

P O R T U G A L

NATACHA 27



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NATACHA
PORTUGAL

You, cyclists who like to climb, discover in these few pages what makes the list of the national challenge in Portugal so rich.

GEOGRAPHY

MEDIA

TOURISM

SPORT

Portugal

'The total area of Portugal is 92,345 km². It's essentially a country with low mountain ranges. Its topography is connected to the Iberian Plateau (Meseta), that covers the whole peninsula. Portugal is divided into two very different regions: the North and the South, separated by the Tagus.

North from the Tagus, the altitude frequently exceeds 1000 m and the mountain reliefs, among which the Serra da Estrela, that is 1993m at its highest point, delimit the highland region in the north-east (Trás-os-Montes, Alto Douro), digged by deep valleys. The Beira Baixa Plateaus, that go down towards the Tagus, are lower.

On the western coast, the Extremadura, with its hills and small ranges, makes the transition with the southern landscapes, that are lower. Here mountain ranges (Serra de Mamede, Serra de Monchique) and plateaus (Alto and Baixo Alentejo) follow one another and isolate from the rest of the country the extreme south of the territory, the Algarve, made of limestone plateaus, plains and lagoons.'

Translation of <https://www.atlas-monde.net/europe/portugal/>

The Azores Archipelago is located in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean ; the 9 volcanic islands group together in three blocks:

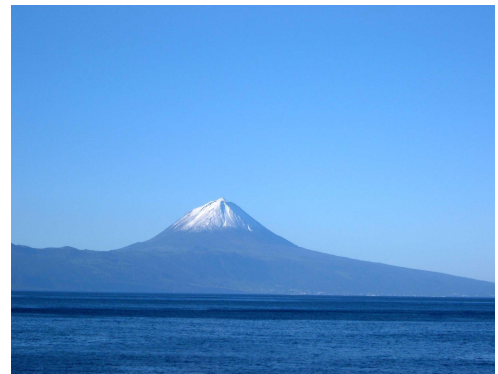
- western: Corvo and Flores ;
- central: Graciosa, Faial, Pico, São Jorge and Terceira ;
- eastern: São Miguel and Santa Maria.

Ponta do Pico (2351m) is the highest point of the archipelago and of the whole country.

Madeira is also located in the Atlantic Ocean. It's made of two inhabited islands: Madeira itself and Porto Santo.



Torre



Pico



Castelo de Vide in Alentejo



Alto da Ameixeira (Algarve)

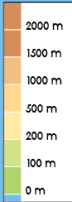
PORTUGAL

0 km 20 40 60 km

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- National Capital 673,000 in 2003)
- over 300,000
- over 200,000
- over 100,000
- over 50,000
- other main city
- other city
- Chief town of district

Portuguese districts have the name of their chiefs towns.
Madeira and Azores are Autonomous regions.



Tourism in Portugal

The Portuguese list of World Heritage sites is particularly well stocked and the Challenge visits a lot of them (13):

-The Cultural Landscape of Sintra includes the town and its cultural and natural environment. Our NE side starts next to the National Palace of Sintra and finishes in the park that surrounds the National Palace of Pena (188).

-The Royal Building of Mafra (Palace, Basilica, Convent, Cerco Garden and Hunting Park Tapada). The palace is a Baroque building from the 18th century. It's worth visiting from Murgeira (182).



National Palace of Pena



Mafra

-The University of Coimbra (107)

It was built in 1290 (in Lisbon, then moved to Coimbra in 1308) and is one of the oldest European universities. To visit in particular: the Sé Velha Cathedral (Romanesque architecture from the 12th century).

-The Historic Centre of Guimarães

The city is the birthplace of Portugal, to be seen at the foot of Penha (038).

-The Historic Centre of Evora

The 'city-museum' is overlooked by São Bento (161).

