



## 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.



## Impérios of Flores

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

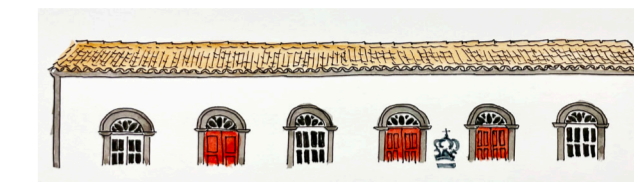
1. Casa do Espírito Santo da Terra Chã - Ponta Delgada
2. Casa do Espírito Santo das Casas de Baixo - Ponta Delgada, Flores
3. Casa do Espírito Santo das Crianças - Ponta Delgada
4. Casa do Espírito Santo da Cruz - Ponta Delgada, Flores
5. Casa do Espírito Santo da Ponta Ruiva
6. Casa do Espírito Santo da Fazenda de Santa Cruz
7. Casa do Espírito Santo do Monte de Santa Cruz
8. Casa do Espírito Santo de Santa Cruz
9. Casa do Espírito Santo da Ribeira dos Barqueiros
10. Casa do Espírito Santo da Boavista
11. Casa do Espírito Santo da Caveira
12. Casa do Espírito Santo da Lomba
13. Casa do Espírito Santo da Fazenda
14. Casa do Espírito Santo das Lajes
15. Casa do Espírito Santo dos Morros
16. Casa do Espírito Santo do Monte
17. Casa do Espírito Santo do Mosteiro
18. Casa do Espírito Santo do Lajedo
19. Casa do Espírito Santo da Costa do Lajedo
20. Casa do Espírito Santo da Cuada
21. Casa do Espírito Santo do Outeiro
22. Casa do Espírito Santo do Rossio - Fajãzinha
23. Casa do Espírito Santo de Cima - Fajã Grande
24. Casa do Espírito Santo de Baixo - Fajã Grande
25. Casa do Espírito Santo da Ponta da Fajã - Fajã Grande



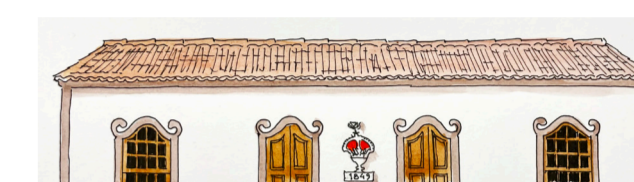
Casa do Espírito Santo do Lajedo



Casa do Espírito Santo da Cuada



Casa do Espírito Santo das Lajes



Casa do Espírito Santo de Santa Cruz



Casa do Espírito Santo do Monte



Império do Espírito Santo da Terra Chã, Ponta Delgada



Correspondence from the Azores to the USA.  
12-JUL-1891 | Lages das Flores



All Impérios locations on Explore Flores

## Experience the cult of the Divine Holy Spirit

According to the chronicles, Flores were discovered in 1452 by Diogo de Teive, who was returning from sailing to the West, and the other islands were beginning to be populated. It was difficult for people to settle in a beautiful but rugged territory where daily life was never easy. The experiences related to the Divine Paraclete, beyond the common, perfectly recognizable trunk, thus took on some aspects of their own, such as one, especially touching, which is how villages establish coexistence with the Divine. The Holy Spirit, God under the invocation of the Third Person of the Holy Christian Trinity, lives here, around the island, in houses almost identical to all the others, only marked by the Crown on the hoisted part facing the street. In this way, God lives next to everyone, in a huge neighbourhood and as if sharing the hardships and better moments with the rest of the people. Therefore, it is essential to visit the island during the

appropriate time, between Easter and Trinity Sundays, if you want to understand what it is like to live surrounded by the sea, storms, winds and moments of beautiful sunrises and sunsets with God as a neighbour. People here definitely understand that, during the time of the Holy Spirit, life has to have other colours and a different mood. The Celebrants, essential pillars of the Festival, are very much alive and respected here, marking the moments with a song that resonates with the Renaissance and recalls medieval times. The wine, which has to come from elsewhere because the island's climate does not allow vineyards, is mixed with tea, and the flavour of conviviality appears. The meat gets pan-roasted, and the sweet bread contains nutmeg, lemon zest and cinnamon, which doesn't happen on other islands. If you manage to be on the island at that time and participate in one or several "Alvoradas", which are now at dusk for the convenience of the people, you will understand what was said here.



### FOLIÕES

For centuries, the Foliões (revellers) were an integral part of the Feast. Not only those of the Holy Spirit but also other religious festivities, such as the procession of the Corpo de Deus (Procession of Corpus Christi) itself. Objected to, perhaps because they were too happy, they were removed from the central stage and relegated to the back of the Church after the Bishop's order at a certain point in history. Flores is the island, let's say, where the Foliões are most alive and authentic. Ensuring the rituals, they accompany all the relevant moments of the festivities, being considered as essential as, on other islands, singing the "pezinho" (popular folklore song) in the streets, near the relevant houses or having a philharmonic band present. While it's not easy to listen to them out of context, it's worth trying. The sound of the bass drum, the pan lids and the singing will remain in your memory for a long time.



