



THE VIVA QUINTA COMPANION SERIES

The São Miguel Insider Guide

A curated companion to the Azores' green isle,
from the team at VIVA Quinta.

VIVA QUINTA · CABOUCO · AZORES

A word from the farm

Some islands you visit. São Miguel you fall into. The largest of the nine Azorean islands rises from the mid-Atlantic in folds of impossible green — pastures stitched with hydrangea, crater lakes the colour of sea glass, and a coastline where the land simply stops and the ocean begins. It is a place where the earth still breathes: hot springs steam in the valleys, and dinner is buried in volcanic soil to cook all morning long.

We made this guide because guests kept asking us the same questions over breakfast — where to swim, where the locals eat, which trail to walk at first light. So we wrote it all down. What follows is not a brochure but a working notebook: the beaches we drive to on our days off, the cafés where the queijadas are still warm, the thermal pools worth the late-night detour. We have kept it practical and honest, the way we would tell a friend.

Take your time. Drive the long way. Pull over for the view. Eat the cozido slowly. The island rewards those who wander without a schedule, and there is no wrong turn here — only another valley you hadn't planned to find.

With warmth,
the VIVA Quinta team



How to use this guide

This guide is organised into seven sections, each one a different way to meet the island. Read it cover to cover before you arrive, or dip in section by section as your days unfold. Throughout, you'll find Insider Tip callouts — the small, hard-won details that turn a good visit into a great one.

INSIDER TIP

Opening hours and prices on São Miguel shift with the seasons, the weather, and the occasional family holiday. Everything here was accurate at the time of writing — but always call ahead or check online the day before you go. Sundays and low season are especially unpredictable.

The lay of the land

Sete Cidades (West)

Twin crater lakes — one blue, one green — ringed by hiking trails and dramatic viewpoints. The island's postcard.

Northwest Coast

Mosteiros and Ferraria: black-rock sea pools, ocean hot springs and the best Atlantic sunsets.

Central / Furnas

Geothermal heartland. Bubbling caldeiras, thermal gardens, and cozido cooked in the ground.

South Coast

Lagoa, Vila Franca do Campo and Caloura — calm swimming spots, seafood and the island's gentlest weather.

Northeast (Nordeste)

Quiet, lush and least-visited. Tea plantations, waterfalls and the high peak of Pico da Vara.

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Getting Oriented

São Miguel is small enough to circle in a day and deep enough to explore for weeks. Start here: how the island is shaped, how to get around its winding roads, and when to come.

THE FIVE FACES OF THE ISLAND

Regions at a glance

Roughly 65 km long and 16 km wide, São Miguel divides naturally into five characters. Knowing them helps you plan: most visitors base near Ponta Delgada in the south and make day trips east and west.

Sete Cidades

The west's volcanic showpiece: twin lakes, crater-rim trails, the most photographed view in the Azores.

Furnas & the Centre

Geothermal heart — steaming caldeiras, botanical thermal gardens and underground-cooked stew.

The South Coast

Lagoa, Vila Franca, Caloura. Calmest weather, sheltered swimming, seafood tascas and the airport.

Northwest

Mosteiros and Ferraria: lava sea pools, an ocean hot spring, and the island's finest sunsets.

Nordeste (Northeast)

Green, quiet and underrated — tea fields, deep ravines, waterfalls and the high peak of Pico da Vara.



Sete Cidades from Vista do Rei

Renting & driving

Rent a small car

A rental car is essentially essential — public transport is sparse and built for residents, not sightseers. Choose the smallest car you're comfortable in: many roads through villages and up to viewpoints are single-lane, walled and steep. A compact saves you grief on parking and blind corners.

Roads & signage

The EN1-1A ring road circles the island and is well surfaced. Trail signs use the PR prefix (Pequena Rota) — e.g. PR4SMI for the Sete Cidades crater walk, PR2SMI for Lagoa do Fogo. Mountain roads can fill with low cloud quickly; slow right down when the fog rolls in.

Fuel & costs

Fuel is pricier than mainland Portugal — budget roughly €1.80–2.00 per litre. Stations cluster around towns and close earlier in rural areas, so fill up before heading to Nordeste or Sete Cidades. Most accept cards.

