

Santa Maria Island, Azores, Portugal

The oldest and sunniest island in the Azores, Santa Maria rewards curious cruisers with golden-sand beaches (a rarity in the archipelago), a fortress that predates Columbus's return voyage, and a landscape unlike any other volcanic island in the Atlantic.

 Tender for large ships; small ships may dock

 Typical call: 7–9 hrs

 Currency: Euro (€)

 Language: Portuguese (English widely spoken)

 Warmest, driest island in the Azores

MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____ Arrive: _____ All aboard: _____

Excursion: _____ Notes: _____

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Tender for most cruise ships; small/expedition vessels (<120m) can dock at Vila do Porto pier

Best For: Beaches, hiking, Columbus history, authentic Azorean culture

Walk to center: ~1.2 km / 15–20 min uphill from tender pier to Vila do Porto

Don't Miss: Praia Formosa beach, Fort of São Brás, and the Columbus chapel at Anjos

Getting around:  Taxi  €5–€15 ·  Rideshare  not available

TOP THINGS TO DO

- Praia Formosa Beach Day** — Santa Maria's showpiece — a long crescent of pale-gold sand with calm, clear Atlantic water.
 - Columbus at Anjos Village** — In 1493, Christopher Columbus stopped at Anjos on his return from the Americas — his crew prayed at the tiny Ermida dos...
 - Island Jeep Safari** — Cover Santa Maria's contrasting landscapes in one circuit — the red clay badlands of Barreiro
- da Faneca, the...

 - Barreiro da Faneca — The Red Desert** — This protected landscape of undulating bright-red clay is unique in the Azores — formed by ancient erosion rather than...
 - Whale & Dolphin Watching** — Santa Maria's warm Atlantic waters host common, bottlenose, and spotted dolphins year-round, with sperm whales and...

BEST WALKS

- Pier to Vila do Porto Historic Center** 1.2 km · 15–20 min · Uphill · Easy–Moderate — From the marina tender dock, follow the main road uphill past the marina facilities into Vila do Porto.
- São Lourenço Bay Viewpoint Walk** Short loop · ~1 hr · Easy — From the road above São Lourenço Bay (reachable by taxi/car, ~25 min from port), a short trail descends to viewpoints over the...

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

 CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)

Mon	High	Low	Rain
Apr	61°	58°	11d
Jun	66°	64°	5d
Aug	73°	71°	6d
Sep	72°	70°	10d
Oct	69°	67°	13d

 DAYLIGHT &  MONEY

Apr 7:06AM–8:15PM · Jun 6:20AM–9:01PM · Aug 6:57AM–8:31PM · Sep 7:23AM–7:47PM · Oct 7:48AM–7:03PM

Currency: Euro (€)

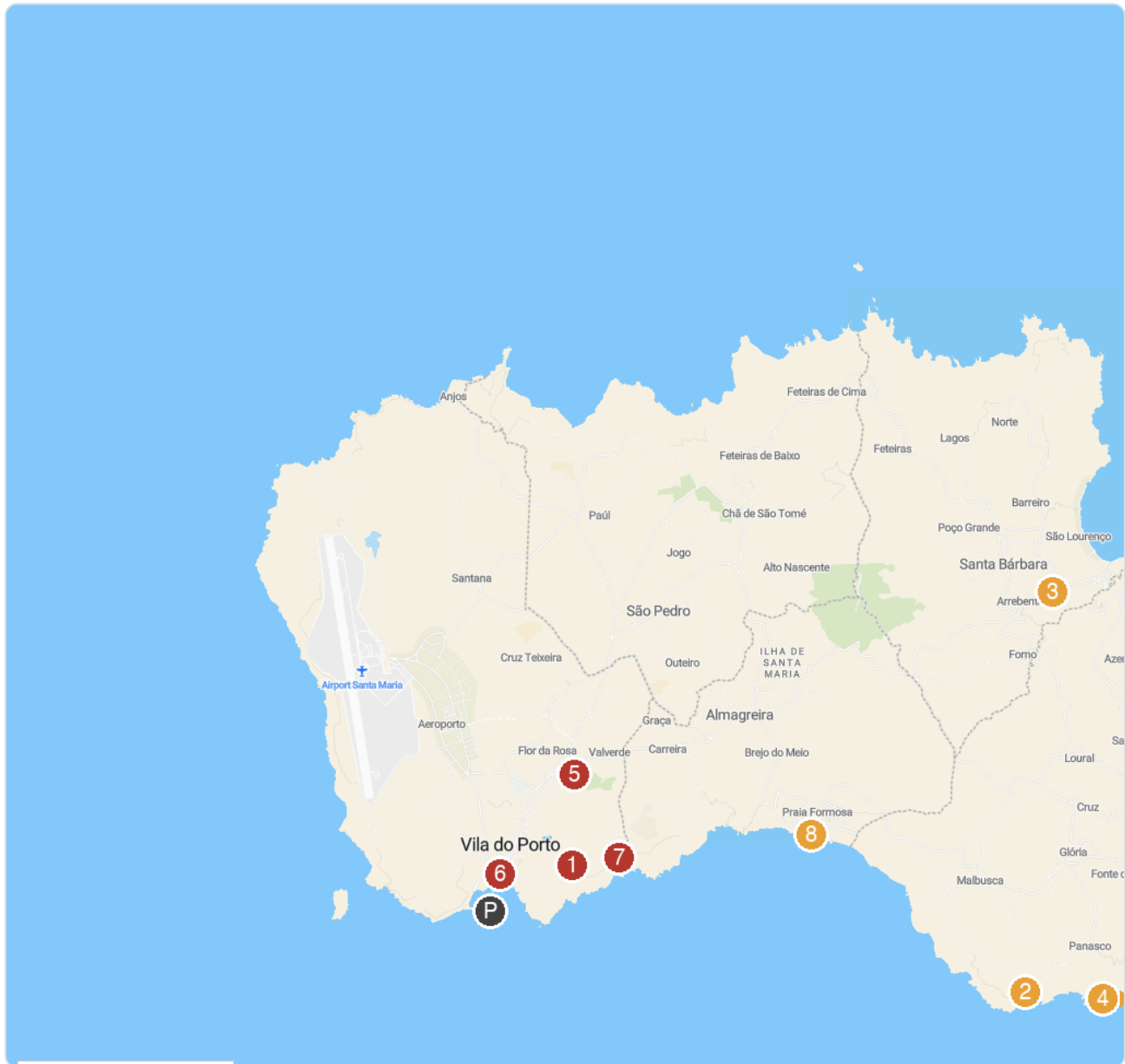
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Grab a taxi immediately: There are fewer than 15 taxis on the entire island. Walk off the ship on the first tender and head straight

Santa Maria Island, Azores, Portugal — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



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|--|--|----------------------------|---|
| 1 Monumento Natural da Pedreira do Campo | Natural monument: an ancient basalt quarry. | 2 Ribeira de Maloás | A stream with unique pillow lava rock formations. |
| 3 Poço da Pedreira | A beautiful lake formed within an old quarry. | 4 Ponta do Castelo | A scenic cape with a lighthouse and ocean views. |
| 5 Recreational Forest Reserve of Valverde Eng. Emiliano Costa | A peaceful forest reserve for recreation and nature walks. | 6 Forte de São Brás | A historic 17th-century coastal fort overlooking the sea. |
| 7 Gruta do Figueiral | A fascinating sea cave accessible by boat or kayak. | 8 Praia Formosa | Santa Maria's largest and most famous sandy beach. |
| P Cruise port / terminal | | | |