

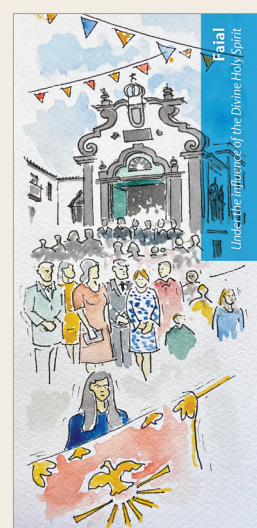
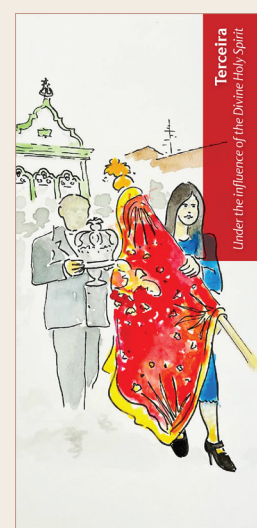
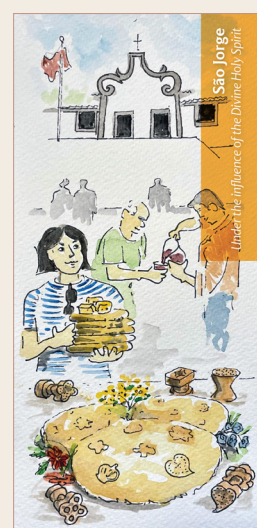


## Explore the same theme in other islands of the Azores

### AZORES ARCHIPELAGO



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



## Capelas do Espírito Santo do Pico

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

1. Império do Espírito Santo da Criação Velha
2. Império da Terça-feira do Espírito Santo da Madalena
3. Império da Segunda-feira do Espírito Santo do Valverde
4. Império da Santíssima Trindade do Valverde
5. Império do Espírito Santo das Sete Cidades
6. Império do Espírito Santo do Cabo Branco
7. Império do Espírito Santo das Bandeiras
8. Império do Espírito Santo de Santa Luzia
9. Império do Espírito Santo de Santana
10. Império do Espírito Santo de Santo António
11. Império do Espírito Santo do Cais do Pico – (works at the Convento de São Pedro de Alcântara)
12. Império do Espírito Santo de São Roque
13. Império do Espírito Santo de São Miguel Arcanjo
14. Império do Espírito Santo da Prainha de Cima
15. Império do Espírito Santo da Prainha de Baixo
16. Império do Espírito Santo de Santo Amaro
17. Império do Espírito Santo da Ribeirinha
18. Império do Espírito Santo da Piedade
19. Império do Espírito Santo da Calheta de Nesquim
20. Império do Espírito Santo das Pontas Negras (works at the Ermida de Nossa Senhora de Fátima)
21. Império do Espírito Santo das Terras (works at the Ermida das Terras)
22. Império do Espírito Santo de Santa Cruz das Ribeiras
23. Império do Espírito Santo de Santa Bárbara das Ribeiras
24. Império do Espírito Santo das Lajes (works at the Capela de São Pedro)
25. Império do Espírito Santo da Ribeira do Meio
26. Império do Espírito Santo da Silveira
27. Império do Espírito Santo da Companhia de Baixo – São João
28. Império do Espírito Santo da Companhia de Cima – São João
29. Ermida da Irmandade do Espírito Santo da Candelária
30. Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Terra do Pão
31. Ermida da Irmandade do Espírito Santo de São Caetano
32. Ermida do Império do Divino Espírito Santo de São Mateus
33. Império do Espírito Santo ao Paço – São Mateus
34. Império do Espírito Santo do Campo Raso (works at the Ermida de Nossa Senhora Mãe da Igreja)
35. Império do Espírito Santo da Mirateca (works at the Ermida de São Nuno)
36. Império do Divino Espírito Santo do Monte



