



## Explore the same theme in other islands of the Azores

### AZORES ARCHIPELAGO



An itinerary with this theme is available for six islands. Learn about our traditions.



## Experience the cult of the Divine Holy Spirit

If there are islands in the Azores where eruptions and cataclysms remain in our memories, Faial is one of them. This is perfectly clear in the diverse architecture of the buildings dedicated to Worship and Festivals, with successive reconstructions, whether of the *Impérios*, the Utility rooms or *Copeiras*. Each according to taste of its own time. A tile here, a carved stone there, an ancient crown above a modern portal, illustrate the way in which communities overcome the pain of loss and recover their living spaces, refusing, however, to forget. As a result, Faial is perhaps the island where you can find the greatest architectural diversity.

Joy, socialising and sharing, typical from the time of the Holy Spirit, help overcome moments of hardship by recovering energy and joy. In principle, the Feasts must be celebrated in the time of the Holy Spirit, that is, between Easter Sunday and Trinity Sunday. However, several have been pushed forward, taking place in July and beyond, as a way of allowing people from Faial, who emigrated to North America, to be present, participate and fulfil their vows.

Much of the socialising takes place around the occasions when *Sopas* (Holy Spirit Soups) are served – and much more, including boiled meat, roast meat and rice pudding, along with bread and wine – and during the coronations. The *foliões* (revellers) still often accompany these moments and celebrations, in a renaissance kind of atmosphere.

During the time of the Holy Spirit, it is possible to eat the *Sopas* around Faial, by invitation of one the various brotherhoods or in some restaurants on the island. During the winter, it is possible to try to purchase them from some institutions that prepare and sell them to those who want to take them and eat them as a way of raising funds.

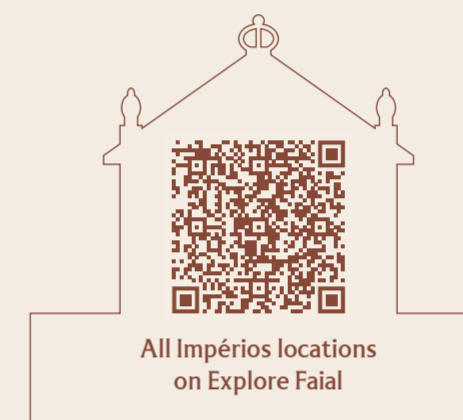
The chronological and artistic sequence of the Crowns of the Holy Spirit is also noteworthy. Ranging from the silver Crown of Cedros, and passing through beautiful chiselled examples with four arches, like the one in Santana or the one kept and exhibited in the Horta Museum, we reach the most modern ones, with six imperial arches. The rich variety of the island, with centuries of tradition, also shines through in this regard. Speaking of exquisite flavours, remember that in Faial, the sweet bread has a rectangular shape, but we can't stop there, as this is a land where milk caramels and comfits are still upheld. It's well worth the effort to look for them at a local establishment.



