

Sete Cidades Drive Guide

The crater lakes and west coast of São Miguel, around 75km

Interactive route map and GPX download: the full Sete Cidades loop, with all 7 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
Ponta Delgada	EN1-1A	Collect the hire car, head West
Mosteiros	EN1-1A	Black sand, sea stacks, sunset
Ponta da Ferraria	EN9-1A	Thermal spring meets the Atlantic
Sete Cidades village	Into the caldera	Lakeside lunch, São Nicolau church
Boca do Inferno	Walk from Lagoa do Canário	The best panorama on the island
Vista do Rei	EN9-1A	Postcard twin-lakes view, Monte Palace ruins
Miradouro do Pico do Carvão	EN1-1A	Final viewpoint before the descent

Safety and Driving Tips

The roads to the rim and around Mosteiros are narrow and winding, with steep sections and blind bends, so keep your speed down and use the passing places. A small or medium car suits the lanes best. The single most important tip is the weather: the famous lake view is completely weather-dependent, so check the live webcams at spotazores.com before you drive up and be ready to flip the order of the route. Parking at Vista do Rei and Lagoa do Canário fills by mid-morning, so start early. Fuel up in Ponta Delgada, as stations are scarce in the West. Take a light layer for the rim, which is cooler and windier than the coast. At Ponta da Ferraria, only bathe around low tide and respect the swell. Drive on the right. There are no tolls on the island.

Best For

- Crater lakes and dramatic rim viewpoints (Vista do Rei, Boca do Inferno)
- A quiet lakeside village lunch between the two lakes
- A wild west coast of black sand, sea stacks and sunsets at Mosteiros
- A natural thermal sea pool at Ponta da Ferraria, tides permitting

Ponta Delgada Airport Gateway Access

Every visitor to São Miguel arrives through Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL), also called João Paulo II, just west of the capital and around 25 minutes from the first viewpoint on this drive. The rental desks are in the arrivals hall, and the EN1-1A takes you west out of the city. A hire car is close to essential, as no public transport serves the rim viewpoints or the west coast. 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.

Viewpoints, opening hours and tide times change, so it is worth checking ahead before relying on any one stop.