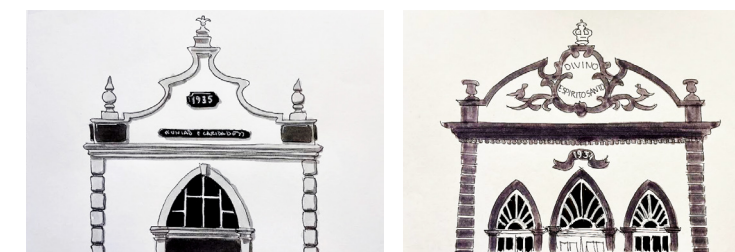
Império da Terça-feira do Espírito Santo da Madalena

Capela do Espírito Santo da Piedade



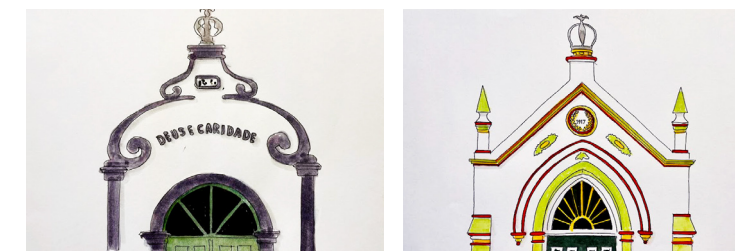
Império do Espírito Santo ao Paço - São Mateus

Capela do Espírito Santo da Calheta de Nesquim



Império do Divino Espírito Santo da Terra do Pão

Capela do Espírito Santo de Santa Cruz das Ribeiras



Ermida da Irmandade do Espírito Santo de São Caetano

Capela do Espírito Santo da Companhia de Baixo – São João

## Experience the cult of the Divine Holy Spirit

Visiting Pico during the Holy Spirit Season, that is, between Easter and Trinity Sunday, is to understand the resilience strategies of people whose tradition speaks of violent volcanic eruptions and long streams of incandescent lava running towards the sea, covering everything in black. Some took place in the 16th century and others in the 18th century, in a land topped by a mountain more than two kilometres high that, although dormant, is still alive.

Pico is a dry, rugged island and the youngest, by far, out of all the others. It has always been suitable for wine and fruit, with some corn and very little or no wheat. Cereal production has always been costly, and it is no coincidence that most wheat is imported. Memories of this challenging life are increasingly kept by the community or presented in places such as Adega A Rodilha. The island is part of what is usually called “the triangle”, the group of three Azorean islands close to each other, Pico, Faial and São Jorge. Proximity led to the existence of cases of shared traditions.

Vésperas, for example, common to São Jorge, are the tradition along the north coast of Pico, between Calheta de Nesquim, in Ponta Leste, and Bandeiras to the west. In Piedade, there is also the “espadim” (small sword), common in São Jorge, as the “Protector of the Crown”. On the other side of the island, from one end of the south coast to the other, the *Rosquilhas* are the standard from Calheta de Nesquim to Madalena, almost as if dividing the island in half.

Two different traditions make the narrative more interesting. In Calheta de Nesquim, they offer *Rosquilhas* and *Vésperas*; in Silveira, roughly in the centre of the south coast and perhaps as the result of a promise made in 1704 when one of the eruptions occurred, Bodo is given in bread. Pão Alvo (Wheat bread) and *Massa Sovada* (Traditional sweet bread), sweeter and fluffier.

When a Feast is organised, the insignia, identifying each Brotherhood, is used, and it is said that “an *Império* has been raised”. That’s why it’s expected to hear about Saturdays’ *Império* Feast in Silveira or Tuesday’s *Império* Feast in Madalena, where a massive giveaway of *Rosquilhas* takes place.

Having served their purpose, the Standards, staves and even Crowns can be stored in their own chapel, in partnership, as is the case with the *Império* of São Nuno, or in a church. What matters is that they are available when the Time of the Holy

Spirit arrives again. The feast’s repast, the “Soups”, consists of Holy Spirit soups, boiled meat, roast meat and rice pudding, all accompanied by *Massa Sovada* and wine and, always, with the special touch of the cook.

If you visit the island of Pico outside of this special time, you may still be able to attend one of the feasts and *Bodos*, promoted by emigrants and locals, who organise them more during the summer when they come on vacation. You can also look for a restaurant that takes pride in our roots or a store where one of these gastronomic particularities is available. According to popular opinion, several bakeries and pastry shops excel in making *Massa Sovada*, *Rosquilhas*, and *Vésperas*.