## Impérios dedicated to the cult of the Divine Holy Spirit marked on the map.

1. Império do Espírito Santo do Reconhecimento e Beneficência (Império dos Nobres) – Matriz
2. Império do Espírito Santo de Sant'Ana – Matriz
3. Império do Espírito Santo União e Fraternidade da Ladeira de Santo António – Matriz
4. Império do Espírito Santo de Santo Amaro – Conceição
5. Império do Espírito Santo Infantil da Volta – Conceição
6. Império do Espírito Santo da Estrada da Caldeira – Conceição
7. Império do Espírito Santo do Largo do Coreto – Conceição
8. Império do Espírito Santo Infantil da Lomba do Pilar – Conceição
9. Império do Espírito do Canto do Chão Frio – Praia do Almoxarife
10. Império do Espírito Santo da Ramada – Praia do Almoxarife
11. Império do Espírito Santo da Santíssima Trindade – Praia do Almoxarife
12. Império do Espírito Santo do Caminho do Meio – Praia do Almoxarife
13. Império do Espírito Santo das Encruzilhadas – Pedro Miguel
14. Império do Espírito Santo da Ramada (Império Amarelo ou Central) – Ribeirinha
15. Império do Espírito Santo da Santíssima Trindade (Império Vermelho) – Ribeirinha
16. Império do Divino Espírito Santo dos Espalhafatos – Ribeirinha
17. Império do Divino Espírito Santo do Salão – Salão
18. Império do Espírito Santo da Praça – Cedros
19. Império do Espírito Santo da Santíssima Trindade da Rua de Cima – Cedros
20. Império do Espírito Santo do Cascalho – Cedros
21. Império do Espírito Santo da Ribeira Funda – Cedros
22. Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Praia do Norte – Praia do Norte
23. Império do Espírito Santo do Norte Pequeno – Capelo
24. Império do Espírito Santo da Santíssima Trindade – Capelo
25. Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Ribeira do Cabo – Capelo
26. Império do Espírito Santo da Coroa da Lombega – Castelo Branco
27. Império do Espírito Santo da Coroa Velha – Castelo Branco
28. Império do Espírito Santo da Coroa Nova – Castelo Branco
29. Império do Espírito Santo da Coroa da Ribeirinha – Castelo Branco
30. Império do Espírito Santo da Ponte – Flamengos
31. Império do Espírito Santo da Lomba da Cruz do Bravo – Flamengos

32. Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Rua do Cantinho – Flamengos
33. Império da Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo da Ramada (Império da Festa) – Flamengos
34. Império da Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo da Santíssima Trindade (Império da Caridade) – Flamengos
35. Império Infantil dos Sinistrados do Farrobo – Flamengos
36. Império do Espírito Santo da Beneficência da Cruz do Bravo – Flamengos
37. Império do Divino Espírito Santo das Grotas – Feteira
38. Império do Espírito Santo da Caridade – Feteira
39. Império do Espírito Santo do Farrobo – Feteira
40. Império do Espírito Santo da Cruz da Portela – Feteira
41. Império do Espírito Santo da Atalaia – Feteira
42. Império do Espírito Santo do Cimo da Granja – Feteira
43. Império do Espírito Santo de São Pedro – Feteira
44. Império Infantil da Rua Vasco da Gama – Angústias
45. Império do Espírito Santo da Santíssima Trindade – Angústias
46. Império do Espírito Santo da Mocidade Pasteleirense – Angústias
47. Império Recreativo Pasteleirense – Angústias
48. Império de Porto Pim – Angústias



### MILK CARAMELS

The recipe is simple, and the product is natural in a land where dairy cattle and dairy products have been part of everyday life for centuries. Cut into small rectangles and wrapped in cut paper, sometimes served “just like that”, they were common and appreciated, constituting yet another differentiating element between costly day-to-day life and moments of celebration. The tradition has been lost, although there are still people who make them on some islands. Here, in Faial, milk caramels are still used in festivals honouring the Holy Spirit. Currently, they also come in oblong shapes, although formerly, they were preferably square. Tasty memories of a simpler time when sweets were homemade.



### COMFITS

Made from a grain or seed, usually fennel seeds, these are covered in sugar and with an irregular surface. The comfits are known on almost all islands but have fallen into disuse on several of them. Today, in Faial, no one makes them locally anymore. The difficulty, however, does not prevent them from being considered an essential element for a proper celebration and can be bought in many places. In ancient times, guests would throw them around at the beginning of the meal, during pauses, to catch someone by surprise or to attract someone's attention, perhaps to start a conversation and courtship.



### THE SHAPE OF THE DOUGH

Along with wheat bread, in many cases, a rare treat on islands where much of the cereal was used to pay rent and fees or shipped abroad, this typical sweet bread appears as something of greater refinement. In Faial, which seems to be a unique case, the breads are baked in the oven, as usual, but in rectangular pans. The abundance necessary for Bodos means that, out of season, it is natural to find several dozen empty pans piled up and stored, waiting for the new year and the new cycle of festivities and joy. However, during these long months of waiting, it is still possible to buy this bread in several places, namely in Praia do Norte, where they say there is a particularly tasty one.