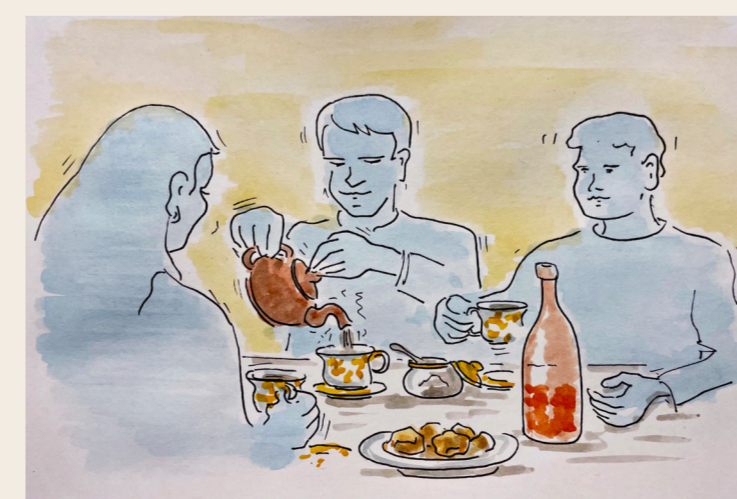
### PÃO ADUBADO OU MASSA SOVADA

In Flores, they call it "Pão Adubado" or "Massa Sovada," and to confirm its richness, the island's recipe not only includes wheat flour, sugar, milk, and eggs but also adds nutmeg and lemon zest. Some people also add cinnamon. Outside the time of the Holy Spirit, it may not be easy to find, but you can try to locate - and purchase - it at "Casa dos Cedros", a structure associated with the Holy House of Santa Cruz, Artisan Bakery Elisa Ramos Inocência (Lomba), and Rosa Bakery (Lomba).



### SOPAS E CARNE ASSADA

Soups and Roast Meat are, along with boiled meat and rice pudding, typical dishes from the time of the Holy Spirit. In Flores, the process is designed to delight the palate. The meat is placed in *vinha d'alhos*, which contains garlic, cumin, Jamaican pepper, Azorean chilli pepper, wine and water. It gets seared in lard before passing it to the pan where it is roasted in lard with previously browned onions. The soups are made with beef; they can include a piece of raw, non-smoked pork belly, a packet of butter - something that is falling into disuse - and cabbages. They are seasoned with onion, garlic, and cumin, both in powder and grain, all put together inside a cloth bag so that traces do not contaminate the broth. The broth is repeatedly tasted, and salt is added as necessary. The bread is made of wheat, as expected. As locals will tell you, the flavour will be different if these dishes are consumed outside of the Holy Spirit period, but it is worth trying at a restaurant or place that serves them.



### WINE OF DAWN

Since wine is not produced in Flores, it is imported from elsewhere. During the time of the Holy Spirit, in some places, it is mixed with black tea, sweetened and served at "Alvoradas" (Dawns), an exquisite typical moment of celebrations on the island of Flores. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of the Feast Week, the last of the time of the Holy Spirit, these meetings occur at dusk, with foliões, instruments, and songs next to and inside the Houses of the Holy Spirit. They used to be at dawn, hence the name, but today, not so much. Although life runs much more smoothly at present, people continue to celebrate a special time of joy, sharing, conviviality, and gratitude, which is different from the rest of the year.

### 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 cevada* (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.

Explore FLORES AZORES





**The Crown's Niche, Fajã Grande**

As Vitorino Nemésio wrote, "The history of the Azores is made up, for the most part, of reports of earthquakes and floods." In Flores, Ponta da Fajã Grande is prone to several problems. Years ago, there was a storm, with flash floods, in the Ponta da Fajã area. Everything around collapsed, except the location of this particular niche, a small altar by the roadside. As in many other cases in the Azores, the event was seen as another "miracle of the Holy Spirit", and since then, people have been talking about the catastrophe that spared the altar. Here, the slaughter and distribution of the animals of the Holy Spirit took place, a rare occasion of meat and abundance, and the Crown was placed here during the work. As everything is done in the slaughterhouse, the memory and the niche remain, reused with other devotions.



**Casa do Espírito Santo da "aldeia da Cuada", Cuada**

The House of the Holy Spirit in the "village of Cuada". After the village was abandoned in the 1970s, mainly due to emigration, the brothers who now live in other places still gather there and celebrate the festivities of the Divine, then store things until the following year before going away. People come from far away, sometimes from across North America, to fulfil promises, remember their roots, and rekindle their identities. Like almost all the others in Flores, this is a house like the others in the parish, only distinguished by the Crown on the facade.