### SOPAS SECAS

A soup is a dish that involves having something, usually bread, soaked in broth or sauce. During the time of the Holy Spirit and as a way of celebrating the Paraclete, soups are made on all the islands. There are always some variations, depending on the island, the place, and even on the island itself, whether in seasonings or the way of cooking. In Pico, however, the most significant curiosity lies in the fact that, in some places, they are usually “sopas secas” (Dry soups); that is, the broth is poured on the bread, but in such a quantity that it all gets absorbed into the bread, and none left outside of it. There are places in Pico where people eat them with a spoon, although other cutlery is also present. These are delicious, like all soups from the time of the Holy Spirit.



### ROSQUILHAS

A *Bodo* is a celebration. Most of the Feasts originated from promises, possibly deriving from the Latin root in *Votum* or Vow. In a *Bodo* of the Divine, the purpose is to create an extreme moment of abundance, seeking the contrast, nowadays much smaller, with a daily life consisting of cornbread, chestnuts, yams or potatoes, and where wheat was but a mirage. In Pico, *Rosquilhas* are famous and given to thousands of people who pass by, one per person. Previous generations called them *Reliques* (Relics), perhaps maintaining the idea of these being relics, memories of the abundance of the day and this special time of the year.



### UM SABOR COM SÉCULOS DE LABUTA

Talking about the Landscape, wine, and Holy Spirit takes another meaning when you visit the Pico Island Wine Cooperative. The rudeness of the island, geologically the youngest in the Archipelago, did not prevent wine from being made almost from stones. The reputation of international exports is for other visits. Here, it is important to understand how one can make use of the hard ground, bringing delight to all, during the festivities and tasting a centuries-old wine of sea.

### THE PARACLETE

The term “paraclete” comes from the Greek *parákleto*s, 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, *alcetra* (traditional meat stew), other kinds of stewed meat, rice pudding, *alfeñim* (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.

# Explore

PICO  
AZORES





**Celebrating abundance, in the name of the Paraclete, Madalena**

The largest *Império* of Pico is “raised” during the Holy Spirit Tuesday in Vila da Madalena, where around ten thousand *Rosquilhas* are distributed, many of them shared with outsiders who come to the island, essentially from Faial and São Jorge, which form the central group “triangle” of the Azores. *Rosquilhas* decorated with flowers are placed in wicker baskets, decorated with white lace tablecloths and worn on their heads by women. These are taken to the main church for blessings before being distributed in the *Bodo*, accompanied by the *Folhões* (revellers). This procession fills the eyes with light, colour, and joy, demonstrating the uniqueness of this day. It’s important to remember that wheat, the base of the bread, was rare on the island and at the people’s table not too long ago. This was a celebration not only of the Divine but of the different abundance that descended upon the islands in these days of the Holy Spirit.



**Amidst stone walls, a wine of sea, Madalena**

For the Glory of the Divine Paraclete, at least wine, bread and meat are needed in abundance to set aside the memories of everyday life. The UNESCO Landscape of the Pico vineyards is, without a doubt, the largest on the Azores islands. It extends over hectares and hectares, allowing wines, such as the traditional Verdelho, to recover its fame and profit. After the difficulties of the 1800s, caused by phylloxera, and as on other islands, cultivation recovered, and the golden tone has returned to glasses and social gatherings. Looking at the vineyards in the middle of the Atlantic is a true delight.



**A Crown in the Chapel of São Nuno, Candelária**

Nuno Álvares Pereira, the celebrated hero and Constable of Portugal during the struggles for independence during the 14th century, was, for many years, referred to as Blessed Nuno de Santa Maria before the Catholic Church. However, here in Pico, in the township of Mirateca, in the middle of the Atlantic and far from Aljubarrota and the Carmelite monastery of Lisbon, he was always considered a saint, with a small chapel, which boasted a mix of characteristics of an *Império* (small temple in honour of the Holy Spirit) and Chapel, procession, *Bodo* and Feast. This is how traditions and sentiments intersect, with the Crown of the Divine Paraclete ennobling the frontispiece of the Chapel of Saint Nuno, whose image is inside, where the traditional silver Crown of the Holy Spirit is also usually located.