-The Historic Centre of Angra do Heroísmo (Terceira Island, Azores)

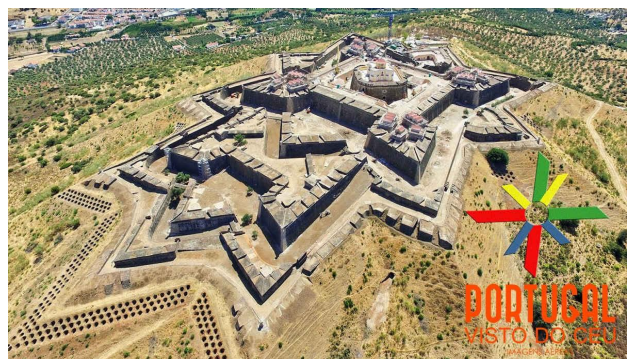
It's an example of the colonial architecture in the 16th and 17th centuries (229-Pico das Cruzinhas).

-The Garrison Border Town of Elvas

Our summit is located at the Forte da Graça (building from the 13th century).



Angra do Heroísmo



Fort of Graça (Elvas)

-3 religious buildings

The Convent of Christ in Tomar was conceived as a fortress at the end of the 12th century by the Knights Templar. It's located in the climb to #139.

The Santa Maria de Alcobaça Monastery was founded in the 12th century. It's a masterpiece of Gothic art. There we put the foot of 126-Vestiaria.

The Gothic Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte overlooks Braga. To reach it, a sacred way made of a majestic stairway (116m elevation gain). It's a step in the climb towards Someiro (034).



The Alcobaça Monastery



The stairway of Bom Jesus

-The Foz Côa Valley is the most important open air Palaeolithic rock art site in Europe. Animal figures number more than 5000. The archaeological park is the summit #072.

-Two natural sites

Alto Douro Wine Region

Laurisilva of Madeira (Laurel Forest), in the Madeira Natural Park



Palaeolithic rock art in Foz Côa



Terraced vineyards in the Alto Douro Valley

The Challenge also visits six sites of the Tentative List:

-Historical Lisbon

The #190 goes through the Bairro Alto as far as the São Pedro de Alcântara Viewpoint. The Calçada da Glória (NE side) permits to be close to one of the iconic trams.

-The Desert of the Discalced Carmelites and Built Ensemble of the Palace-Hotel in Bussaco
The Mata do Buçaco is an ancient walled arboretum. Since the end of the religious orders in 1834, the monastery was neglected. It was taken over for the royal family and partly demolished to build what was supposed to be a hunting lodge. The 'Desert' was built by the Carmelites in the 17th century.

-Villa Viçosa is a city-museum. The top is located in front of the Renaissance Palace (157)

-Besides Elvas (official UNESCO site), two walled villages: Almeida (084) and Marvão (147).

-The Historic Centre of Mértola (174), top at the castle.

-The Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina Natural Park is located along the Atlantic Ocean in the extreme south-west. Visit thanks to Pinheiro (170), Odemira (171), Arrifana (201) and Parque Eólico da Lagoa Funda - Vila do Bispo (203).



Bussaco Palace



Mértola

Protected areas

Mamoa do Batateiro (003), Travanca (005) and Branda Bilhares (011) are located in the single Portuguese national park (Peneda-Gerês). It's connected to the Gerês-Xurês Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (013-Portela de Leonte, 014-Calcedónia and 018-Serra do Pisco).

Natural parks are many (11 in the Challenge out of 13 existing). They involve 31 summits:

-Montesinho: Landelo (025) and Vinhais (026)

-Douro Internacional: Miranda do Douro (030), Bemposta (047) and Porrinhela (065)

-Alvão: Barragem Cimeira (056)

-Serra da Estrela: Portela de Folgoso (094), Penhas Douradas (095) and Torre (096)

-Serras de Aire e Candeeiros: Chão das Pias (128), Santo António (129) and Parque Eólico (140)

-S. Mamede: Castelo de Vide (146), Marvão (147), Cabeço de Mouro (148) and São Mamede (149)

