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## Vereda do Pico Castelo



### Legend

- Regional road
- Footpath
- Rural road
- Water course
- Stream
- House

- Information Point
- Litter
- Toilets

- Picnic Spots
- Belvedere



Porto Santo donkey



Pico's Castelo View

### The Footpath

This trail begins at Moledo, next to the Regional Highway and continues up the forestry road, with two alternative routes to follow, either along the north side or the south side of Pico do Facho. The latter has the distinction of being the longest footpath of Porto Santo Island.

As we cross the central zone of the island at the base of Pico do Facho, we can see traces of old farmlands and of the hard work of building the cut stone walls, and contemplate the amazing effort made by man to reforest the island.

At the top of Pico Castelo, you will come upon a statue in honour of António Schiappa de Azevedo, the driving force behind the reforestation of Porto Santo. This process of arborisation has helped control the effects of erosion that are seen on this island. Some exotic species were introduced, whose wild nature is more resistant to the adverse conditions, examples being the Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), the Maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) and the Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*). Indigenous species that can be found include the dragon tree (*Dracaena draco*), the olive tree (*Olea sp*), the holm oak (*Quercus ilex ssp. rotundifolia*), some fire trees (*Myrica faya*), broom heath (*Erica scoparia*) and pride of Madeira (*Echium nervosum*).

The walk affords magnificent views and the opportunity to come in contact with the fauna of the island, observing flocks of red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*), birds of prey such as the common buzzard (*Buteo buteo buteo*) and the kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus canariensis*), the colourful house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and the impressive hoopoe (*Upupa epops*).

After the climb to the top of Pico Castelo, you reach the end of the trail at the Canhão Belvedere and have a view of the city of Vila Baleira and in the background almost the entire length of the island. In the distance you can make out the Deserted Islands and Madeira. The name Pico Castelo dates from the 15th century and derives from the fact that there was a fort there where the local inhabitants took refuge when they were attacked by French pirates or Algerians. Its central location and greater ease of organising the defence of the people made it a true Castle.

## Description

Distance: 3,2 km / 4,6 km  
Time: 1h 30m / 2h 15m  
Highest point: 435m  
Lowest point: 225m  
Start: Moledo  
Finish: Canhão Belvedere

## Warning

No springs en route, carry drinking water.

## Contacts

Emergency number	112
Civil Protection	291700112
Volunteer Fire Department (Porto Santo)	291980060
Tourist Office (Porto Santo)	291982361
Taxis (Porto Santo)	291982334

## Local Festivities

- Festa de São João - St. John (24 June)
- Festa de Nossa Senhora da Graça (14 and 15 August)

## Handcrafts

Palm leaf hats; Embroidered palmettos; Reed cane baskets; Clay figurines.

## Field Code



## Walking Code

- Avoid noise or actions against nature.
- Do not take plants or animal with you.
- Do not throw rubbish away (lissues do not easily decompose).
- Do not light fires.
- If you are a smoker do not throw cigarettes ends on the floor, keep them for the dust-bin.
- Do not change or damage the signs.

## For your own safety ...

- Before starting out make sure you have update instructions on the route.
- Let someone else know where you're going and when you expect to return.
- Be sure to confirm the time it will take so that you can finish before nightfall.
- Take some extra food and water with you.
- Wear suitable clothes and shoes;
- If possible take a mobile phone with you;
- In case of heavy rain or strong winds do not go on and/or turn back using the same route.
- Don't take risks.

## Promotor



## Technical information:

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Porto Santo Island Footpaths

