clearer. First, we have a bridge, over running water, to cross. The road widens and is now paved with stones.

References to the altitude and distance begin to appear painted on the stones.

Finally, the bridge. Upwards, in the middle of the creek, next to an old watermill in ruins, there the

Rumex azoricus grows with its exuberant green leaves. A well-restored house leaves us thinking of a sunny afternoon. In the Caldeira (Caldera) de Cima there are two springs the Fonte dos Inhames and the Fonte da Família.



Right after we cross the bridge, on the right hand side of the road, you will find a small footpath that takes you a few metres down to a small waterfall made by this creek. After this brief and refreshing detour, return to the road and continue forward. Another creek, another bridge. Continue until you find a fountain with drinkable water. Go down between small pastures and some small storage stone buildings, always following the footpath that is on your left.

At the bottom of the cliff on your right, next to the ocean, collapses from other times, that seem to be trying to become new "fajãs"; however, inaccessible by land.

Suddenly, the always spectacular view of the Fajã de Caldeira de Santo Cristo and in the ocean the islands of Graciosa and Terceira. The next descent requires caution because the ground is looser and may be slippery.

You have reached the "fajã". If you are curious and are willing to walk an extra kilometre before you go on, continue along the seaside rocks to Nascente until the mouth of the creek whose bridges you crossed. If you climb, you will see a large deep waterfall of the cool mountain water. This creek is home to freshwater eels that are very shy and well camouflaged. They hide so well among the rocks that it takes some patience and attention to be able to see them.

Back at the "fajã", the road takes you to the large natural breakwater, formed by the stones that the ocean piled here, protecting the vegetable gardens, houses and everything else. "Mantenha a fajã limpa", "Keep the fajã clean", here is a good request that you will find frequently. The refuse cans that you will find at several locations in the "fajã" are at the minimum curious, including one next to a recuperated public fountain.

You reach the Chapel of the Holy Lord Christ (*Ermita do Senhor Santo Cristo*) blessed on 10th November 1835. The feast is celebrated on the first Sunday of September with a mass, procession and auction. Many pilgrims come to the "fajã" to fulfil promises at the time of the feasts. Travel through space and time in the "fajã". While you are here, go to the Restaurant/Coffee Shop "O Borges", where you can try the clams from de "fajã" (during the legally appropriate season) or have a drink any time of year.

Go to the Lagoa (pool). This "fajã" has always received special attention because of its pool where the saltwater mixes with the freshwater. It is a place of interest not only for its beautiful landscape, but also



because it is a habitat for birds and the aforementioned clams. In 1984, the pool was classified as a Natural Reserve and later the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands classified it as an important habitat for scores of migratory aquatic birds that pass through the lagoon on the way to their final destination.

At the end of the Fajã de Santo Cristo, next to the west side of the lagoon a hike at the base of the rocks takes you to the Fajã dos Tijolos. On this tall crag, where *Azorina vidalii* grows, is hidden the Furna (Cave) do Poio, a natural cavity with an interior pool. You pass a low tide well with a basin.

Continue on the red basaltic pumice road, where the ascents are sometimes paved with stones. Farther ahead, after a small bay, you see the Fajã do Belo. Continue walking to go down to it. You enter the "fajã" under a small arch of tree heath (*Erica arborea*).

This "fajã", now without residents, left homeless by the 1980 earthquake, at one time had more than 130 residents. You can see the ruins of the houses, some rather large.

Soon you are climbing again, now on your way to Fajã dos Cubres.

We are nearing our destination. The Fajã dos Cubres and its salty pool are in front of us. We arrive at a make shift car park. The cars belong to those who went for a walk to the Fajã de Santo Cristo.

Continuing on the road, you soon pass the pool and reach the chapel of Our Lady of Lourdes, next to a coffee shop, where you can wait for your transportation.

FAJÃ OF THE CALDEIRA (CALDERA) DE SANTO CRISTO

This, "fajã" located in the parish of Ribeira Seca, is the most symbolic and the most beautiful "fajã" of São Jorge. A "fajã" is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris. In the nineteenth century, more than one hun-



dred people lived in the "fajã". Today there a few more than ten permanent residents, however, in the summer the population grows. In recent years, some of the houses have been rebuilt and updated for use as summer homes.

Some of the pastures of the "fajã" have dairy cows while others are used for cultivation.

On 14th October 1960 a public telephone was inaugurated and, later, electricity from a small generator. A wharf was built inside the lagoon to dock boats, which, up until then, were docked on the rocks. The earthquake in 1980 caused collapses on both of the accesses to the "fajã" and destroyed the telephone connections isolating the Caldeira de Santo Cristo from the rest of the world.

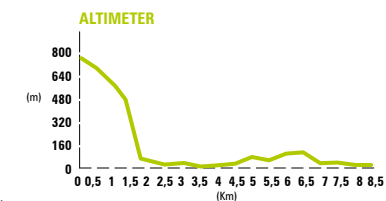
The "good waves" that form here and the magnificent landscape make Fajã de Santo Cristo a sanctuary for bodyboarders and surfers. Many people who enjoy these sports come here. The warmer waters of the lagoon appeal to bathers and summer visitors.



CALDEIRA (CALDERA) DE SANTO CRISTO - FAJÃ DOS CUBRES

1. Start of trail
2. Fajã da Caldeira (caldera) de Cima
3. Fajã da Caldeira de Santo Cristo
4. Fajã do Belo
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 10 Km
- START: Serra do Topo
- END: Fajã dos Cubres
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: North-eastern Coast and Ponta do Topo - *Community Interest Site*. Special Ecological Zone of Lagoa (Lagoon) da Caldeira (Caldera) de Santo Cristo - *Protected Area*. Partial Natural Reserve of the Lagoa (Lagoon) da Caldeira (Caldera) de Santo Cristo - *Protected Area*



SERRA DO TOPO – FAJÃ DOS VIMES

PR2SJO



A coffee scented walk

We begin this trail by leaving the road, next to the Wind Farm, on a small access road to the pastures that are on the ocean side with a superb view of Pico Island. Go down, to the right of the sign of the beginning of the trail, and turn immediately left in the direction of one of the poles that carries electricity to the Fajã dos Vimes. From this electricity pole go to another one in front of you on a road framed with hydrangeas. Down below, next to the ocean you begin to see the profile of the Fajã dos Vimes. The footpath descends and, after passing a brook, climbs again. We now see the first bushes and trees of the natural forest that covers this entire side. We see Azores blueberry (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*), Azorean holly (*Ilex perado Alton ssp. Azorica*), and tree heath (*Erica arborea*) in abundance. Continue on the path, past a cement house in ruins and keep going until the next brook.

In the deep valley at your feet you see, again, the “fajã” (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris); however, it is still far. On a small stone, you find the sign to change direction. Turn right onto a narrow footpath also used by cows that are moving from one pasture to another.

Continue towards a depression in the terrain that you will cross under some Azores junipers (*Juniperus brevifolia*), and then you will climb up again on the other side.

Another gate, another brook and turn immediately right. Do not climb the grassy slope in front of you. Farther ahead, you enter a footpath covered with enjoyably varied natural vegetation that forms a roof under which we walk. The ground changes from dirt to pebbles. The ground is humid and sometimes slippery. This tunnel, with windows to the ocean here and there, is full of endemic species: *Lysimachia azorica*, *Cardamine caldeirarum Guthn. ex Seub.*, *Pericallis malviflora*, Laurissilva (*Laurus azorica*), *Carex vulcani*, wild orchids, selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) dots the path with purple, daisies (*Bellis azorica*), ivy, African boxwood (*Myrsine africana*), and *Hypericum*.

Suddenly, we are at a fork in the road with three alternatives. Go down the straightest and steepest path. Now you are on an old footpath that will take you to Fajã dos Vimes. Arranged through the decades, the stones on the path became the stones on the steps and the walls that guard this footpath. I've been told that here, there are Azores blueberries (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*). São Jorge seems to

be the cradle of a different variety of this endemic species, with white flowers. The fruits were harvested to make jam.

As we go down, the vegetation becomes taller and denser, keeping in more humidity that allows the mosses and ferns to grow. The staircases are sometimes course or missing, so that one should always be careful during the descent, especially at the end on the ramp with loose pebbles that takes you to the road.

On the road, climb to the creek on a tight turn. The signpost next to the stairs that access the creek invites you to go down to a spring of *água azeda* (sour water). These springs, of highly mineralized water, occur on several islands of the Azores. Taste the water. You will certainly agree that the name fits.

Back to the road, continue climbing. Another creek, another bridge. Walk a little farther and you will find a red basaltic pumice and dirt road. Go down this road through an area of small vegetable gardens with some fruit trees and pastures.

As we go down, we can clearly hear the ocean beating against the rock. We reach cement, see the first houses and then reach the asphalted road on the western point of the "fajã". At least it is the most western point for those who cannot go without their automobile. From here, we can admire the Fajã dos Vimes in its entirety all the way to the Fajã dos Bodes beyond it.

This "fajã" was hit with natural catastrophes through the centuries. The 1757 earthquake killed more than 120 people and the flood of 1899 caused damage to the entire coast of the island. In 1992, a large storm dropped so much rain on the hill above the "fajã" that the Ribeira (Creek) dos Vimes became so strong and full of water that it tore down the bridge that was there. The bridge had to be rebuilt from the foundations.

Detritus "fajãs", such as this one, many times have unique climates. Normally the climate is milder and protected, it is ideal for the cultivation of more tropical crops. This is evident in Fajã dos Vimes. Sometimes with the use of greenhouses, protected from the dominant winds, it is possible to produce in quantity and with quality. We find banana trees, yams (of great historical importance to this "fajã"), lettuce, tomatoes, strawberries, eggplants, squash, cucumbers, grapevines, sweet potatoes, cantaloupes, pumpkins, potatoes, and several types of cabbage, to mention a few. The thing that surprises the visitor most is that there are coffee trees in the "fajã" and that you have the opportunity to taste the

São Jorge coffee. To do so, continue walking next to the bridge and to your left, climb to Café Nunes, where Mr. Manuel Casimiro will serve you the famous espresso, slightly more acidic than the coffee you are probably used to.

Several brooks drain here, namely the Ribeira dos Vimes on whose margins you can still see water mills.



Pass the primary school, which was closed some time ago.

Reinvigorated, go a little farther and you are at the Chapel of São Sebastião (Saint Sebastian), normally open for visits from a more curious or more tired pedestrian.

The hike ends next to the port, but don't give up yet. Get to know a little more of the "fajã" and its people by walking around a bit.

THE LOOMS OF THE FAJÃ

This "fajã" (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris) is known for its famous wool bedspreads with raised, three-dimensional spots, still made on antique wooden looms. With a very unique "Calheta" style, some of the bedspreads were made on narrow looms, where three pieces were then sown together to form a wide bedspread known as "de 3 ramos" ("with three branches").

They produce other pieces ranging from simple placemats to blanket throws.

In times gone by, a woman of the Fajã had several looms and employed several other women. Her establishment also served as a bit of a "school" where she taught the secrets of this

art, in this way assuring its continuity. Nowadays you can see this technique and possibly purchase a souvenir by visiting Café Nunes. Mr. Manuel Casimiro restored some of the looms that work above the coffee shop.



FAJÃ DOS VIMES COFFEE

It is not known when the first coffee plants were introduced into this "fajã" (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris). The truth is that the species of coffee, *Coffea arabica*, found good growth conditions here in this "fajã".

Each plant has a year of high production followed by a year of low production. This two-year cycle is repeated. Harvesting season is from May to August, especially in June and July.

Mr. Manuel Casimiro, knowledgeable in these things, told me that there are several coffee producers in the "fajã", although I only visited his plantation. He also told me that the best way to prepare the coffee is to let the fruit dry in the sun, and when the exterior shell is dry, thresh the fruit with a rock to remove the coffee beans. Then, roast the coffee beans in a pan on a wood fire stirring frequently. However, some people roast them



using a gas oven. Once ground, it is ready to be used.

Although in smaller quantities, Fajã das Almas and Fajã de São João also produce coffee.

As far as I know, the Fajã dos Vimes is the northernmost spot in Europe where coffee is commercially produced.

SÃO JORGE

FAJÃ DOS VIMES – LOURAIS – FAJÃ DE SÃO JOÃO

PR3SJO

**Between “fajãs”**

This trail connects Fajã dos Vimes to Fajã de São João. A “fajã” is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris. However, because the route between Fajã dos Vimes and Lourais has a climb that goes from sea level to 450 metres, we recommend that those with greater difficulties only attempt the second half of the trail from Lourais to Fajã de São João.

We begin the hike next to the port at Fajã dos Vimes on the red basaltic pumice road. On the majority of the houses, it is difficult or impossible to see the traces of the architecture from the first centuries of construction. The agricultural lands are frequently used for grapevines. Leaving Fajã dos Vimes, we continue on the road to Fajã dos Bodes. On the embankment of the road, small springs spill water onto the dirt ground. This occurs at many spots in these small “fajãs”, and this water is sometimes used for agriculture. As we enter Fajã dos Bodes, we see the firewood lines more frequently. Here and there large blocks of stone, fallen from the rocky cliff sides, lie in the vegetable gardens forcing the gardener to work around them. These huge stones, common to many “fajãs” are called “poios” (stone benches). At the end of the “fajã”, after a pebble beach, the road turns into a footpath. After passing a brook, you see barns that are still in use by the viticulturists. The footpath slopes upwards and we start the

FIREWOOD LINES

The firewood lines, when they came about, were a means of transporting material to the “fajã” at high speeds. A “fajã” is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris.

A wire fixed at a high point or even on top of the cliff was stretched to the “fajã”. With the use of a rotary system on the structure at the base of the wire, the tension on the wire was increased to raise it in the air. The materials then slid on the wire without any way to control the speed at which they travelled. A stack of firewood (and more recently a stack of tires) next to the base was used to break the fall of the material when it reached the bottom.

It was mainly used to carry firewood that was cut from the thickets on the slope. More recently, some of the wires were used to carry other materials, including materials for the construction



and restoration of houses and gas cylinders. In the Fajã dos Bodes you can see a large number of firewood lines. Although they have structural variations among them, they work in the same manner.

Today, the majority of the firewood lines are abandoned.

tough climb to Lourais. When you see the first wooden steps, look back and admire the outline of the island and the “fajãs” that you left by the sea. Keep climbing the footpath, stopping whenever you feel the need.

With the altitude, the vegetation becomes more natural and tree heath (*Erica arborea*) predominates. At the top, on one of the curves on the path, take a last picture of Fajã dos Bodes, Fajã dos Vimes and Fajã da Calheta.

In the middle of the climb, you will find the Ribeira dos Cedros (Cedar Creek) with running water year-round that fills pools in the creek. One of these was a wonderful cool relief for my tired feet seeming to take weight off my feet and reinvigorating them.

Be careful when you step on the stones in the creek, they are normally slippery. Keep climbing up and up and up. When the terrain levels somewhat, a little farther on, you can see Fajã de São João for the first time. You are entering Lourais, indicated by the vegetable gardens, the arrowhead plant *Sagittaria acutifolia*, the common box (*Buxus sempervirens*), Cryptomeria (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and hydrangeas. We walk out through a path that looks like it was opened to cut and remove wood. Go a little farther until you reach the asphalt road and the houses of Lourais, now it is all downhill. After the last house the road becomes a dirt and red basaltic pumice road again as you approach the deep valley through the Ribeira do Salto (Leap Creek). Water is captured and piped here. The black water pipe will keep you company during a good portion of the hike down. This footpath takes



you to Fajã de Além (don't confuse it with Fajã de Além on the north coast where there is another hiking trail), halfway to Fajã de São João. During the hike down, we find vineyards on the higher portions and many birds singing. The hike down is easy but the loose pebbles tend to slip under the boots. The rest is the view - but a beautiful one, with the “fajã” that awaits you always in front.

The footpath widens and the surface gets better, allowing access to the pick-up trucks that come to pick up the grapes. Judging by the winepress that we see in at least one of the buildings next to the road, some of the grapes were probably smashed right here.

After we pass the inlet adorned with a pebble beach where Ribeira de São João (Saint John's Creek) flows, we enter Fajã de São João. I am told that Ribeira de São João is the largest on the island, with a permanent flow, where the eels, “eirosos”, live. The first houses and some willows await you at the entrance.

Only 700 metres of trail are left on the “fajã”. The rest of the hike is on the main road with portions of the road in Portuguese parallelepiped cobblestone, with narrow streets and houses where we see rural architectural details with evident value.

The hike ends at a fountain dating from 1896 next to Saint John's Chapel from 1762, which you can visit by asking Ms. Judite at the *Café e mercearia Águeda* (Águeda Market and Coffee Shop) next door. If you should need, the owner of the market also has a taxi service and a telephone that you may use. Quench your thirst and take advantage of the opportunity for conversation.

FAJÃ DE SÃO JOÃO

The Fajã de São João is in the parish of Santo Antão, and is one of the largest “fajãs” on the south coast of São Jorge Island. A “fajã” is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris.

The first references to inhabitants in this “fajã” are from 1560, and it has been inhabited since. The Fajã de São João has a milder climate than the rest of the island and abundant water. The creek with a permanent discharge forms large waterfalls on the cliff into the “fajã”.

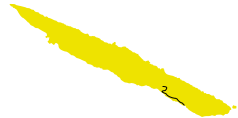
The area was hit with severe collapses caused by the large earthquake on 9th July 1757. This earthquake was called the Mandate from God by the population. A large part of the population



was buried under the immense collapses from the cliffs, which are still very visible on the cliff side and along the coast. Just on the island of São Jorge there were 1,053 dead, buried in the ruins. Later, counting the disappearances and the injured that perished the number grew to around 1,500 fatal casualties. Reconstructed, the area suffered greatly again in the earthquake of 1st January 1980. The 1980 earthquake brought destruction to the “fajã” once again. The wine from this “fajã” was famous, but it was also known for its good crops of figs, walnuts, oranges, apples, chestnuts, pineapples and coffee. Some of these crops are still present in the “fajã”, although now for auto consumption, rather than for commercial ends. Nowadays, the Fajã de São João is an important summer holiday destination.

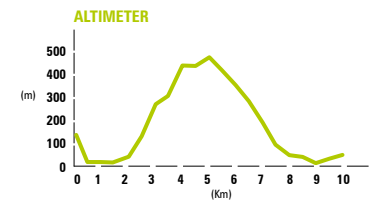


FAJÃ DOS VIMES - LOURAIS - - FAJÃ DE SÃO JOÃO



1. Start of trail
2. Fajã dos Bodes
3. Lourais
4. Fajã do Além
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 3H 30M
- DISTANCE: 10 Km
- START: Fajã dos Vimes
- END: Fajã de São João
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium



SÃO JORGE

PICO DO PEDRO – FAJÃ DO OUVIDOR

PR4SJO



From the blue of the sky to the blue of the sea

Leave the main road that connects the parish of Urzelina to Santo António, in the Norte Grande, to begin the hike facing Pico do Pedro (Peter's Peak). A typically São Jorgen landscape awaits you on this hike. A landscape of natural pastures, always green, timidly spotted with colourful flowers predominantly yellow, sporadically frequented by the cows responsible for the delicious and renowned São Jorge Cheese. The first part of this hike is done in zigzag in the alignment of basaltic scoria cones that rise like a crest on the back of the island. It is a curious fact that here at this altitude pastures, sometimes delimited by *Cryptomeria* (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and hydrangeas, dominate instead of forest like on the majority of the other islands.

After 400 metres, you will reach a small water tank (*Serviços Florestais 1967*) that collects water from the springs on the slopes and has a spout and basin, probably for watering the animals.

The humidity permits the growth of easily identifiable species such as: *Tolpis azorica*, *Hypericum foliosum*, Azores blueberry (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*), rooting chainfern (*Woodwardia radicans*), *Leontodon filii* and great horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*) covering the slopes on the side of the path. After going around Pico Verde, and before Pico do Carvão a small marsh on the right is home to a couple of ducks and their family. The air is agitated with a varied group of flying insects, from bees to butterflies, including dragonflies on the marshes and many others, where fortunately, mosquitoes are not included.

