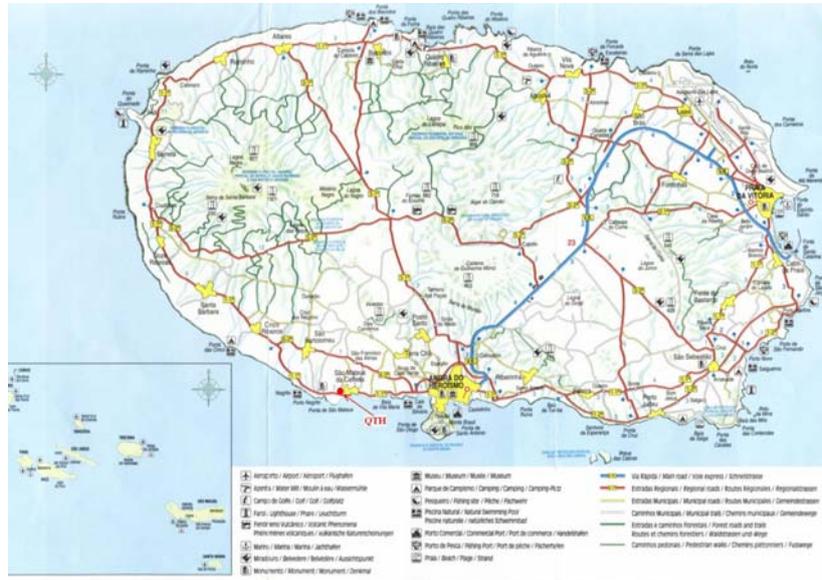


# Mini Travel Guide On Terceira Island



# Geography



With an elliptical shape, Terceira has an area of 148 sq miles (381.96 km<sup>2</sup>). Its length is 18 miles (29 km) and its maximum width 11 miles (17.5 km). A plateau, cut by the gentle slopes of the “Cume” hills, dominates the western end.

The central area is marked by the large, deep crater called “Caldeira de Guilherme Moniz” and by many craters with small lakes, while to the east there rises a volcanic cone with a broad crater, the “Serra de Santa Bárbara”, which has the highest altitude in the island, 3356 feet (1,023 meters).

Terceira is situated at 27° 10' West longitude and 38° 40' North latitude.



## Angra do Heroísmo

Angra do Heroísmo was the seat of a captaincy in 1474, and it soon became an important trading centre thanks to the natural qualities of its harbour as evidenced even in its name (Angra means Bay).

Its commercial importance led to its being given a town charter in 1478 and being raised to the status of a city - the first in the Azores - in 1534. It was also in the latter year that Pope Paul III chose Angra to be the seat of a bishopric. A port of call for the ships plying to and from Africa, India and the Americas - it was here that Vasco da Gama's brother was buried during the return from the first voyage to India - it became a town with an intensive economic life and great wealth in the 16th century. It was also at Angra that government departments such as Mint and the Navy Purveyor's Office were set up.

That golden period was reflected in the straight lines of its streets, in accordance with the town planning rules of the Renaissance of which it is one of the finest examples, and also in the splendour of its palaces and churches and an artistic legacy that makes it a monument in itself. This has been recognised by UNESCO, which has included it in the world heritage list.

The struggles against the Spanish occupation, between 1580 and 1583, had catastrophic consequences for Angra, which was sacked for five days by Spanish soldiers and which saw many of its leading citizens executed. Later, in 1589, the town was attacked by the privateer, Sir Francis Drake, who was unsuccessful in his attempt, and in 1597 the Earl of Essex, with about one hundred ships, tried in vain to seize a fleet of Spanish galleons, loaded with gold and silver, which were anchored in the port. The construction of São Filipe Castle, later called São João Baptista, dates from this period; it was designed to be a defence against pirates and, at the same time, a means of ensuring Spanish control over the town itself.



With the Restoration of Portugal's independence, the Spanish garrison surrendered after heavy fighting and after the town had been bombarded.