-Sudoeste Alentejano e Costa Vicentina: 4 summits already mentioned as UNESCO sites

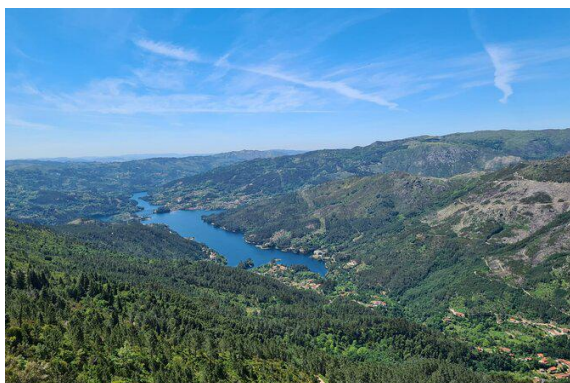
-Vale do Guadiana: Mértola (174)

-Sintra-Cascais: Pena (188)

-Serra da Arrábida: Picheleiros (194), Arrábida (195) and Castelo de Palmela (196)

-Madeira: Cabeço do Resto (239), Bica da Cana (240), Achada do Teixeira (241), Pico do Arieiro (242), Boca da Corrida (243) and Eira do Serrado (244)

-Most of the nature reserves are aquatic and flat. Serra da Malcata is the only one in the Challenge. It lies around the Vale de Fratura de Valdedra-Meimão (101).



Peneda-Gerês



Barragem Cimeira do Alvão



Serra da Arrábida



Vale de Fratura de Valdedra-Meimão

5 Protected Landscapes are in the list: Parque das Serras do Porto (049-Santa Justa), Serra do Açor (113-Tojo), Serra do Montejunto (176), Serra do Socorro (180) and Arriba Fóssil da Costa de Caparica (192-Aroeira).

3 Natural Monuments: Cabo Mondego in the climb to Bandeira (106), Portas de Ródão (134) and Pegadas de Dinossáurios (138).



Serra do Açor



Serra do Socorro

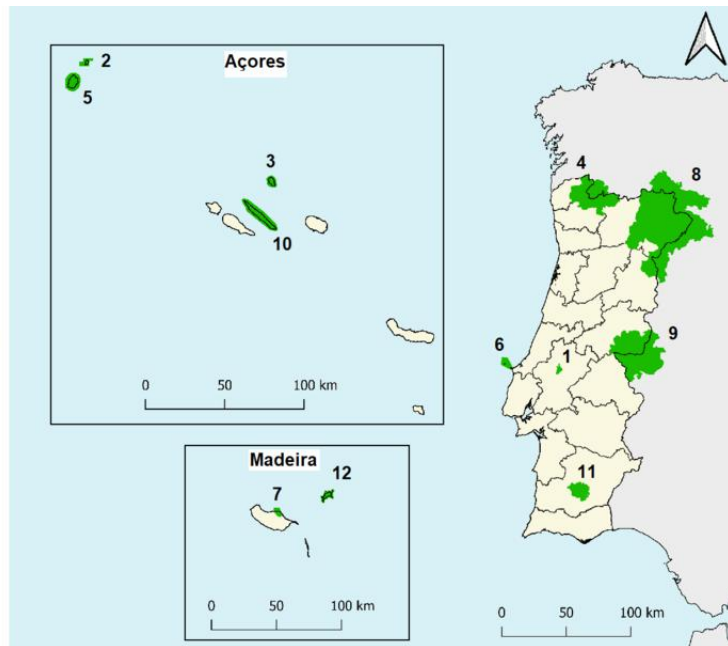
Biospheres

In the Azores, the summits #218, 219 and 220 are located on Graciosa Island (3 on the map below) ; 216 and 217 on Flores (5 on the map) and 3 fajãs de São Jorge are gathered under the summit #226 (10 on the map). Fajãs are 'supratidal talus at the foot of coastal cliffs, caused by landslides or lava flows'. In Madeira, the whole Porto Santo Island (236-Pico do Castelo and 237-Quinta das Palmeiras) and Santana in the north-east of Madeira itself (239-Cabeço do Resto) are biospheres.