After you pass Pico do Carvão you have your first panoramic view of Manadas, next to the ocean, and of the majestic island of Pico. You will see Morro Pelado ahead, with the border of its crater lowered on the side that faces the road. Inside the crater is the MONTOSO CAVE. Next to the road is a gathering of

endemic species in which we highlight the rare *Chaerophyllum azoricum*, *Ammi trifoliatum*, *Scabiosa nitens* and *Euphrasia grandiflora*.

As you climb the road next to Morro Pelado don't forget to look back to appreciate the south seashore of the island. Keep going towards Pico da Esperança (Hope Peak). It is the highest point of the island with 1,053 metres. On the way, you will pass near the area of the tragic aviation accident that occurred in 1999.

There are some displaced specimens of *Rumex azoricus* on the side of the road. A few metres later is the detour to climb Pico da Esperança. Go up and go around the summit counter clockwise. Inside the crater, there are two small lagoons, on the outside a magnificent view in several directions: to the east, the cone alignment towards the Serra do Topo; to the west, Pico do Montoso and Morro Pelado; and to the north the parish of Norte Grande. You will pass the triangulation pillar, go down to return to the trail and continue. Next are Pico do Areeiro and Pico Pinheiro. Next to these, some outcrops of rock in the relief allow us to appreciate the geologic constitution that is around us. There are blocks of stone next to the road covered with white lichen; deposits of multicoloured scoria on the sides of the cliffs where we can see the rock layers of the evolutionary meteorization that transformed them into soil; and we can make out lava flows that sometimes form small seashell-shaped caves.

After passing Pico Pinheiro, go toward Norte Grande. The road bends and you reach an intersection, continue going down on the left. The first thickets of tree heath (*Erica arborea*) and Azores juniper (*Juniperus brevifolia*) appear with Azorean holly (*Ilex perado Aiton ssp. Azorica*), *Vaccinium cylindraceum* and Sanguinhos (*Frangula azorica*). The brooks become deeper and covered in ferns.



Another crossroads, turn left here. From the worn dirt path, you reach asphalt and the medium altitude pastures dominate the terrain again.

Go down about 1 km, turn left off the paved road onto a dirt road about halfway down. As you walk on this road you can see the Pico da Esperança, the Morro Pelado and the Pico Verde where the hike began. On the right the slope goes down to Norte Grande and from there to the “fajãs” on the seaside, with Graciosa Island so close. After about 1,800 metres on this road, a sloping road appears on the right normally used by local farmers, and where you can see some of the farming equipment used on the island, namely portable milking equipment and troughs.

You will come upon only one fork in the road, when you can already see the church tower. Turn left and you will reach the regional road right in front of the Império do Divino Espírito Santo (Holy Ghost Chapel).

Cross the street and, if it is open, visit the Church of Our Lady of the Snows (Igreja de Nossa Senhora das Neves), built in 1762, where beautiful panels of tiles and carved wood in blue and gold line the walls of the chancel. The previous church was involved in what is known in São Jorge as the Mutiny of the Taro (Motim dos Inhames). In this temple the men sent to collect the tithes for the taros were surrounded by the population in 1694, and from the top of the bell tower the parish priest burned the list with the names of those implicated in this popular revolt “we will not pay”, the living conditions were already difficult even without the tithe.

Head down the path next to the church. Based on the architectural layout that you will see, you realize that this was one of the main streets of Norte Grande and the only one that gave access to the Fajã do Ouvidor. Soon you will pass a bridge over a stream and come to the viewpoint. Here is a prime view of the Fajã do Ouvidor, take the opportunity to record this image... in your memory or in the camera. Next to the viewpoint is the old footpath that was the only land access to the “fajã” before 1948, when the current road was opened. As usual, partially paved with stones, partially dirt, the path descends with

MONTOSO CAVE

This vertical cave is at an altitude of 1,000 metres inside the Morro Pelado.



This is the largest volcanic cavity of the Azores with a depth of approximately 140 metres.

The descent into its interior is done, through one of the two large openings, with climbing techniques and ropes.

Climbing down we pass an upper chamber that forms a first platform where we can appreciate the vegetation that covers the interior walls of this portion of the cavity. Continuing the climb down, we reach the bottom where the large chamber measures about 150 metres in length, 70 metres in width and has a height to the ceiling of about 50 metres.

*There is cave fauna in this chamber, and the *Trechus isabelae* (ground beetle) should be noted.*

FAJÃ DO OUVIDOR

One of the largest “fajãs” (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris). Its name Ouvidor means judge and emerged because in times gone by a large portion of the lands belonged to the judge of the captain of the beneficiary.

The existing road that gives easy and safe access to automobiles was only opened in 1948.

The fishing port has a crane, and it is currently being enlarged. It maintains its importance to the fishing industry as a safe haven for small vessels and as a departure point to neighbouring “fajãs” that can’t be reached by land.

*Depending on the time of year, you can see Cory’s shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea borealis*), terns, seagulls, as well as several *Passerines* (perching birds) that live in the thickets on the sides of the cliffs.*

Several natural springs flow down the cliff side to the “fajã”.

This “fajã” is renowned for the Poça de Simão Dias (Simão Dias Pool): a geological formation



that formed a natural pool used for bathing.

The “fajã” has about thirty houses, many with a modern architectural style. Under half of the houses have full time residents.

This “fajã” is one of the most visited by tourists and summer holidaymakers. As a result, it has a nice restaurant.

In addition to cow pastures, there is the cultivation of potatoes, beans, corn, grapevines, garlic, and onions.

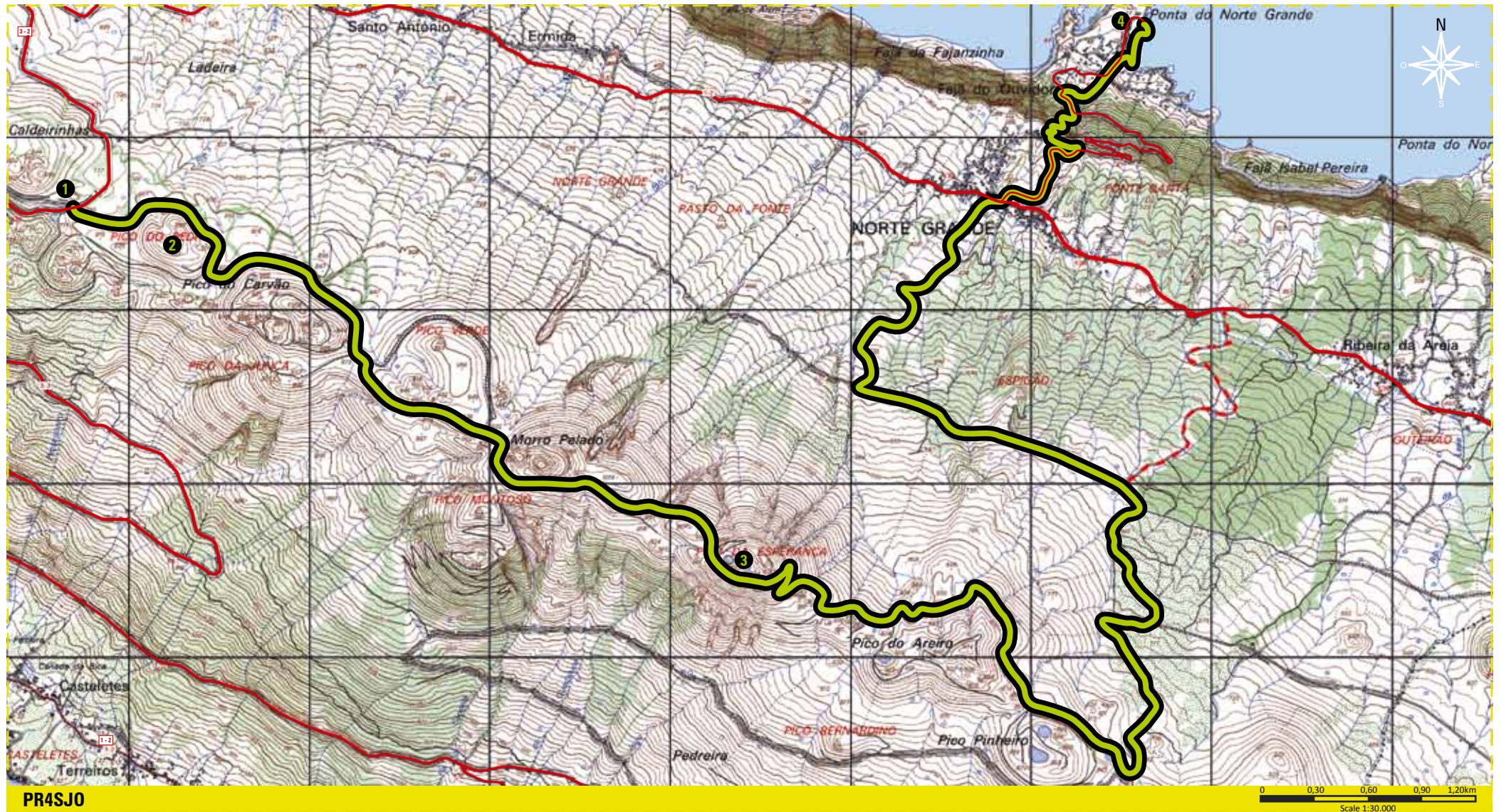
The “fajã” has a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, dating from 1903.

steep turns. When the footpath becomes wider and you see chestnut trees, you are nearing the road. Go down to the intersection with another dirt road, where you will find a water station for vehicles. Continue on this road, until you reach the asphalt road where a sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) awaits you in a small traffic circle. A little farther down, next to the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows you can see the neighbouring Fajã da Ribeira da Areia and the port from a distance. Go a little farther down, and follow a small cement ramp, the old access to the port, that will take you next to the “O Amílcar” restaurant. The restaurant has several house specials and a cinnamon “aguardente” (local spirit) that is a specialty. I recommend it.

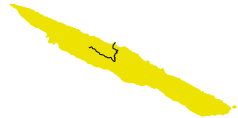
Don’t leave the “fajã” without visiting the Simão Dias pool. The lava that reached the ocean formed interesting niches and forms through columnar disjunction, erosion and solidification. Go 25 metres up the road to find, on your right, the signs that identify the location and the footpath that accesses it as well as the small lighthouse.

Say goodbye to this “fajã” with a refreshing ocean swim.



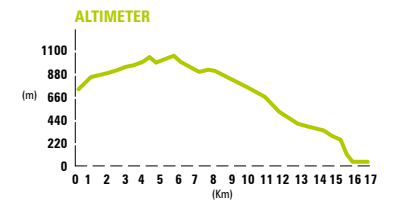


PICO DO PEDRO - -FAJÃ DO OUVIDOR



1. Start of trail
2. Pico do Pedro
3. Pico da Esperança
4. End of trail

- DURATION: 4H 00M
- DISTANCE: 18 Km
- START: Base of Pico do Pedro
- END: Fajã do Ouvidor
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: North-eastern Coast and Ponta do Topo
- *Community Interest Site*



SÃO JORGE

FAJÃ DE ALÉM

PRC5SJO



An almost private “fajã”

A chapel, built in 1936 by a private citizen, in honour of Our Lady of Assistance awaits us at the beginning of the hike. Go down the paved road until you reach a sign to change directions to the left. Go down the top of a pasture marked by a barbed wire fence, which forms the beginning of the footpath that will take you to Fajã de Além.



This “fajã” (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris) has a path on each extremity that facilitates the access of the population of Santo António to the “fajã”. The hike takes us down one of the paths and up the other, after obviously crossing the “fajã”.



The initial descent, until we reach the edge of the cliff, is a footpath with common box (*Buxus sempervirens*) and sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) that sometimes form porticos, and is sometimes paved with stones zigzagging with a small stream for company. It isn't a very pretty stretch, and it didn't have to be. These footpaths were created by the need to cultivate products, for human survival, in areas with a milder climate. This one is still used to access several pastures in the area. On the way are several samples of the rare endemic species *Chaerophyllum azoricum*. Suddenly we reach the cliff edge, the pastures end and the cliff side begins to be covered in natural species. In the distance is Fajã do Ouvidor, and even farther is Fajã da Ribeira da Areia; both are on top of lava flows. A view worthy of registering for posterity. Along the down climb, we see and hear the water that springs from the rock or that flows on the cliff side from above. Sometimes we only hear the continuous sound under the leaves of the *Rumex azoricus*, yams and other species that like wet terrain.

After a few more turns, we see Fajã de Além. The young Auracarias catch our eye, though medium to short, they are an infrequent tree species in the “fajãs”.

Now in the “fajã” we can appreciate the twenty or so houses, distant from each other, although neighbouring, as is usual. The houses are made of stone, and in their majority well preserved and cared for. There are at most two or three paths to walk around the “fajã”. They are well defined by the worn or stone ground, sometimes, but not always, with a stone wall border. It is easy to find ourselves within private properties; it is through them that the public access passes. To reach some of the houses, the owners, sometimes have to leave the main footpath.

The area around the buildings is normally well cared for with carnations, palm trees, geraniums (*Pelargonium sp.*) and other flowers, without debris and sometimes with Azores bellflowers (*Azorina vidalii*) growing naturally on the walls near the houses. I now understand the existence of the Auracarias as one of the elements used in the gardens of the houses.

There are small vegetable gardens protected by reeds or tree heaths (*Erica arborea*), where diverse things are grown such as chilli peppers. The gardens are watered with drinking water that arrives through an efficient plumbing system that reaches practically all the houses. Lemon trees, fig trees, and grapevines are some of the fruits that do well here.



We cross the “1º de Maio 2004” (First of May 2004) bridge, probably the date of the reconstruction, and other brooks. Next to one of the brooks, Mr. Moisés built a very small water mill with PVC pipe, and an oven where he dried the corn. Obviously, the oven was also used afterwards to bake the bread. A quick look at the wheel allows us to see that the gears have not been used in some time. In some of the details, we see that the people of the “fajã” are ingenious. The difficulty in bringing



material to the “fajã” promotes the reuse and reconversion of materials and utensils.

We see an innovated firewood line that certainly never transported firewood, but rather gas cylinders, roof tiles, and other construction materials and goods. It begins well on top (where we will finish our hike, at the exit from the “fajã”) and the material reaches the bottom safely, the fall broken by a pile of tires.

I was told there was a good probability of running into one of the proprietors when I went down to the “fajã”, and that I would certainly be well received, because they are very nice people.

That came to be a great and timely truth. Already on my way up, I came across a nice couple from Santo António that gave me important information about this “fajã”.

They were the ones that told me that in times gone by there was a very old water mill in the “fajã” and that it was abandoned long ago. It was used to grind the corn that was cultivated and threshed in Santo António and that came to the “fajã” on the firewood lines, because there was no windmill in Santo António. Corn was grown in the “fajã” but sweet potatoes and yams were more important. No one lives in the “fajã”, they tell me, in part because from *October to February the sun does not shine in the “fajã”*, which makes life and agriculture difficult.

After cordial goodbyes, I slowly continue my climb. As I climb, I find small tributaries of the creek that flows to my left, in cascade in the middle of the Indian shot (*Canna indica*), *Rumex azoricus* and vegetable gardens of yams. Sometimes the water overflows and we have to jump over puddles to continue the climb. This footpath has more pronounced “stairs” than the ones we found on the way down.

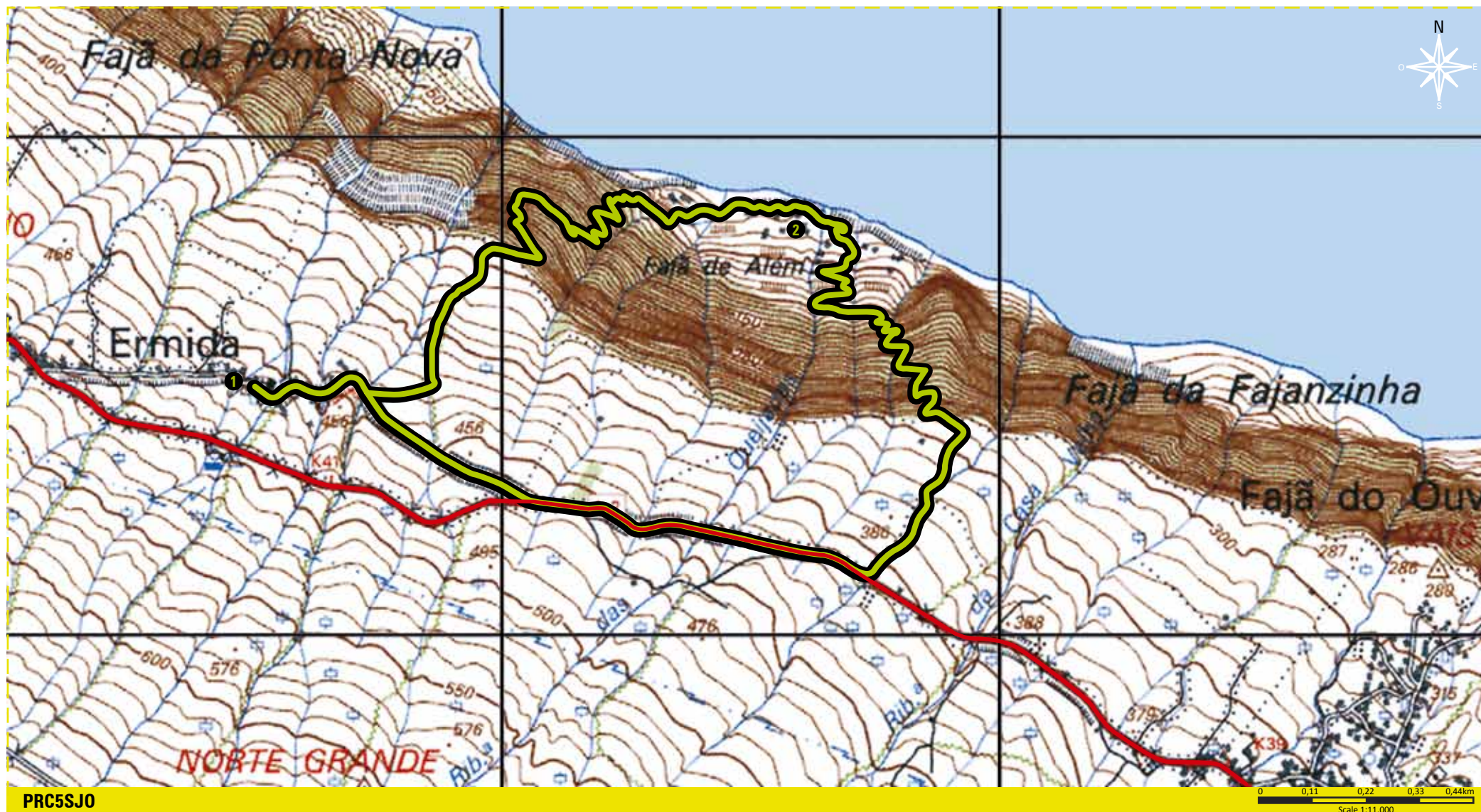
Near the exit, a last look over the “fajã” and a last photo.

As I reach the top of the climb, where there is access to vehicles, I find the structure that supports the “modern” firewood line and a buoy that I think must serve as a signal for the descent of the materials.

Now on the road, I climb and follow the signs until I reach the vehicle that saw me leave a good while back.

Of all the uninhabited “fajãs” that I have visited in São Jorge, I can truly say that this was the one I liked the most, because of how well the owners maintain their properties. I hope you enjoy it as well.



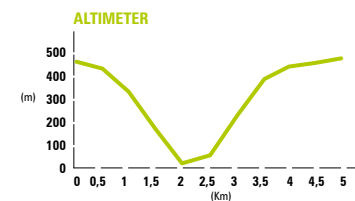


FAJÃ DE ALÉM



1. Start and End of trail
2. Fajã do Além

- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 6 Km
- START: Ermida de N.ª Sr.ª Auxiliadora (Chapel of Our Lady Assistance)
- END: Ermida de N.ª Sr.ª Auxiliadora (Chapel of Our Lady Assistance)
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium



SÃO JORGE

NORTE PEQUENO

PRC6SJ0



Three “Fajás” Tour

This hike begins where the road Canada da Fajã do Mero meets the Regional Road, next to the *Cooperativa Agrícola de Lacticínios do Norte Pequeno* and a curiously undated fountain in ruins. It is a paved road with a one hundred percent agricultural landscape watched by houses, some in ruins, here and there. After 500 metres, you come to the first fork in the road. In front, the dirt road is the old road access to Fajã do Mero, which you will take, on the right the paved road named Caminho Novo, on which you will return, continues.