### THE PARACLETE

The term “paraclete” comes from the Greek *paráketos*, meaning the one who helps, comforts, encourages, protects, and intercedes. This is the title of the Third Person of the Christian Holy Trinity: The Lord Holy Spirit (*Senhor Espírito Santo*), as He is referred to by the Azoreans and how He is perceived in these islands.

The Azoreans turn to Him, seeking help and encouragement above all. In the event of illness in the family, hardships, times of war or earthquakes, or when facing so much adversity that they feel as though they have no strength left. It is not an act of surrender, but of asking for help! That is quite a different thing, and it is only natural for those who live in the middle of the ocean, so tempestuous and rough at times.

The festivities can, in short, be considered moments of reunion, sharing, brotherhood, joy, and peace and are celebrated every year between Easter Sunday and Trinity Sunday, eight weeks after, reminding us that, as in mediaeval times, every single one of us is worthy of mercy, is poor and worthy of receiving alms, and is deserving of having, at least once a year, a full, joyful table.

Originating in mediaeval Italy, the festivities and cult in honour of the Divine Spirit arrived in Portugal during the first dynasty, according to tradition, by the influence of the queen Saint Elizabeth of Portugal (*Rainha Santa Isabel*), wife of King Denis of Portugal (*Dom Dinis*). By virtue of the Portuguese maritime expansion, this cult was brought to these islands in the Atlantic and, ever since, has been flourishing here, following the Azorean emigrants to Maranhão and the South of Brazil, the United States, Bermuda, and Canada.

In terms of collective events, all of these Festivities involve collecting donations and goods; a week of praying the Rosary, whether inside the *império* or in the home of a brother who was lucky to receive the Holy Spirit Crown, laid upon an altar in his home; the procession of the Coronation – the greatest moment; a festive meal – called *Função*, and a Bodo, the donation of food alms.

There are dozens and dozens of buildings supporting all these events, where the immaterial domain of the Paraclete centres his physical presence within these communities. There is a diverse meal ritual associated with it, including bread soups, whose recipe differs from island to island, *alcatra* (traditional meat stew), other kinds of stewed meat, rice pudding, *alfenim* (sugar paste pastry), and a remarkable variety of breads: milk bread, water bread, or the *massa sovada* (traditional sweet bread), *rosquilhas* (ring shaped biscuits), *bolos de véspera* (typical baked biscuit) with beautiful marks, etc.

The tenderness and devotion towards the Lord Holy Spirit (*Senhor Espírito Santo*), as a source of comfort and support, spilled over the centuries into many and various aspects of everyday life in the Azores.

As a result of this strongly communal and supportive way of feeling, there are fortresses, streets, hospitals, sculptures and carvings, silver crowns and adornments, decorative ceramic pieces, vessels and ships, names of places and villages, memories, and stories, told from generation to generation.

Despite the diversity of customs between the islands, there is a definite common thread that emphasises a deeply unifying and striking feeling, very evident in the identity of the Azoreans, and that is worth following by exploring these islands and places.

### The strength in wanting, Praia do Norte

The place where “the fire broke out” in April 1672 was called Cabeço do Rilha Boi at the time, and lava gushed through two different flows, one headed towards Praia do Norte, destroying everything, dispersing population and forcing many to emigrate to Brazil. The place was renamed Cabeço do Fogo, and the parish was extinguished and integrated into Capelo, only gaining autonomous authority again in 1845. In 1957, the parish was, once again, devastated by the effects of the Capelinhos eruption. Many lands close to the volcano were once again covered in ash, houses were destroyed, and people were now emigrating to the USA. Overcoming all these events, including the most recent earthquake of 1998 and proving the strength of spirit, the facilities of the Brotherhood of the Império of Praia do Norte remain here, ready to welcome the Festival and remember the Holy Spirit. The tile panel, presented to passers-by, guarantees its remembrance.