Parking

Free or cheap almost everywhere. In Ponta Delgada use the blue-line metered bays or the harbour car parks. At popular viewpoints and trailheads, arrive early — the small lots at Vista do Rei and Caldeira Velha fill fast by mid-morning.

WHEN TO VISIT

Weather & seasons

In the Azores, the saying goes that all four seasons can dance through a single day — morning mist over emerald hills, midday sun on the volcanic shore, an afternoon shower along the hydrangea-lined lanes. The Gulf Stream keeps things gentle year-round, rarely below 13°C or above 27°C, so there is no bad time to come — only different islands to meet. Whenever you visit, pack layers and a rain shell.

Spring (Mar–May)

Hillsides at their greenest, wildflowers waking and the crowds still thin — the dreamy season for the geothermal pools of Furnas and the trails of Sete Cidades and Lagoa do Fogo. May brings the Festas do Senhor Santo Cristo, the Azores' biggest festival. Variable rain; bring a shell.

Summer (Jun–Sep)

Warmest, driest and liveliest: 18–27°C, calm seas and the island bursting with hydrangeas. Prime time for swimming in lava pools, snorkelling and whale-watching, and for June's São João street parties. It is also the busiest stretch — book pools, cozido and stays well ahead.

Autumn (Oct–Nov)

Cooler, calmer and quieter, with the sea still swimmable into October and the light turning golden. October is grape-harvest season — a fine time to sip your way through small island vineyards between hikes.

Winter (Dec–Feb)

Low-key and lush, rarely dipping below 13°C. The greenery never fades, the thermal baths are at their most magical in the cool, and winter swells make Santa Bárbara and Ribeira Grande a hidden gem for surfers. Some trails turn muddy; pack waterproofs.

WHAT TO PACK

A waterproof jacket and quick-dry layers (always). Sturdy shoes for muddy trails. A dark swimsuit for the iron-rich thermal pools — light fabrics stain orange. Swim shoes for rocky sea pools, and a small towel you don't mind tinting brown.

Where to Eat & Drink

Atlantic fish hauled in that morning, beef from cows grazing the green hills, limpets grilled in garlic butter, and a stew cooked in the living earth. São Miguel eats simply and superbly.

Where the locals eat

Almost everywhere on São Miguel eats well, so wander in anywhere that catches your eye. That said, these are the rooms our guests come back raving about — the ones we book ourselves.

A Tasca — Ponta Delgada

WHERE R. do Aljube 16, old town

ORDER Sesame-crusted tuna; octopus salad

A warm, much-loved tavern serving authentic Azorean cooking with real care. It fills fast and the kitchen is small — arrive early to be sure of a table.

Bar Caloura — Água de Pau

WHERE R. da Caloura 20, south coast

ORDER Grilled fish of the day & lapas

A south-coast favourite set right beside the sea, beloved for impeccably grilled fish and garlicky limpets. There are natural swimming pools alongside, so plan a dip before or after. No reservations — come for a late lunch.

Michel — Ponta Delgada

WHERE R. Eng. José Cordeiro 55

ORDER Sesame-crusted tuna; duck

One of the island's finest dining rooms — Azorean cuisine given a contemporary, confident turn in a cosy setting. Reservations are essential.

Restaurante Tony's — Furnas

WHERE Largo do Teatro, Furnas

ORDER Cozido das Furnas

The classic address for cozido slow-cooked in the volcanic ground, served in generous, family-style portions. Reserve the cozido a day ahead so they bury a pot for you.

ALSO WORTH A TABLE

A Terra at the Octant Hotel for fine dining across from the marina · Quinta dos Sabores (Rabo de Peixe) for a farm-to-table tasting menu — tour the farm between courses · Associação Agrícola (Campo de Santana) for the island's best beef steaks.

THE ISLAND'S SIGNATURE DISH

Cozido das Furnas



Cozido das Furnas, slow-cooked in volcanic earth and plated for lunch

In Furnas, the ground itself is the oven. Each morning, restaurants lower pots layered with beef, pork, chicken, smoked chouriço, blood sausage, cabbage, carrot, potato and yam into holes dug beside the lake. Six hours of geothermal steam later, the cozido emerges meltingly tender and faintly earthy.

