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# The Azores: Nine Islands - A Geopark

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## ABOUT



Photo: Carlos Duarte

### The Azores: Nine Islands - A Geopark

The Azores originated as a result of the 1766 volcanoes that are to be found in this archipelago, nine of which are still active. The **Azores Geopark** was born out of all this natural wealth, as part of the **European and Global Network of Geoparks**. Its aim is to promote and protect the geological heritage of the archipelago.

The **Azores Geopark is unique worldwide** because it offers **121 geosites** scattered throughout the nine islands and surrounding marine area, mirroring the vast volcanic geodiversity of the archipelago. There are nine islands, but only one Geopark!

In the subsoil, there are nearly three hundred volcanic cavities in the form of caves, grottoes and crevices. On the landscape, there are dry calderas, lakes in craters, fumarolic fields and hot springs. Underwater geothermal sources are found out at sea. The majestic mountain of Pico, whose cone is still intact, seems to protect all these geological riches. As a testimony to the power of nature, the archipelago's volcanic history is impressive for the diversity of the region's geological heritage that reflects a geological memory of 10 million years.

The Azores Geopark Association has created new services, routes and interpretative products, implementing a high level of quality geotourism in the region, in close connection with other strands of Nature Tourism.

Some of existing **routes** it is possible to take are:

- **Volcanic cavities route**

To discover the underground world of the islands.

- **Viewpoints Route**

To discover the geolandscape by car

- **Footpath Route**

To discover the geosites on foot

- **Hydrotherapy Route**

To discover the strength of the volcanoes, enjoying the advantages of the spa waters and mud baths in terms of health, leisure and well-being.

- **Science Centres Route**

To better understand and interpret the volcanic phenomena.

You can also combine the discovery of this amazing world of geotourism with an itinerary that includes the whole **family!**

Start the day at a viewpoint from which you can admire the extraordinary landscape created by the Azores' volcanoes. Then, go down into the subterranean depths of one of several cavities prepared for this purpose. They are magical

places, suitable for even the smallest to visit.

After returning to the surface, it's always good to take a walk to enjoy the surrounding landscape.

Whenever the heat rises, there's nothing like a refreshing dip in a natural pool.

A visit to a museum or interpretation centre will provide answers to any questions you have as a result of the rich experiences of a day spent in a world of volcanoes.

**With so many suggestions, you can't help getting to know and enjoy the volcanoes of the Azores... an eruption of Flavours, Aromas and Experiences!**

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#### **USEFUL INFORMATION**

- Visit the Azores Geopark website:

[www.azoresgeopark.com](http://www.azoresgeopark.com)

- Follow the Azores Geopark on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Geoacores>

- Visit the Azores website:

<http://www.visitazores.com/pt-pt/experience-the-azores/geotourism>

- Brochure in English:

[http://www.azoresgeopark.com/media/docs/Azores\\_Geopark\\_brochure.jpg](http://www.azoresgeopark.com/media/docs/Azores_Geopark_brochure.jpg)

- Video

The volcanic mystic in the Azores | Top Ten Places To Travel

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=mGCHxH5bgTQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mGCHxH5bgTQ)