Aligned around the small pasture plots the large heather stands out in the landscape. The pasture plots are often infested with horehound and brambles that stretch out onto the road as if they want to grab us. After another 500 metres we come upon another fork in the road: keep to the left on the flatter and wider road. The hollies, Azores laurel, Azores blueberry (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*), ivy and even Sanguinhos (*Fragula azorica*) sprout on the wayside... these are the first endemic plants that this stroll has to offer anyone interested in the local flora. You will likely see rabbits crossing the road in front you - they are restless animals. In another 1,800 metres, you will pass a path on the left, which is not of interest now, and farther ahead you will find a small stand of tall and dense Cryptomerias, where you should turn right and begin a steeper descent.

The intense chirping of birds and an inaugural plaque mark the end of the wide path and the beginning of the footpath that descends to the “fajã” (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris). The first part of this descent is on a wide and cared for footpath, along a line of electricity poles that, curiously, have bulbs for public lighting. I think it is a unique case in São Jorge. The electricity reaches a little farther, where it provides power to a pump that takes the water collected at Nascente das Sete Fontes (Seven Fountain Spring) through the tubes that you may have noticed on the descent. This water will boost the water supply to the parishes of Norte Pequeno, Calheta and Ribeira Seca. Turn right to go see the water from the various fountains (seven?) that spring from the rocks and flow year-round. The plaque at the beginning of the descent commemorates the inauguration of this public works on 17th July 1991.

Return to the other side where the footpath continues, however, don't expect the second descent to be equal to the first. It is a dark descent, without anything new, except the murmur of the sea that becomes louder with every step. Ahead more endemic species appear: *Ammi trifoliatum*, *Rumex azoricus*, *Euphorbia azorica*, *Polypodium azoricum*. To the left and next to the sea, we can begin to see a bit of the Fajã da Ribeira da Areia, a typical lava "fajã" with its gleaming white houses. This lava "fajã" (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris), is different from the Fajã do Mero which is a detritus "fajã". Continue down the trail to the left in the direction of the sound of running water. Some areas are more waterlogged due to the streams that flow downhill, some abundantly and throughout the year. You pass a plantation of New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*) which is curious - would it have been used to make mooring lines or mats? Farther down appear some flowering *Scabiosa nitens* and the houses of Fajã do Mero. We have arrived at the vegetable gardens: with banana trees, small pastures, corn, cabbage, chilli and sometimes other crops, such as fava beans, sweet potato, grapes, potato and pumpkin. Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) (a.k.a. Elephant ears) abounds on the banks of the streams and grows without much cultivation. The *azorinas* and the Festuces (*Festuca*) are also here.



Two small brooks discharge near each other in the rock. The brooks are easy to find: follow the taros. You reach a concrete slope; this is the road (now in good condition) that gives vehicle access to this fajã coming from the Fajã da Penedia. The current goal is take this path in the opposite direction, however, if you wish, you can go down the path a little farther and explore this "fajã". You will certainly notice a curious thatched barn with a modern lock on the door. We were told that one used to be able to catch a lot of good fish by fishing from the rocks or the pebble beach. Nowadays, I doubt that anyone fishes here. In other times it was necessary to be self-sufficient: one would go down to the fajã to work and took the food from the sea. Throughout the year it is possible to observe gulls, rock-pigeons and Kites. You will only see Cory's shearwaters (*Calonectris diomedea*) and terns at the right time of year.

Then come back to this gooseberry slope, so numerous are these small trees on the side of the road, and go up. Halfway through the climb, at a well renovated house, is a faucet that provides cool drinking water to the passerby. It is an enjoyable and always wide road where the concrete alternates with unpaved spans. Before going down and coming out at Fajã da Penedia you will pass some houses above the Fajã das Funduras, which is hidden below.

On arriving at Fajã da Penedia, turn first to the left and visit the chapel Ermida de Santa Filomena. The easy access and later the appearance of cars enabled the survival of this "fajã", which has several houses, some recent. In the past, some of the houses were permanently inhabited; now, their owners only come to spend a few days, especially before the Feast of Saint Philomena (*Festa de Santa Filomena*).

The water comes from a single source on the hillside, which reaches the "fajã" through a small stream.

Only later, in the twentieth century was Human ingenuity able to bring water to the houses, hence the recent date on the fountain: 1972. In this "fajã" were cultivated the same products as in Fajã do Mero, with the addition of reeds from which the baskets that were used here were made.

If you want to see the sea you have to climb the breakwater that protects the road and the "fajã" from the winter fury of the sea.

Turn your back on this "fajã" and begin to climb. You may come across automobiles. At a fork farther up, is the access to Fajã das Pontas. Go down to this "fajã", at least, until the port. You can however continue to follow the path until Fajã da Neca. Although it is a modest seaport, equipped with a crane and some open boats, it remains one of the best on the northern coast. The boats allow for the fishing of several species: conger, eel, mullet, hake and Mediterranean parrotfish, to name a few. It has several homes with running water, and in its heyday had six firewood lines, now unused.

Views aside, continue the climb up the winding road to the top. On the way, there are walnut trees, fig trees and many chestnut trees. Back on the asphalt, climb to the crossing with Travessa Poço do Jogo on the left, which leads to Fajã dos Cubres, and Travessa do Terreiro on the right, which you should take. Keep going straight through the next crossing and junction. Turn left at the third crossing and walk down Caminho Novo to the point you passed before. From here, climb back to the spot where the walk began.



ERMIDA DE SANTA FILOMENA (SAINT PHILOMENA CHAPEL)

This beautiful small chapel was erected on the initiative of Father António Tomé on land he owned in this fajã. Blessed on 27th May 1889 it was dedicated to Santa Philomena.



Along with the chapel, there was also a house for pilgrims, which is now gone. It was a place of pilgrimage for the payment of the many promises made by devotees from all over the island.

After his death, a daughter (probably recognized by him as such) inherited the chapel which remained in the possession of his descendants. Later because of a dispute between the owners and the Diocese, the chapel was excommunicated and closed. The 1980 earthquake caused massive damage, and it remained in ruins for some time. Later, it was given to the diocese and was rebuilt.

The Feasts of Saint Philomena (Festas de Santa Filomena) take place on the last Sunday in August, with a mass in the morning, followed by a procession. Additionally there are the traditional auctions and soup (sopas) offered to all those who participate in the feast, in a curious self-service atmosphere. The presence of many dozens of participants is customary.

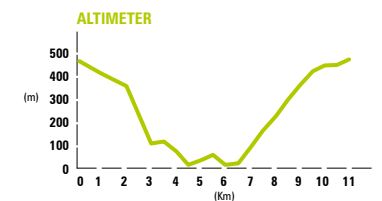


NORTE PEQUENO



1. Start and End of trail
2. Fajã do Mero
3. Fajã da Penedia
4. Fajã das Pontas

- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 11 Km
- START: Junto à Cooperativa Agrícola de Lactínios
- END: Junto à Cooperativa Agrícola de Lactínios
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Costa Nordeste and Ponta do Topo
- *Community Interest Site*



TERCEIRA



PRC1TER Mistérios Negros
(Dark Mysteries) (Pág. 172)
PRC2TER Baías (Bays) da Agualva (Pág. 178)

PRC3TER Serreta (Pág. 184)
PRC4TER Monte (Mount) Brasil (Pág. 190)
PRC8TER Oxen Cart Tracks in São Brás (Pág. 196)

FAIAL
GRACIOSA
PICO
SÃO JORGE
TERCEIRA
CORVO
FLORES

...among peaks and valleys
dressed in forest green.

TERCEIRA

MISTÉRIOS NEGROS (DARK MYSTERIES)

PRCITER

**The lava domes of 1761**

This hike begins at the Caminho Florestal do Pico Gaspar (Forestry Road of Pico Gaspar); next to a house that recreates the traditional rustic houses of Terceira. The house has many details including a squared stone chimney in the “hands clasped in prayer” (“mãos-postas”) style. This house was built by the Os Montanheiros Association as a tourist centre and as an access to the cave Gruta do Natal. Nearby the plaque that signals the beginning of the trail has all the necessary information about this hike. The small lagoon, that is small after the summer, is called Lagoa do Negro (Black’s Lake). Although it has been “mistreated” through the years, it is still important to birds. Curiously, one of the stretches of the cave Gruta do Natal is below this lagoon. However, this stretch is not open to visitors. Shortly after beginning the hike, on the first curve on your right, you will travel on a red basaltic pumice road until it ends at a pasture. Enter the pasture and continue walking in a straight line to the other side, where you will find a more natural scene. Mixed with the Cryptomerias (*Cryptomeria japonica*), which were planted here a few years ago, tree heaths (*Erica arborea*), heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), some Azores junipers (*Juniperus brevifolia*) and other plants are rebuilding the natural community that existed here. It was important that the Cryptomerias (*Cryptomeria japonica*) were planted without ploughing the land.

We hear the short and shrill song of the Azores goldcrest (*Regulus regulus inermis*).

We pass next to a marsh that becomes one of the lakes of the Vale Fundo (Deep Valley) in the winter and spring. In the summer the *Juncus* rule. Keep going on the well-marked trail until you reach a fork in the footpath. First, go to the right to visit the only one of the three lakes of the Vale Fundo that keeps water year round. These wet areas, all with free water in the winter, are important for migratory birds that accidentally come here, namely ducks and herons. Few people pass up the opportunity to take a picture of this lake. Although it is small, it captivates us with its surroundings.

After this justified detour, return to the main hike and continue going around the marsh that in the winter and spring is another lake. Next are an area of *Calluna vulgaris*, and then another area with

Australian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*). After a few turns in the road you reach the middle dome of the Mistérios Negros (Black Mysteries). The upcoming portion of the hike is the most difficult; it requires extra attention and some gymnastics.

After a few minutes, you will have crossed the trachyte lava under a forest that is still limited to the lower terrain. The lava is irregular, with sharp edges, and the area has several caves.

You will come out, suddenly, at the end of a path, which is the beginning for you. You have to walk about 700 metres on this road.



As you walk down the path, the scenery reveals itself. To your left, a cloak of green surrounds the black lava islands and you see cones of pre-historic eruptions, the Picos Gordos (Fat Peaks), covered in *Cryptomerias* (*Cryptomeria japonica*). Behind the Picos Gordos are the mounds of the Serra (Mountain) de Santa Barbara and to the right Pico Gaspar (Gaspar Peak).

The view, of the domes laid out before you and the surrounding landscape, is beautiful.

Where the road becomes rather steep it also becomes quite slippery and is not adequate for vehicles. On the portions of the road that are more irregular and more

creviced, we can frequently see fine red-brown glassy crusts, of about five millimetres, that are hardened and waterproof. These crusts, called spodic horizons, are formed by the weathering processes that strip organic matter combined with iron and other chemicals. The spodosol soils appear frequently in volcanic terrains.

After one of the last turns on this road, turn right according to the trail signs. On the footpath, you will pass through *Cryptomerias* (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and come out in one of the pastures of Pico da Cancela (Gate Peak).

Climb to the top. There you will find a footpath that leads to the triangulation pillar at Pico da Cancela. To the west, you can see one of the most typical landscapes of the interior high zones of the island: the pastures divided by thickets and hedges of *Cryptomerias* (*Cryptomeria japonica*). To the left we see the peninsula of Monte Brasil. The church at São Mateus da Calheta is easily visible on the coast. It stands out in the settlement so well that the fishermen from this area used it as a marker to find their fishing spots.

From the triangulation pillar, walk about 150 paces and you will be at another pasture enclosed by barbed wire. Walk along the tree line at the top to reach the old access road at the top of the peak. Follow the access road down. The descent is in the shade where mosses dominate the slopes among ferns.

When you reach the end of the road, pass through the barbed wire into the pasture. Once inside the pasture, walk in the direction of the road. However, before you reach the road, turn left onto a



footpath that is parallel to the road and walk about 100 metres. Leave the footpath and cross the road to climb Pico Gaspar (Gaspar Peak), a truncated volcano with a beautiful crater and a hotspot of endemic species. In the landscape, we see other cones aligned with Pico Gaspar and two entrances to caves.

This succession of eruptions is on the Terceira Rift, a tectonic structure with about 550 kilometres in length. The Terceira Rift originates in the Mid-Atlantic ridge, crosses the islands of Graciosa and Terceira and ends at the intersection with the Azores-Gibraltar Transform Fault, also called the Azores-Gibraltar fault zone (AGFZ), which separates the Eurasian Plate from the African plate.

Return to the road and go to the right about 100 metres. Enter the barren area again on your left, right next to the stone wall that you should follow. After this barren pasture there is another that is more uneven. This entire area was at one time a lava terrain with fissure eruptions that left several signs of their presence, namely volcanic cavities. In the midst of these semi-natural pastures is the Algar/Gruta do Mistério (Mystery Cave), a volcanic cave with a lava tube measuring about 151 metres in length. The entrance to the cave is through a volcanic cone that is about 12 metres tall. It is a small elevation with low trees. You will probably pass by it.

When the hike is over, we recommend a visit to Gruta do Natal (Christmas Cave). It is a lava tube of about 700 metres in length. A large portion of the cave is open to visitors and has large dimensions, which facilitate the access and tour within the cave. Inside the cave, it is possible to see long passages that branch out, superimposed passages, and many geological details and structures. It is known by the local population for the religious ceremonies that take place there: baptisms, weddings and the traditional Christmas Mass.

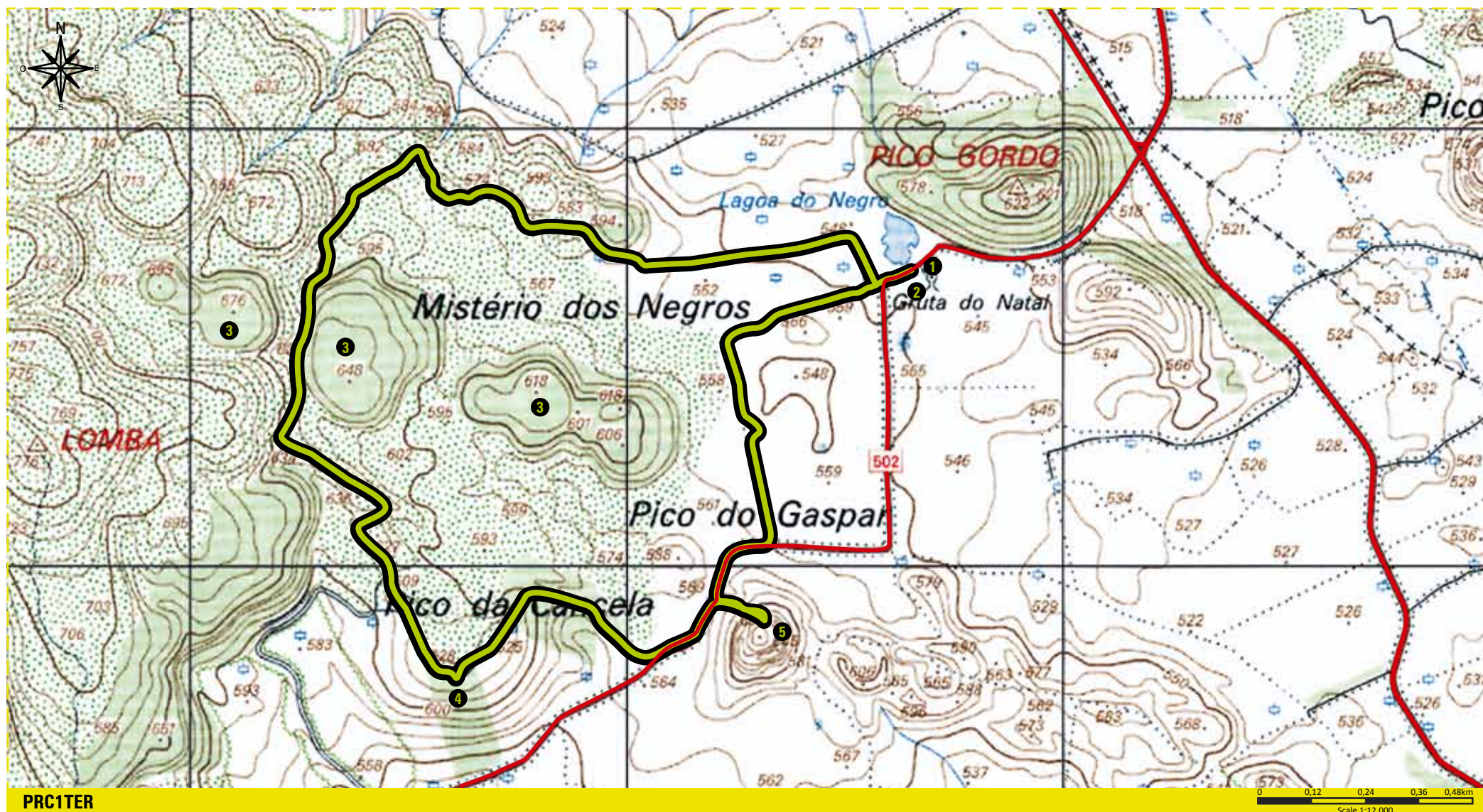
The visit to the Gruta the Natal is the perfect ending to this geologically inclined hike. We wish you a great speleological adventure.



MISTÉRIOS NEGROS (DARK MYSTERIES) ERUPTION

“On 22nd November large earthquakes began and continued frequently until 14th April 1761, when the earth shook more than ever. So it continued until the seventeenth of the same month, when in the morning, fire erupted behind the Picos Gordos, with underground thundering similar to artillery.”

José Acúrsio das Neves, 1826 “Entretenimentos Cosmologicos, Geographicos, e Históricos” (Cosmological, Geographical and Historical Reflections).

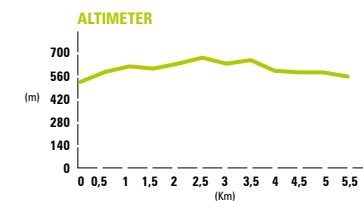


MISTÉRIOS NEGROS (DARK MYSTERIES)



1. Start and End of trail
2. Gruta do Natal
3. Mistérios Negros
4. Pico da Cancela
5. Pico do Gaspar

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 5 Km
- START: Gruta do Natal
- END: Gruta do Natal
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Difficult
- REMARKS: Serra (Mount) de Santa Bárbara and Pico Alto
- *Community Interest Site*



TERCEIRA

BAÍAS (BAYS) DA AGUALVA

PRC2TER



North Coast Seaside

This hike is on the north coast of the island, between Agualva and Quatro Ribeiras. It begins where the old Canada da Alagoa road intersects with the Regional Road. It begins on a worn dirt road that passes through agricultural land where we see pastures and fodder corn. We go down about 500 metres towards a deep cut gorge kept cool by the forest of sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) that flanks it. This used to be the only access to the “fajã” (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris). Through this gorge flowed a substantial amount of the water that fed into the lagoon.



At the end of the gorge, we pass an area of natural springs and water capture that is used for domestic consumption. As we reach the “fajã”, we hear the ocean breaking against the rocks.



In between agricultural plantations of yams and such, we reach the pebble beach that serves as a natural dike and protects the interior of the “fajã”.

Turn left and walk until you reach the road. On this road walk about thirty paces, and then, on a slightly slippery path, climb the slope on your right to go to the viewpoint of the “fajã”. This slope is sparsely covered with tree heaths (*Erica arborea*).

The viewpoint is on lavas that are more recent and has a privileged view of the ocean and the surrounding area. Before the “fajã” existed, this was simply a bay where the ocean pounded the cliffs that surround the “fajã”.

When you leave the viewpoint, continue to climb the path that will take you to a road accessible to automobiles. Turn right until you reach a small square that is frequented by fishermen who park their cars here while they fish from the high cliffs you see in front of you. This is a viewpoint as well. In this bay, the Baía da Ferradura (Horseshoe Bay), you can see the jagged rocks carved by the natural separation of the rocks that creates what seem to be extra large cobbles at the sea level.

Return by this road, and then climb the asphalt road until you reach a sharp turn. At this turn, follow a footpath that crossed the lavas. This area used to be filled with grapevines, but it is abandoned now. A small pause here and there allows us to observe the birds that fly around and rest here. In the summer, there is an important colony of common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), who come to visit the rock pigeons (*Columba livia*) that live here year round.