WHERE

Tony's in Furnas is the classic; Vale das Furnas and the Terra Nostra restaurant also excellent.

COST

~€20–30 per person; one portion is generous.

WHEN

Lunch only — buried at dawn, dug out around midday.

BOOK AHEAD

Essential — reserve the day before so they bury a pot for you.

INSIDER TIP

Skip breakfast — portions are enormous. Walk to the lakeshore steam vents to watch the pots being dug out: a ritual worth seeing, and free.

Cafés & pastéis

Pull into any village pastelaria mid-morning for a galão and whatever's freshest.

Queijadas da Vila

Cheese-and-egg custard tarts from Vila Franca. The originals: Queijadas do Morgado.

Queijada de inhame

Furnas yam twist — earthier and denser. Try Caldeiras & Vulcões.

Pão-de-ló

Barely-set sponge cake, deliberately gooey in the centre.

Bolos lêvedos

Springy griddle breads — best warm with butter. A Furnas staple.

Malassadas

Fried dough dusted in sugar. Eat them hot.

Ananas (pineapple)

Hothouse-grown Azorean pineapple in tarts, liqueurs and jams.

Beaches & Coastal Walks

São Miguel's shore is volcanic and varied: black-sand surf beaches, sheltered swimming coves, natural lava pools and cliff paths where the Atlantic crashes far below.

Six beaches worth the drive

Praia do Pópulo

SURF / CITY BEACH

Where: E of Ponta Delgada · Parking: Roadside, easy · Best: Morning

The closest real beach to the capital — dark sand, rock pools and a reliable surf break. Lifeguards and cafés in summer make it the easy default after a city morning.

Praia dos Mosteiros

SCENIC / SUNSET

Where: NW coast, Mosteiros · Parking: Village lots · Best: Late afternoon

Black volcanic sand framed by the jagged Mosteiros islets, with natural sea pools alongside. The west-facing aspect makes it the island's great sunset beach.

Praia de Santa Bárbara

SURF

Where: Ribeira Grande, N coast · Parking: Large lot · Best: All day

A long, wild north-coast surf beach with a school and a stylish beach club. Strong currents mean it's for surfing and paddling more than calm swimming — heed the flags.

...and a few more

Praia da Caloura

CALM / FAMILY

Where: Água de Pau, S coast · Parking: Small, arrive early · Best: Midday

A tiny, sheltered harbour swimming spot on the sunny south coast — calm, clear water ideal for families and a swim before lunch at nearby Bar Caloura.

Praia do Lombo Gordo

WILD / QUIET

Where: Near Povoação, SE · Parking: Roadside · Best: Summer

A remote dark-sand cove in the island's quiet southeast. Few crowds and a real end-of-the-road feel; bring everything you need, as facilities are minimal.

Praia das Milícias

FAMILY / CITY

Where: São Roque, E of PDL · Parking: Good · Best: Morning

The largest beach near Ponta Delgada — broad dark sand, gentle for families, with cafés and summer lifeguards. A relaxed spot close to town.

Coastal walks



The coastal village of Mosteiros and its natural sea pools on the northwest coast

Ponta da Ferraria walk

From the lighthouse at Ponta da Ferraria, a coastal path traces black lava cliffs down to the ocean hot spring (see Section 4). Wild, windswept and dramatic; allow an hour return and wear grippy shoes — the rock is uneven and slick near the water.

Mosteiros sea pools

An easy stroll links the village beach to a cluster of natural lava-rock swimming pools, sheltered from the open Atlantic. Time it for late afternoon, swim as the light goes gold, then stay for the sunset behind the islets.

Lagoa Pedestrian Seafront Walk

A gentle paved pathway runs right along the sea in Lagoa, threading past natural sea pools where you can break off for a swim. It is one of our favourite easy strolls — and our oceanfront Quinta do Mar in Atalhada has direct access onto it.