Until the early 19th century, Angra, as the seat of the captaincy-general, retained its standing as the governmental centre of the Azores although there was a reduction of its importance as an Atlantic seaport. The town took an active part in the struggles for the implantation of liberalism and became the seat of the liberal Regency during the Civil War. Because of the spirit of sacrifice and bravery then demonstrated, the town received from Queen Maria II the title of "Heroísmo" (Heroism) proposed by the great writer, Almeida Garrett.

Angra do Heroísmo is one of the administrative seats of the Autonomous Region and has one of the centres of the University of the Azores. Having suffered the effects of an earthquake in 1980, the reconstruction work is being carried out in such a way as to preserve the lines of the damaged buildings and monuments.

Places to visit: Cathedral; Church of Nossa Senhora da Guia; Church of the Jesuit School; Church of São Gonçalo; Church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição; Church of the Misericórdia; São João Baptista Castle; São Sebastião Castle; Palace of the Bettencourts; Palace of the Captains-General; Town Hall; Historic centre; Municipal Garden; Alto da Memória; Monte Brasil; Angra Museum.



Church of the Misericórdia



Church of the Jesuit School



Sé Church



## **Praia da Vitória**

Praia da Vitória was the seat of the captaincy of Terceira in the early settlement period (1456 to 1474) and made a town in 1640, Praia (as it was then simply called) took part in the economic prosperity of the island in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Near the town, and with the participation of its inhabitants, the battle of Salga was fought in 1581. The pretender to the throne, Dom António, Prior do Crato, was acclaimed king when he landed at Praia in 1582. The struggles between liberals and absolutists brought Praia back to the pages of history once again. In 1829 the town, supporting the liberal cause, heroically and successfully resisted an attack and attempted landing by an absolutist fleet of 21 ships with highly superior forces. It was this fact that led to the town's being granted the title of Praia da Vitória in 1837 (vitória meaning victory).

Its economic importance and growth, achieved in spite of the earthquake of 1841 which partially destroyed it, justified its being raised to the status of a city in 1981. A large new oceanic port, recently built, decisively contributes to its progress.

Places to visit: Parish Church; Church of Senhor Santo Cristo; Fort Santa Catarina; Town Hall; Historic centre. The long, sheltered sands of Praia da Vitória are one of the most welcoming beaches in the Azores. A seaport was built with a 1,400 metre long jetty.

An excellent vista of the coast and town can be achieved from the belvedere called Miradouro Riviera, on the cape known as Ponta do Cabo.

## Some of the places to visit



Angra do Heroísmo Museum is located in the old Convent of St. Francis and is adjoined to "Nossa Senhora da Guia" Church (Our Lady of Guidance).

"Monte Brasil", classified as Protected Landscape, provides a recreational area and resting place as well as a fantastic view over the ocean and the city.

São João Baptista do Monte Brasil Fort is a large, fortified wall 2.5 miles long.

"Imperios" (religious monuments) are all over the island and are considered interesting due to their coloured façade.

"Algar do Carvao" is famous for its' grottoes that reach a depth of approximately 328 feet (100 meters). These spectacular grottoes contain stalactites, stalagmites and an interior lake. Near the "Algar" the "Enxofre" "Água" and "Cabrito" Caves and the "Balcões", "Aguilhas" and "Natal" Grottoes are of special interest especially to scientists.

"Praia da Vitória" is a young city with one of the most inviting beaches of the Azores. The architectonic patrimony is concentrated in the churches and chapels.

In "Biscoitos" you can visit the only wine museum. This museum, inaugurated in 1990, illustrates the process of traditional wine making in the archipelago.

# History

Terceira was known as the island of "Jesus Cristo" in the period when it was being discovered by the Portuguese navigators.

Terceira's settlement was started on or about 1450 when its captaincy was granted to a Fleming, Jácome de Bruges, by Prince Henry the Navigator.

The first settlements were situated in the areas of Porto Judeu and Praia da Vitória, and soon extended throughout the island.

