

# Lagoa do Fogo Scenic Drive Guide

The crater lake at the heart of São Miguel, around 60km

Interactive route map and GPX download: the full Lagoa do Fogo drive, with all stops plotted, is on our website. Download the GPX to load the route into Google Maps, a sat nav or your phone.

## At a Glance

Stage	Road	Highlights
<b>Ponta Delgada</b>	EN1-1A / EN3-1A	Collect the hire car, head to the centre
<b>Caldeira Velha</b>	EN5-2A north	Thermal waterfall and warm forest pools
<b>Miradouro da Barrosa</b>	EN5-2A	High viewpoint, both coasts on a clear day
<b>Miradouro da Lagoa do Fogo</b>	EN5-2A	The main view and the descent trailhead
<b>Lagoa do Fogo shore</b>	Walk down from the viewpoint	White-sand crater beach, 30 min down
<b>Vila Franca do Campo</b>	EN1-1A south	Queijadas da Vila and the islet, lunch

## The Summer Shuttle (Important)

From mid-June to the end of September, between 9am and 7pm, tourist vehicles cannot drive up to the Lagoa do Fogo viewpoints and lake. You park at Caldeira Velha or in Ribeira Grande and take a shuttle bus (around 5 euros per person, hop-on hop-off all day), or hike in. Outside those hours and months you can drive all the way up freely. The simplest plan is to drive up early, before 9am, which also beats the cloud and the crowds. Residents may drive through at any time, but visitors must use the shuttle in season.

## Safety and Driving Tips

The EN5-2A is a steep, winding mountain road climbing to nearly 950 metres, so use a low gear on the descents, keep your speed down on the bends, and a small car is easier than a large one. Parking at both viewpoints is limited and on the roadside, so arrive early and never block the road. Bring a warm layer, the crater rim is much cooler and windier than the coast. Check the live webcam before setting off, as fog often hides the lake. Swimming in the lake is forbidden to protect the reserve. For the descent to the shore, wear proper footwear, carry water, and allow about 1.5 hours round trip. Fuel up in Ponta Delgada or Ribeira Grande. Drive on the right. There are no tolls on the island.

## Best For

- A dramatic, untouched crater lake at the centre of the island
- High viewpoints with both coasts in view on a clear day
- A thermal waterfall and warm pools at Caldeira Velha
- Queijadas da Vila, the famous tartlets of Vila Franca do Campo

## Ponta Delgada Airport Gateway Access

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Every visitor to São Miguel arrives through Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL), also called João Paulo II, just west of the capital and about 30 minutes from the first viewpoint. There is no public bus to Lagoa do Fogo, so a hire car or a guided tour is the only way to reach it, and a car gives you the early start that beats the summer restriction. Remember you hire a separate car on each island, as rentals cannot travel between the islands on the ferries.

Book your hire car at [getcarhire.com](https://www.getcarhire.com) and compare all the main suppliers in one search, with insurance and taxes included. Prices for car hire in São Miguel start from around £12 per day in the low season.

*Access rules, shuttle times and Caldeira Velha slots change seasonally, so check the official Azores tourism site and the webcam before relying on any one plan.*