Reservas da biosfera de Portugal

- 1 Paul do Boquilobo, 1981
- 2 Ilha do Corvo, 2007
- 3 Ilha Graciosa, 2007
- 4 Gerês, 2009
- 5 Ilha das Flores, 2009
- 6 Arquipélago das Berlengas, 2011
- 7 Santana Madeira, 2011
- 8 Meseta Ibérica, 2015
- 9 Tejo, 2016
- 10 Fajãs de São Jorge, 2016
- 11 Castro Verde, 2017
- 12 Ilha de Porto Santo, 2020

Fonte: ICNF



On the continent, Gerês-Xurés and our 3 summits were already mentioned (UNESCO). The Iberic Plateau (Meseta Ibérica, 8 on the map just above) is the western part of Bragança District. It extends the Parque Natural do Douro Internacional ; the Tejo ('Tagus' in English, 9 on the map) widens the Tejo Internacional NP.

To conclude, two forestal parks: Parque Florestal de Monsanto (189) on the hills of Lisbon and Morro Alto (216) on Flores Island (Azores).

Other places of interest

If you don't see any religious building or any 'miradouro' (viewpoint) around you, there is no doubt: you are not in Portugal.

At our summits, we can often see chapels (033-Nossa Senhora da Boa Fé and 077-São Macário, for instance), sanctuaries (like 042-Sr^a da Graça, 085-Nossa Senhora da Saúde, ...), or even a basilica (136-Fátima).

Three Cristo Rei Statues can be seen at the top of 041-Cristo Rei de Viso and 082-Marofa, and close to the foot of 250-Jardim da Senhora (Madeira).



Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary (Fátima)



Cristo Rei de Garajau (Madeira)

Miradouros are as many as chapels. In the climb to 060-São Cristóvão do Douro, there are five of them. The SW side of 121-Cabeço da Urra overlooks the meanders of the Rio Zêzere. 190-São Pedro de Alcântara and its viewpoint towers above Old Lisbon. The Atlantic Ocean can be seen from 006-Alto da Espiga, 106- Miradouro da Bandeira or 212-Cerro de São Miguel. A special mention to the 076-Panorâmica do Detrelo da Malhada. Madeira has many viewpoints: among others, 239-Cabeço do Resto, 238-Beira da Quinta, 236-Pico do Castelo and 247-Cabo Girão. In the Azores: 217-Fajã do Lopo Vaz, 219-Urzeiras, 233-Pico do Ferro, ...

Often both (religious building and mirador) go together, at the top of 06-Serra de São Domingos, for instance.



Cerro de São Miguel

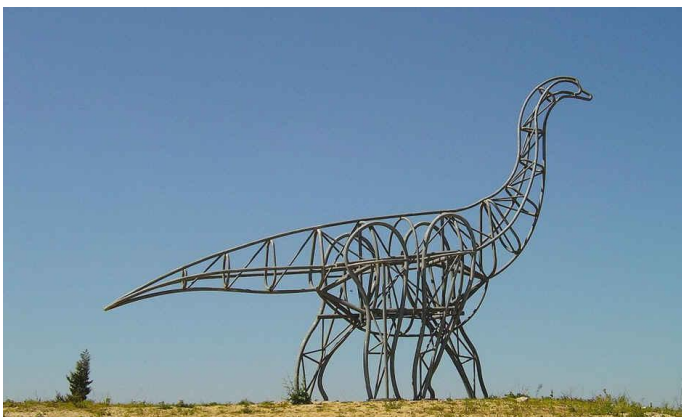


Detrelo da Malhada

If we go back in time, dinosaur footprints are visible at 138-Monumento Natural das Pegadas de Dinossáurios and the top of 177 is located next to the Dino Parque de Lourinhã (statue at the roundabout at the top).