**The banners, a visible mark of the Brotherhood, Cabeço Chão**

A flag on the mast, a banner installed in a Festival room or carried with respect are symbols and a visible mark of identity. Like other organisations, all Holy Spirit Brotherhoods have their insignia, even more so because it concerns something as intangible as the celebration of the *Império* of the Holy Spirit, proudly displayed and elevated in the times of the Holy Spirit, kept with respect and care the rest of the year. Vivid symbols of the Feast, in various places on the island, there are those who make or renew them, with the characteristic *fleurs de lis* in the corners, more common in this area of the Archipelago. Nostalgia, emigration, and the desire for a reminder of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, led some to want a smaller banner for home display in the Americas. While there are those who make them large and hand-embroidered, there are also those who make them smaller, like, for example, Paula Rosa at Cabeço Chão.



**The oxen that escaped the lava, São Roque**

The memory of the various eruptions, which took place in historical times here in Pico, in which “fire broke out”, causing extensive lava flows in the 16th and 18th centuries, gave rise to situations considered to be miracles of the Divine Paraclete. One of them tells of some oxen, promised for the Feasts of the Holy Spirit, which were in the field when “the fire came”. Frightened, they fled as best they could and ended up on high ground. When the terrible molten rock passed and cooled enough, the people saw that the animals were on the hill. Only those who have been close to one of these lava torrents, sometimes lofty and moving in an omnipotent and tremendous way, engulfing everything, can imagine the miracle felt by those who saw them after passing on the green hill surrounded by black smoke. It happened on a hill close to the Forestry Services house, next to the Caiado lagoon on Estrada do Mato, which connects Lajes to Madalena. Even today, the enormity of these lavas can be evidenced by the forest patch that covers Mistério da Prainha, right next to it, one of the four “*Mistérios*” of the island of Pico.



**The Divine and the Sea, Santo Amaro**

The Divine and the Sea. Santo Amaro For centuries, elegant vessels of larger and smaller sizes left the Santo Amaro do Pico shipyards, from cabotage ships to trawlers, gasoline-powered speedboats and whaling boats. Visiting the places where shipbuilding life still exists here is essential on a trip to Pico. The Santo Amaro shipyards are much more than regional history, with builders who were successful in San Francisco Bay originating from here. The relationship with the Holy Spirit is complex and beautiful. The first cabotage yacht “Espírito Santo” (Holy Spirit), was commissioned in Santo Amaro do Pico by João da Cunha from Graciosa, following a vow made to the Divine Holy Spirit in case he survived the sinking of a boat in which he was sailing. This first “Espírito Santo” began sailing in 1853 with a capacity of 28 tons of gross tonnage and sailed until 1892 or 1893. For more than a century, several ships with that name were built in Santo Amaro do Pico, the last of which, with the registration number SG 16 TL, sailed until the last quarter of the 20th century. Today, the name continues in use on a larger vessel belonging to the company Transportes Marítimos Graciosenses.



**The açafates of pride, Ribeirinha**

The *Bodos*, in praise of the Lord Holy Spirit, always involve a Feast of abundance, where the açafates (shallow, archless wicker baskets), full of bread or *Rosquilhas* are highlighted. Perhaps this is the special brand of Pico, particularly in Madalena. Ribeirinha do Pico houses the rare wicker craftsman, Germano Pimentel, who insists on making these açafates because wicker is a living thing that, if not taken care of, and even if it is, gets damaged and lost with time. The necessity and appreciation of this art keep the production of this artefact possible, which only comes to life in the time of the Holy Spirit. As, in many situations, younger girls carry the *Rosquilhas*, he has adapted, and nowadays also builds smaller açafates for these cases.



