



REFÚGIO de
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CULTURAL & NATURAL
HERITAGE ITINERARY 





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GEOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL OUTLINE

PORTO SANTO LIES IN THE HEART OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND, TOGETHER WITH MADEIRA, DESERTAS, AND SELVAGENS ISLANDS, FORMS PART OF THE MADEIRA ARCHIPELAGO.

THIS ARCHIPELAGO BELONGS TO MACARONESIA, A BIOGEOGRAPHICAL REGION THAT ALSO INCLUDES THE AZORES, CANARY ISLANDS, AND CAPE VERDE.

PORTO SANTO IS SITUATED 700 KM FROM AFRICA, 900 KM FROM LISBON, AND JUST 40 KM FROM MADEIRA ISLAND. WITH AN AREA OF 42 SQUARE KILOMETRES, 12 KM IN LENGTH AND 6 KM AT ITS WIDEST POINT, PORTO SANTO REPRESENTS 8.5% OF THE ARCHIPELAGO'S TOTAL AREA. THE ISLAND FEATURES GENTLE RELIEF, REACHING ITS HIGHEST POINT AT 517 METRES ON PICO DO FACHO.

ITS 41-KILOMETRE COASTLINE CONSISTS OF ROCKY, STEEP, AND JAGGED CLIFFS TO THE NORTH, EAST, AND WEST, WHILE THE SOUTH FEATURES AN EXTENSIVE, CONTINUOUS SANDY BEACH ALONG LOW-LYING TERRAIN.

THE ISLAND IS SURROUNDED BY SIX ISLETS AND TWO LOW-LYING REEFS: ILHÉU DE BAIXO OR ILHÉU DA CAL; ILHÉU DE CIMA; ILHÉU DO FERRO; ILHÉU FONTE DA AREIA; ILHÉU DAS CENOURAS; ILHÉU DE FORA; MEIO REEF AND BARBEIROS REEF.

GEOLOGICALLY, PORTO SANTO IS MUCH OLDER (APPROXIMATELY 14 MILLION YEARS) THAN MADEIRA ISLAND (7 MILLION YEARS) AND PRESENTS A COMPLEX, HEAVILY ERODED STRUCTURE. THIS EROSION HAS EXPOSED ROCKS THAT BEAR WITNESS TO ITS DISTINCT FORMATION PHASES: LOWER UNIT (SUBMARINE MOUNTAIN PHASE), UPPER UNIT (EMERGING ISLAND PHASE), AND QUATERNARY DEPOSITS SUCH AS MARINE TERRACES, DUNES, BEACH SANDS, AND OTHERS.

THE ISLANDS OF MADEIRA AND PORTO SANTO ARE THUS THE PRODUCT OF VOLCANIC STRUCTURES THAT FORMED THE ATLANTIC OCEAN FLOOR IN THE WESTERN SECTOR OF THE AFRICAN PLATE, AS IT OPENED AND EXTENDED OVER THE PAST 200 MILLION YEARS.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

DURING THE REIGN OF KING JOÃO I, JOÃO GONÇALVES ZARCO AND TRISTÃO VAZ TEIXEIRA REACHED ON PORTO SANTO IN 1418, FINDING A SAFE HARBOUR AFTER DAYS OF STORMY NAVIGATION.

BY ORDER OF PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR, BARTOLOMEU PERESTRELO WAS APPOINTED CAPTAIN-DONATORY, RESPONSIBLE FOR POPULATING THE ISLAND WITH SETTLERS PRIMARILY FROM THE ALGARVE. HIS DAUGHTER, FILIPA MONIZ, MARRIED CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, THE GENOESE NAVIGATOR WHO DISCOVERED AMERICA. IT IS BELIEVED THAT HERE, ON THE GOLDEN ISLAND, COLUMBUS PLANNED HIS GREAT VOYAGE.

CLIMATE

THE ISLAND HAS A DRY CLIMATE WITH MINIMAL TEMPERATURE VARIATION BETWEEN SEASONS. THE AVERAGE AIR TEMPERATURE RANGES FROM 23°C IN SUMMER TO 19°C IN WINTER. THE AVERAGE WATER TEMPERATURE VARIES BETWEEN 22°C IN SUMMER AND 17°C IN WINTER.