**The Instability of Fajãzinha, Fajãzinha**

The Holy Spirit is not always a theme of peace, as it should be. In 1875, one of the most severe disputes in memory occurred. At the time, the Brotherhood of Fajãzinha had split into two, and the newer one had recently received the approval of its statutes. Taking advantage of this, the heads of this faction elected a mordomo (the Holy Spirit Festivities' caretaker) and intended to take possession of the house, Crown and sacred items, which the other group denied. A huge fight broke out, which involved the parish and civil administration bodies until the Administrator of the Municipality of Lajes had to ask the Civil Governor of the District of Hora to send a force of at least twenty well-disciplined soldiers to calm the situation. The matter went to court, and the Bishop ordered the parish priest not to bless or crown anyone until the two brotherhoods reunited fraternally.



**The Spirit of God as a neighbour, Ponta Delgada**

The House of the Holy Spirit in Flores and Corvo are different from those on other islands. As if wanting to blur it with the community and bring it closer together, the people created structures almost identical to the other buildings, unlike other islands where the chapel model was more followed. It is as if it were just another house where God lives, under the invocation of the Paraclete, alongside other people and in close proximity. This one, from Terra-Chã, although similar to the others in the western group, presents neo-Gothic elements, the result of influences from emigration to the USA and the taste of those who built and maintain it.



**Church and Fort of the Holy Spirit, Lajes das Flores**

There are places where almost all the experiences of an island come together, and from here, looking at Baía das Lajes below, it is possible to cover one of these cases better. There was initially a small church on the promontory in front of the village parish, overlooking the anchorage and dedicated to the Holy Spirit. Pirate and privateer attacks led to the temple being moved further inland for greater security, creating in its place a fortified position which, in 1710, was described as the Fort of the Holy Spirit. It would have been small, but nothing remains today. In the same area, in the 19th century, whalers settled, coming from the east coast of North America. The habit meant that the small houses on land reproduced the systematisation aboard larger ships. From all these different times, memories of the last one remain, in a "Whale House" belonging to the nautical club, which houses, in particular, boiler rooms, a place for workers to rest, a storage tank and woodwork.



**The butcher at the House of the Holy Spirit, Fazenda de Santa Cruz**

During the centuries-long tradition of the slaughter ceremony, animals were decorated and paraded through the village accompanied by music until its total prohibition in the 1990s. There was a time when some Brotherhoods took on the construction of butchers and cutting rooms in an effort to keep the party within the community as much as possible. Here, the river's proximity allowed the area to be washed and cleaned. Today, adapted into a kitchen, this serves as an example of the constant effort of the brotherhoods and the repeated struggle between rural customs and traditions and urban thinking.



**Slaughter grounds, Fazenda das Lajes**

Before it was prohibited to do so outside the slaughterhouse, the slaughter of animals, whose meat is given as alms and during Bodo to celebrate the Divine, was carried out according to a long-established ceremony and on land reserved for that purpose. Here was one of those places where the animals were taken, accompanied by foliões (revellers) and the community, in a cortege after being adorned. The slaughter was carried out in the presence of the Crown, sometimes placed on the wall or on one of the drums of the foliões. Once the work was finished, the place was cleaned and tidied up, making cultivation possible until the following year, when it was called upon, once again, to be the site of a ritual sacrifice.



**The animals of the Holy Spirit, Baía de São Pedro, Santa Cruz**

During a certain year, the organisers of the Feast began to worry when a storm hit. They had bought some oxen from Corvo, as usual, but they ran the risk of not having them in time to slaughter them as the storm had arisen. They were discussing the matter, looking for a way to solve the problem, when two animals presented themselves to the group. The people were even more surprised because they were wet and shivering from the cold. Approaching them, one of those present ran his hand over his back and noticed that the water smelled of salt. The only explanation they found was that they had swum from the neighbouring island, entering Baía de São Pedro, north of Santa Cruz.



**The Feast, in miniature. Boqueirão Whale Factory, Santa Cruz**

On an island where the experience of the Time of the Holy Spirit is difficult to understand outside of the period itself, we can use a recent model framed in the exhibition space of the Boqueirão Factory. The entire ambience of the processions, the participants, the organisation and the community involvement reside there. Along the way, take a moment to understand how close this island is to the American coasts of the Atlantic and the importance of whaling, which even gave rise to folklore themes.



**Tinplate Crown, Santa Cruz Museum**

Tin or tinplate Crowns are a shared memory found on almost all islands. They were the first to be used by many communities until this was prohibited by the Church, taking into account the non-noble material. In some cases, they were piously kept by devotees who preferred to keep them, even though they knew they were no longer revered. In other cases, they were lost. The object was lost, but not the memory, and now, in museums or other collections, they are seeing the light of day again, remembering the first times of worship, as is the case with this Crown in Santa Cruz das Flores.



**Virgin of the Annunciation, Santa Cruz Museum**

There are two paintings of unknown origin related to the Holy Spirit in the Flores museum, one of which concerns the theme of the Divine Holy Spirit. They belonged to a monastery or convent on the Portuguese mainland, and, in the context of liberalism and according to what is known, a total of nineteen were sent to the Azores. The whereabouts of all of them were lost except for these, which arrived in Flores, destined for the Main Church of Santa Cruz. This is a piece considered relevant to Azorean Art History, as it represents the Virgin Mary receiving the Holy Spirit in the traditional form of a dove.