008-Citânia de Santa Luzia is a walled village from the Bronze Age (Castro culture), also inhabited by the Romans. 036-Citânia de Sanfins is another similar site.

The S1-side of 131-Idanha-a-Nova is a Roman road. If you like this kind of old roads, try the south side of 196-Castelo de Palma, absent from the list, but accessible by MTB.



Pegadas de Dinossáurios



Roman road to Idanha

About fifteen castles serve as summits: Trancoso (081), Castelo Rodrigo (083), Torre de Menagem (097), Sortelha (099), Castelo Branco (132), Ourém (137), Abrantes (143), Alter Pedroso (152), Estremoz (155), Évoramonte (156), Mourão (163), Sesimbra (193), Palmela (196), Alcácer do Sal (197), Santiago do Cacém (199) and Ourique (173).



Évoramonte



Palmela

A monument in honour of Hercules and the defenders of the Lines of Torres Vedras was erected above the Tagus (185). These lines were made of forts built under the (French) First Empire (1809-1810) in order to protect Lisbon against the assaults of the Napoleonic army.

On the 031-Monte de São Félix a monument was built in honour of the Portuguese migrants to Brazil. This mount is a religious site that can be reached by means of an impressive stairway. A castro and a windmill can be seen as well.

The mill ('moinho' in Portuguese) is also the theme of Monte da Ovelha (117), Malpique (166), Portela de Oliveira (103, mills and museum) and Malveira de Cima (183).



Monte de São Félix



Mills at the top of Portela de Oliveira

Blue tourism

-Dams are many in Portugal: Alto Lindoso at the foot of Mamoa do Batateiro (003-sud), Vilarinho das Furnas at the foot of Penacova (012-est), Cimeira do Alvão (056), Meimão (101), Santa Luzia in the climb to 114-Chiqueiro (sud-west), Albergaria dos Fusos (162), Odelouca (206), ...

-The Rio Paiva flows down the gorges at the foot of Cerro do Cão (073) and NS dos Aflitos (074).

-The biggest wave of Nazaré was 26m high. That makes this sea resort one of the best surfing spot around the world.

-In the Azores, water is mixed with fire in the crater lakes: at the foot and at the top of Canário (230), at Lagoa do Fogo (231) and at the top of Morro Alto (216). We'll also appreciate a caldeira from Cabeço Gordo (221) and in the Furna do Enxofre ('Sulphur Grotto', 220).



Paiva Walkway and Suspension Bridge



Nazaré Wall



Lagoa do Canário



Sulphur Grotto

Difficulty

The summits in the Portuguese challenge

Torre (096) 1991m

Serra do Larouco (019) 1515

Portela de Folgoso (094) 1425

Marão (058) 1415 - Serra do Pisco (018) 1287 - Portela de Folgoso (094) 1281 - Alto do Trevim (111) 1202 – Landelo (025) 1133 - São Pedro do Campo (068) 1116 and Parque eólico da Serra Alta (100) 1116.

In Madeira: Arieiro (242) 1818m - Achada do Teixeira (241) 1584 - Bica da Cana (240) 1578.

In the Azores: Pico (223) 1220m - Serra de Santa Bárbara (227) 1017 - Pico da Barrosa (231) 947.



Serra do Larouco



Portela de Folgoso

The greatest elevation gains

Torre (096) 1686m

Marão (058) 1343

São Pedro do Campo (068) 1028

Portela de Folgosinho (094) 1024 - Alto do Trevim (111) 1018 - Senhora do Castelo (067) 963 - Serra das Meadas (069) 949 - Mamoa do Batateiro (003) 938 - Detrelo da Malhada (076) 890 – Fóia (205) 853.



Serra do Marão

In Madeira, the top3 exceeds 1500m: Pico do Arieiro (242) 1805m - Bica da Cana (240) 1568 - Achada do Teixeira / Abrigo da Heidi (241) 1516.

