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Graciosa Island



Graciosa means gracious and no other name would fit so perfectly this small volcanic Azorean island. Arriving from any European country you will have the feeling



you are in some topical place with a soft hot and wet climate.



Mass tourism hasn't reached the island and is the perfect place to have a deserved rest. The island has its own rhythm. To enjoy the most try to adapt that rhythm and try not to be very demanding with the service as the islanders are still engaging tourism as an economic activity.

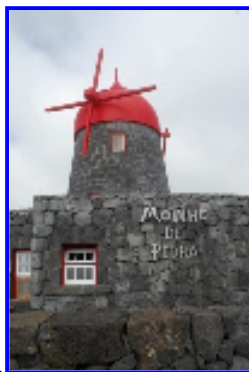


Santa Cruz da

Graciosa is the capital of the only municipality of this 62km². Monte da Senhora da Ajuda has the most astonishing view overlooking the city and the local bullfight plaza as well as the endless Atlantic Ocean.



Praia is the most famous beach of the island. The only sand beach has dark sand but still, is very comfortable. From the beach you see the port where the ferry and all cargo ships stop to provide the islanders with everything they need from the main islands. The windmills are a must see. Most have been fully recovered and there is a couple that can be rented for



holiday. The houses are mostly made with volcanic dark rock contrasting with the



white painted walls. Everything is well kept and clean. Even the lighthouses remain habited and still have an enormous importance in the maritime traffic.



Experience the view at the Senhora da Victória Lighthouse overlooking the whale shape rock formation called Ilhéu da Baleia that has become a brand of Graciosa Island.



Graciosa looks much smaller then it really is.



It is when you get to the inside of the crater of the main volcano that you



realise its majesty and extension. Several paths take you to the crater. The "Caldeira", as it is called in Portuguese, is filled with lush pine woods and green valleys. At its centre lays the Furna do Enxofre, a cave reachable through spiral stairs.



There is a 130mt diameter hot water lagoon with 100mt deep. Sulphur levels are often high in the summer and sometimes the cave is closed for visitors. But the local information centre as well as the view and surroundings are worth the visit. Don't



miss the local products.

The vineyards

produce high quality wines and preserves. portuguese are the main fruit as well as the passion fruit.



Small melons, meloa in island cheese is a wonderful spicy strong taste

perfect to match the sweet flavour of Graciosa's grapes. The many restaurants arround the island will surprise you with wonderfull local recipies like the "Alcatra de Congro"(congro eel stew) or "Polvo à Lagareiro" (octupuss cooked in olive oil). Ask the locals for the



restaurants that best suit your appetite.



restaurants that best suit your appetite.

The biggest and only hotel in the island is Graciosa Hotel, fully integrated with the surrounding landscape;



this hotel has everything to make your stay more than comfortable. You also can stay at rural houses, pensions or even camp around the island, being Carapacho Camping the most incredible one. The camping overlooks the Thermal Facilities and the sea



natural pools of thermal hot water. The panoramas of the Ilhéu do Carapacho and Ilhéu da Gaivota, just ahead, are breathtaking. Only if you are



diving in Graciosa you will know what goes on under that view. Massive underwater stonewalls, underwater mountains, thousands of fish of dozens of species, algae and beautiful caves make Graciosa one of the most beautiful places to dive in Portugal.



The local tour operators can also take you to see hundreds of dolphins on regular island boat tours. You would need more than one book to express everything you feel, see and do while you are visiting Graciosa. For Portugal Travel Advisor team this was just the first chapter.

See you soon Graciosa Island.

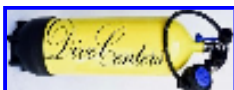
More about Graciosa Island soon.



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