Near the end, the trail veers to the right and goes down to a natural pasture. From here, you can see the deep Baía das Pombas (Pigeon Bay) and a cave with the same name. If you move a bit closer to the ocean, you can see a dangerous path used by fishermen to reach a fishing spot.

This area with curious niches requires extra caution with each step that we take towards the cliff edge.

Turn back and climb the slope on the right. Cross a fern-filled terrain and continue following the pasture walls on your left. To your right are the ocean cliff edge and a spectacular view of the bay and the small peninsulas that stretch into the sea.



THE LAGOON AT FAJÃZINHA

This “fajã” (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris) is one of the best examples of a “fajã” created by a lava flow in the Azores.

The lava spilled from the cliff and created a barrier. A lowland formed where the ocean used to flow freely. Later the bay was filled by detritus brought by the waters that discharge through the crevice and by the ocean that deposited stones and formed a pebble beach.

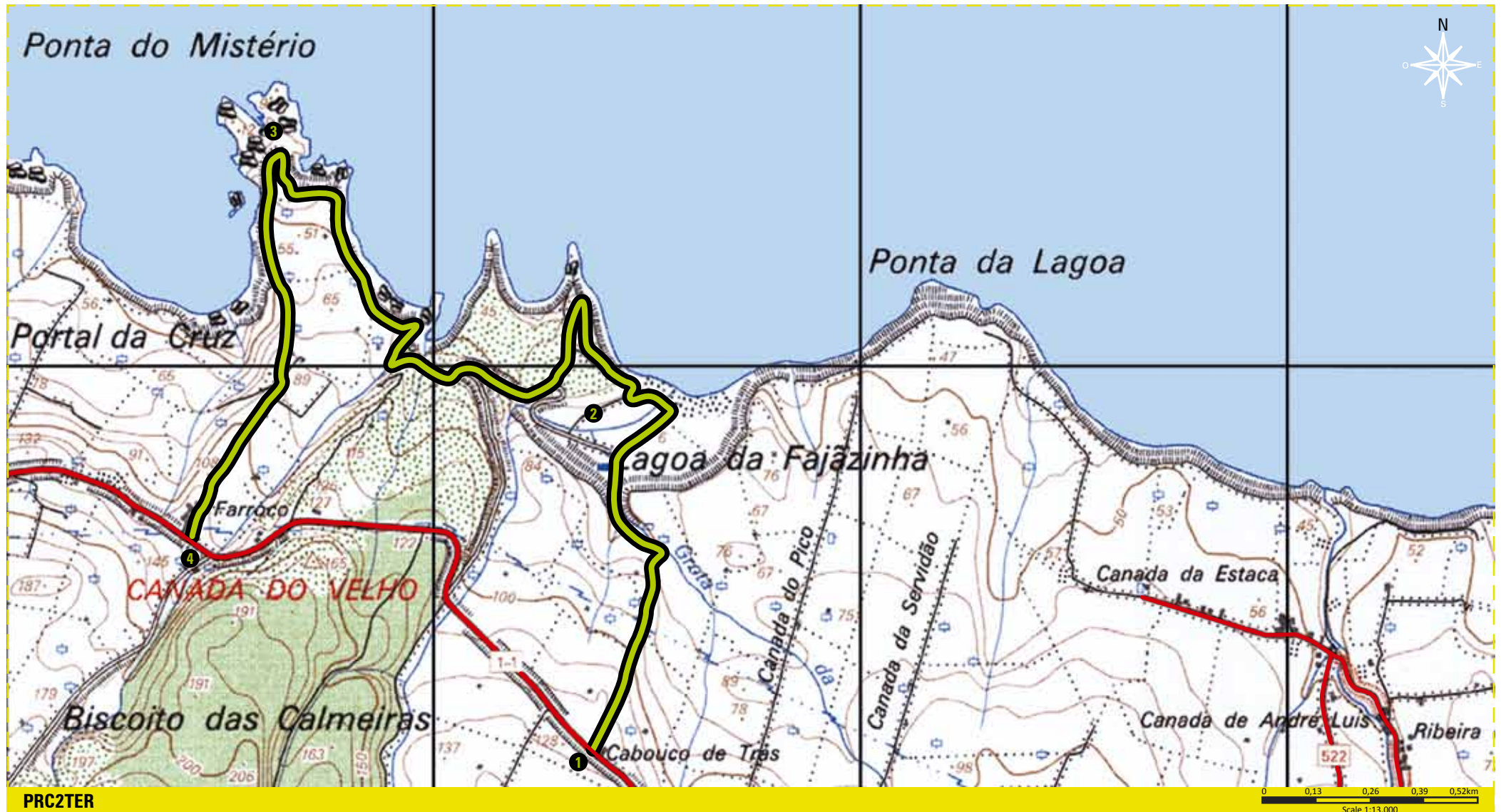


Farther ahead, you start to see the Ponta do Mistério (Mystery Point) and you reach the Caldeirão Grande (Large Caldera) quickly. The Caldeirão Grande is a small bay where from the deep waters rise two basalt walls that seem to want to close in on each other.

Keep going and climb to the plain, covered with *Festuca petraea* on the left side, then go to the edge. In front of you is the Ponta do Mistério (Mystery Point) where the ocean breaks on the rocks forming pools of water full of marine life. If you wish, you can use the fishermen’s shortcuts on the side of the Caldeirão Grande to reach the northernmost part of the Ponta do Mistério. The tide pools are full of green and white seaweed, red sea urchins, small fish, limpets and other molluscs.

Although it is outside the officially marked route, because it is not appropriate for those with difficulties, it is worth the trouble. Don’t forget to go back up the same way that you came down. On the plain again, turn your back on the ocean and continue forward on the fisherman’s footpath. On the final part of the footpath, there are large trees flanking the path and providing an enjoyable shade. You will come out at the Canada da Baleeira (Whaler Road), which you should climb to the regional road where the hike ends.

At the end of the hike, you can continue another 1.3 km to return to the starting point.



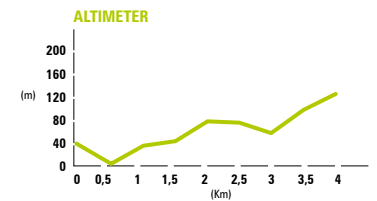
PRC2TER

BAÍAS (BAYS) DA AGUALVA



1. Start of trail
2. Alagoa da Fajãzinha
3. Ponta do Mistério
4. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 00M
- DISTANCE: 4 Km
- START: Canada (Road) da Alagoa
- END: Canada (Road) da Baleira
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy
- REMARKS: Quatro Ribeiras Coast - *Community Interest Site*



TERCEIRA

SERRETA

PRC3TER



Hike to Lagoínha (Small Lake)

Going north on the regional road, about 600 metres after the church in Serreta on the right, is the start of Canada da Fonte (Spring Road). A large Hiking Trail sign is clearly visible. However, before you reach Canada da Fonte road, you will pass Canada das Fontes (Springs Road), which is not the correct road. Once on Canada da Fonte road, climb another 600 metres until you reach the information panel for the trail. On the way up you will see signs on the electricity poles confirming the direction to take.

If you have a vehicle, leave it parked here. Although the trail is not marked as circular, it does end at the same place where it begins.

Hike up the paved road on the right. The first part of the trail is always up until we reach the Lagoínha

(Small Lake). If you look out to sea, on a clear day, you can see São Jorge Island with Pico's mountain behind it.

At the first fork in the road, go left onto an old dirt road. Actually, it is a mixture of rocks, including obsidians, dirt and pumice. Pumice is frequent on this part of the island.

This is an area of altitude pastures, which resulted from the late clearing of the land, sometimes with machinery. Dividing the pastures are Laurissilva (*Laurus azorica*), tree heaths (*Erica arborea*), Azores junipers (*Juniperus brevifolia*) and the ever-present Cryptomerias (*Cryptomeria japonica*).

At a new fork in the road, go to the right. A little farther ahead, go left. Climb a bit more and cross the fence that you will find. Then turn left onto the more level path. The steeper path will be for the return from Lagoínha.

On both sides the recent cutting down of the Cryptomeria (*Cryptomeria japonica*) opened the way to the invasive species Kahili ginger or Ginger Lily (*Hedychium gardnerianum*) and *Rubus irenaeus*. The road soon becomes a footpath amidst woods of Australian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), eucalyptus, Azores junipers (*Juniperus brevifolia*) and Cryptomerias (*Cryptomeria japonica*) where, for a few minutes under an arched roof of sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*), you will cease to see the sun.



On the humid dirt ground, about ten different species of ferns, and some strange mushrooms grow among the moss-covered rocks. This footpath has a very irregular ground and is lower than the surrounding terrain. This is probably due to the traffic that passes here, as well as, erosion. The path becomes steeper and the surrounding vegetation now consists of species that are more natural.

The only things we hear are the curious Azorean goldcrests (*Regulus regulus azoricus*), the black birds and the pigeons. The climb becomes gentler and to your left a brook carved a small valley filled with large ferns. Above the protective fence, we can see chain ferns (*Woodwardia radicans*). The sides of the path are yellowed by the mosses (*Sphagnum*). We cross a small tributary, which is dry, and enter a wood of imposing Cryptomerias (*Cryptomeria japonica*). We unexpectedly see *Angelica lignescens* and *Sanicula azorica* on the path.

We continue climbing with roots coming up on the ground. The roots soon give way to the leaves of Australian Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*) that are everywhere. We also see Azores blueberry (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*), Cape myrtle (*Myrsine africana*

L.) and *Viburnum treleasei* with satiny berries. We pass next to a small wood of Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) with its characteristic smell from the feathered leaves in a flat spray.

We come out on a road that takes us to a paved road a few metres ahead. The road comes from the recreational park at the Mata (Wood) da Serreta. Turn right and follow this road to the end. Another climb, with small tree trunks forming stairs, takes us through a terrain with high reliefs caused by water erosion. We see hydrangeas everywhere.

We reach a worn dirt path only accessible to 4x4 cars. Turn right. On the sides of the road are Azorean holly (*Ilex perado Aiton ssp. Azorica*), tree heaths (*Erica arborea*), Laurissilva (*Laurus azorica*), *Viburnum treleasei*, Azores junipers (*Juniperus brevifolia*), *Tolpis azorica*, *Potentillas*, *Lysimachia azorica*, ivy, mosses (*Sphagnum*), chain fern (*Woodwardia radicans*), flowering fern (*Osmunda regalis*), *Lycopodiella cernua* and many other species. These are perfect high land communities.

The climb to Pico da Lagoínha (Small Lake Peak) is a few metres ahead on a path off this road. A sign marks the footpath that takes us to the top of this volcanic cone that rose on the flank of Serra (Moun-

tain) de Santa Bárbara. The path is slippery with loose rocks and high steps cut into the ground. Be careful on this path.

Almost at the top, we come across a fork in the path. Climb on the left until you reach the summit, where you can see the Lagoínha da Serreta (Serreta's Small Lake) inside the almost perfect crater. This small lake is beautiful in its geological setting and because of its position on the slope of the mountain.



It is also very important to the wildlife, especially migratory birds because of the integrity of its lake ecosystem.

The footpath continues to the triangulation pillar. On the way, we come across a fork in the path that goes down to the limpid lake. At the triangulation pillar, look to the ocean to see the lava flow that separates the settlements of Serreta and Raminho. Aligned between two vertexes of the pillar, you find Graciosa Island in the ocean.

Go back down and turn left when you reach the road. You will cross a few brooks that are tributaries to the Ribeira da Lapa (Limpet Creek). The road turns into red basaltic pumice and a little ahead, you will see the sign marking the entrance to the pasture on your right. Follow the path marked with cement posts and wire. At about the middle, where a ledge with natural vegetation almost touches the path, cross the wire and climb onto the ledge. During the next few minutes, you will go down, always on the edge of one of the sides of the ravine of Ribeira (Creek) de Além. Here and there, small windows in the vegetation of Azores dwarf mistletoe (*Arceuthobium azoricum*) growing on the Juniperus brevifolia give us a peek at the deep valley cut by time and water until it reached a blanket of rock that slowed the process. This is an impressive landscape. The footpath next to the steep slope ends as you go towards the Pico Negrão (Black Peak). The path that awaits you becomes unstable and is a steep down climb where the ground slips under your feet frequently. Fortunately, here and there, a few steps help immensely. At the midpoint, a viewpoint gives us a view of the valley of Ribeira (Creek) de Além below it.

At the end of the descent, enter the pasture that is in front and go down to a water tank. Here begins the road that takes you back to where we started the hike. You will surely recognize the road to return to your vehicle.

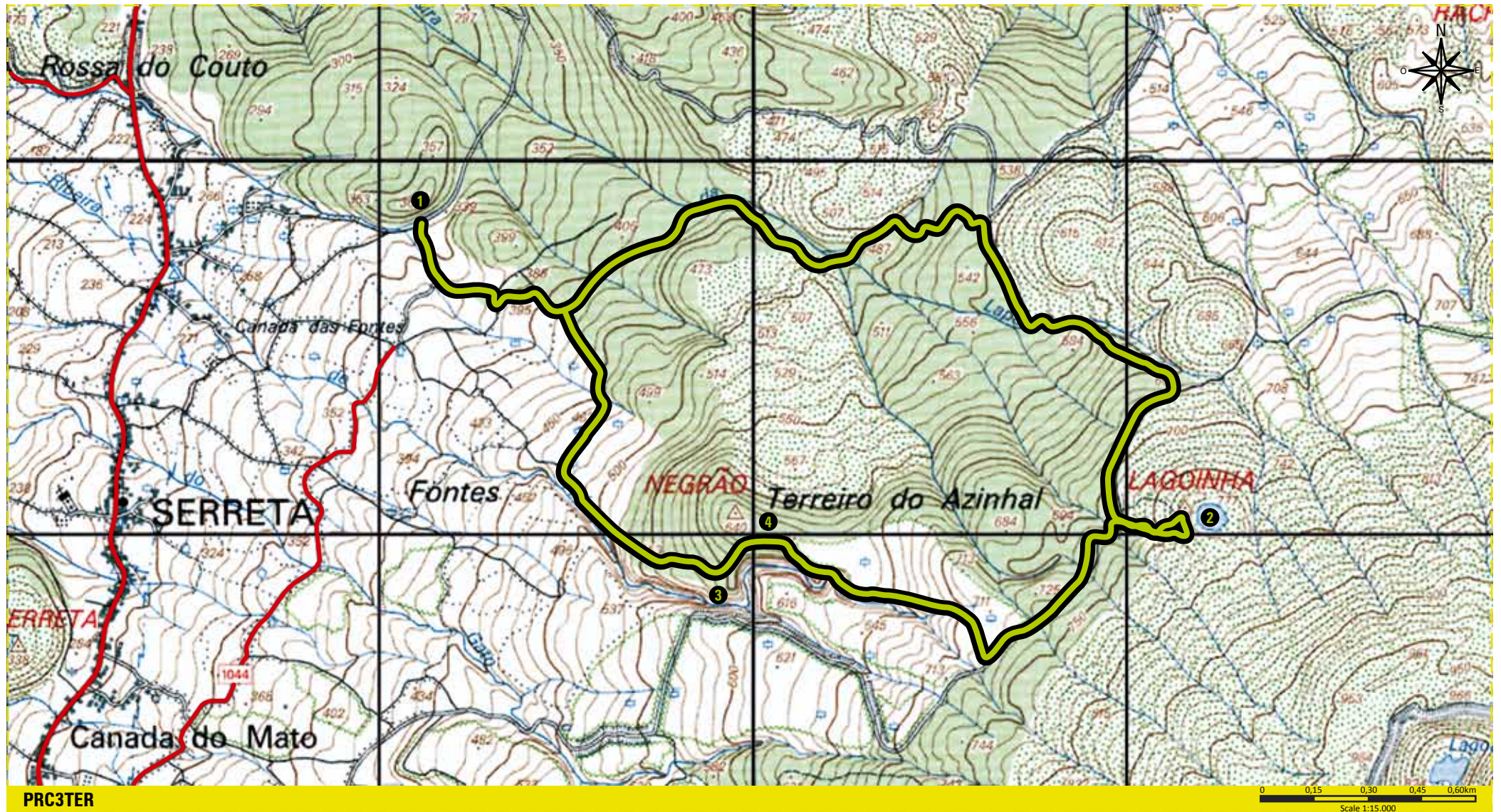


PUMICE/OBSIDIAN

The parish of Serreta is on the western flank of Serra (Mountain) de Santa Bárbara. The Serra de Santa Bárbara is a solid of trachyte origin that created the western third of the island. It formed extensive lava flows and large deposits of pumice that were projected into the atmosphere and covered the lavas. Sometimes the pumice formed horizontal planes with several metres in height, such as can be seen on the banks of the Ribeira (Creek) do Além, where you will pass.

When felsic lava cools too quickly to crystallize because of the atmospheric conditions, it becomes obsidian, a type of volcanic glass.

On the slopes at several points on this hike, we can see obsidian, black glassy rocks with sharp edges, scattered on the ground or mixed with the pumice.

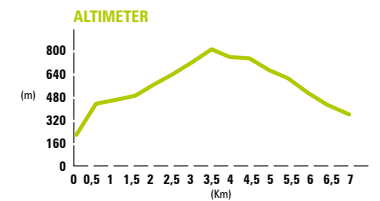


SERRETA



1. Start and End of trail
2. Lagoínha da Serreta
3. Ribeira do Além
4. Pico Negrão

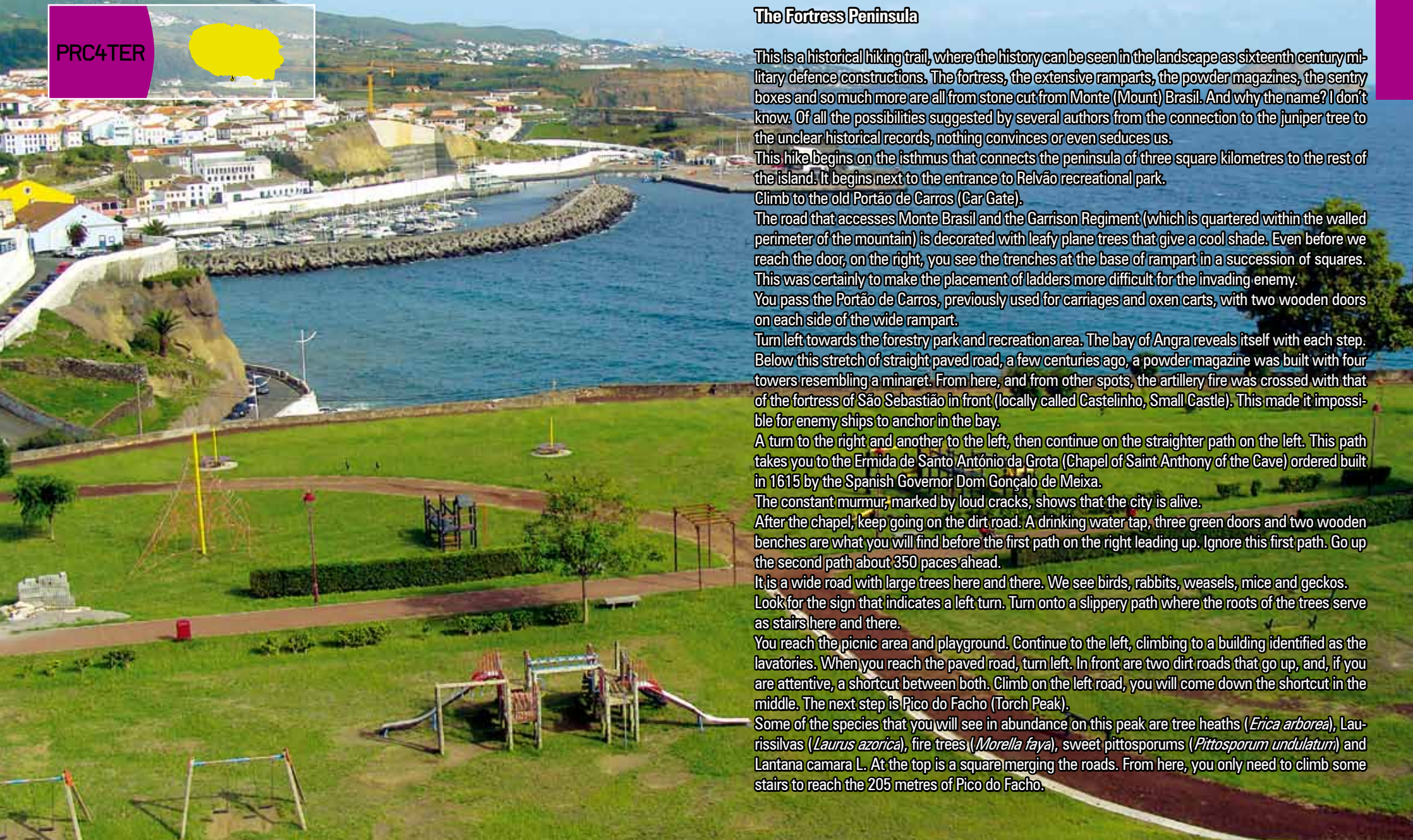
- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 7 Km
- START: Canada (Road) da Fonte
- END: Canada (Road) da Fonte
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Serra (Mount) de Santa Bárbara and Pico Alto
- Community Interest Site



TERCEIRA

MONTE (MOUNT) BRASIL

PRC4TER



The Fortress Peninsula

This is a historical hiking trail, where the history can be seen in the landscape as sixteenth century military defence constructions. The fortress, the extensive ramparts, the powder magazines, the sentry boxes and so much more are all from stone cut from Monte (Mount) Brasil. And why the name? I don't know. Of all the possibilities suggested by several authors from the connection to the juniper tree to the unclear historical records, nothing convinces or even seduces us.