With an economy initially centred on agriculture, mainly the production of grains, and the export of woad (a dye-yielding plant), Terceira began to play an important part in navigation in the 15th and 16th centuries, as a port of call for the galleons bringing the wealth of the Americas and the ships engaged in the India trade.

In that period Terceira was an emporium for the gold, silver, diamonds and spices brought from other continents, which attracted the covetousness of French, English and Flemish corsairs who constantly attacked its coast for several centuries.

When Philip II of Spain took the Portuguese throne in 1580, Terceira supported the claims of the pretender, Dom António, Prior do Crato, who even came to reside on the island and to coin money there, which led to Spanish attempts to conquer it. The first landing by Spanish troops, in 1581, was completely defeated in the famous battle of Salga, in which the writers Cervantes and Lopo de Vega took part. In 1583 much larger Spanish forces, commanded by Don Álvaro de Bazan, the victor of the battle of Lepanto, managed to dominate the island after violent fighting.

Until 1640 Terceira was a port of call for the Spanish galleons filled with the fabulous wealth of Peru and Mexico. With the Restoration of Portugal's independence, line

Spaniards were expelled and life returned to normal. The island kept its position as the economic, administrative and religious centre of the Azores until the early 19th century. The struggles that accompanied the introduction of liberalism led Terceira to play an important role in the history of Portugal once again. The island supported the liberal cause as from 1820. After various vicissitudes, there was a turn about in 1828 and the absolutists were dominated on Terceira which became the main base of the liberals. An absolutist attempt to land at Vila da Praia was defeated in 1829, and this was followed by the establishment of a liberal regency on Terceira and the later conquest of the other islands of the archipelago by the constitutional forces. And in 1832 it was from Terceira that the liberal expedition left for the landing at Mindelo in northern Portugal and the subsequent proclamation of the Constitutional Charter.

The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century were marked by a progressive reduction of Terceira's role in the life of the Azores. The construction of a port at Praia da Vitória, the existence of an important air base and a commercial airport have opened up new development perspectives for the island.

# Landmarks and History

## São Mateus da Calheta



Picturesque fishing village. Forts Grande and Negrito, remains of the former fortifications erected all over the island to defend it from a Spanish invasion (16th c.). Two picturesque “impérios” or chapels of the Holy Ghost (19th c.). A whale hunting station, described by Prince Albert of Monaco in the 19th c., used to exist at Negrito.

Places to visit: Parish church; Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Luz.

## Santa Bárbara

Parish church. 15th c. edifice, with later alterations. Gilded, sculptured woodwork.. Image of St. Barbara, in stone from ARQA. Close to the church lies an “império” of the Holy Ghost (19th c.).

## Vila Nova

Characteristic village. On nearby Agualva stream, a number of old water-mills set in a verdant landscape. Interesting “império” of the Holy Ghost (19th c.).

Place to visit: Church of the Divino Espírito Santo.

## **Fontinhas**

Church of Nossa Senhora da Pena. Originated in a 16th c. edifice that was profoundly altered in the 19th c. High altar. Carved woodwork. Decorative tiles. Close to an "império" of the Holy Ghost (19th c.). Chapel of Santo António. Picturesque 19th c. construction.

## **Lajes**

Old village. Site of the air base which played an important part in the anti-submarine campaign of the Allies during the 2nd World War, and which also served as a supporting point for several air operations against the Axis forces. Today it is part of the defensive system of the Atlantic.

Places to visit: Church of São Miguel Arcanjo and Casa do Espanhol.

## **São Sebastião**

Site of the first settlement on the island. An old and characteristic town that received its charter in 1503. Picturesque "império" or chapel of the Holy Ghost, with figures.

Places to visit: Church of São Sebastião and Chapel of Santa Ana.

## **Ribeirinha**

Church of São Pedro, 16th c. building that was expanded in the 18th c. High altar. Gilded, carved woodwork. 16th c. image of Christ.