MONUMENTS
HERITAGE



OLD PIER

CAIS VELHO OLD PIER

Construction of the pier began on March 19, 1929, where people and goods were once transferred between Porto Santo and Madeira Island. Today, it's an icon of Porto Santo. Restored in the 1990s, its structure spans 102 metres in length and 4 metres in width, supported by equally spaced pillars.

FÁBRICA DAS ÁGUAS WATER FACTORY

Currently abandoned, this two-storey stone building operated between 1924 and 1990. The waters bottled here were bicarbonated, chlorinated, and sodium sulphated, recommended for treating skin and digestive system conditions. They were awarded a gold medal at an international exhibition in Rio de Janeiro.





DISCOVERIES MONUMENT

PADRÃO DOS DESCOBRIMENTOS DISCOVERIES MONUMENT

Located in Alameda do Infante, this imposing square-section monument designed by António Aragão features reliefs depicting Prince Henry's discoveries and is popularly known as the "pau de sabão." It was inaugurated on August 28, 1960.

PAÇOS DO CONCELHO CITY HALL

Located in Pelourinho Square, this building displays restrained Baroque features. Built in the second half of the 18th century, specifically in 1756, it is the archipelago's oldest building constructed to house a municipality. Popularly known as the "Old Chamber," it also served as a jail.



FORNOS DA CAL **LIME KILN**

Lime extraction was once one of Porto Santo's main industries. The raw material was collected from Ilhéu de Baixo (also known as Ilhéu da Cal) and then fired in the kilns. There were once about 17 operating structures supplying the construction industry. Currently, no kilns are in operation.



FONTANÁRIOS **FOUNTAINS**

Water scarcity has always been a challenge directly affecting the local population's lifestyle and sustainability. To combat the long periods of drought on the island, the Town Council built fountains supplied by existing springs. Several fountains still exist throughout the island, with the main ones available for visiting being Fonte do Tanque, Fontinha, Vila, Canção da Terra, São João, Espírito Santo, and Fonte da Areia.



NORAS E POÇOS **WATER WHEELS**

Water wheels are circular structures built to raise water through animal traction. Popularly known as wells or cisterns, they are architecturally beautiful and perfectly constructed.





MOINHOS DE VENTO **WINDMILLS**

According to some historians, the first windmill in Porto Santo appeared in 1794. The island's low relief, with wind blowing many days of the year from various directions, created favourable conditions for installing these devices used for grinding cereals, particularly barley, wheat, rye, and corn. This was extremely important for Porto Santo residents, enabling bread production and its derivatives, as well as economic development through flour exports.



TRADITIONAL PAVING

CALÇADA OU CALCETAMENTO TRADITIONAL PAVING

Spread throughout the island, particularly in religious temple courtyards, traditional paving features black and white rolled pebbles forming symmetrical surfaces with various motifs and patterns.

CASAS DE *SALÃO* *SALÃO* HOUSES

These buildings represent one of Porto Santo's various popular architectural manifestations. These straight-lined houses were characterised by their roofs having a waterproof covering of *salão*, a type of clay that keeps houses cool in summer thanks to the cracks that open when the *salão* dries, allowing air circulation. In winter, it absorbs rain, making them waterproof.





MATAMORRAS OR SILOS

MATAMORRAS OU SILOS MATAMORRAS OR SILOS

Matamorras are small but deep pits built outside houses to store cereals. They were lined with stone and straw, allowing hermetic grain storage. Some examples can be found in the city centre and at *Casa Colombo - Museum of Porto Santo and Portuguese Discoveries*.

MUROS DE PEDRA E DE CROCHÉ STONE WALLS

Designed to protect vineyards and delineate spaces, crochet walls are stone structures with a lace-like appearance where stones are arranged without binding elements, fitting together almost perfectly. The openings between stones allow wind circulation.





MUSEUMS



CASA COLOMBO
- MUSEUM OF PORTO SANTO AND PORTUGUESE DISCOVERIES

CASA COLOMBO — MUSEU DO PORTO SANTO E DOS DESCOBRIMENTOS PORTUGUESES MUSEUM

Among the island's most relevant historical facts is that Christopher Columbus lived here after marrying the daughter of Bartolomeu Perestrelo, the island's first Captain-Donatory. It was during his stay in this house, now a museum, that the navigator planned the voyage that would immortalise him - the discovery of America. Among various objects of great interest, such as nautical charts, navigation instruments, and illuminated manuscripts, visitors can also see items recovered from the Slot Der Hooge galleon, belonging to the Dutch East India Company, which sank off Porto Santo's coast in the 17th century.