### The memory of the eruption and reconstruction, Capelo

In the part of the island most affected by the Capelinhos eruption in 1957, many houses were destroyed or buried by ash. Once the eruption ended, life had to be resumed, and so it was. But the Impérios that emerged, offered by the government, reflect the construction of the mid-20th century in Portugal. Strong, hard in dialogue with the landscape, not at all decorated, and serious in the way they stand on the side of the road, they almost go unnoticed. Anyone who looks closely will recognize the crown somewhere on the facade, the flag-pole for the flag, and nothing else. The Festival and the days when soups are served add worth to them. In those moments, they shine with the hustle and bustle, colour and joy.



### Between the churchyard and the main altar, the same Spirit, Feteira

Here, the Holy Spirit, in addition to justifying the presence of the traditional Império, is the patron saint of the parish. Therefore, the entire area seems to be taken over by the same idea, although in different representations. We can look at the somewhat different small building, with a hexagonal base, at the entrance to the churchyard, then look at the enormous black stone crown embedded in relief at the top of the church's facade, and finally, inside, enjoy the beautiful painting evocative of Pentecost.



### The humility of remembrance, Ribeira Funda

All buildings in the lands closest to the Capelinhos volcano were destroyed or deeply ruined due to the 1957 eruption, including the Impérios. Many people emigrated, but some wanted to return to their lands, homes and places, slowly and laboriously recovering what was possible of their way of life. However, rebuilding can be complicated when you want to rediscover more than just buildings, as the Impérios are the house where the Holy Spirit lives during the days of soups and celebrations. Facing misfortune, the people of Ribeira Funda found a way to revive. They took a stone from the old Império and embedded it in the wall of the new one. The continuity of memory was safeguarded, and the Festival gained a new place.



### The age of the Festival, in the silver of a Crown, Cedros

Many call it the “Royal Crown”, and, in fact, it differs from the other usual crowns with imperial arches, by closing at the top. The crown of Cedros, with its beautiful chisel work and being linked to a fascinating story, displays, in this characteristic of an open crown, the antiquity of the Celebrations of the Holy Spirit. It is said that it was left behind by a Moorish king during a pirate assault on the island. Noticing the missing crown, the king returned in search of it, this time disguised as a common sailor. The insistent questioning instilled a sense of distrust, and a woman from Cedros, who had found it, hid it, putting it on her leg, as if putting a ring on a finger. Knowing its value and wanting to keep it, she left it on her leg for too long, and removing it was no longer possible. The leg swelled, and they had to cut the crown off and then weld it back together, which can still be seen. Used by the people as a crown of the Divine, a replica was recently made, with the old one remaining in the mordomo's (the festivities' caretaker) house each year. It's a matter of asking.



### A different typology of house and festival, Ribeirinha

Perhaps for climatic reasons or ancient community traditions, the Impérios of Faial have an architecture that almost always includes a Copeira (structure attached to the Império, or compartment of it, where meals are stored, cooked and distributed) or a utility room. There, in communion, the Divine is honoured, soups are eaten, a different time is celebrated, and the festivities are shared in the protective shadow of the Crown of the Holy Spirit and the insignia on its decorated altar. This presents a good example, with the particularity of the small connecting courtyard.



### A real contrast, Horta

Built on the corner of Médico Avelar and Eduardo Bulcão streets, the Império of Santana is one of the smallest and simplest, going almost unnoticed. With white walls and a single entrance opening, its gracefulness comes from the stonework decorations and finishes, the neo-Gothic shape of the door and, above all, the black crown, topped by a white dove. The mast is to the side. It is enough to, once again, be led to realise that the pomp of the Feast in Honor and Praise of the Divine is essentially immaterial and something to be experienced and shared. It's worth stopping by and visiting the Sacred Art Museum to see the crown.