INSIDER TIP

Both walks are tide-dependent. The Ferrara hot spring only works around low tide, and the Mosteiros pools are calmest then too — check a tide table (search 'Ponta Delgada tides') before setting out.

Whale & dolphin watching



A whale breaches off São Miguel — among the finest whale-watching waters on earth

The deep Atlantic off São Miguel is among the best places in the world to watch whales. Resident sperm whales are seen year-round, and in spring the migratory giants pass through — blue, fin and humpback whales between roughly April and June. Pods of common, bottlenose and Atlantic spotted dolphins play in these waters all year. Boats leave from Ponta Delgada marina and Vila Franca do Campo, and spotters posted on the coastal cliffs radio sightings to the skippers, keeping success rates high.

Tours: ~3 hours · Cost: ~€60–75 per adult · Best: Morning, for calm seas & light

Dress for the open ocean: bring layers and a wind- and waterproof jacket, and take a sea-sickness tablet beforehand if you are prone to it. Mornings usually mean calmer water and softer light for photographs.

INSIDER TIP

Smaller RIB boats are quick and get you closest to the animals; larger catamarans ride more gently and are the kinder choice for children or anyone prone to seasickness. Pick the boat to suit your crew.

Terra Nostra Garden Park

THE ISLAND'S ICON



The iron-rich thermal pool at the heart of Terra Nostra

History

In 1782, Thomas Hickling — a Boston merchant enchanted by the transcendent beauty of the Azores — acquired this plot in the Furnas valley and built a wooden summer house known as Yankee Hall. He laid out the first gardens around the iron-rich thermal spring, planting an English oak that still stands today. Appointed US Vice-Consul to São Miguel in 1795, Hickling shaped the estate into a remarkable retreat. In 1848 the property passed to the Viscounts of Praia, whose family expanded the grounds through the 19th century, and in the 1930s Vasco Bensaude extended the park to its present 12.5 hectares with over 3,000 botanical species — including one of Europe's most important collections of cycads and camellias.

At the garden's heart, a vast rust-coloured thermal pool is fed by iron-rich volcanic water at a constant 38°C / 100°F. Floating in the warm, ochre water beneath towering tree ferns and ancient camellias is one of the island's defining experiences. Wander the gardens after — endemic Azorean flora, koi ponds and shaded avenues of araucarias.

Entry: ~€10 · Hours: ~10:00–18:00 daily (longer in summer) · Where: Furnas village

INSIDER TIP

Wear a dark swimsuit you don't love — the iron permanently stains light fabric orange. Bring a towel you don't mind tinting too. Go early or near closing to beat the tour-bus crowds, and rinse off well after.

TWO MORE SOAKS WORTH THE TRIP

Caldeira Velha & Dona Beija

Caldeira Velha

Entry: ~€3–8 · Hours: Daytime, timed slots · Where: Slopes of Lagoa do Fogo

A lush, jungle-like reserve where a warm waterfall tumbles into a steaming natural pool, with shallower thermal basins below. Pure tropical fantasy — ferns dripping, mist rising, water around body temperature.

INSIDER TIP

Capacity is limited and timed — book online ahead in summer or you may be turned away. Mornings are quietest; it's on the road between Ribeira Grande and Lagoa do Fogo.



A geothermal pool in the Furnas valley, São Miguel

Poça da Dona Beija

Entry: ~€8 · Hours: Until 23:00 · Where: Furnas

Five sculpted thermal pools fed by a warm stream in Furnas, beautifully landscaped and open late into the night. The warm orange water and lantern-lit setting make it especially romantic after dark.

INSIDER TIP

Come in the evening — far fewer people and a magical atmosphere once the sun drops. Same dark-swimsuit rule applies; the water is iron-rich.

Ponta da Ferraria



The rugged volcanic coastline of São Miguel

On the island's western tip, hot volcanic water seeps directly into a sheltered ocean inlet. At low tide the sea here turns bath-warm; at high tide the cold Atlantic takes over. Ropes are strung across the pool to hold onto against the swell. Floating in naturally heated seawater as waves break around you is one of São Miguel's most singular, slightly wild pleasures — and the natural pool is free.