This hike begins on the isthmus that connects the peninsula of three square kilometres to the rest of the island. It begins next to the entrance to Relvão recreational park.

Climb to the old Portão de Carros (Car Gate).

The road that accesses Monte Brasil and the Garrison Regiment (which is quartered within the walled perimeter of the mountain) is decorated with leafy plane trees that give a cool shade. Even before we reach the door, on the right, you see the trenches at the base of rampart in a succession of squares. This was certainly to make the placement of ladders more difficult for the invading enemy.

You pass the Portão de Carros, previously used for carriages and oxen carts, with two wooden doors on each side of the wide rampart.

Turn left towards the forestry park and recreation area. The bay of Angra reveals itself with each step. Below this stretch of straight paved road, a few centuries ago, a powder magazine was built with four towers resembling a minaret. From here, and from other spots, the artillery fire was crossed with that of the fortress of São Sebastião in front (locally called Castelinho, Small Castle). This made it impossible for enemy ships to anchor in the bay.

A turn to the right and another to the left, then continue on the straighter path on the left. This path takes you to the Ermida de Santo António da Grota (Chapel of Saint Anthony of the Cave) ordered built in 1615 by the Spanish Governor Dom Gonçalo de Meixa.

The constant murmur, marked by loud cracks, shows that the city is alive.

After the chapel, keep going on the dirt road. A drinking water tap, three green doors and two wooden benches are what you will find before the first path on the right leading up. Ignore this first path. Go up the second path about 350 paces ahead.

It is a wide road with large trees here and there. We see birds, rabbits, weasels, mice and geckos.

Look for the sign that indicates a left turn. Turn onto a slippery path where the roots of the trees serve as stairs here and there.

You reach the picnic area and playground. Continue to the left, climbing to a building identified as the lavatories. When you reach the paved road, turn left. In front are two dirt roads that go up, and, if you are attentive, a shortcut between both. Climb on the left road, you will come down the shortcut in the middle. The next step is Pico do Facho (Torch Peak).

Some of the species that you will see in abundance on this peak are tree heaths (*Erica arborea*), Laurissilvas (*Laurus azorica*), fire trees (*Morella faya*), sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) and Lantana camara L. At the top is a square merging the roads. From here, you only need to climb some stairs to reach the 205 metres of Pico do Facho.

This lookout post was built between 1567 and 1588 in the beginnings of the settlement to watch for approaching ships. With improvements through time, it served its duty of visually alerting, with flags and balloons, the number, nationality and type of vessels that were approaching. It was later called Posto Semafórico (Semaphoric Post).



We can see a guardhouse made of stone and lime with two rooms and a vaulted interior, a window on one side and a low relief cross on the other where the provisions and necessary equipment were kept. We also see a triangulation pillar from 1951; a torch, where a base held a stick and the signalling elements were raised and manoeuvred; two rounded anti-aircraft shelters from the Second World War; some small water reservoirs and other constructions in ruins.

Keep going on the footpath that will take you down to the sign that indicates the maintenance trail on which you will continue.

It is a nice road covered with vegetation, on which you will travel about a kilometre. You will see some training equipment on this road. Go in zigzag on the slope until you finally find a staircase of tree trunks and stairs cut into the soil. These stairs take you down the valley created by Pico do Facho and Pico da Quebrada (Quebrada Peak) until you almost reach the Caldeira (Caldera). On the lowest part, follow the path that leads towards the ocean. Through here, you will reach the Forte da Quebrada (Quebrada's Fort).

This simple fortification was built by the Castilians so that undesirable ships could not seek protection on this flank of Monte Brasil that was until then unprotected. It was built on forty metres of steep rock and inaccessible from the ocean. It was made up of a small fort with a guardhouse and a reservoir of which we only see traces.

Return to the path and keep going around the caldera 45 metres above the ocean. The caldera has been used as both a shooting range and a bullring. It is quieter now, only agitated by the wind that blows through the vegetation on its slopes.

The path follows on the internal slope of Pico da Quebrada until it reaches the road. Follow the path until it forks and turn left to the top of the peak, also called Vigia (Lookout). A bunker style construction sheltered the lookout who was watching for whales. Upon spotting one, he would send a signal: a firecracker rocket, I believe.

Return to the road and go down until you are next to a cement wall painted white. From here, you can see the ocean facing Brasil. Although it is not on the marked trail, you can climb the Pico do Zimbreiro (Juniper Peak) by following the road in front of you. There aren't any junipers here anymore, and although it is perfectly



possible that there were, I don't know with certainty that there ever were.

Go down until you reach the pavement next to the caldera's viewpoint. Twenty metres before you reach the main road you will see bare rock on the opposite side. It was one of the old quarries on Monte Brasil. The black tuffs that can be seen on the quarried rock face are quite compact. This is evidenced by the reduced erosion of the constructions here and by the difficulty of the tuffs turning to soil with frequent tuffs visible on the surface.



frequent tuffs visible on the surface.

Climb the paved road until you see a path on the left side between tree heaths (*Erica arborea*) and some sentry boxes. This path takes you to a picnic area with barbecues and lavatories. Nearby is another powder magazine from the seventeenth century with barred windows where gunpowder was stored.

A sign shows the way to Pico das Cruzinhas (Peak of the Small Crosses). On the way, we pass anti-aircraft artillery niches from the Second World War, and we can see exposed museum pieces.

The Pico das Cruzinhas is the lowest of the four elevations with 168 metres in altitude. However, it has an impressive view of UNESCO's World Heritage city and the south coast of the island. It is without a doubt the most visited viewpoint on the island. Old maps show three crosses that have disappeared with time. They may have been part of the galleries of the Castle that appear to have been in this area. In its place, in 1932, a stone monument was erected; a tall column topped with the Order of Christ Cross, celebrating the 500-year anniversary of the discovery of the Azores.

Go down the stairs and turn left down the road. At the first intersection turn left towards the playground following the footpath until you reach the main road again. Walk back down to the starting point of the hike.

MONTE (MOUNT) BRASIL

Monte Brasil is considered the largest coastal volcano in the Azores. This type of eruption normally occurs in shallow waters with initial explosive hydro volcanic activity resulting from the direct interaction of the basic magma and the ocean water.

It forms large dark columns of steam and volcanic ash that fall back to earth as a tuff.

*This eruption is more recent than the island and occurred when the area that is Angra was already covered with vegetation. When excavating, it is common to find tuff with fossilized leaves from the plants of that time, mainly Laurissilva (*Laurus azorica*) and ivy.*

It is more than a square kilometre in size. The



erosion of the border of the volcano created four elevations that surround the crater. Monte Brasil can have many different forms when it is observed from a distance.

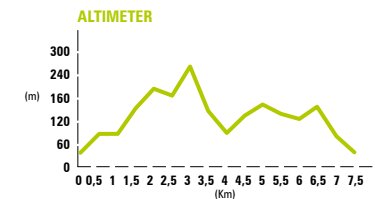


MONTE (MOUNT) BRASIL



1. Start and End of trail
2. Relvão Recreational Park
3. Santo António Chapel
4. Picnic Park
5. Pico do Facho
6. Quebrada Fort
7. Pico das Cruzinhas

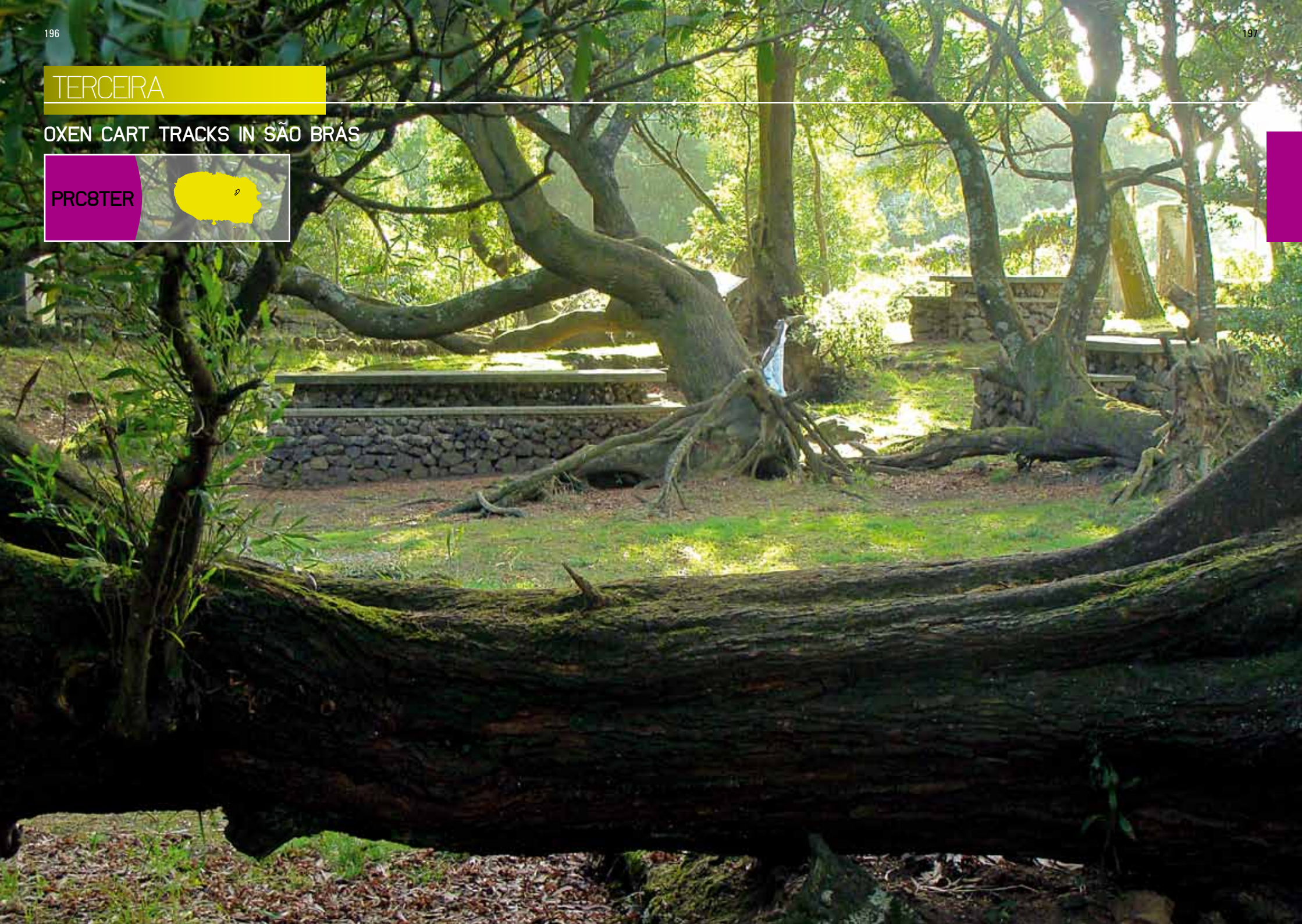
- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 7,5 Km
- START: Next to the Relvão Park
- END: Next to the Relvão Park
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



TERCEIRA

OXEN CART TRACKS IN SÃO BRÁS

PRC8TER



The Groves that Time Did Not Erase

This hiking tour begins at the agreeable Picnic Park of São Brás that you can enjoy after our short hike that this tour offers us. It is a circular tour.

Leave the park and turn right. A little ahead (about 300 metres) you will find a pedestal with the wheel axis of an antique oxen cart, placed here when this trail was inaugurated. Look at the grooves in which the wheels are placed; they are the oxen cart tracks. Follow the worn dirt path, the Canada da Fonte do Cão (Dog Spring Road), you will understand the name farther ahead.



After a sign prohibiting litter (which seems to be ignored), on the ground you begin to notice deep tracks on the lava made by the wheels of the oxen carts that were constantly passing. They probably carried firewood that grew in this “biscoito” (a terrain from recent lava flows that has volcanic breaches). This is one of the main attractions of this trail. It is a testimony to the use of the land and the labour that was required to tame the road to survival.

Look closely, on this road you will see two types of tracks. One is V-shaped and the other is U-shaped. The first are from more than 200 years ago, when nails were still used on the wheels, perhaps to reduce wear or to avoid slipping on the lava stone slabs. Then came the U-shaped wheels, wider at the base, and because they travelled inside the first tracks, held in by the grooves worn in the stone, they removed the V-shape. This is what happened in the first several metres of this road.

The road becomes covered with grass and we cross a gate made from sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) wood and held by two whitewashed cement pillars. The vegetation is

not very diverse. It is mostly made up of common species.

On your left, you pass a sign placed here by the National Scout Corps - Group 713 of São Brás who are the promoters of this trail. Finally, you reach the Fonte do Cão (Dog Spring). It is a small cavity in the ground with a stone ring and a rock pile as a finishing touch.

It really could only be used by dogs that passed here with their owners. It has water year-round and so must really be from a spring, which remains hidden.

Keep going until you see a mound of rocks with a trail sign indicating we should go left. Here we find sharp and extensive tracks with a V-shape. It is the most interesting part of the trail.

The fluid lava that turned to stone here, left rocky cloaks sometimes levelled that form a regular and beautiful ground. The ground is only marred by the oxen tracks with beautifully coloured mosses that frequently cover the base of the tracks where it is more humid.

Continuing with the trail, this old road goes into a forest area with eucalyptus trees, lots of bugweed (*Solanum mauritianum* Scop.) and sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*). At the first fork in the road that you encounter keep going straight ahead. The ground is covered with mosses.

Farther ahead are the last lava stone slabs. Go on the old path among Fayas (*Myrica faya*) and Cryptomerias (*Cryptomeria japonica*).

Continue until you see a large boulder on your right. At this point, it is already possible to see the gate that will take you to the red basaltic pumice road that takes you back to the park.

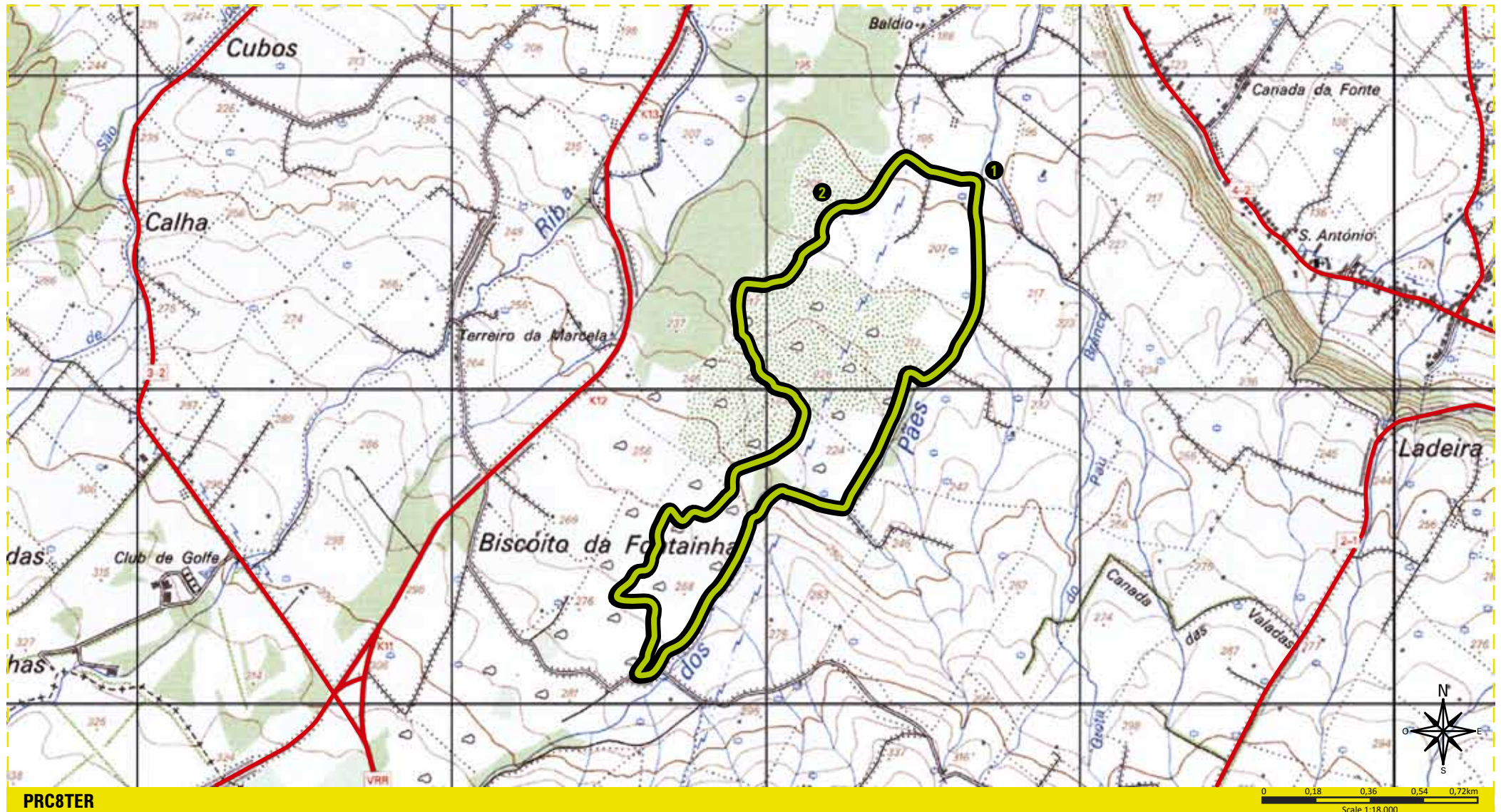
Turn left and go down. On your left is the north slope of the Serra do Cume (Summit Mountain). After 600 metres, the road is asphalted. The land around you is covered with pastures, Australian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), eucalyptus trees, and some Eastern cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*). After about 400 metres on the asphalt, you reach another intersection with a red basaltic pumice road. Turn left. Another 500 metres, two consecutive tight turns and you should continue to the left. The curves have large Coast Banksias (*Banksia integrifolia*) and an unusual “fence” of about fifty large eucalyptus trees separates the road from the Ribeira dos Pães (Loaves of Bread Creek). This creek, which will eventually have water after a more intense winter rainfall, is completely uncharacteristic because it is full of vegetation and debris.

Many of these waterways have significantly lost their primary function because of agriculture in their runoff basins. The ploughing and agriculture resulted in the retention of water for agriculture and a deeper infiltration of the water in the soil.

Walk another 400 metres and on your right is a water supply for agriculture. Look at the embankment of pastures on your left. The stone walls are firmly set on a rocky cloak with a little more than a metre in height that covers an older subsoil. This is the lava flow that formed the Biscoito das Fontinhas (a terrain from recent lava flows that has volcanic breaches), and the lava stone slabs that are part of it, where the oxen cart tracks that you visited are located. The lava flowed over existing land a little more than 3,000 years ago. The eruptions of very fluid basaltic lava in the Caldeira do Guilherme Moniz (Guilherme Moniz Caldera) produced extensive flows of which this is one.

