
Monumento Natural Regional da Gruta das Torres

ABOUT

The Gruta das Torres, located on the island of Pico at an altitude of 285 metres, is the largest lava tunnel known to exist in the Azores, with a total length of roughly 5150 metres and a maximum height of 15 metres.

It consists of a large main tunnel and several secondary tunnels above and to the sides, which, despite being smaller in size, have a wide range of geological structures.

The interior is rich in geological formations, resulting in the presence of various types of lava stalactites and stalagmites, lateral "side-benches", lava balls, striated walls and long rope-shaped strings of lava. One of the most interesting aspects is the floor of the cave which presents a variety of forms, such as a fine, smooth crust under which the lava continued to flow, taking on the form of a rope or a rough, prickly and irregular surface, with pointed protuberances.

It should be noted that the architectural project for the Visitors' Support Centre was selected for the "European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award 2007", organised by the European Union, in partnership with the Mies van der Rohe Foundation in Barcelona.

The Centre's innovative project reproduces the image of the local building systems used in the livestock pens found in the landscape of Pico island, classified as a World Heritage zone. One should also note the similarity of the texture of the finishing, the black hue and the vitrified lava found within the Grotto. In order to minimise the impact on the soil, the structure has been mounted on a rail.

Contacts

Criação Velha Madalena - Ilha do Pico

Characteristics and Services

Altitude: 295m

Length: 5140m

Signposted routes

Guided Tours

Outdoor parking

Temperature: 15°C

Timetable

May and October - Weekend: 2:30pm - 5:30pm June and September: 2:30pm - 5:30pm; July and August: 10am - 12pm / 2:30pm - 5:30pm

Other information

Access for persons with disabilities in the visitor's centre