Cost: Free (natural pool) · Where: Ponta da Ferraria, NW tip · Key: Go at low tide

INSIDER TIP

This only works for an hour or two around low tide — outside that window the water is cold and the swell dangerous. Check tide tables, hold the ropes, wear swim shoes for the rocks, and never go in rough seas. A spa above offers a warm shower afterwards.

Trails & Volcanic Land

This is a young, restless island, and its trails take you to its raw edges — crater rims, mirror-still lakes, bubbling mud and a coastline carved by fire. Lace up.

Sete Cidades



The blue and green lakes of Sete Cidades from Miradouro da Vista do Rei

Walking the crater rim

PR4SMI · ~12 km

Time: 4–5 hrs · Effort: Moderate · Start: Vista do Rei

A spectacular loop around the caldera rim with the blue and green lakes shimmering below the whole way. From the Vista do Rei viewpoint you also pass the eerie shell of an abandoned luxury hotel — a cult photo spot. Trails can be muddy and cloud rolls in fast; pick a clear morning.

INSIDER TIP

Arrive at sunrise to catch the lakes before the cloud and the weekend tour buses. The light is best early, and you'll have the abandoned hotel almost to yourself.

Lagoa do Fogo & Pico da Vara

Lagoa do Fogo

PR2SMI · ~6 km

Time: 2–3 hrs · Effort: Moderate · Swim: Yes — cold

A protected crater lake ringed by wild vegetation, with no roads to its shore. The trail descends steeply to white-sand inlets where you can swim in the (bracing) water. Utterly unspoilt — one of the island's great walks.

INSIDER TIP

It's a steep climb back up — save energy. The upper viewpoint on the road is often above the cloud line, so even a grey day can clear higher up.

Pico da Vara

PR · full day

Time: 5–7 hrs · Effort: Hard · Height: 1,103 m

The island's highest peak, deep in the Nordeste, crowned by protected laurisilva forest and home to the rare Azores bullfinch. A serious full-day hike for experienced walkers, often in mist — the reward is total wilderness.

INSIDER TIP

Only attempt it in clear, settled weather and start early. Cloud and wind at the summit are common; carry layers, water and a map, and tell someone your plan.

Caldeiras & Lombadas



Bubbling mud pots and fumaroles at the Caldeiras das Furnas

Caldeiras das Furnas

free

Cost: Free · Where: Furnas village & lakeside · Time: 30–60 min

Right in the village, fenced walkways wind past hissing fumaroles and pots of grey mud bubbling like porridge. It's where the cozido is buried each morning. The smell of sulphur is strong but harmless — lean in, it's the island showing you its inner workings.

INSIDER TIP

Stay on the marked paths — the ground is genuinely scalding. Locals fill jugs at the iron-rich mineral fountains; taste the famous (and famously eggy) waters if you dare.

Lombadas valley

Northeast of Furnas, the lush Ribeira dos Caldeirões and Lombadas area hide waterfalls, old mineral-water springs and restored watermills among dense greenery — a peaceful detour for those exploring the centre and northeast of the island.

Markets, Crafts & Culture

Beyond the landscapes lies a living island culture — Saturday markets piled with cheese and fruit, Europe's only tea fields, pineapples grown under glass, and festivals that fill the streets.

Markets & tea fields

Mercado da Graça

PONTA DELGADA

Ponta Delgada's covered market is the island's pantry: stalls of fresh queijo fresco and aged São Jorge cheese, tree-ripened fruit, just-landed fish, and the famous Azorean pineapple. Mornings are liveliest, and Saturday is the big day, when producers come in from across the island.

INSIDER TIP

Come before 11am on a Saturday for the best choice. Buy local cheese and a jar of pineapple jam for an easy picnic, and chat to the fish sellers — they'll tell you what's freshest.

Tea plantations

São Miguel is home to the only tea commercially grown in Europe — a centuries-old tradition kept alive on the island's misty north coast by two family estates.



