

from south-east to north-west. It is about fifty-four miles in length, but of an irregular breadth, exceeding not fifteen miles, and being at the centre not wider than six miles. The number of inhabitants is estimated at nearly eighty thousand.

Ponta del Gada, the principal town, is situated on the south side, and contains about twelve thousand inhabitants. The streets are regular and of convenient width, and the churches and religious houses, as well as other public edifices, may be termed rather elegant. Convents and nunneries are placed in various situations throughout the country. The town is built along the sea-coast; the land behind it rises at first with gradual ascent, and afterwards more abruptly, the view terminating by a congeries of conical hills. A mountain on the west towers above these, and is of a handsome form, its summit having a table appearance. In this is an ancient crater filled with water, whose depth has not yet been ascertained. There is no harbour in the vicinity of the town, and vessels are usually anchored at a considerable distance from shore, in an open and unsheltered road. That part of the island in which the capital is placed, forming a gentle acclivity of considerable extent, is well cultivated, and divided with no small degree of taste into spacious fields planted with Indian corn, wheat, barley, and pulse; two crops of these are annually produced. Country houses are frequently interspersed with orchards of orange trees, whose fruit is superior to that which grows in the southern parts of Europe.

Ribeira Grande, the second town in point of magnitude, is placed on the north side of the island, and contains nearly as many inhabitants as the chief city. In it are two convents, one of Franciscan friars, another of nuns.

Villa Franca, about eighteen miles east of Ponta del Gada, on the south side of the island, forms the third town. It likewise contains a convent of Franciscan friars, and one with about three hundred nuns. A small island opposite to this place, and about half a mile from the shore, possesses a basin, with a narrow entrance, where fifty vessels might anchor in security. Smaller towns, and a variety of hamlets are scattered throughout the country. The surf of the sea breaks with considerable violence, and with unceasing agitation, all round the coast.

The hot baths are situated in the eastern part of the island, and the road leading from the capital thither, is by Villa Franca; from thence it rises by a gradual ascent for about twelve miles, until it attains the summit of the elevated lands by which these baths are environed. The descent into the valley is by a steep, narrow, and winding path. This extraordinary gulph is about twelve miles in circumference, surrounded by lofty and abrupt