**The wood stamps from across the Channel, Piedade**

The *chavões* (wood stamps), carved in fine wood and intended to mark the *Vésperas* (Eve’s Cake), exist on the north side of the island of Pico facing São Jorge and in the so-called Ponta da Ilha, Piedade, since this is the part of the island where *Vésperas* are held and are an essential part of the *Bodo* (distribution of alms). A tradition shared between São Jorge, Pico and Graciosa, in the past, these markings would indicate who had made the bread or cakes, perhaps to free themselves from the promise or obligation to contribute to the group and the Festival. In other regions of Europe, such as Flanders, there are remnants of this same tradition, especially in regions with communal ovens, where several houses and families put everything together in the same oven. Now, they appear mainly kept in museums. In Pico, however, they remain active and alive in the biggest celebration of the people of these islands, at the hands of João Alves, a craftsman who remains active, whether in the production of souvenirs or new *chavões* if one gets damaged.



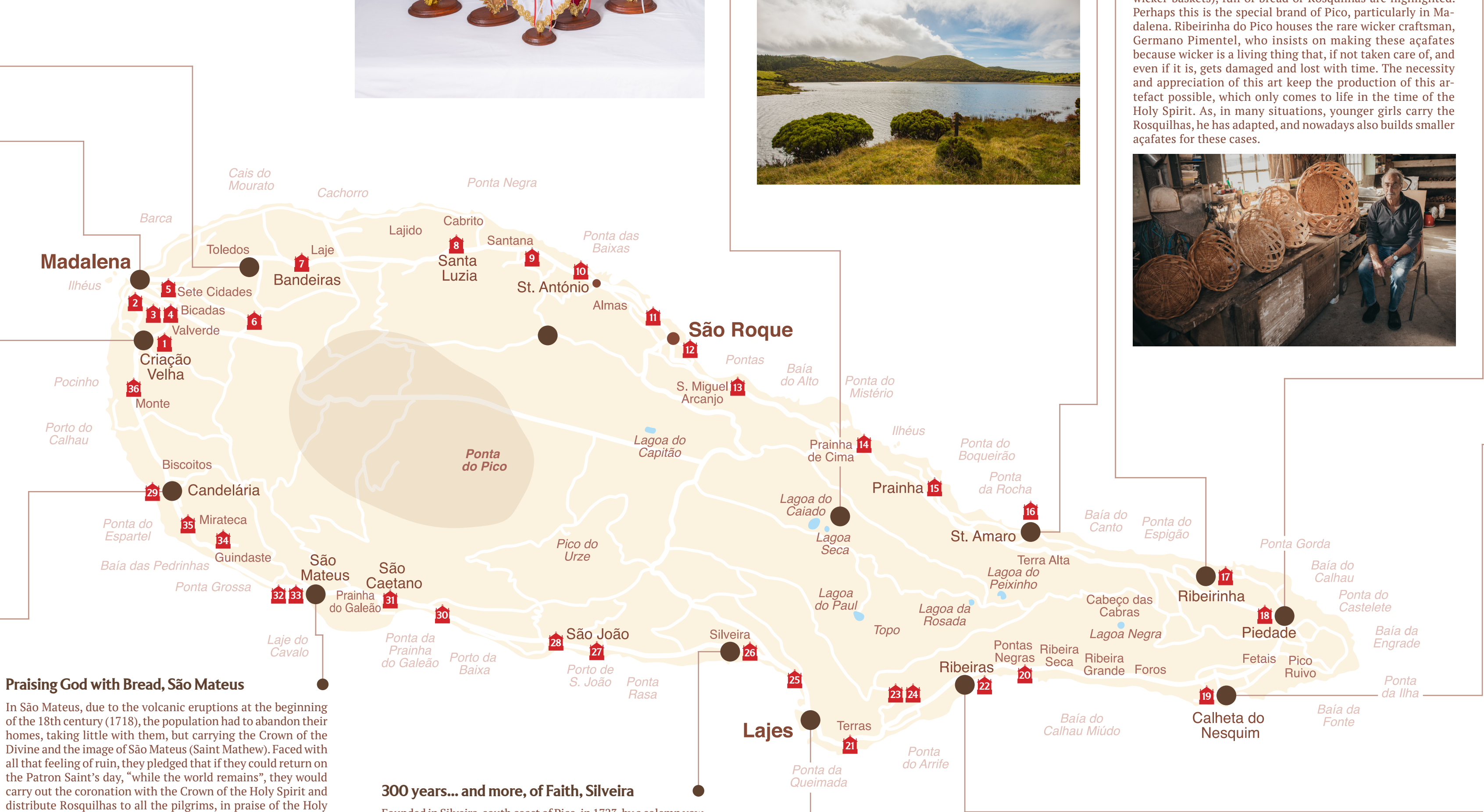
**Calheta de Nesquim, the meeting place, Calheta de Nesquim**