In the Azores: Pico (223) 1192m - Santa Bárbara (227) 1005 - Pico da Barrosa (231) 937.

The Top10 in europoints on the continent

Torre (096) 1409pts

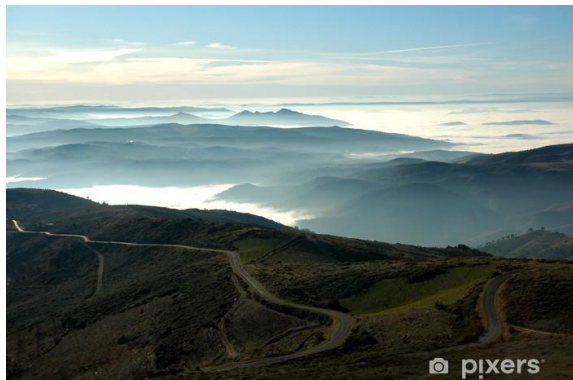
Marão (058) 1396

Mamoa do Batateiro (003) 962

Senhora do Castelo (067) 954 - Serra de Bornes (045) 866 - São Macário (077) 849 - Portela de Folgosinho (094) 845 - Detrelo da Malhada (076) 819 - Vila Nova (110) 802 - Serra das Meadas (069) 796.

But the Portuguese Top4 in points belongs to Madeira: Achada do Teixeira (241) 2036 - Bica da Cana (240) 2018 - Pico do Arieiro (242) 1882 - Boca da Corrida (243) 1675.

In the Azores: Pico (223) 1130 - Pico da Barrosa (231) 1011 - Santa Bárbara (227) 974.



Serra de Bornes



Achada do Teixeira

Bombs

Of course volcanic islands are explosive:

Madeira: Achada do Teixeira (241) 50,6pts - Boca da Corrida (243) 48,4 - Bica da Cana (240) 43,8.

Azores: Urzeiras (219) 34,2 - Pico (223) 32,8 - Pico da Barrosa (231) 30,2.

On the continent:

Calçada das Carquejeiras (048) 53,8pts

Marão (058) 38,6

Aveleira (112) 36,3

Serra de Bornes (045) 35,7 - São Macário (077) 35,6 - Arnelas (051) 34 - Cabeço de Mouro (148) 33,1 - Torre (096) 33 - Monte Vascões (004) 32,9 – Calçada da Glória (190) 32,3 – Nazaré (125) 27.



Carquejeiras: 48m en 200m



Nazaré

The longest

Marão (058) 38,3km

Torre (096) 29,9

Portela de Folgosinho (094) 27

Alto do Trevim (111) 26,5 - Parque eólico da Serra Alta (100) 25 - Miradouros de Horta (071) 23,6 - Serra das Meadas (069) 23,3 - Castelo Rodrigo (083) 23,2 - Mamoia do Batateiro (003) 21,2 - Alcaria do Cume (211) 21.

In Madeira: Pico do Arieiro (242) 24,8 - Bica da Cana (240) 23,2 - Eira do Serrado (244) 14,3.

In the Azores: Pico do Ferro (233) 19,1 - Caldeira do Faial (221) 17 - Pico da Barrosa (231) 16,8.



Alto do Trevim



Bica da Cana

Cycling races in Portugal

The **Volta a Portugal** exists since 1927, but the level of the riders is not up to the quality of the profiles. The race has ten stages and looks like the Tour of Switzerland or the Dauphiné Libéré.

Some uphill finishes became classic climbs.

Senhora da Graça (042) was climbed 12x (in 12 editions analyzed),

Torre (096), the highest point, 9x,

Santa Luzia (008) above Viana do Castelo, 5x,

Santuário de NS de Assunção (037) and Serra do Larouco (019) 4x,

Vila Nova Observatory (110) and Santa Quiteria (039) 1x.