CARDINA MUSEUM

MUSEU CARDINA MUSEUM

Inaugurated in 2006, this cultural centre displays an extensive collection of different types of everyday items and artefacts from Porto Santo's population, dating from the time of its settlement, highlighting the island's strong agricultural heritage.

CASA DA SERRA CENTRE

Located in Serra de Fora, it's more than just a centre for promoting local culture and traditions. Visitors are guaranteed a warm welcome while being invited to embark on a journey through time, discovering Porto Santo's culture, its past, and its culinary traditions.



NÚCLEO MUSEOLÓGICO BRUM DO CANTO DISPLAY



This space houses the collection of famous filmmaker Jorge Brum do Canto, donated in 2005 by his family to the Regional Government of Madeira. The exhibition illustrates Brum do Canto's various interests as an actor, film critic, film director, president of the Cinema Professionals Union, musician, decorator, poet, ethnologist, gastronome, ichthyologist, and sport fisherman.



CHURCHES AND CHAPELS



NOSSA SENHORA DA PIEDADE CHURCH

IGREJA MATRIZ MAIN CHURCH

One of Porto Santo's main monuments is the Church of Nossa Senhora da Piedade, also known as the Main Church, located in Pelourinho Square in the heart of Porto Santo city. It was repeatedly targeted by pirates and corsairs, being set on fire, which left it severely damaged. Its interior features magnificent altars and paintings by Martim Conrado and Max Römer, whose beauty captivates visitors.

IGREJA DO ESPÍRITO SANTO CHURCH

Located in Campo de Baixo, this Mannerist church with a longitudinal plan dates back to the 17th century. With a simple façade, it comprises a nave and main chapel. The main façade features a portal with a perfect arch in Porto Santo stonework. The churchyard is paved with sea-rolled pebbles. The main chapel boasts a polychrome carved altarpiece from the 17th century Mannerist period.





SÃO PEDRO CHAPEL

CAPELA DE SÃO PEDRO CHAPEL

Built in the late 18th century with Mannerist and Baroque influences on the slope of Pico Ana Ferreira. It has a single rectangular nave, and outside, the churchyard, paved with rolled pebbles, features a Portuguese caravel, symbolising the saint's role as protector of sailors.

CAPELA DE NOSSA SENHORA DA GRAÇA CHURCH

The Chapel of Our Lady of Grace is one of Porto Santo's oldest temples, with construction dating back to 1533. In 1812 it was completely destroyed, and in 1951, reconstruction work began with a modern appearance. Closely linked to the island's history, many inhabitants took refuge here to escape pirate persecution.





CAPELA DA MISERICÓRDIA MERCY CHAPEL

Located on Cristóvão Colombo street, this chapel was built in the 16th century and rebuilt in the 18th century, with interior restoration work completed in 2016. This rectangular-plan hermitage shows Baroque features and comprises a nave and main chapel. It has a late Baroque altarpiece, gilded and marbled, and a beautiful 1946 painting by Max Römer titled "Our Lady of Visitation," patron saint of the Mercies. The main façade features a perfect round portal with frieze and cornice in local stonework, Mannerist style. The churchyard is paved with beach-rolled pebbles.



GEOMONUMENTS



PICO ANA FERREIRA

DISJUNÇÃO PRISMÁTICA DO PICO ANA FERREIRA

(Regional Interest Property)

Pico Ana Ferreira, a unique element in the landscape, presents a crest-shaped relief, composed of rare magmatic rocks (mugearite) that cooled inside the conduit, forming the prismatic columns we observe on the surface today. This site functioned as a quarry whose rock exploitation began in the sixties and ended in the late eighties.

EOLIANITOS DA FONTE DA AREIA

Here, extensive accumulations of wind-deposited sandstones, the eolianites, are the parent rock of Porto Santo Beach's current sand, a heritage resulting from the mobilisation of organic fragments that existed on the insular platform around the island during the Last Glaciation.





