

TRAILS OF THE AZORES



TERCEIRA



PRC6 TER

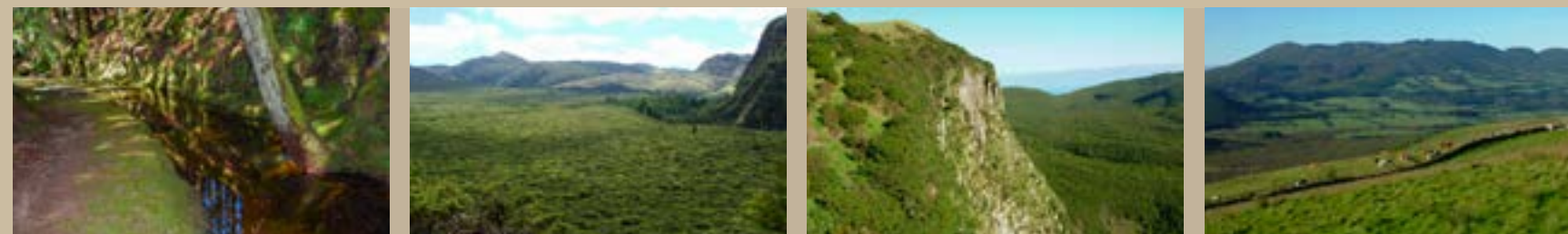
Rocha do Chambre

Difficulty: Medium Extension: 9,3 km Time Average: 2:30h Category: Circular

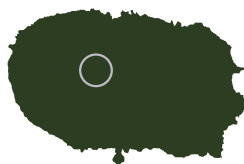
The walking trail begins next to the regional road that links the city of Angra, in the south of the island, to the parish of Biscoitos, in the northern region. Actually, the whole hike is made within this parish's boundaries, whose name is inspired on the recent lava mantles that covered its terrain.

As soon as the hike begins along a red lapilli path, you will see on both sides the typical green mantle that covers the lava flow that ran here in 1761. It consists mostly of low woods of *Erica azorica*, *Morella faya*, *Juniperus brevifolia*, *Laurus azorica*, *Myrsine africana* and some invasive species like the *Pittosporum undulatum*.

You will see a fork to your left, but ignore it and keep going straight forward, making a sharp turn to the right in this path that serves the pastures of Malha Grande. After covering an approximately 250 metres distance, you will (...)



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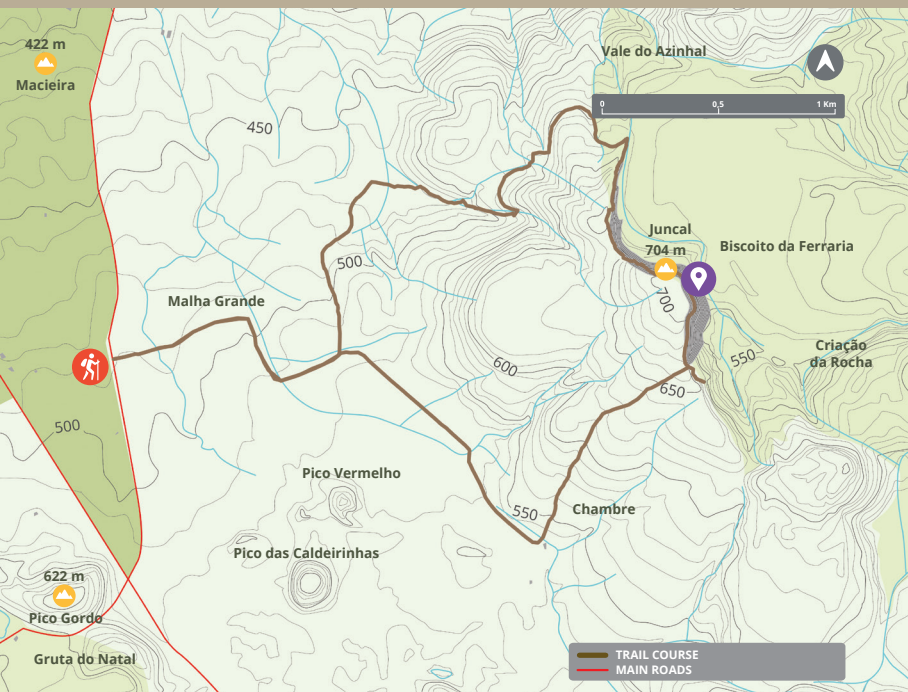


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Rocha do Chambre

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Starting point

38° 44' 54.61" N;
27° 15' 47.56" O



Peak



Highlight

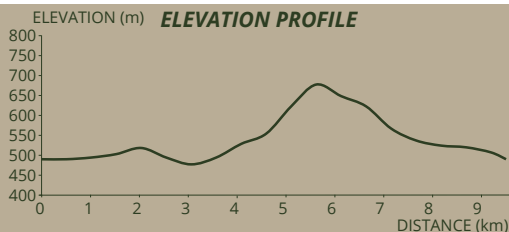
Terceira Island
Natural Park



Protected Area for the Management
of Habitats and Species



Natural
Reserve



PRC6 TER *Rocha do Chambre*

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You will see a fork to your left, but ignore it and keep going straight forward, making a sharp turn to the right in this path that serves the pastures of Malha Grande. After covering an approximately 250 metres distance, you will reach a fork, where you must turn left, knowing that you will cover the path to the right on your way back.

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About 200 metres ahead, you leave the red lapilli path and enter a shortcut next to the last wooden gate. The lava that spread over the older arable lands created a trail of scoriasceous rock whose stones now divide the pastures. It is an approximately 650 metres long shortcut, uncomfortable to walk on, requiring from you extreme caution when placing your feet on the loose and sharp-edged stones. On your right, the pastures stretch up the Juncal, the elevation that precedes the top of the Rocha do Chambre, which is your destination in this hiking trail. On your left, to the West, is the volcanic massif of the Serra de Santa Bárbara, a more recent part of the island where its highest point is located.