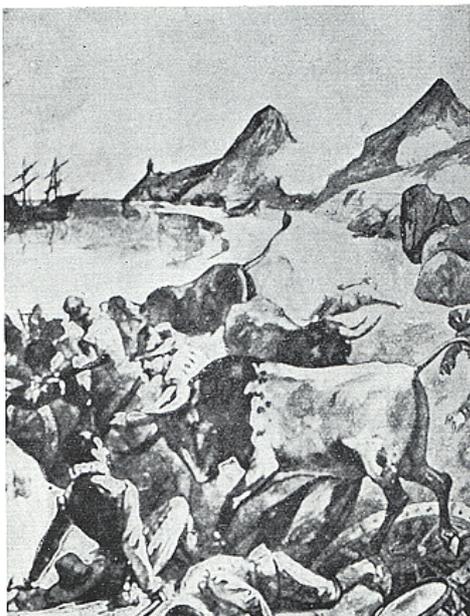
The village contains four "impérios" of the Holy Ghost, three of which date from the 19th c.

## Galleons, shipwrecks and treasures

Off the coast of Terceira lie the remains of swift caravels and other ships engaged in the African trade, large galleons from Peru and the Orient and war-like frigates with bright bronze cannon. These ships have transformed the coast into a hidden museum, the memory of times gone by, of struggles and suffering, of hope and danger.

### The battle of Salga

After bombarding Angra on 5th July 1581, a Spanish fleet of ten ships, commanded by Don Pedro Valdez, reconnoitred the coast of the island in search of the best landing places. At dawn on the 25th July, the first ships loaded with Spanish troops anchored in Salga bay. A watchman, stationed at the cape called Ponta do Coelho, gave the alarm, but when the first Portuguese forces arrived about one thousand Castilians had already landed and had started to sack the surroundings. In this phase of the fighting a leading role was played by young and pretty Brianda Pereira who, together with other women, attacked the enemy when she saw her house destroyed by them.



Batalha da Salga or Battle of the Bulls (1581). Painting ordered made by Philip II of Spain, or Philip I of Portugal. (162)

By nine a. m. the fighting was heavy. The Spaniards swept the coast with their artillery, which made the task of the defenders more difficult. About mid-day, when the outcome of the battle was still indecisive, an Augustinian named Friar Pedro, who was taking an active part in the struggle, thought of the stratagem of driving wild cattle against the Spaniards so as to scatter them. Over a thousand head of cattle were quickly gathered and, by means of shouts and musket shots, driven against the enemy positions. The terrified Spaniards fell

back and were pursued to the shore, where almost all of them lost their lives in the fighting or drowned while trying to reach their boats.

## **The Corte Real family and America**

Captain-donnee of Angra in 1474 and later of the island of São Jorge, João Vaz Corte-Real took part in voyages of exploration, and is said to have reached Newfoundland before 1472 and afterwards, with his two sons Gaspar and Miguel, the North American continent.

Gaspar Corte-Real was to carry out two voyages of discovery. The first, in 1500, is said to have reached Greenland and the entrance to Hudson Bay and to have sailed along the coast of Canada to the St. Lawrence River. On his second voyage, in 1501, his caravel disappeared.

In 1502, Miguel, anxious to discover his brother's fate, headed a rescue expedition which never returned. According to the inscription on the famous Dighton rock in Rhode Island he became chief of the Indians in the Wampanois and Providence region. These two unfortunate brothers were therefore the first Europeans to tread the soil of the North American continent.

Vasco Anes Corte-Real, the eldest brother, who had inherited the captaincies of Angra and São Jorge, wanted to set out in search of his kinsmen but was prevented from doing so by King Manuel I.

## **Flemish art in the Azores**

In the 15th and 16th centuries, relations with Flanders, which also supplied settlers, made it possible for the Azores to receive works of religious art from that region, which was then one of the artistic centres of Europe. Dating from that period, the Azores have about one hundred Flemish sculptures (mainly from the towns of Zoutleeuw and Malines, which identified them with initials) and fewer than twenty paintings.