Finally, after 2.3 km of a return hike, you reach the picnic park once again. If you wish, go into the park and rest among the eucalyptus trees and the Australian Blackwoods (*Acacia melanoxylon*) with leaning trunks that give shade to the barbecues, basins, tables and benches. Farther in are the lavatories and a rudimentary playground.





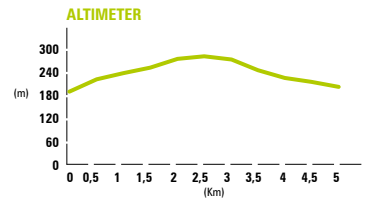
PRC8TER

OXEN CART TRACKS IN SÃO BRÁS

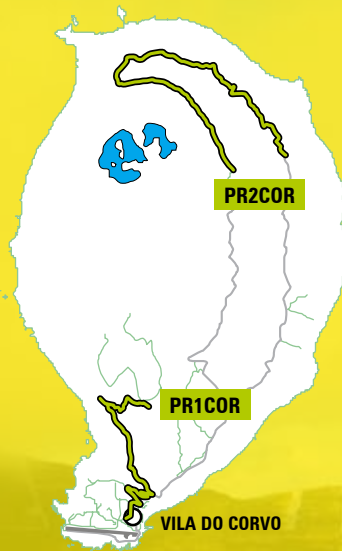


- 1. Start and End of trail
- 2. Oxen Tracks

- DURATION: 2H 00M
- DISTANCE: 5 Km
- STAR: São Brás Picnic Park
- END: São Brás Picnic Park
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy



CORVO



PR1COR Cara de Índio (Indian Face) (Pág. 204)

PR2COR Caldeirão - Ponta do Marco - Cancela do Pico (Pág. 210)

FAIAL
GRACIOSA
PICO
SÃO JORGE
TERCEIRA
CORVO
FLORES

...a caldera of lakes
wrapped in cliffs

CARA DO ÍNDIO (INDIAN FACE)

PRICOR



The last village of the Azores

Ask someone to leave you at the Cova Vermelha (Red Pit), where this green walk begins, next to a green gate. To your right, up high, peeks the top of the south slope of Caldeirão (Great Caldera), the large volcano that formed this island and, closer to you, the Coróinha (small crown), a half-moon shaped ridge that is the dividing line of the first of the two deepest valleys of the island of Corvo, and through which you will pass.

Begin the walk, without forgetting to close the gate behind you, go down the footpath to the

pastures of Cova Vermelha, the depression in the landscape in front. The white of the stone walls contrasted with the green pastures, which are dotted here and there with rush, makes curious designs. An unexpected circular form stands out in the middle of the slope. It likely had one of three objectives common to the stone walls in the Azores, to divide the land, protect crops from the wind or store stones that were in the field.

What appear to be isolated clusters of rocks are merely the curious water wells, which are abundant in the pastures of this island but rare elsewhere. In reality they are small holes made in the earth, with some stones roughly placed, not too small, to retain and store rain water that flows here in grooves in the ground. Other stones, such as slabs, give some cover and shade to these reservoirs, keeping the water cool for the livestock.

Our friend Fernando, who comes here periodically to check on his animals, tells us that "once this was the best land for milk, but now nobody milks cows!" True, those we see are bred almost exclusively for meat production.

Here and in the remaining untilled plots of the island there were a lot of sheep, left on the island even before the beginning of settlement, in an activity that perfectly exemplifies the community



life that the inhabitants of Corvo lived. On a single day of the year, on the Monday immediately following Pentecost Sunday, all the sheep of the island were sheared. It was called “yarn day” or “wool day”. Today there are virtually no sheep. Now the cool green of these alpine meadows is



only for the black-and-white cows that calmly watch the clouds move over the hills.

After an initial descent of 150 metres, the foot-path curves to the left and continues for another 150 metres, on a flatter terrain, until a fork in the path. You should go to the right until you enter a pasture, and then follow along the wall that goes to the right. Jump into the other pasture and continue in the same direction, skirting to the right a small hill with rocky outcrops. Continue until you reach the cliff, from where one can see the entire north coast of the island of Flores, and where there is a sign for a short

detour to see the “Cara do Índio (Indian Face)”, a portion of the cliff resembling an Indian face in profile. It is not very obvious, but it is possible to see some similarity between them, although the shadows cast by the sun have an important role.

Go back and continue to go down always along the cliff. A more pronounced coast, with a valley slope going down to the sea shows the bare rocks down there on which wild goats roam. We saw and photographed them. Perhaps you will have the same luck. Ahead, with a small jump, you enter a pasture where a natural stone arch defies gravity. The monotony of the flora of the pasture contrasts with the ravines, where there are *Picconia azorica*, seaside goldenrods (*Solidago sempervirens*), Azores juniper (*Juniperus brevifolia*) and many other plants.

Below the village of Corvo reveals itself before us. Pay ATTENTION, if you do not see the signs for the trail, go to the left, passing some pastures, but try not to go too far down. You will end up finding the old footpath that went up this valley of Morro da Fonte up to higher pastures.

This site is the main refuge of the few cedars that escaped the slaughter to which they were victim for centuries. In addition to being used for utensils, tools and other things, they also serve to make crafts. You pass next to a rock, worn by Man to serve as a temporary shelter from some unexpected downpour, and finally, you reach the road next to a water capture, go up 50 metres until the viewpoint of Sítio do Portão to appreciate the Village of Corvo.



With a belt of towering cliffs on most of the coast of the island and in winter surrounded by an angry sea, the inhabitants of Corvo were deprived of contact with the outside during weeks. Despite the archipelagic and outermost reality of all the islands of the Azores, it is here that one continues to feel the word *insularity* most. This village, developed on this small platform of a flatness that contrasts sharply with the rest of the island and that extends to the south had, in 1965, 642 people and now has about 400. In this

cluster of houses, upon each other, huddled on the hillside, with only the narrow, winding streets they call “canadas” to divide them, now has few that maintain the characteristics of the typical Corvo house. The regional tile gave way to the imported tile, the walls with uncovered stone are now plastered and whitewashed, and other architectural elements disappeared when the houses were expanded or new ones were built. The oldest part still maintains the core aspect that existed until 50 years ago, now diluted by a new set of buildings that has expanded westward. They are signs of an inevitable evolution, which we have to accept when we want to actually live somewhere. It is not simply a decorative historical setting for tourists.

Resume the descent on the asphalt road, which becomes cobblestone. When the road reaches the houses, on the right you will find a concrete road where, in 20 metres, is the Casa de Artesanato do Corvo (Corvo Handicraft Shop). The shop is open anytime. Visit it and learn the history of the typical caps with pompons that protected those who boarded the American whaling boats. You can also buy a miniature of the typical locks made of Azores juniper, probably the most iconic craftsmanship of Corvo. Walking again, in the vegetable gardens next to the road, there is no longer wheat or rye, but there is plenty of corn and pumpkin.

Visit the church, which continues to be the tallest building of the village, where one sees a valuable image of Our Lady of Miracles. It is a Flemish sculpture from the beginning of the sixteenth century. There is also the Império (Holy Ghost Chapel), next to which a few elderly people pass the day. Near the coast, past the airport, a series of mills liven the landscape. One is still in dark stone, while two others a little farther away, are plastered and whitewashed. They are different from any others in the Azores, approaching those that the Moors left on the Portuguese mainland. Inside, there was an ingenious mechanism to rotate the dome so that the sail cloth would accompany the winds.

Ending this tour take time to acquaint yourself with this village - the last village of the Azores.



HANDICRAFT AND GASTRONOMY

Included in the handicrafts of the island of Corvo are the following: caps and berets made of typical wool, traditionally in dark blue with a white stripe; woven items: several items made from wool, a remnant of a tradition of working with wool which is almost lost; and embroidery and lace. The typical locks of Corvo, entirely made of wood including the keys, are noteworthy.

In spite of the advertisement of dishes typical of the island, it will be very difficult to have the opportunity to taste them. The *Couves da Barça* (*Barça Cab-*

ages), the *Tortas de Erva do Calhau* (*Rock Herb Pies*), the *Molho de Fígado* (*Liver Sauce*) and the *Couves Fritas* (*Fried Cabbage*) are touted examples, but they will be hard to find. The Restaurant *Traineira*, on the road to the port, can however serve you a delicious fish from the fertile encircling sea. In the ocean around Corvo the following species can be found: fork-beard, Mediterranean parrotfish, Atlantic goliath grouper, blue-mouth, Atlantic wreckfish, blackspot seabream, red scorpion fish, horse-mackerel or blacktail comber.

The cheese, when homemade, is something not to be missed.

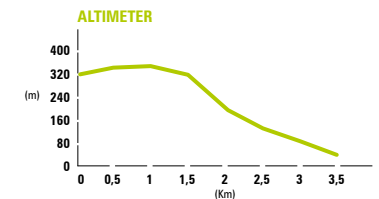


CARA DO ÍNDIO (INDIAN FACE)



1. Start of trail
2. Cara do Índio (Indian Face)
3. End of trail

- DURATION: 1H 00M
- DISTANCE: 3,5 Km
- START: Cova Vermelha
- END: Vila Nova do Corvo
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Easy
- REMARKS: Costa e Caldeirão -
Community Interest Site - Special Protection Area.



CORVO

CALDEIRÃO – PONTA DO MARCO – CANCELA DO PICO

PR2COR

**A large caldera dressed with cliffs**

Some say that Corvo is nothing more than a huge volcano whose summit struck forming a caldera of considerable size which was named Caldeirão (Great Caldera). Do not be fooled by this simplistic view, because even at the level of natural scenery this island has more to offer.

But no doubt this Caldeirão (*Great Caldera*), often shaded by the passing clouds or the fog that hovers, has a special charm and is the pride of all Corvo.

Your ride left you at the end of the paved road. Please be aware that this trail should not be attempted by children or inexperienced hikers. The irregularity of the ground and the nearness of risky areas are not safe for such attempts. Likewise it becomes very dangerous when visibility is reduced, so in case of fog do not attempt it. It is recommended that this trail be hiked only with a guide, for this reason there are no signs or placards.

Start the journey, which takes you along the north ridge until the "stones from the sea", up the concrete path in front to the antennas. If you start this hike before 9 AM, you will certainly still find too many

shadows in the Caldeirão (Great Caldera). From the antennas, walk to the geodesic milestone of 598 metres, where there are ruins that resemble a small old shelter. It seems as if someone launched large boulders into the pastures we pass through.

At the lowest point of the Caldeirão (Great Caldera), the two lakes, which thrive with direct rain water or with what runs on the slopes fed in turn by the rugs of bog moss (*Sphagnum auriculatum Schimp.*), mirror the geometrically partitioned land. This extinct volcano, with steep slopes, is speckled inside with late small cone eruptions forming mounds, which at one time were vehemently claimed by their legitimate owners. In summer, they appear to be peninsulas in the lakes; however, during the floods they change and become new islands.

The absence of wind brings us a lot of silence, broken by a seagull that flies lower or by the mooing of some of the dozens of multicoloured cows that pasture inside the caldera or on the green tops digging their hooves in. Continue by finding the best path in this rough terrain. In front, on the opposite side, the Estreitinho (Narrow one) raises the island to 720 metres.

The *Hiparchia Azorina*, an endemic butterfly brownish with black spots, appears flying in mid-summer,



sometimes in the company of one or more birds. However, it is in the month of November that there is an unusual influx of Nordic birdwatchers looking to photograph the seabirds that come to rest in Caldeirão (Great Caldera), after the hardships of travel in the turbulent North Atlantic. Among these, for their historical importance to this island, we highlight the Manx shearwater (*Puffinus Puffinus*), which were hunted for their meat, "grease" and feathers. The "grease", was used in lamps for light. Currently, this North Atlantic species, with only about 200 couples, nests exclusively on Flores and Corvo, their

southern limit on the planet.

This island was initially christened *Insula Corvi Marini* whose closest translation would be *Great Cormorant Island*, which subsequently became Corvo. There have been several sightings of specimens of the species Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) in the Azores, although, always in a small number. Therefore, this bird would hardly have been the source of name of the island. As a hypothesis, would the navigators sailing on the waters have seen another bird that they confused with this one?

Farther ahead, climb up a rocky ridge. Sometimes the rocks have their own stairs it is a matter of looking for them. Around here grow the following plants: orchids (*Platantheras*), wood-rush (*Luzulas*), some thyme, flowering Azorean bittercress (*Cardamine caldeirarum*) and a few natural heather bonsai and holly (*Ilex perado ssp. azorica*). Do not forget to look right into the valley of Ribeira Funda. The return is through there.

The better marked trail is the passage of the cows, with the ground often muddy and uneven. In grass we can see tubular rock fragments, from old lava spills, evidenced by the wear of the slag that covered them. Look again at the Caldeirão (Great Caldera). It is known that there has always been much human activity here. Among other things pigs were kept here and, imagine, potatoes were planted at the bottom. We no longer see any of this but on the small protuberance of land that separates the two lakes maybe you can make out what remains of the ruins of a mill that was there.

Suddenly you reach the craggy cliff on the west side of the Caldeirão (Great Caldera). Below, the Atlantic, as far as the eye can see, mirrors the clouds in the sky that come from the Americas and to the side the island of Flores. Apart from where they developed the village of Corvo, the whole island is a round ring of colossal cliffs, which at this spot reach 600 meters; nevertheless, this is not the highest point on the island. The erosive agents (wind, rain and ocean) slowly scorched the susceptible slag from the external sides, progressing markedly on the western side, towards the interior of Caldeirão (large caldera).

When you reach this border you can choose one of two possible alternatives for the rest of the walk (see text box "RETURN THROUGH THE INTERIOR OF THE CALDEIRÃO").

Go down on the right on the outer side, but always keeping alert to any approach you make to the cliff. It is tempting to try to see what is beyond the hedge of hydrangeas, for example, the Ponta do Marco and farther off a small islet painted green. This is the only island of the Azores where there aren't any wild rabbits, if you see traces on the ground they can only be from the wild goats that sometimes climb the cliffs to the pastures.

During the first kilometre in this pasture the ground furrowed with small ditches leaves no doubt, always follow along the cliffs. Soon after, we see water runoff trenches firmly in the terrain where the rainwater drains in turmoil. Here, you should leave the cliff edge and keep walking around the same elevation (300 m). Don't go down too much.

The torrential regime is extreme here. Steep short slopes on the cliff side produce large torrents of water after a good downpour to shortly afterwards reduce to very little. Even the water that infiltrates is sent to the cliff side by the impermeable rocky underground, which is unfavourable to retention in aquifer.

The Ribeira Funda is the one that has the wider shallow and is difficult to pass, because it is not easy to uncover the passages that the farmers and animals use. However, it is possible to do it in many points, just use your observation skills. Upwards the streams divide and become less deep, which makes it easier to pass them. Farther ahead you realize that the stone walls are taller in the pastures. The one that is farther up marked the end of the private fields and the beginning of the uncultivated lands. It was called the "*Bardo do Rei*" (Bard of the King). Soon you will be following some parts of that administrative boundary.

In the distance you can see the Farolim. Arriving at the Ribeira do Pico da Cancela, cross it in a place where the New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*) abound. On the other bank you enter a dirt footpath, sometimes muddy and with some iron gates to cross. Some spots harbour a few junipers (*Juniperus*), ferns (*Trichomanes*) and other rare species, and hydrangeas flank both sides of this footpath. Without ever leaving this footpath the route ends when you reach the road next to a water reservoir, at a place called Cancela do Pico,



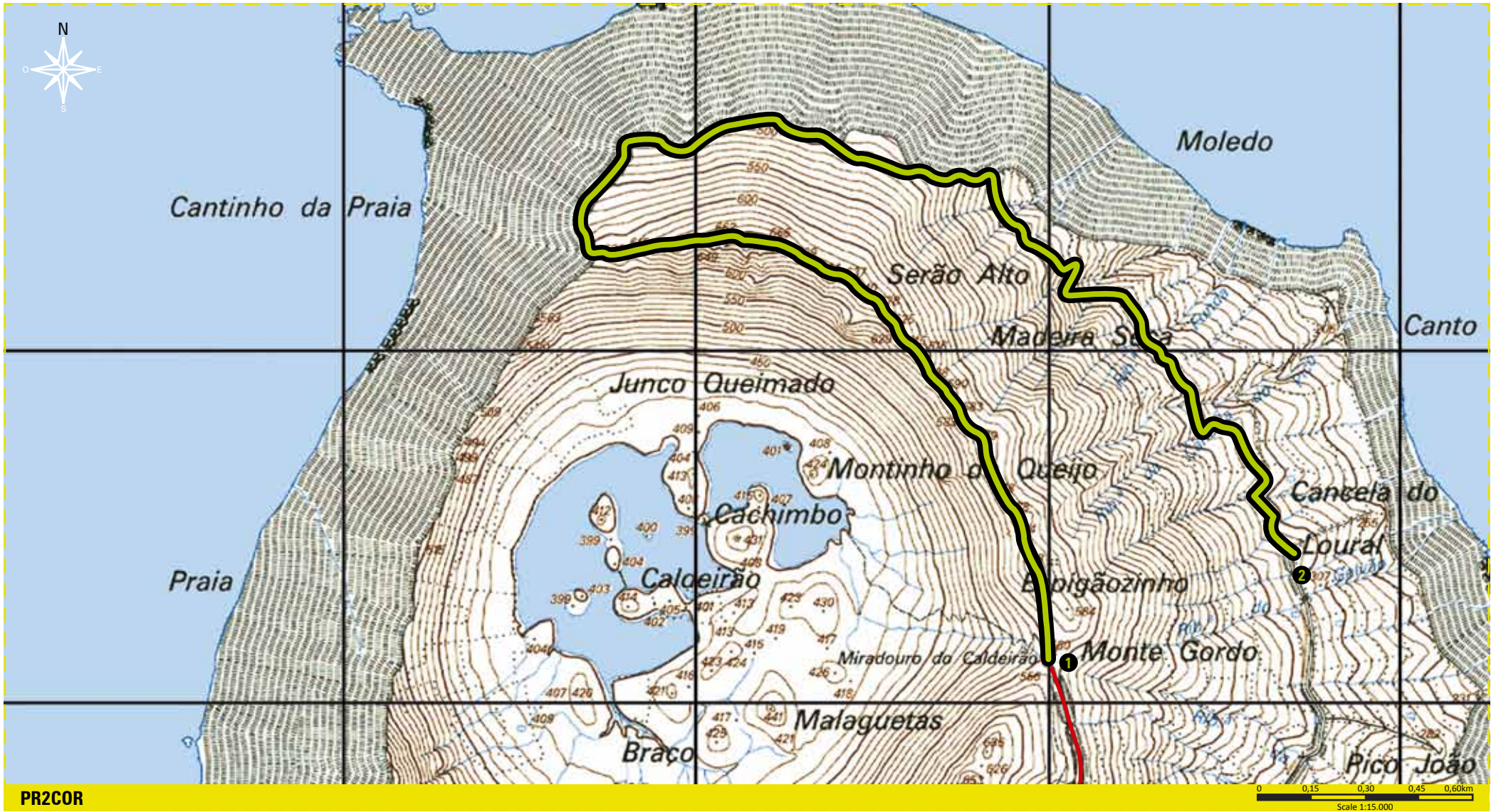
RETURN THROUGH THE INTERIOR OF THE CALDEIRÃO

At the most western point of this trail, you have the option of returning through the interior of the Caldeirão, thus making this a circular route. In addition to the convenience of returning to the starting point, this solution is also safer because it is easier to orient yourself and it is an easier path. It also allows you to view in detail a number of important elements of the natural landscape and the historic constructions.

After the summer, you can view, up close, the various migratory birds in transit over the Atlantic that insist on stopping at this oasis where they regain their strength with rest and food or breed. It is a paradise for bird watchers, who come to the island in October and November in larger numbers. The mill between the two lakes was interesting

and unique in the Azores. By passing next to its ruins, you can understand how it operated. It had as its driving force water, moved by gravity and a dam. The water flowed slowly from the larger lake to the other.