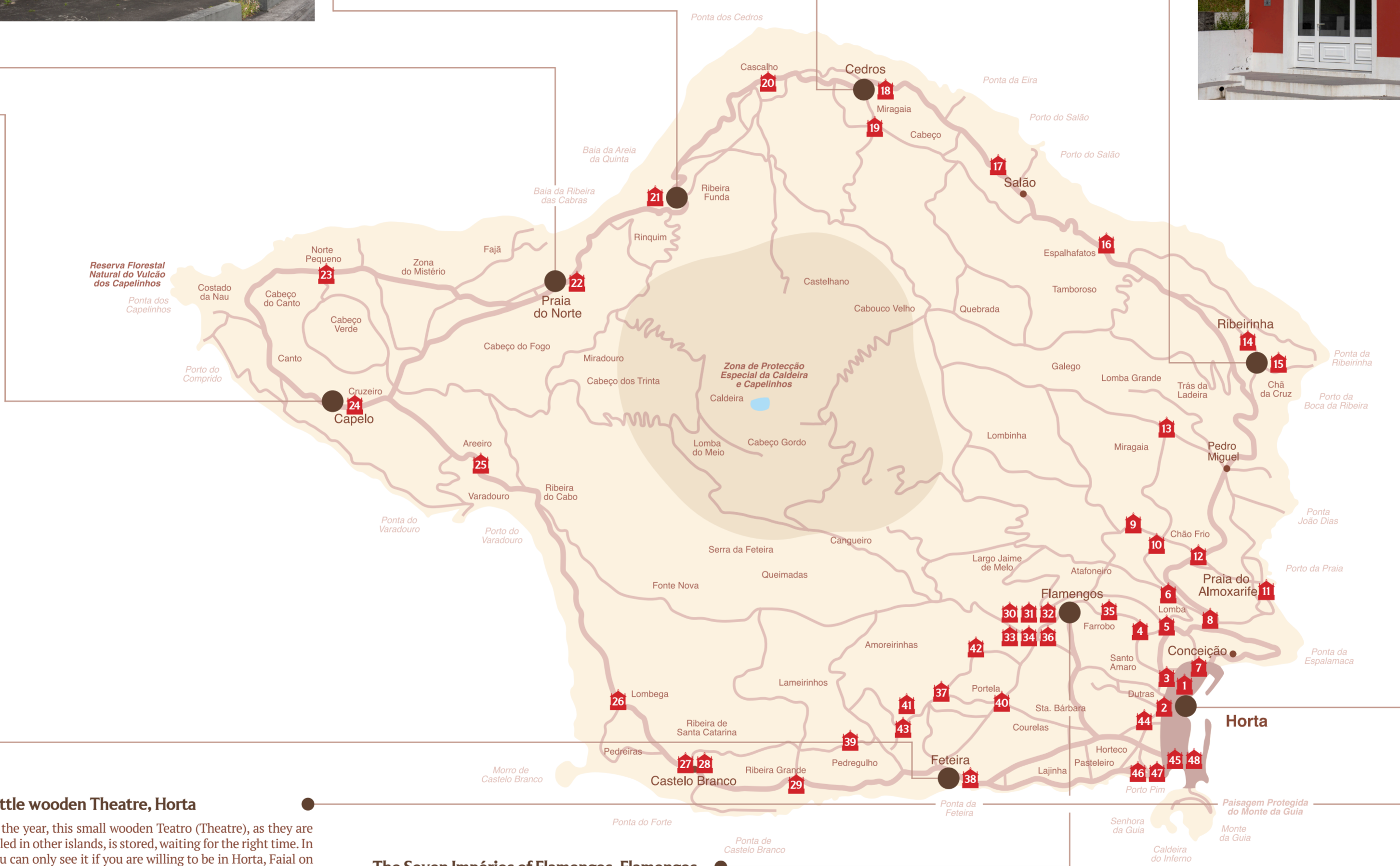
### Spirit, religion and culture. Museu da Horta, Horta