This legacy constitutes a true artistic treasure, since so many works from that period were destroyed in Flanders by the wars of religion. It is possible that only Spain has a larger number of Flemish images in its museums and churches. For over a century Flemish art influenced the output of religious images in the Azores until, with the Spanish occupation (1583 to 1640) and the masters of Angra cathedral, a new aesthetic style was adopted.

## Folk Art

Feminine hands embroider linen with traditional motifs in which blue and green flowers predominate. They also make dainty lace, artificial flowers and the typical caps worn by shepherds. The men, on the other hand, account for the wickerwork, pottery, objects of daily use made from the island's cedar wood, ornaments made from animal horns, tin articles, colourful slippers, practical galoshes and the guitars that are heard on feast days.



### The counterpanes made on looms

The weaving tradition on Terceira dates back to the settlement period, when families depended on home-made woollen and linen cloth to make their own clothing.

The heavy old looms are still used to make woollen counterpanes in many colours and with geometrical designs. These counterpanes are used all over the island to cover beds and also to decorate windows on festive occasions.

### The "empires" of the Holy Ghost



The colourful chapels known as "impérios" (empires) or "teatros" (theatres) of the Holy Ghost, with their showy decorations and fantastic shapes, contrast with the whiteness of the villages of Terceira and are one of the most consummate and interesting forms of Azorean popular architecture and of the peculiarities of the local way of life and feelings.

Spread all over the island - where there are over fifty of them - most of these "impérios" date from the 19th century, when they replaced the original ones, part of which, it is supposed, were wooden affairs that could be put together and taken apart. Annexed to the "empíres" are the "larders", where the bread, meat and wine to be used in the festivals is kept; some of them have allegorical decorations.

At the top of their facades the "empíres" have a white dove or crown. The windows are large, usually with wrought iron gratings. Inside are the altar, with the niche where the crown and plate are placed, and the tables used by the members of the Brotherhood to receive alms and to offer food and wine to anyone they want to.

## **The houses with their curious chimneys**



The fact that most of the settlers of Terceira came from the Alentejo and Algarve in southern Portugal is revealed by the rural houses, with their white walls and coloured edgings along the doors, windows and corners. Made up of dressed stones forming a rectangular parallelepiped which ends in a wedge, the chimneys are called "mão-postas" by the people. To prevent rain from entering, many have a terminal part made of bricks or tiles.

Typical, too, are the "aprons" of dressed stone; rounded or of straight lines, they come down from the window sill and end in a fleur-de-lis, point or rosette.

Every house in Terceira has a surrounding garden and next to it is the "burra de milho" where the ears of maize are kept when they are not simply hung from the branches of trees, which offers a unique and unexpected sight.

# Festivities

## Holy Ghost Festivals - all over the island

Linked to Franciscan mysticism and the charitable spirit of Queen St. Elizabeth of Portugal (16th c.), the Festivals of the Holy Ghost came to the Azores with the first settlers. The invocation of the Holy Ghost at the time of the natural catastrophes that struck the archipelago and the fame of the consequent miracles, together with the hard life and isolation of the islands, all contributed to making the devotion sink deep roots and persist in the Azores although it has disappeared in Portugal with rare exceptions. Moreover, Azorean emigrants carried the devotion to Brazil, America and Africa, where the old ceremonies are now repeated in all their traditional splendour. The Holy Ghost Festivals are also held in Hawaii, where there is a large Azorean community.

Of a charitable nature, the festivals are aimed at distributing food to the needy. Everything starts on Trinity Sunday with the drawing of the names among the "brothers" to determine who will be the "mordomos" or stewards of the festival in the following year.



The first to be chosen keeps the insignia of the Holy Ghost (crown and sceptre on a silver plate) in his house until Low Sunday, when the festivities begin with "balhos" or dances accompanied by guitars and singing while the "throne" of the Holy Ghost is set up and profusely decorated in the "stateroom", the main apartment of the house. The "coronation" ceremony is then held in the parish church, the crown is placed on the head of a child or adult - the "emperor" - who carries in procession the symbols of his dignity to the house of another steward - a ceremony called "disposing of the crown" - who keeps them for a week. Afterwards, on every Sunday, the crown, sceptre and plate are passed on to the houses of the other stewards until the feast day itself, when

they are displayed in the "império" (literally, empire) or chapel.