Chá Gorreana, working since 1883

Chá Gorreana

Founded 1883, family-run for five generations and the larger of the two. Free self-guided tours take you through the working fields and original antique machinery still in daily use. The on-site café serves complimentary tea alongside traditional bolo lêvedo sweet bread. Located in Maia on the north coast. Black and green teas grown without pesticides; buy direct.

Chá Porto Formoso

Smaller and more intimate, restored to production in 1998. Guided tours include a tea tasting and views over neat terraces that tumble toward the sea. Located in Porto Formoso, just east of Ribeira Grande. Both black and green teas available pesticide-free; visitors can buy direct.

Pineapples & festivals

Pineapple plantations

At Plantação A Arruda in Fajã de Baixo, just outside Ponta Delgada, Azorean pineapples grow slowly under glasshouses over nearly two years — a tradition dating to the 19th century. The free, self-guided tour winds through steamy greenhouses and ends at a shop selling pineapple liqueur and jam. Our own Quinta do Ananás in São Roque welcomes visitors for tours of the traditional Azorean wooden greenhouses where the prized Smooth Cayenne pineapples ripen under glass.



Azorean Smooth Cayenne pineapples, freshly picked

Festivals through the year

Romeiros de Cuaresma

Late Feb–Easter

Groups of men in homespun shawls walk the entire island in eight days, stopping at chapels to pray; you'll hear their chanting before you see them on the road.

Festas do Senhor Santo Cristo

May

The Azores' biggest religious festival floods Ponta Delgada with flower-carpeted processions, lights and crowds.

Festas do Espírito Santo

May–Aug

Village impérios — small painted chapels — host communal soup feasts open to all; crowned children parade with the silver Holy Spirit crown.

Sanjoaninas (São João)

Late June

Midsummer bonfires, marchas (parades), grilled sardines and music — street parties across Ponta Delgada and the towns.

Cavalhadas de São Pedro

Late June

Ribeira Grande's historical horse parade re-enacting medieval traditions — colour, pageantry and a crowd that knows every rider.

The White Party (Festa Branca)

Early Aug

A glamorous summer evening in Ponta Delgada where guests dress head to toe in white — one of the social highlights of the Azorean summer season.

Festas de Nossa Senhora da Guia

Late Aug

Vila Franca do Campo's pilgrimage to the chapel on the iconic rocky islet — boats, prayers and the island's gentlest harbour at its most festive.

Crafts & keepsakes

Azorean craft runs deep, shaped by farming, fishing and centuries of isolation. The best souvenirs are the useful, made-here kind — look for them in village workshops and the Ponta Delgada market rather than airport gift shops.

Pottery (Lagoa)

The town of Lagoa — just down the road from VIVA Quinta — has a long ceramics tradition. Hand-painted tiles, bowls and jugs in blues and earth tones.

Scrimshaw

Intricate carving and engraving on whale teeth and bone, a legacy of the island's whaling past, now worked in legal substitutes. See the museum collections in Horta and local galleries.

Woven goods & embroidery

Hand-woven blankets, baskets and fine embroidery — practical island crafts still made in homes and small ateliers.

Local edibles

Chá Gorreana tea, pineapple liqueur, queijadas and local cheese travel well and capture the island in a jar.

INSIDER TIP

Ask at VIVA Quinta — we keep a short list of the potters, weavers and producers we know personally, and can point you to whoever's working that week.

Practical Notes

EVERYTHING ELSE YOU NEED

Money & ATMs	Euro (€). ATMs — Multibanco — are everywhere and reliable; cards are widely accepted, though small tascas and markets may prefer cash.
Tipping	Not obligatory, but rounding up or leaving 5–10% for good service in restaurants is appreciated.
Language	Portuguese. English is widely spoken in tourist areas, hotels and restaurants; a few words of Portuguese go a long way in villages.
Time zone	The Azores run on UTC–1 — one hour behind mainland Portugal, and the same as the UK in winter.
Mobile & data	Good 4G/5G coverage from Vodafone and MEO across populated areas; signal drops in remote valleys and on high trails.

Health, safety & essentials

Emergencies

Dial 112 for police, fire and ambulance — free from any phone, with English-speaking operators.