FC Porto 2-0 lead: Carvalho and Rodrigues (2017)



Moreira at Torre (2022)

Several summits of the list were KOM 1st category:

Barragem Cimeira do Alvão (056) 4x,

Alto de Barra (057) 2x

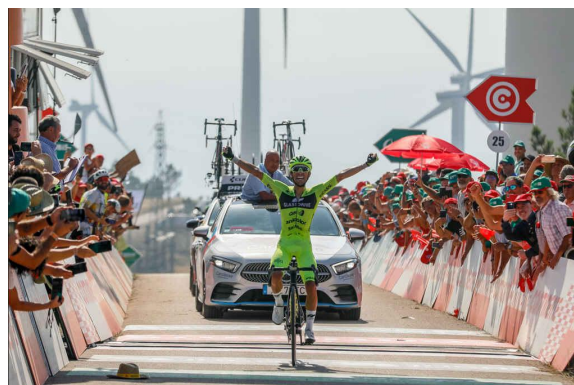
Sao Macario (077), Serra da Lousa (111) and Cristo Rei de Viso (041) 1x.

Others (not 1st cat.) were selected more than one time:

Alto da Arrábida (195), Idanha-a-Nova (131) and Sameiro (034) 4x

Serra de Bornes (045) 3x

The Salto de Pedra Sentada (040) is a special case. It is very well-known thanks to its big jump in the WRC Rally de Portugal. Gravel of course and used by the cyclists in 2016 et 2017.



Figueiredo at Vila Nova (2022)



Ogier in the Big Jump (2018)

The **Tour of the Algarve** is a stage race early in the season. More recent than the national Tour (1960) and with a higher level according to its list of winners. A lot of great names since 2009: Contador (2x), Tony Martin (2x), Porte, Kwiatkowski (2x), Thomas (2x), Roglič, Pogačar, Evenepoel (2x) and Martinez.

From 2017 to 2022, the Volta ao Algarve arrives each year at the top of Fóia (205) and Malhão (207), what leaves little chance to surprises.

In the 6 editions studied, Monte Brito-Alto (208) and the Miradouro do Alto da Ameixeira (210) were 3x KOM.



Gesbert won in Malhão (2021)



Evenepoel already statue on Fóia

The **GP de Torres Vedras** is organized since 1978 in honour of Joaquim Agostinho, born in this town and well-known rider of the 70s. At the international level, he finished 2x on the final podium of the Tour de France, in 1978 and 1979, with 4 stage wins, among others in Alpe d'Huez (in 1979).

In the 3 editions studied (from 2020 to 2022), there are 4 different uphill finishes:

Montejunto (176) 2x

Carvoeira (178), Serra do Socorro (180) and Sobral de Monte Agraço (181) 1x.



Socorro, it's disgusting !



Joachim



Figueiredo in Montejunto (2022)

The **Volta ao Alentejo** will celebrate its 40th edition in 2023. The five traditional stages go through a rather flat region, except from the Serra de São Mamede in the east. Crossing this mountainous range means climbing 149-São Mamede itself (3x in the 9 editions studied since 2013), the dreadful wall 148-Cabeço do Mouro (5x) and the walled village 147-Marvão (4x). The stage in São Mamede arrives in Castelo de Vide, where the riders climb 146-Vista panorâmica de Castelo de Vide, also known as '(Ermida de Nossa) Senhora da Penha'. This climb is also used in the ITT stage around Castelo de Vide.



Zintchenko at Cabeço do Mouro (2003)



Unknown in Senhora da Penha (ITT)

Among the KOM in the plain, the Volta ao Alentejo often rides over Montemor-o-Novo (9 KOM in 5 editions), where we put the summit at 159-Nossa Senhora da Visitação, more iconic. Santiago do Cacém saw the riders 3x (our summit 199 is located at the castle). Finally, Cruz João Mendes (198) was KOM 1x (under the name of São Francisco da Serra).

Other KOM don't belong to the list:

Monte Paleiros is too close to Cabeço do Mouro and the succession is almost natural

The northwards climb from Odemira vs. 'our' miradouro (171).