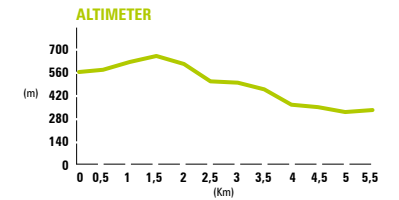


**CALDEIRÃO - PONTA DO MARCO
- CANCELA DO PICO**



1. Start of trail
2. End of trail

- DURATION: 4H 00M
- DISTANCE: 5,3 Km
- START: Miradouro do Caldeirão
- ENA: Cancela do Pico
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Difficult
- REMARKS: Costa e Caldeirão
- Community Interest Site - Special Protection Area.



FLORES



PR1FLO P. Delgada - Fajã Grande (Pág. 218)

PR2FLO Lajedo - Fajã Grande (Pág. 224)

PR3FLO Poça do Bacalhau (Pág. 232)

PR4FLO Fajã do Lopo Vaz (Pág. 238)

FAIAL
GRACIOSO
PICO
SÃO JORGE
TERCEIRA
CORVO
FLORES

... one thousand waterfalls
bursting into a fine mist

FLORES

PONTA DELGADA – FAJÃ GRANDE

PRIFLO



Going down the island

The officially recommended starting point for this walk is not the place that we suggest you start walking. The official proposal makes this hike about of 4,500 metres longer on paved road.

We suggest that upon entering the parish, you continue by car on the main road which leads to the lighthouse. At the very beginning, you will find, next to the small Chapel of Our Lady of Guidance and the islet of João Martins, the first indications of the trail. Make a stop here to see the northern coast of the island. Then follow the road for another 1,500 meters to the Ribeira do Moinho bridge, with another stop to admire this sunken valley where the abundant brownish waters wash, as well as they can, the white stones of the riverbed and the trout that are here. You can still see, above, the ruins of an old mill, and on the opposite side, the island of Corvo.



In another 400 metres you pass by a concrete road (Estrada das Lombas), on your left, you will have to go up this later. Meanwhile keep going for another 500 metres until the lighthouse at Ponta de Albarnaz that has been radiat-

ing light for more than 80 years. Go down and next to the dumpster you will find two protruding rocks (steps) that allow you to climb on the white wall: walk on the wall towards the sea. Ahead another stone allows you to get off the wall onto the grass. You can see the large islet Maria Vaz and the flattened pastures extending to the formidable sea-beaten coastline. Ponta Delgada (Narrow Tip) is on the oldest lavas on the island of Flores, more than 2 million years old.

Turn back and now go up the aforementioned Estrada das Lombas, for another 1,500 meters to reach an altitude of 250 meters, enjoying the beautiful stream valley. There, finally, you find a sign, on the right, that indicates the beginning of the footpath. Say goodbye to your ride here and start walking, it is 9 km until you reach Fajã Grande. This extraordinary hike is one of the busiest in the Azores. It is not difficult, except for the attention it requires, and its extension. Do not hike this trail if there is fog or a strong likelihood of rain.



Some stones were placed here try to even the rocky ground of the trail, which sometimes is very muddy and soaked. In 5 minutes you will be crossing the small river on the right, continue up on this uneven path, where sometimes the sun doesn't shine. It doesn't even take 15

minutes to leave the footpath onto a wide road, which is flatter and more comfortable. Enjoy the pastures on both sides, as the road narrows ahead, into a footpath that will cross Ribeira Seca stream, home to jumping frogs. After a bit, the path widens again, with better views, despite the quantity of insects that insist on fluttering around us. You reach the Ribeira do Mouco stream with small waterfalls and mountain pools, over which hang ferns, and cedar and Sanguinho (*Frangula azorica*) branches. A third, wider road, a new stream, and you reach the edge of the cliff, just

above Fajã da Quebrada Nova. Farther back is Ponta de Albarnaz, the islet Ilhéu da Maria Vaz and the island of Corvo. It is a unique opportunity for some good photos.

In case of fog, or if you feel confused and lost, be aware that over the next kilometre you will walk along the cliff edge, to your right. Among the cedars and hydrangeas many rabbits abound here, but the sequence of geometrically spaced holes that form puddles on the odd track, is certainly from cows.



Approximately one hour after starting the hike, you pass through the last gate and the valley of Ribeira do Monte Gordo, beginning the descent of the cliff on a footpath carved into the rock. Ahead are the first glimpses of Fajã Grande. The steep footpath, with stone portions in the form of a "Z", good for experienced legs, reveals itself and the view at each turn. A little way and on your right, at sea, Baixa Rasa lapped by the white foam appears to be halfway to the Monchique Islet, this geographic landmark that closes the Old World and opens the doors to the western sea. Farther down, you go down a section with earthy ground, under cover of sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*) that protect you from the sun. During some time, the view disappears, and you only see a few metres into the woods. The fragrant *Hedychium gardnerianum* (*Kahili*

Ginger, *Ginger Lily* (*Aust.*) is also present here and there. Several courses of water appear, and then you come to a footpath that descends in reverse. Through here you can down to Ponta dos Fanais and Quebrada Nova, but do not follow this path unless you have been told that it is open. Some runoff forming small trenches of water appears on the slopes and would make the trail impassable if not for human intervention. Water for Ponta da Fajã is captured from one of the trenches, through the pipeline on the left side of the trail. You can see the Fajã Grande, ever closer, with the *Pico da Vigia* behind it. Above you there are wild goats that go to drink water from the river and throw stones. There is no doubt that the photo opportunities of the landscape are one of the rewards of this trail. The last curve, which sidesteps the rock, gives you a view of the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The footpath comes into Ponta da Fajã by a stream that comes out on a dirt road that leads to the asphalt. Partially affected by the collapse of the cliff in 1987, residents of Ponta da Fajã were evacuated, against their will, semi-abandoning their properties. Obstinate to this fact, from then to now, they have already re-occupied some of the houses.



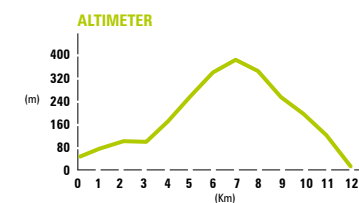
From the church to the bathing area of the Fajã Grande it is about 1,800 metres of paved road from which you can admire several waterfalls, among which is the Poço do Bacalhau. To learn more about this location and the parish read the two other pedestrian trails that also converge here.



PONTA DELGADA - FAJÃ GRANDE

1. Capela de N.^a S.^a da Guia
2. Ribeira do Moinho
3. Farol da Ponta de Albarnaz
4. Start of trail
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 7,5 Km
- START: Estrada entre Ponta Delgada e a Ponta de Albarnaz
- END: Fajã Grande
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Costa Nordeste - *Community Interest Site*.



FLORES

LAJEDO - FAJÃ GRANDE

PR2FLO



Conquest of the West

Start your hike at the centre of the parish of Lajedo, next to the parish church with its exotic holy water fountains at the entrance, two large abalone shells. Take the opportunity to visit it. The feasts of Our Lady of Miracles that are held here in mid-August, are responsible for the largest pilgrimages to the island, as payment of divine graces conceded.

Next, go up next to the Casa do Espírito Santo. A few meters after the beginning of this path there are more houses. Continue to the viewpoint where the sign for the beginning of the trail is located, however, you can start the hike from here. Along the way some *azorinas* on the slopes pose for a photo.



The well maintained and landscaped viewpoint, next to an old barn, allows you to see the massive islet of Cartário and next to the sea, over to the right, a bare rocky slab-like platform, which is the origin of the name of the parish. This platform helped the disembarkment at the Portinho do Lajedo, a tiny cove which is contiguous the platform.

Now there are three kilometres and three extensive valleys, open over the ocean and dotted with hard basalt rocky outcrops, until you reach the parish of Mosteiros (Monasteries). For now, continue down the dirt road. At the next fork in the road, continue to the left and go down a footpath with cobblestoned portions. In front of you is *Pico da Terra Nova* with a river at the foot, which you will have to cross. Going around this peak you reach the valley of the stream Ribeira da Lapa and soon you pass a stone bridge over the Ribeira da Lapa's main tributary. Go around another hill to the entrance to the third valley, the Ribeira do Fundão, which has a view of a large number of

islets in an extravagant coastline. They are scenes of great beauty and many natural attractions. The cow bells and the water flowing freely between the stones are all that you hear. Upwards the valley has a few basaltic dikes of considerable size, which emerge as stone sentinels from the green pastures. Choose your stepping stones wisely to cross the stream Ribeira do Fundão. It is a sharp climb, to overcome 130 metres of height, which will take you to the asphalt road of Mosteiros. On this climb you get the best view of the imposing Rocha dos Bordões (Staff Rock). Some say it was the numerous islets along the coast, while others say it was the large rock pinnacles that were on land that gave the name *Mosteiro* (Monastery) to this parish. I don't know about the origin of the name, but I can say that we are in the second to the smallest parish in the country, with only 50 residents according to the latest census figures.

The traditional architecture of Mosteiro maintains its originality in about 20 round stone arches that the doors to the ground floor of some of the houses still have. These arched doors were the entrance to the space where the agricultural equipment and the oxcarts were kept. The equipment was wide, hence the need for a larger opening. The larger opening was achieved with the stone arches which were more stable and easier to build than the typical stone lintels that top the windows and narrower doors of the houses.



Go down, past the Igreja da Santíssima Trindade (Holy Trinity Church), whose feast is on the third weekend of August, with a fountain in front where you can refresh yourself. Please note that after Mr. José da Costa closed his friendly establishment it is no longer possible to purchase necessities in Mosteiro.

Keep going down the Rua do Cabo de Baixo das Casas street, until it curves to the right. There leave the asphalt and go down on the concrete passing by a well preserved house that curiously has Azorina in the holes in the wall. After crossing the bridge over the Ribeira do Mosteiro stream where trout grow, you will see some barns that fit in well with the landscape, and where there were butter factories. These barns allow for some pictures of this beautiful countryside.

Go up to the road and walk another 800 metres. Soon, you are faced with the Caldeira (caldera), a depression of fertile land and water that allowed the establishment of a small core of settlers. Now it is completely deserted, only a few houses remain standing for storing agricultural material. Leave the asphalt road and turn into an old footpath on the left, and pass next to the ruins that were swallowed by the vegetation.

Come out at the road, walk 200 metres leaving the Caldeira (caldera) behind you, and go onto the footpath on the left next to a water reservoir. The footpath goes around a hill, the Cruzeiro da Fajãzinha, on the ocean side. The Cruzeiro da Fajãzinha is one of the best viewpoints of this parish, visited by all those who pass on the regional road.



This footpath, somewhat psychedelic from the countless specks of light that reach the ground through the vegetation that is over us like a gallery, takes you to Ladeira do Portal, the old descent on the incline, which for centuries was the only way in and out of Fajãzinha. It is often more than 2 metres wide and still has some of the early cobblestones.

We have the first glimpses over the valley Fajãzinha, with a stunning and spectacular landscape, where the indented cliff and several waterfalls grab our attention. The mouth of the Ribeira Grande river, the most extensive

and dangerous of the whole island, transformed into a pebble beach, and far away the Fajã Grande also demands our attention. Fajãzinha and Fajã Grande were until recently one of the most important fruit production areas of the island.

The entry to the Fajãzinha is done by passing next to the *Igreja Matriz* (Mother Church) of Our Lady of Remedies, whose churchyard is curiously paved with pebbles. The interior is very rich in terms of furniture and decoration. Visit its interior and enjoy the painting of the ceiling of the high altar; the walls of this and of the other altars; the brownish wood pulpit with fine golden details; the columns painted to imitate marble; and still other details. The feast of the patron saint is celebrated on the last Sunday of August, but in the beginning of the summer the Feasts of the Holy Spirit are very popular.

You reach the Largo do Rossio square. With a population of less than 100 people the existence of so many establishments is surprising. You can purchase something that you need or even dine at a typical restaurant (Pôr-do-sol). Take the first street to the left and go down.



Many of the houses of Fajãzinha have abnormally wide facades with a door and several windows. Sometimes two semi-detached house further accentuate this feature.

Pass through the Largo do Outeiro, near a small chapel. Go down, always on the asphalt. At the end, don't turn to the restaurant; continue on a footpath in front passing next to the ruins of two water mills. The old country road takes you back to the road, and soon you arrive at the Ribeira Grande river. The flow of this river, which is abundant throughout the year, was stronger during some past winters, to the point of destroying everything in its path, isolating

the Fajã Grande. The wooden bridge, built in 2006, is a pedestrian bridge. Although completely safe, it might seem a little daunting to those with a fear of heights. On the other bank, go up the hill until you find the footpath again. It is narrow but well-defined, and once was the only connection between the people of the "fajãs". You continue to find water taps. Pass by a path to the right that could take you to Aldeia da Cuada, an ancient housing core recovered a few years ago for rural tourism. Soon you will be going down to Fajã Grande.

Ahead you reach a small section from the road that was destroyed by a collapse of the cliff due to its proximity to the sea. Be particularly careful here, keeping to the interior, as indicated by the signs. The road widens, with high walls that protect some orchards where a curious and original spindle tree (*Euonymus*) stands out. To your left, properly marked, is the climb to the Vigia da Baleia (Whale Watch Station), 280 metres ahead, on top of Pico da Vigia where you get a nice view of the houses of Fajã Grande. This eruption is more than half a million years old with much of the Fajã Grande on top of its lavas.

Pass by the Restaurante Casa da Vigia, open only part of the year, and come onto the road at place where the asphalt gives way to cobblestones that will take you down the Rua Senador



ROCHA DOS BORDÕES (STAFF ROCK)

Rocha dos Bordões (Staff Rock) is a rare geological formation, the most expressive of its kind in the Azores, characterized by more than 200 huge prismatic vertical basalt columns with 22 to 28 metres in height, which are commonly called "staves". This disjunction of basalt originates from the fast cooling of a thick lava flow. Located at Cabo de Baixo das Casas, in the parish of Mosteiros, this imposing rock, of singular beauty has long been a major landmark of the island of Flores.

André de Freitas street. It is the main artery that runs through the parish and across an old part of the housing district.

Pass by the Argonauta, a resort that offers accommodation and other services, but above all a chat with the owner, Pierluigi Bragaglia, an exiled historian passionate about this island, and knowledgeable about the natural and human potential of the island.

Up from the church is the convenience store (market and coffee shop) belonging to José António. In summer, it is a stopping point for foreign tourists who enter to taste his "Mistura" (Mixture), a sweet alcoholic beverage prepared by him, or for something more refreshing.

The neighbouring Church of Saint Joseph with a single nave and a painting on the main door that is a little different from the usual. The feasts of Our Lady of Health are held on the 2nd Sunday of September.

The road leads us to Porto Velho, perhaps the best of the west coast of the island, now used mainly by pleasure craft. Then you pass through an area of barbecues and picnics until we reach Porto Novo. About 20 years ago began the work that brought a bathing area, served by a coffee shop with terrace, a restaurant and more recently a shop that sells tourism products. This investment makes Fajã Grande, one of the most popular sites of this municipality for bathing in summer. During the rest of the year it continues to be a fascinating place with a unique position between the sea and the mountains.

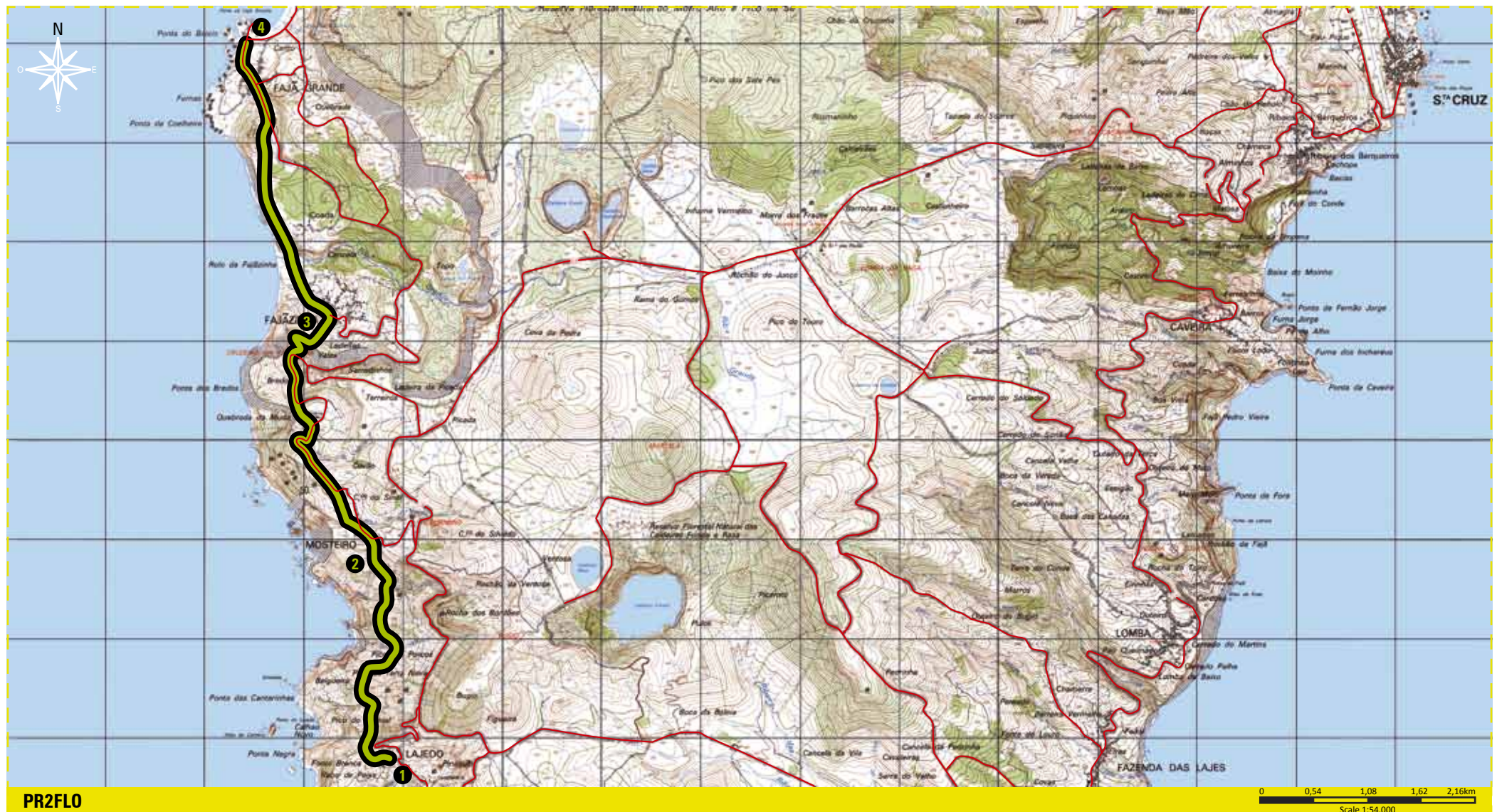
You have arrived at the end. While you wait for your ride, relax a little and enjoy. If you stay later, maybe you can enjoy one of the magnificent sunsets that this spot has to offer.

PARISH OF LAGEDO

The parish of Lagedo, currently, with about 100 people, when it once had more than twice this number, has been gradually depopulating as a result of the numerous emigration which began in the seventeenth century, initially to Brazil and then to the United States of America and Canada. It was the first settlement to emerge on the wes-

tern part of the island, and responsible for the settlements of Mosteiros, Fajãzinha and Fajã Grande.

Although some French emigrants have settled here in search of guaranteed peace to help their artistic production, the parish seems doomed to abandonment. Agricultural activity, had its high point with the production of butter exported in cans to the Portuguese mainland.

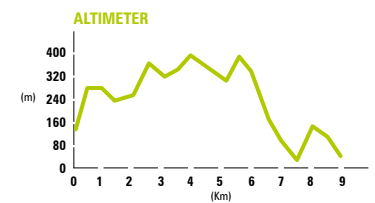


LAJEDO - FAJÃ GRANDE



1. Start of trail
2. Mosteiro
3. Fajãzinha
4. End of trail

- DURATION: 2H 30M
- DISTANCE: 10 Km
- START: Lajedo
- END: Fajã Grande
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Costa Sul e Sudoeste - *Special Protection Area*.



FLORES

POÇA DO BACALHAU

PR3FLO



Plateau of four lakes

On 26th May 2009 the island of Flores was classified by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve, this walk will help you understand why.