The silver crowns, crafted in devotion to the Holy Spirit, vary in workmanship, decoration, details and splendour. Where these do not vary, however, is in the effort to provide quality to a devotion deeply rooted in the people of the Azores. The crown kept and presented at the Horta Museum deserves, like many others on the islands, to be gazed upon with attention to detail and with time, whether due to the very fine chisel work or the decorative elements used. Furthermore, another piece that deserves to be highlighted due to the detail and material used is the work by Euclides da Rosa, made from fig tree kernels. This material is traditionally used in this area of the archipelago in fine and delicate works. This piece is called “Aldeia Açoreana”, “Fayal-Açores” and is signed “E Rosa”. It's an imagined recreation of a coastal town in the Azores. In the foreground, next to the coast, simple but perfectly identifiable, stands a small building of an Império of the Holy Spirit.



### Império dos Nobres, Horta

The Império do Reconhecimento e Beneficência (Império of Recognition and Benevolence), commonly known as the Império dos Nobres (Império of Nobles), emerged following the eruption of 1672, which occurred near the parish of Praia do Norte. The eruption was long and violent, and on the 18th of May of that year, the Municipal Council of Horta vowed that “On the day of the Holy Spirit, every year and as long as the world lasts, a solemn procession will take place, ordered by the officials of the Municipal Council, from the Main Church to the Church of Misericórdia”, the Municipal Council would also bear the expenses. Nearly 100 years later, in 1760, the building was erected in memory of this eruption and vow. The name derives from the nobles who held municipal positions. The name derives from the celebration's expenses being initially borne by the nobles. The Municipality paid the expenses of the procession and the nobles paid the expenses of the festival.



### The little wooden Theatre, Horta

During the year, this small wooden Teatro (Theatre), as they are also called in other islands, is stored, waiting for the right time. In fact, you can only see it if you are willing to be in Horta, Faial on the exact days of celebration. As well as in Velas, São Jorge, and a few other occasions, the Festival takes place in the street. The Theater gets assembled and decorated, offering the Crown and the emblems the expected and due dignity. It's the Coronation, the Bodo, the sharing and the Celebrations. Then... everything gets stored away until the following year. It is called Império União e Fraternidade, set up on the former Calçada or Ladeira de Santo António, now officially named Rua Advogado Graça. However, for the people of Faial, this street is still referred to as Ladeira de Santo António, after the Portuguese saint (Anthony of Padua). The Império is not currently in operation.



### The Seven Impérios of Flamengos, Flamengos

An Império of the Holy Spirit is essentially an idea and a feeling, and for such an Império to exist, there must be a Brotherhood. In an apparent contradiction, the highest level of domination does not require those who command, but those who serve and a group of equals, of brothers, to support the celebrations of joy and sharing in honour of the Paraclete. In fact, one can raise as many Impérios as one wants. In one of the few parishes in the Azores where the sea lies hidden from view, the Holy Spirit is evoked here seven times, perhaps in an unconscious allusion to the biblical number of Eternity and His Gifts. Each year, seven Impérios are “raised” here, and seven Festivals are organised and held in praise of the Divine. This way of devotion to the Holy Spirit led the community to organise and build a Community Centre where the different Brotherhoods collaborate.



### Crown of Santana. Museum of Sacred Art, Convent of Carmo, Horta

According to some, this beautiful silver crown has something to do with the Viscount of Santana. However, the natural connection is with the very small Império on the corner and at the end of Visconde Santana Street, which begins at the old Mansion and ends precisely next to the Império. Carved to perfection, it is a very rare or even unique case of a crown where something else appears, in addition to the dove, representing the Paraclete. In this case, it is a small gold figure of Santana fixed to one of the rods. The sceptre, which is also rare, is extendable. The enormous distance that exists between this grandiose beauty and the small Império, with the same name, is the same that separates the simple materiality of things and the Festivals in Honor and Praise of the Divine in the Azores.