The **Clássica da Arrábida** is a new born race (2017). It takes place in the homonymous Serra, near Setúbal. The Challenge was inspired by it:

-Palmela (196) is an inescapable KOM, but also a finish line. The sterrato (Estrada da Cobra) meets the gravel trend.

-In 2023, new uphill finish in front of Sesimbra Castle (193), after Assenta (800m at 10%).

-The main road to Arrábida (195) is a classic.

-Alto das Necessidades (194) is a ... necessity: 1km and 107m e.g. (see picture below).



Gravel in Palmela (Cobra)



The Gran Fondo at the top of Necessidades

Younger still, since born in 2023, the **Figueira Champions Classic** promotes Figueira da Foz, coastal town at the mouth of the Rio Mondego. The riders climb twice the northern side (Parque Florestal and Enforca Caes), at the foot of 106-Miradouro da Bandeira, riding through the Cabo Mondego (natural monument).



From Enforca Caes to Cabo Mondego



In the Parque Florestal

There is a nice **GP Azores**, organized in 2021 and 2022 in the form of a three stage tour on São Miguel Island. Three of our four summits are visited:

- The 2 editions finish in style at the Lagoa do Fogo, that corresponds to Pico da Barrosa (231).
- The Lagoa de Canário (230) was also visited 2x, as KOM 1st cat. in 2022 and cut in two KOM (2nd and 3rd) in 2021.
- Our Pico do Ferro (233) is the extension to a viewpoint in dead-end of several sides of Furnas or Achada das Furnas.



Pedro Lopes at the Lagoa do Fogo (2021)



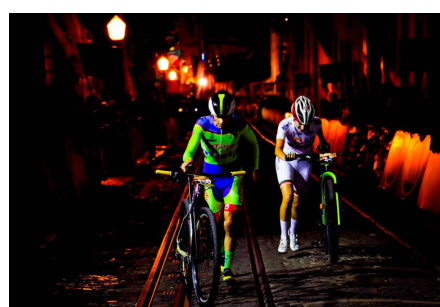
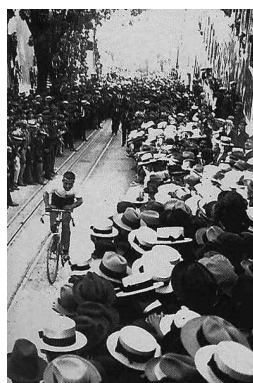
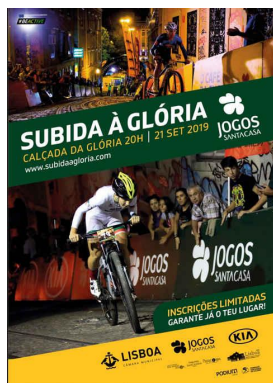
Profile of the 3rd stage GP 2022

Madeira has its volta as well. In 2022 the 47th edition was stingy with topographic emotions. The 4 stages only offer a double climb of Encumeada (1st part of 240-Bica da Cana).

2016 was much more generous with a very nervous 3rd stage along the corniches of the northern side of the island: Miradouro de Pedras Pretas (315m), Cabanas de São Jorge (502m), Castelejo (230m) and La Portela (597m). These KOM are not in the Challenge, because the north is very often the first part of much higher summits. The Miradouro da Beira da Quinta (#238) represents this zone. The 2nd stage proposed Jardim da Serra (757m), in the climb to our Boca da Corrida (243) and the inescapable Encumeada.



Finally, to end with a flourish, a **subida** in Lisbon dating from 1890. The aim of the game is to climb the Calçada da Glória without the help of the funicular, that means 265m in length at 17% on cobbles and preferably by night, to avoid the above-mentioned vehicle. The current record is 36 seconds. After a few stairs, you'll be rewarded with the nice view from the Miradouro de São Pedro de Alcântara (190). The cycling event has an article on Wikipedia and its own website: <https://www.subidaagloria.com/>



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