



The *São Filipe* Fortress in *Monte Brasil* was built following the island's conquest in 1583 by the troops of *Filipe II* of Spain (I of Portugal) commanded by the Marquis of *Santa Cruz*. It addressed the need of assuring the security of the Azores and of *Angra* in particular, which was the confluence point of international maritime routes and was experiencing the pressure of English privateers, especially Francis Drake, in the late 16th century.

Construction began in 1592, with Italian engineers Tiburzio Spannocci, Fr Vicenzo Casale and Antão Colla in charge of the project. Financial difficulties lasted almost until the expulsion of the Spanish garrison in 1642, following the nationalist movement of 1 December 1640. The name of the fortress was then changed to *São João Baptista* in honour of King *João IV* of Portugal, the restorer.

The Philippine building consists fundamentally of the curtain wall facing *Angra* that cuts across the isthmus of *Monte Brasil* and features three bastions and two

half bastions, the later at the top along the Bays of *Angra* and *Fanal*. If we connect this facility to the small *Santo António* and *São Diogo* forts in the southeast and southwest of the same hill respectively, which were built earlier under the line-based defence plan of *Terceira* prepared by Tommaso Benedetto, and if we consider the advanced fortified strongholds, the length of the fortress wall reaches approximately five kilometres. If we include the inaccessible rocks to the south, it covers an area of three square kilometres and it is probably the biggest historic fortified stronghold exclusively use for military purposes.

The Garrison Regiment No. 1 (RG1) is stationed at the *São João Baptista* Fortress, Portugal and Europe's westernmost military facility. It is also Portugal's oldest barracks with an uninterrupted presence of troops spanning five centuries.



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VISITING HOURS:

Summer (June to September)

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Winter (October to May)

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM



Centro Histórico de Angra do Heroísmo nos Açores
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SÃO JOÃO BAPTISTA

FORTRESS

1 PALACE OF GOVERNOR

It was built by the Spanish starting from the ground floor that was used as a stable and shaped by the tuff. King Afonso VI lived in the annex building during his exile on Terceira island between 1669 and 1674.



2 SÃO JOÃO BAPTISTA CHURCH

Planned during the Spanish period, construction still began during that time but it was almost entirely rebuilt after the departure of the Spanish regiment; therefore, it was *São João Baptista* as its patron. Construction lasted for many years but it received a decisive push during the exile of King Afonso VI in the fortress, which added a special magnificence to the building. Destroyed by fire in 1818, it never recovered the original seventeenth-century splendour, having alternated since then between a place of worship and a garrison. The remains of the Spanish governors who died

on the island and were buried in the churches that existing in the fortress at the time were transferred to a crypt located under the main chapel, which was also the resting place of other governors of the fortress. All bones were transferred to a local cemetery in more recent times.



3 TANK



First structure built by the Spanish, it consists of three interconnected units that can hold up to 3,000 barrels (1.5 million litres) of water.

4 MAIN GATE / GATEHOUSE / PRISONS

Only public access to the fortress in the original architectural design, it opens halfway up the curtain

wall flanked by the bastions of *São Pedro* and of *Boa Nova*. Access was made through a wooden walkway



that bridged the moat and was later replaced by a ten-arch stone bridge interrupted at the wall to make room for a drawbridge, which has since been replaced by a simple gate. Excavated in the tuff, the gatehouse is located just as you enter, along with the Philippine prisons.



5 SANTA CATARINA DE SENA OR HOLY SPIRIT CHAPEL

One of the places of worship of the Spanish garrison, it was later consecrated to the worship of the Holy Spirit. In the late seventeenth century, the Empire [Holy Spirit festivities] of the fortress was one of the richest of the city.



6 WOLF PITS – MAIN GATE

Wolf pits were opened at the bottom of the moat with a discontinuous layout that made it difficult for someone to lay mines or climb the wall.



- 1. PALACE OF GOVERNOR
- 2. SÃO JOÃO BAPTISTA CHURCH
- 3. TANK
- 4. MAIN GATE / GATEHOUSE / PRISONS

- 5. SANTA CATARINA DE SENA OR HOLY SPIRIT CHAPEL
- 6. WOLF PITS – MAIN GATE
- 7. POSTERN OR HIDDEN DOOR
- 8. FLAG TURRET

7 POSTERN OR HIDDEN DOOR

There are four hidden doors along the wall allowing for any sortie or quick return of troops when the main gate is closed. Today only the one located along the front curtain wall actually connects to the exterior of the fortress.



8 FLAG TURRET



It is said to be the place where the blue and white liberal flag, the last of the monarchy, was first hoisted. The batteries of King *Pedro IV* and Queen *Maria II* sit right next to it as witnesses of the organisation in *Terceira* of the army that, by winning the Liberal Wars, paved the way for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Portugal.