This trail is undoubtedly the most diverse, in terms of natural and human landscape that the island of Flores has to offer. Especially because it begins on the central plateau of the island, one of the largest classified areas of the Azores, between lakes and lush natural communities, then goes down to the sea to finish at a stupendous waterfall. Start by taking the road to the viewpoint of Lagoa Funda (Deep Lake), to the left, also called Lagoa Negra (Black Lake) (although its waters are thickly greenish). It is the deepest of the Azores measuring about 130 metres. To your right the Lagoa Comprida (Long Lake), despite its abrupt sides, is not more than 20 metres deep and its water has a healthier colour.

When the beautiful lakes of the island of Flores are mentioned it is sometimes made by associating their names to the word caldera instead of lake. This is due to the fact that they are, most of them, associated with a particular type of crater, the maars.

Go down to the sign of the beginning of the trail. As you go around Lagoa Comprida (Long Lake), on a footpath, you can admire a large waterfall which endlessly pours many cubic meters of water into the lake. Around you and on the more protected slopes, a rich community of plant species can be found.

The forest of cedars and heather, typical of wetlands such as this, is greatly contaminated by several endemic species. The brambles are all of the endemic species Azorean blackberry (*Rubus hochstetterorum*), which produces large and tasty berries. In a quick view of the landscape, the yellow bog moss (*Sphagnum auriculatum Schimp.*) contrasts with the light green of the Festuce (*Festuca*) and with the dark green of the junipers (*Juniperus*).

In the background, if it is not foggy, you can see the top of Morro Alto, measuring 911 metres. It is the highest point on the island and

was used for the installation of a telecommunications antenna, disabled at present, and of course as viewpoint.

The beaten trail often has run-off water and moss carpets, fit for high mountain areas, almost always wet from the abundant rainfall and fog.

This plateau zone of the island offers us a landscape where the greens of the natural vegetation or of the Cryptomerias that grow in clusters mingle with the yellow in the lower and flatter terrain occupied by the mosses (*Sphagnums*) and the rushes (*Juncus*) sometimes forming real traps for large animals that try to cross them. The cows grazing peacefully on the uncultivated land are often the only thing that, in their monotonous movement, gives colour to the landscape. When the sun hides, the waters of the lakes darken, strongly contrasting with the whiteness of the waterfall that tries to compensate the darkness.

After the first 1,000 metres of walking, you cross a paved road and on the other side the Caldeira Seca (Dry Caldera) awaits you. Despite the name, at the bottom there is a marsh, which is never completely dry, but only without free water during certain times of the year, allowing the growth, at the bottom, of a flora associated with this wetland and certainly of some other life in the lake, which is not possible to discern at this distance. The presence of Azores blueberry (*Vaccinium cylindraceum*) folhado (*Viburnum trelease*), *Euphorbia stygiana*, laurel and holly are easily noticeable, among other species covering the slopes. Pigs were formerly taken down here, and with no chance of escape grew, until someone came to get them.

Go up 30 metres on the road and then go down the embankment of red basaltic pumice on the left to take another path in the middle of the vegetation. Pay attention to signs, the entrance is easy to miss. It is a footpath where one walks on the bare ground or on small rocky outcrops. Because it is often the lowest spot, even in summer, it is often muddy or soaked by water; it is here that you find the best

route. So pay attention to the ground, which can be very slippery, leaving the enjoyment of the scenery for when you stop.

After 500 meters of the footpath, and with wet boots you reach the Lagoa Branca (White Lake), a lake system with a vast area of bog, whose name may come from the surrounding yellower colour. This is the fourth and oldest crater.

This lake is an important stopover area for migratory birds. Take a short detour to the first bird-watching post opened in the Azores, specifically in the summer of 2008. You will find information about the birds have been spotted, some quite rare, and others that you may observe yourself.

Continuing the route, leave at the turn of the red basaltic pumice road of Morro Alto, past the Ribeira do Ferreiro stream and go up about 1 km, until you find a bypath on the left which you should follow to reach the cliff. On this climb, the slopes are coated with *Deschampsia* and other herbaceous perennials, while the landscape increasingly requires “that photo”.

Start the descent to the cliff, on this secondary road strictly used for agriculture, and which increasingly appears damaged and impassable to vehicles, which has led to “alternative paths” in a vain attempt to escape the deep ditches.

You will find another bypath, continue to the right. You reach a gate that ask us to close it (CLOSE ME) and that leads to a new pasture. On the left, the remains of what looks like an antenna mark the approach to the cliff, on which it was installed to benefit from the location. Now, out of service, it continues to serve as a landmark in the landscape.

Despite the many grooves and the irregularity of the ground, continue as well as you can straight ahead, keeping the wall to your right as a guide, because you might not see any signs until you find another path at the beginning of the next pasture. However, do not follow the footpath. Go into the pasture and go straight ahead to the cliff, turning a bit to the left until you reach the stream. From here you have a first overview of the Fajãzinha, a picturesque parish set at the bottom of this idyllic kind of valley. (A “fajã” is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of

a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris.) Go back and, now, turn right towards the valley of the Ribeira das Casas, on the other side, and go until you approach the cliff again. The worn path gives you an idea of where to go, but if in doubt, do not be afraid because soon you will see marks. In this valley the water runs down through the vegetation in multiple waterfalls, of which many are invisible but not inaudible. All this water from Ribeira das Casas comes out at a single drop of over 100 meters, Poço do Bacalhau.

For some time the islet of Monchique is present, almost one mile from the coast. There, this rebound, the westernmost point of Europe, marks the end of the Old Continent.

Shortly after a first glimpse of the bathing area of the Fajã Grande, the descent begins on an ancient cobblestone path. For centuries, this footpath was the best solution for the people of the “fajãs” who travelled to Santa Cruz. Along the lakes, as a shortcut, they passed in the middle of Lagoa Branca (White Lake), on large sections of firewood that was put there so they would not sink.

Due to the mud and debris that normally accumulate, the descent on the steps may require some cau-



tion. On the exposed rock faces grow rare endemic plants, such as *Euphrasia azorica*, *Scabiosa nitens*, *Ammi trifoliatum*, among others. The staircase ends and you reach the edge of a cliff with a spectacular view of Fajã Grande and Fajãzinha. The grid of stone walls below offers a very characteristic view. Walk down this last pasture, always near the cliff where the sound of the sea is now louder than the rivers. Soon you are next to a wooden gate to the old stone staircase of Rocha da Fajã, providing an unexpected descent, easy, to a certain extent, for such a steep rock.

The roots of trees that form the outer trail hedge help maintain the path. Somewhere on the descent you come to a

first spring and then others emerge between the reddish paleosol and the lava that buried it. Farther down grows a considerable number of *Picconia azorica*. The steps are wider and we enter a tunnel of sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*). The descent ends on a grassy path, with the Ribeira dos Paus Brancos (*Picconia azorica* Stream), a very appropriate name, on the left, which soon becomes your right. A fountain with drinking water marks the nearing of the asphalt road.

Looking at the slope behind you, it might be hard to believe in the existence of the path you just came down. Another 400 metres on the asphalt road, towards the sea, and you reach the bridge of Ribeira das Casas. Climb up the left side of the stream, 280 metres to the Poço do Bacalhau. Along the way you will see the ruins of four mills, with two more on the other bank of the stream. At least some of these will date from the end of the nineteenth century. It is also possible to see the remains of the channel system for the mills. If the wind blows stronger, from a specific direction, the approach to the Poço do Bacalhau is done while taking a gentle shower of spray that comes from the majestic waterfall. This friendly and small lake, which has never heard silence, hides between its submerged stones a fresh water eel named *Anguilla anguilla*. However, don't be shy, and don't fear any danger, take off your boots and cool off dipping your feet, or something more, in this water that comes down the mountain hiccupping from rock to rock.

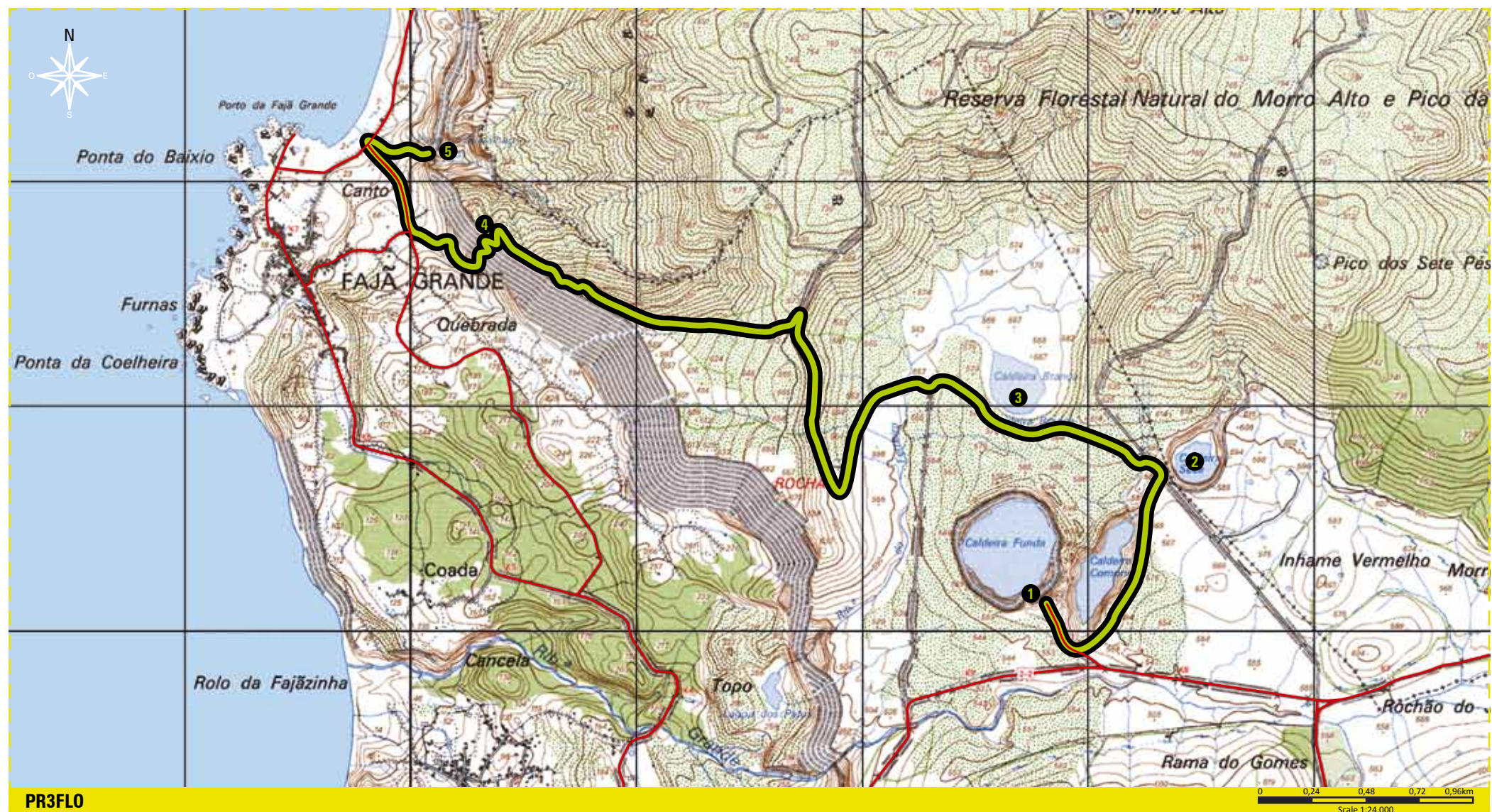


MAARS

The maars are a particular kind of volcanic eruption. The craters come from phreatomagmatic or phreatic explosions, when contact occurs between the rising magma and surface water or groundwater levels existing in the overlying rocks.

These eruptions normally do not form volcanic cone craters but rather stay at the level of the surrounding region, often flattened.

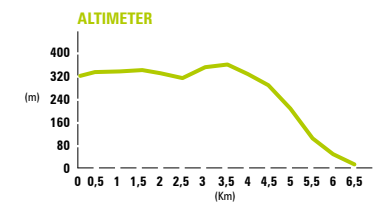
These formations tend to be circular and more extensive than deep, with steep rocky slopes and a flat bottom, which is often occupied by lakes, as in the case of the calderas: Funda (Deep), Comprida (Long), Seca (Dry) and Branca (White).



POÇA DO BACALHAU

1. Start of trail
2. Caldeira Seca
3. Caldeira Branca
4. Descida da Rocha da Fajã
5. End of trail

- DURATION: 3H 00M
- DISTANCE: 7 Km
- START: Miradouro das Lagoas
- END: Poça do Bacalhau
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Zona Central e Morro Alto - *Community Interest Site.*



FLORES

FAJÃ DO LOPO VAZ

PR4FLO



A Fifteenth Century “Fajã”

For much of the descent the Fajã Lopo Vaz is ahead of us set in the landscape. For that reason, if possible walk this trail in the morning with the sun at your back. (A “fajã” is a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris.)

Along the regional road just outside the town of Lajes, you begin to find some signposts to reach the starting point of this trail, after about 1,800 meters on byways. So, drive to the Picnic Park and viewpoint of the cliff, where the descent to the Fajã de Lopo Vaz begins. It is about two kilometres to reach the far western point of this “fajã” and another two to come back.

Still at the beginning, go up next to the cross for a first view of the cliff of the island’s southern coast, which sometimes ends in landslides washed by the sea, covered with vegetation, however, it is unable to completely hide the trail where we will descend. The Fajã do Lopo Vaz is hidden by reliefs but, farther off, you can see another “fajã” called A Quebrada da Rocha Alta. This is the only access to the “fajã” so you leave by the same route.

Around 1508-1510, Lopo Vaz left his island Terceira to settle in the island of Flores, as one of its first settlers. Gaspar Frutuoso, a fifteenth century chronicler, states in his *Saudades da Terra* “...Next to the rock is a “fajã” of Lopo Vaz, because it is his, up to twenty acres of land that produces wheat and woad...” and later “...until you reach a “fajã”, called Lopo Vaz, three bushels of land and at sea level... there are limpets and crabs, and on the land side there is a rocky cliff, the height of a beastly shot, through which Lopo Vaz made a road, on which oxen go gown...” I do not believe that we will see wheat, woad, limpets or crabs; however we will certainly see other noteworthy things.

The trail alternates between dirt footpath and stairs. Sometimes there are stairs and wooden trunks for protection, and some parts are cobbled to facilitate the descent. The trail is well recovered, small repairs have been made to facilitate traffic and increase the safety of visitors, namely on the wettest or steepest spots, with the diversion of runoff, repair of the pavements and the placement of wooden fences.



Soon on the descent, you find a niche on the embankment with a small statue of the Virgin Mary and a cross, on other islands this could be in memory of some tragic accident that happened there, but no one here remembers. However, these images (and another set of four below) are kept on the spot, maybe for the protection of visitors. Just in case, be careful of falling rocks, which in addition to the danger of them hitting you are debris on the path that cause accidents. Some of these, from old and recent landslides, have now been compressed under the feet of visitors and some larger stones are embedded in the stairs.

It is a large footpath, that is accessible to large animals such as cows, donkeys or horses, the last of which, I have seen in this "fajã". You go down between *Picconia azoricas*, sweet pittosporums (*Pittosporum undulatum*), reeds, heathers, and Cryptomerias. On the ground and on the slopes grow plants like the fern, *Asplenium Hemionitis*, with its unique stellate leaves.

A few minutes after having started the descent, you reach a staircase that comes down in sharp turns and where you can see for the first time this "fajã". It is said that the staircase was made by Lopo Vaz himself in the first decade of 1500; it may

be the oldest human construction visible on the island. This "fajã" doesn't run into the sea like many others, rather it sits on top of a plateau about 30 metres above the ocean. It is blocked from the beach on the south side by an inaccessible embankment and on the north side by one of the highest cliffs of the island. On this small portion of fertile land the lattice of the stone walls forms small agricultural plots where there are orchards and grazing areas.

At the beginning, near the first houses where we are headed, a total that does not exceed half a dozen, is a dark volcanic sand beach. Once you arrive, continue on the footpath that goes from that

house to another farther ahead and continues on. I see only four cows; it's no wonder that some of these small pastures are filled with grass. Not having a boat landing spot here, it makes me think that it must be a struggle to make the cows go up the path to leave the "fajã".

The path goes through a wet area. Step on the strategically placed stones to be able to continue. This water comes from the only source of drinking water for the "fajã", and comes from a high cliff, with more than 350 meters in height. It ensures the survival of livestock and the particular fruit that is grown here. It is also the reason for the cultivation of taro

(*Colocasia esculentum*), a spontaneous sub-species, which, when cultivated, its thick underground rhizomes can be harvested for human consumption. It is used as a side in typical pork based Azorean dishes, such as crackling and linguça. Its large leaves often share the same space with the invading *Hedychium gardnerianum*.



A TROPICAL MICROCLIMATE

The Fajã do Lopo Vaz faces south, and so benefits from good sun exposure, and protected from the prevailing harsh western winds, it functions as spot for acclimatization and cultivation of some tropical species that find here a niche where they can vegetate, produce and reproduce easily.

For some this suggests that this is a "tropical micro-climate".

*What is certain is that on the descent on the footpath and more so at the "fajã" (a small area of flat fertile land at the bottom of a seaside cliff composed of volcanic and/or geomorphological debris), you can see less common species of fruit, such as the following: fig; strawberry guava (*Psidium Cattleianum*, Sabine), in full bloom during the month of September, curiously more common on this island than the yellow variety; currants that in August are full with astringent berries; orchards of banana trees with large bunches protected from the winds; and, in the backyard of one of the houses, pineapples*

There is no electricity in the "fajã", but there are several water taps. Farther ahead, if the footpath seems to disappear, don't worry. Jump into the pasture and go through the portals in the stone walls. You will be back on the path again soon. On the cliff on your right, water from the previously mentioned spring flows and forms a small creek that feeds the taros and that you will cross. It is the only one I saw in the "fajã".

In the distance, at the bottom of a tall cliff (Rocha Alta or Tall Rock) beyond the Fajã Lopo Vaz, on 22nd May 1980 a landslide created a new detritus "fajã" formed by the deposition of material torn from the cliff. This large movement of earth on a warm spring day surprised everyone, and resulted in a localized tsunami, that affected the nearby port of the town of Lajes, where the rising sea temporarily submerged some dry-docked boats and the pier.

The "fajã" has no other exit so you must return the same way you came. If you want to explore the "fajã" a little more, before the stream, go to a barn near a lonely cedar tree and return closer to the sea, although this solution involves overcoming a few more obstacles. The stone walls are torn down in certain places, for the cows to pass. Use these portals.

Back at the first house of the "fajã", before starting the climb, explore the beach. Although it may seem modest in size, I think it's the largest sandy beach on the island. However, the sand is very coarse more like gravel than sand, there are numerous boulders deposited by the sea and in places the beach is threatened by an invasion of reeds. This beach is used for bathing by some, as is evidenced by the makeshift showers that can be found next to a wall. It allows us to approach the detritus slope carved by the sea and see, especially at the top, the falling material deposited here from the cliff or brought by the sea.

Now, to leave the "fajã", all you have left are the same 1,200 metres, which may seem to be more. Have a good climb.



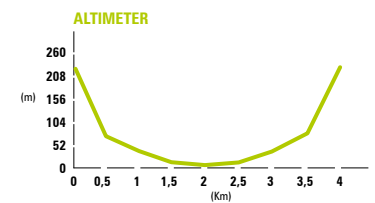


FAJÃ DO LOPO VAZ



1. Start and End of trail
2. Fajã do Lopo Vaz

- DURATION: 2H 00M
- DISTANCE: 4 Km
- START: Miradouro da Fajã do Lopo Vaz
- END: Miradouro da Fajã do Lopo Vaz
- DIFFICULTY LEVEL: Medium
- REMARKS: Costa Sul e Sudoeste - *Special Protection Area*.





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Masthead:

AZORES - INFORMATIVE GUIDE - WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS (2nd Edition expanded)

Year: 2011

Publisher: Regional Tourism Association (RTA)

Cover and island chapter photography: Nuno Sá - Veraçor, Lda.

Furna do Enxofre photography: Jorge Góis - Os Montanheiros

All other photography: Paulo Barcelos - Os Montanheiros

Text: Paulo Barcelos

Translation: Susana Melo Alves

Graphics: Ver Açor, Lda.

Legal Deposit: 321981/11

ISBN: 978-989-96379-2-4

Print run: 2.000 Unidades

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