On that day, the beef, offered in fulfilment of promises, is made into the typical "Holy Ghost soups" and the fragrant "alcatra," accompanied by various types of bread, "massa sovada" (biscuits made from kneaded dough) and the aromatic wine called "vinho de cheiro", is consumed by all the inhabitants of the parish and its visitors, in an atmosphere of great rejoicing. The festivals are never lacking in "foliões" or jesters, who are entrusted with the task of announcing, directing and animating the ceremonies with singing accompanied by music on a drum and cymbals, called "testos" by the people. In rural parishes, the festival ends with a lively and colourful "bullfight on a rope". The Festivals of the Holy Ghost extend from Whitsun to the end of the summer, spreading joy all over the island.

## **The St. John's Festivals or "City's Festival"**

Connected with the traditions of the so-called Popular Saints - St. Anthony, St. John and St. Peter - with the passage of the years these festivals have been turned into bullfighting events, with lively "bullfights on ropes", the setting loose of bulls in the streets and performances by "toureiros", on horse and on foot, in the arena. The St. John's Festivals usually include an ethnographic procession with old farm implements, folk costumes and the typical vehicles called "carros de toldo". The festivals last for several days around St. John's Day, 24th June. They are held in Angra do Heroísmo City.

## Bullfighting on a rope - all over the island

The bullfighting tradition on Terceira goes back to the 16th century, due to the abundance of cattle at that time



over 100,000 head, say the chroniclers - the fact that the first settlers came from provinces where bullfighting was deep-rooted and due to the later Castilian presence. This is why bullfighting has been practised for centuries in Terceira. It is also why a unique

technique has been developed here, one that is perfectly adapted to the local conditions, the skill of the bullfighters and the tastes of the population. We are referring to the always merry and lively "bullfighting on a rope", in which the movements of the bull are conditioned by a rope held by a group of men, called "pastores". The bull, bred on the pastures in the central region of the island and chosen for his ability to follow figures and be cunning, has his horns padded and is then let loose in the streets of the parish, the windows and balconies of which are crowded with people on that day. Fireworks are discharged and men and bull immediately start running about, with steps that are sometimes luckier than others.

"Parasol lucky" is the colourful name that has been given to one of the manoeuvres that have been devised: it consists in putting the parasol up suddenly in front of the bull and trying to avoid his horns in the subsequent charge, while the men on the rope moderate its momentum when they themselves are not dragged along or deliberately



give the bull a little more freedom to liven up the show. "Bullfighting on a rope" has evolved with the passing of time, and one of its most recent forms - although even it is already at least forty years old - is that of bullfights by the sea, on beaches and shallows where boats are run upon for repairs. In it, everyone, including the bull, takes repeated baths in salt water in the midst of the laughs, shouts and hisses of the spectators.

You are certain to catch a bullfight every day somewhere in Terceira between May 1st and October 15th.

## Some local Festivities

"São Joaninas" (24th of June is the highest point of the festival though the celebrations take usually 10 days), the popular marches are the most important activity of the celebrations. The tauromathic fair is inserted in the São Joaninas.



"Tourada à Corda" (Running of the Bulls) is another traditional activity all over the island. It consists in leaving the bull in the streets, tied with a rope, some men challenge the bull while other control the bull with the rope. There are "touradas" on a daily basis (sometimes 2 and 3 in one day). The season runs from May 1 to October 15.

"Festas of Praia da Vitória" (includes a gastronomical fair, with small restaurants from the whole of Portugal and some international as well) - second week of August.

"Angrajazz" (jazz Festival in Angra do Heroísmo: first weekend of October.

"Ramo Grande Festival" (world music): End of October/beginning of November.