Safety

São Miguel is very safe with low crime. Take normal precautions with valuables; the real hazards are natural — tides, cliffs, scalding ground and fast-changing mountain weather.

Pharmacies

Farmácias (green cross) are in every town for minor ailments and advice; rotas show the nearest after-hours pharmacy on the door.

Hospital

Two options in Ponta Delgada: Hospital do Divino Espírito Santo (public) on Av. D. Manuel I — the main public hospital with a 24-hour emergency department. For shorter waits and English-speaking staff, the private CUF Açores Hospital is São Miguel's CUF-group facility, affiliated with the same network as mainland Portugal's leading private hospitals.

Driving safely

Roads are narrow and winding with sudden fog, free-roaming cattle and steep drops. Drive slowly, use lay-bys to let locals pass, and never stop in the road for photos.

Water & sun

Tap water is safe to drink. The Atlantic sun is stronger than it feels through cloud — sunscreen up, even on grey days.

Groceries & essentials

Self-catering for a few days, or just topping up? Supplies are easy to find. Two Portuguese supermarket chains — Continente and Pingo Doce — cover the island, with at least one in each of the main towns: Ponta Delgada, Ribeira Grande and Vila Franca do Campo.

Supermarkets

The largest supermarket on the island is the Continente Modelo inside Parque Atlântico, the Azores' biggest shopping centre in Ponta Delgada — everything under one roof, plus a cinema and food court. For something closer to many south-coast stays, the Pingo Doce at Rabo de Peixe is hard to miss in its bright green-and-black livery; it has a bakery, butcher and a fishmonger who will gut, scale and bone your fish on request (fillets are not the norm here — just ask).

A grocery with a view

The large Pingo Doce in Vila Franca do Campo, just off the highway on Avenida das Comunidades Emigrantes, has a fresh-food cafeteria and a covered terrace with arguably the finest ocean view of any supermarket anywhere. Worth a stop for a cheap, well-made lunch.

Farmers' market

The Mercado Agrícola de Santana near Campo de Santana runs every Thursday morning — local produce, dairy, meats and handmade goods straight from the island's farmers.

Pharmacies & ATMs

Farmácias (green cross) handle minor ailments and advice; a rota on the door shows the nearest after-hours pharmacy, and the all-night pharmacy line is +351 808 250 143. Cash comes from the reliable Multibanco ATM network, found in every town; cards are widely accepted, though small tascas and markets may prefer cash.

Forgotten your kit?

Decathlon in Ponta Delgada stocks sports gear, outdoor clothing and accessories, and offers on-the-spot bike servicing — handy if you left walking shoes or a rain shell at home.



YOUR BASE ON THE ISLAND

About VIVA Quinta



The green pastures of São Miguel, the landscape VIVA Quinta calls home

VIVA Quinta is a boutique agricultural retreat — a sanctuary in the Azores — set among the fields of Cabouco, Lagoa, on São Miguel's gentle south coast. We are a working regenerative farm and a small hospitality house, built on the idea that the best way to know this island is to slow down and live alongside it for a while. We are also a family of three farms, each with its own character.

VIVA Quinta · Cabouco

Our main sanctuary on the gentle south coast — calm rooms, a long table for seasonal meals, and hands-in-the-soil workshops. Your quiet base between island adventures.

Quinta do Ananás · São Roque

A working pineapple farm just minutes from Ponta Delgada, with eight traditional Azorean wooden greenhouses bearing the DOP seal and a small herd of goats and sheep guests are welcome to help feed.

Quinta do Mar · Atalhada, Lagoa

Our oceanfront farm where the slower rhythms of the coast shape the stay. Figs, grapes, cherimoya, papaya and guava grow close to the Atlantic — sea air, open views and a quieter, more expansive sense of retreat.

[Plan your stay](#)

vivaquinta.com

OBRIGADO · THANK YOU

Until we meet on the green isle

We hope this guide sends you somewhere wonderful — a hidden cove, a steaming pool, a long lunch that runs into the afternoon. Travel gently, eat well, and let São Miguel set the pace.

With warmth, the VIVA Quinta team



VIVA QUINTA
A SANCTUARY IN THE AZORES

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