Between Beira and Piedade, the *Vésperas* prevail as a way of celebrating the Divine. The proximity of the North side of Pico to São Jorge, over many tens of kilometres, and the small coastal ports favoured the sharing or transposition of traditions. Calheta de Nesquim, a place of ancient whaling tradition southeast of Pico and facing the open sea, is the meeting point for another Bodo tradition: *Rosquilhas*, a ring-shaped bread. Interestingly, it is said that this contact generated a unique situation, the blending of the two traditions, since both *Vésperas* and *Rosquilhas* are given to those who pass by without distinction.



**Having the Divine close to you, Ribeiras**

Pico is one of the Azores islands where the immateriality of the Divine is most present as a form of companionship. It may seem strange, but the idea of everyone bringing a symbol or souvenir of the Holy Spirit leads to the manufacture of things as simple as a keychain. This utilitarian piece allows you to store your keys and carries with you at the same time memories of the Feasts, memories of the land and a feeling of protection and support. Artisan Diana Silva is one of those who works in this art of wise mixing of feelings and memories.



**Praising God with Bread, São Mateus**

In São Mateus, due to the volcanic eruptions at the beginning of the 18th century (1718), the population had to abandon their homes, taking little with them, but carrying the Crown of the Divine and the image of São Mateus (Saint Mathew). Faced with all that feeling of ruin, they pledged that if they could return on the Patron Saint’s day, “while the world remains”, they would carry out the coronation with the Crown of the Holy Spirit and distribute *Rosquilhas* to all the pilgrims, in praise of the Holy Spirit and of São Mateus. Since then, the vow has been fulfilled, with around three thousand *Rosquilhas* available to be distributed to all those who pass through São Mateus.



**300 years... and more, of Faith, Silveira**

Founded in Silveira, south coast of Pico, in 1723, by a solemn vow made in 1720, this Brotherhood is a direct result of one of the many volcanic quakes that affected the island. In 2023, when celebrating its three hundred years of existence, the “*Império* of the Saturday of the Holy Spirit” recalled the 300th anniversary of the historical eruptions of 1718 and 1720, maintaining the tradition of giving wheat bread during the *Bodo* (offering of alms) unlike others on the island. In the courtyard, in front of the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, there is now a tiny monument with the symbolism of the Holy Spirit, evoking all this and, nearby, you can visit the *Mistérios* of São João and Silveira and try to understand and feel a little of the what the inhabitants of the time felt and the reason for their vow. In Silveira, unlike the rest of the island, neither *Vésperas* (Eve’s cakes) nor *Rosquilhas* (Ring-shaped bread) are given, but *Pão Avo* (Wheat bread) and *Massa Sovada* (Traditional sweet bread).



**The Main Church of the Holy Trinity, Lajes**

Saint Peter is the municipality’s patron saint, and the Festa da Senhora de Lourdes (Festival of Our Lady of Lourdes) is the biggest in the Municipality of Lajes. However, although this Main Church, close to the first chapel on Pico, is precisely dedicated to Saint Peter and the evocative Settlement Monument, the Main Church is dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The temple, completed over several years, was well-documented in photographs throughout the 20th century. Since devotion to the Holy Spirit is implicit, it presents, at the top of the altarpiece of the main altar, a symbolic representation, at the same time ancient and very modern. The Trinity appears here as the all-seeing and all-protecting “Eye of Providence” of the Old Testament. Rare representation, well integrated into contemporary themes, much more symbolic and abstract than traditional and figurative ones.