MORENOS

The coastal cliffs of the Morenos area present numerous dykes of basaltic and trachytic nature that intersect submarine volcanic rocks from base to top, showing structures with prismatic jointing, locally known as “navalheira stone.” In the Canaveira Viewpoint area, the eolianitic rocks preserve abundant fossils of terrestrial gastropods and rhizoconcretions, the latter bearing witness to the ancient plant cover from about 30,000 years ago, when the island was larger and more rugged.

ZIMBRALINHO

In Zimbralinho bay we find lithologies from the island’s submarine volcanic sequences. The famous pillow lavas appear at the base of the western side and illustrate the initial phase of geological evolution when volcanism was still occurring underwater.





ILHÉU DA CAL

(Natura 2000 Network; Porto Santo Marine Protected Areas Network)

The Ilhéu de Baixo or Ilhéu da Cal separated from the main island through erosive phenomena about 10-12 thousand years ago. Here we can observe several extensive galleries from which limestone rocks, about 15 million years old, were extracted for the lime manufacturing industry. At the islet's summit, old buildings supporting this activity transport us back to that time.



ILHÉU DE CIMA

(Natura 2000 Network; Porto Santo Marine Protected Areas Network) Ilhéu de Cima, also known as Lighthouse Islet or Dragon Tree Islet, displays on its western-facing slopes some radiated structures locally known as “Sun Stone.” These radial rock alignments reflect how lava cooling occurred, from the outside to the inside of the flow. On the eastern side of the NE point, “Orange Head” presents a spectacular concentration of fossil red algae rhodoliths from the Miocene age (14-15 million years). At the islet’s summit, visitors can follow an environmental interpretation trail showcasing the natural richness of this location.

SERRA DE FORA

The coastal area of Serra de Fora features thick calcarenitic rocks belonging to the Eolianitic Formation, which still covers about 1/3 of the island. This Quaternary formation has a whitish-yellow colour, composed mainly of marine micro-organism shell fragments, molluscs, and calcareous algae, later joined by various terrestrial gastropod shells. The presence of a lime kiln and a support building confirms the lime industry’s activity in this area.



SERRA DE DENTRO

Salão deposits, a term used to describe a specific type of clay called bentonite, occur particularly in the eastern sector of the island, with the most representative deposits located in Serra de Dentro. These bentonitic deposits result from intense alteration of submarine volcanic breccias, the hyaloclastites, belonging to the island's so-called Ancient Complex (10-16 million years). Basaltic dyke rocks support and protect against erosion phenomena.



DISJUNÇÃO PRISMÁTICA DO PICO BRANCO

(Natura 2000 Network)

The Pico Branco-Terra Chã trail (PRI) is carved into acidic volcanic rocks (trachytic and rhyolitic) sculpted by geological phenomena into prismatic jointing. This recommended route is about 5.4 km (round trip) and takes 3 hours. The spectacular north-facing slopes date back to a time when vegetation was lush. This location constitutes an excellent habitat for flora and fauna endemism, particularly terrestrial gastropod molluscs.

PORTO DAS SALEMAS

The steep cliffs of this coast, consisting of submarine volcanic pyroclastic formations represented by tuffs, breccias, and basaltic scoriae, date from the Lower Miocene. A complex network of dykes traces their ascending path in these walls, contributing to the island's growth.





PRAIA BEACH

Porto Santo beach sands, grains with unique characteristics in the national context associated with their genesis and the geological processes that formed them over thousands of years, result from the erosion of eolianites that outcrop in various sectors of the island. Besides the awards it receives for environmental quality, it is one of Portugal's 7 Wonder Beaches in the dune beaches category.



PEAKS



PICO DO CASTELO

PICO DO CASTELO PEAK

The ancient volcanic chimney of Pico do Castelo has exposed, through erosive phenomena, a trachytic dome approximately 13.8 million years old. This peak was a strategic point in the past and continues to be so today, functioning as a viewpoint over the central flattened region, the beach to the SW, Ilhéu de Baixo, and the Picos Ana Ferreira and Espigão.

PICO DO ESPIGÃO PEAK

Pico do Espigão presents itself as a magnificent and imposing dyke of intermediate composition rock - mugearite, about 12.5 to 12.7 million years old, which crossed outcrops of basaltic composition scoria. A privileged observation point that once served as a lookout for whale watching.