On your right, you will see a new path that meets the one you are covering now. Take it and go along towards a gate made of small trunks and pallets. Past that gate, walk about 5m metres towards a thicket of very thick *Cryptomeria japonica* that grow in a depression where water falls and a rivulet runs. The sign tell you to go around that “depression” heading left so as to avoid the wet areas formed at the bottom of the trunks after heavy rainfalls. However, if the ground is dry, you can go up that rivulet until you find a bridge, crossing it to the right and continuing the hike. This is, without a doubt, the most pleasurable option, for it allows you to walk next to the tree trunks, some of which with rather unusual shapes.

After crossing the bridge, you will enter an old shortcut that goes up along the right bank of this stream, under the roof created by the



ROCHA DO CHAMBRE

It consists of what is left of the west edge after the last great trachytic eruption in this island occurred, in a period when other three massifs were already formed: Cinco Picos, Guilherme Moniz and Santa Bárbara. It is known as Pico Alto Massif because it is the highest elevation within its boundaries. To have an idea of the original crater's size, if you turn East, you will see the opposite edge 2800 metres away. In the meantime, other eruptions occurred inside it, creating countless lava domes and lava torrents, like that of the Biscoito Rachado, with its clearly noticeable thick drained lavas in the landscape in front of you that filled a significant part of this crater with lava: the lower levelled area that stretches under your feet, called the Biscoito da Ferraria. Behind the Biscoito Rachado is the highest point in this part of the island: the Pico Alto, with 809 metres of altitude. It is estimated that the eruption on the Pico Alto occurred approximately 100 000 years ago.

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woods. You walk a few metres along pastures and, past two gates very close to one another, you enter the woods once again. While you go up this shortcut of stones, trunks and roots, you will hear the sound of small waterfalls and see some ferns and mosses through the foliage that has fallen from the trees, and that is just about it. You will cross another bridge and see that the trees in the slopes somewhat resemble walking sticks turned upside down. The shortcut ends and, immediately after, you can finally cross the stream and enter a pasture you must cover. Once you reach the end of the pasture, you must walk along a footpath in order to enter the path on the opposite side.

Walk up this damaged secondary road for 170 metres, until you reach its end. Keep going forward, penetrating the woods, and crossing it until you reach one of the *Azinhã's* stream tributaries, walking along the right bank in between the trees, where you see very little marks or signs indicating that someone has been here. At some point, you cross the stream further above, and you must keep going up as the trail gets less steep until you reach the northern —and the lowest — part of the top of the Rocha do Chambre.

The woods stretch down to the left for a long distance, and, a bit more to the right, they go up the Pico das Pardelas. Even more to the right, the Biscoito Rachado still displays its elevations and gorges. Do not spend too much time





here, for as you walk towards the rock's highest peak along the right side you will find better points to enjoy the landscape.

A thick rope and some steps made of metal grids will help you cover safely the steepest climb, even though some "giant" steps are occasionally required. Use the rope, because the trunks are covered with what resembles some sort of sticky alga. Small "windows" in the vegetation will allow you to see the landscape. The staircase ends and you move away from the rock for a few minutes before you start climbing again. You enter a wood once more. The rock in front of you is covered with big yellowish green tufts of *Sphagnum sp.*

The whole hiking trail is made within the *Protected Area for the Management of Habitats or Species from the Central Plateau and Northwest Coast*, but from this rock, and as far as the eye can see, we are presented with the view of the *Nature Reserve of Biscoito da Ferraria and Pico Alto*. This area was also classified as *Ramsar Site* in 2008, with the name *Central Plateau of Terceira* (Furnas do Enxofre and Algar do Carvão).

This is the last time you experience the freshness and cosiness of the woods. You start covering the high-altitude natural pastures, occasionally filled with invading species like the *Sphagnum sp.*, the *Polytrichum commune*, the *Calluna vulgaris* and the *Holcus rigidus*.

After going down, and past a stone wall, when you reach a particularly wet area, you will start the final climb, that will require a final extra effort.

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Walk along a footbridge made of trunks, cross a narrow-fenced field and you will reach the top, continuing along a deep ditch that separates you from the higher pastures. A few more minutes of walking, characterised by dazzling views in all directions, and you finally arrive at the triangulation station that marks the highest point in the trail: 704 metres.

You start to cover the steep slope from the top of the rock. Further down, the Biscoito da Ferrara ends and gives place to the pastures that go up the Pico do Tamujo and surround it, stretching towards Sanguinhal. You will cross another bridge, and further down you have the fences installed to prevent any fall from the Rocha do Chambre viewpoint. Approximately 10 metres before, you will find a gate on your right that opens to the first of four pastures you will have to cover on your way down, along a partially forested water stream. Here, like in the pastures, the trees display the damages caused by the strong west winds that blow up the slope.

On your way down, you will see the *Pico do Fogo* in front of you, and, behind it, in the distance, the Picos Gordos. You can also see *Pico Gaspar*, more to the left. And, behind all these, is the east slope of the *Santa Bárbara's* huge volcano. When the steep terrain ends, you arrive next to some agricultural structures used for wild livestock. Do not be surprised if you see bulls in the pastures surrounding a small, shattered peak, whose stone walls are topped by palings as an additional protective measure against possible charges by these animals.

Turn right and walk along the 500 metres road that leads to a shed where a wall was transformed into a staircase that you must climb, entering a straight path. 740 metres later, you reach a fork where you have already been. All you have to do now is take the red lapilli and cover it towards the hike's starting point.