# Gastronomy

A trading emporium frequented for centuries by galleons and other ships from exotic lands, Terceira saw its food lose its initial frugality during the 16th and 17th centuries. Over the years other influences came, adding the present richness and refinement to the island's gastronomy. These influences range from the presence of Spanish troops for almost 80 years, the liberal emigrants from absolutism and the Englishmen connected with the "orange trade", to the conventual recipes for sweets and liqueurs. The meat specialities called Holy Ghost soups, "alcatra" and "cozido", as well as the wine known as "vinho de cheiro", are connected with the festivities that animate the whole island in the summer. Having a place in the festivals is also "massa sovada" or kneaded dough, which is baked into biscuits of various shapes including some with the forms of animals and human beings. Other delicious dishes are "caldeirada" (fish stew) with apples, "sarapatel" (haggis) and "morcela" (a kind of sweet sausage) as well as the various traditional recipes for octopus, rabbit (with a special sauce called "molho de vilão"), crabs, goose barnacles and limpets.

But cooking on Terceira reaches perfection in the form of the over two hundred recipes for sweets. Most of these sweetmeats, such as "donas-amélias" and "coscorões", are made in accordance with conventual traditions. Fresh cheeses made from goat's milk and the "Ilha" cheese made from cow's milk put a fine finish to a meal. As regards wines, "Porto Martins" and "Pesqueiro" produce a "verdelho" while that of "Biscoitos" enjoys great local fame.

**Confections.** Sugar paste, mixed with water and a drop of vinegar, is transformed by the skilled hands of women confectioners into flowers, doves, chickens, swans, rabbits and calves - a varied, sweet and fantastic world of sugar. These sweetmeats are associated with the Festivals of the Holy Ghost and those of the patron saints, and are often used as an ex-voto of thanks for miracles obtained. In the latter case the confection takes the shape of the part of

the human body that has been cured (a breast, arm, leg, etc). These sweetmeats are long-lasting and therefore, when not consumed by visitors with a sweet tooth, make an original souvenir of Terceira.

**Sweet potatoes.** The mild climate of the Azores and its position as a port of call from the 15th to the 17th centuries enabled Terceira to add to the traditional European crops of the time new plants brought from other continents. This led to the fact that early in the 16th century, before it was introduced in Europe, the sweet potato was being planted in Terceira, whence it spread to the other islands. For the same reasons maize, yams and potatoes have been part of the diet of Azoreans from those early times.



"Massa sovada"



"Alcatra"



"Morcela"



"Alfininho"

# Landscape

## Caldeira de Guilherme Moniz

Huge volcanic crater (the largest in the archipelago), with a perimeter of 9 miles (15 km). Flat and verdant interior. Rounded edges, covered with trees.

## Algar do Carvão

Grottoes with a depth of about 328 feet (100 metres). Stalactites and stalagmites. Close to the fumaroles of the Sulphur Caverns called "Furnas do Enxofre" (manifestations of



volcanic activity). The caverns of "Água" and "Cabrito" and many others that exist in Terceira (totalling about 40 and resulting from the passage of gases during the cooling of lava at the time of volcanic eruptions) are an invitation to the thrilling experience of plunging into the bowels of the Earth. A guide and suitable equipment are necessary for visits.



## Biscoitos

Layers of lava resulting from former volcanic eruptions, which take on interesting shapes. Curious vineyards planted on lands devoid of vegetation, protected by stone walls - the

typical "curraletas".

## **Pico da Bagacina and Pico do Cabrito**

Volcanic heights set in large areas made up of lava. Pasture area for wild cattle.

## **Mata da Serreta**

Forest with luxuriant vegetation on the slopes of a volcanic peak. Excellent vista from the place known as "Peneireiro", taking in the sea. Ideal place to relax and commune with Nature.

## **Serra de Santa Bárbara**

A ridge that affords magnificent views of the island. Road crosses a verdant area, with rows of hydrangeas.



## **Lagoa do Negro and Lagoa do Ginjal**

Small lakes that surprise the visitor because of the calm and beauty of the surrounding countryside.

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Information based on the internet. Photos from the internet and from Lino Borges and Marilyn Almeida.