PICO JULIANA PEAK

Pico Juliana, one of the most recent volcanic units at about 10.6 million years old, exposes a volcanic needle with prismatic jointing, formed by material solidification within the chimney.

PICO DO FACHO PEAK

Pico do Facho is the highest relief at 517 metres. Like Pico Juliana, it belongs to the island's most recent volcanic units, about 10.6 million years old, and exhibits a volcanic needle with less well-defined prismatic jointing, probably due to faster cooling. In the past, its summit was used to watch for and alert Madeira Island of the arrival of enemy vessels with pirates, corsairs, and Moors.



VIEWPOINTS



PONTA DA CANAVEIRA VIEWPOINT

MIRADOURO DA PONTA DA CANAVEIRA VIEWPOINT

Located on the western part of the island, from this area we can glimpse the steep and jagged slopes of the northern zone, as well as ilhéu do Ferro and, further away, ilhéu da Fonte da Areia. Adjacent is the Morenos site, an ideal spot for picnics.

MIRADOURO DA PORTELA VIEWPOINT

A small avenue of palm trees leads us to this viewpoint, located less than 2 km from the city centre, with a splendid view over the island's southern coast and overlooking the entire beach expanse, port, and marina. Some windmills placed here were once used to grind wheat and other cereals.





MIRADOURO DA PONTA DA CALHETA VIEWPOINT

Ponta da Calheta, the southern tip of the island, coincides with the western end of Porto Santo Beach's extensive sandy stretch and is separated from ilhéu de Baixo by a 400-metre wide channel, the Boqueirão de Baixo. From here, you can see the rocky contours of neighbouring Madeira Island.

MIRADOURO DAS FLORES VIEWPOINT

This western extremity of the island provides a view of almost all of Porto Santo, as well as a privileged view of Ilhéu de Baixo, ilhéu do Ferro, Desertas Islands, and Madeira Island. At the top of this viewpoint stands a bust honouring Madeiran painter Francisco Maya, who dedicated many of his artistic works to the Golden Island.



MIRADOURO DA FONTE DA AREIA VIEWPOINT

This viewpoint offers a beautiful view over the north coast, the ocean, and the namesake islet a few hundred metres away. In times past, Fonte da Areia contained the most delicious water on the entire island, even being used for medicinal purposes, and was therefore a pilgrimage site for the local population for many years. Here, the fossil cliff is magnificently sculpted by wind action.



MIRADOURO DO PICO DO CASTELO VIEWPOINT

At 437 metres altitude, it offers a general view over the island. Walking its stone paths lined with pine trees is a pleasant way to reach the summit, where there stands a bust honouring Schiappa de Azevedo, who strongly contributed to this peak's afforestation.



MIRADOURO DAS LOMBAS VIEWPOINT

This viewpoint, overlooking Porto Santo city, offers a beautiful view over the bay. The presence of a wooden rotary windmill serves as a tourist attraction. It was designed by Chorão Ramalho.



GARDENS



ALAMEDA INFANTE D. HENRIQUE GARDEN

JARDIM DA ALAMEDA INFANTE D. HENRIQUE GARDEN

This garden offers a pleasant leisure space featuring palm trees, araucarias, dragon trees, and others. Children have two playgrounds for their entertainment. In the same garden stands a bust honouring navigator Christopher Columbus.

PARQUE FLORESTAL DOS SALÕES FOREST STATION

This urban green area for public use, with a total area of about 14,780 m², is located near the city centre. It includes a plant nursery, the Salões Forest Station, and an area with braziers and tables.





TANQUE GARDEN

JARDIM DO TANQUE GARDEN

Public space with a total area of about 4,200 m². Located next to Tanque fountain, it offers a picnic park equipped with wooden benches and tables and a barbecue area.

QUINTA DAS PALMEIRAS

This mini-zoo and mini-botanical garden offers visitors the observation of a vast number of bird and plant species. Occupying an area of over 5,000 m², this luxuriant space contrasts with Porto Santo's predominantly rugged landscapes.







PORTELA VIEWPOINT





COFINANCIADO POR:



REGIÃO AUTÓNOMA DO ALENTEJO
GOVERNO REGIONAL DO ALENTEJO
COMISSÃO REGIONAL DO ALENTEJO



UNIÃO EUROPEIA
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