



**Portugal- Island hopping in the Azores (2024)**

**14 Days/ 13 Nights**

**Group Guided**



Discover the best of five Azores unspoilt islands; Sao Miguel, Terceira, Sao Jorge, Flores and Faial. This gentle walking holiday explores the beautiful and varied landscapes; crater lakes, extinct volcanoes, vineyards, thermal springs and craggy coastlines.

- **Sete Cidades** - Crater walk with stunning views of the twin blue and green lakes
- **Whale watching** - Opportunity to take a boat trip alongside whales and dolphins
- **Faja dos Cubres** - Follow a hydrangea lined path down to this unique lagoon

## Day by Day

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Ponta Delgada on the island of Sao Miguel

Arrive in Ponta Delgada, Located on the harbour of Sao Miguel, the Azores largest island, Ponta Delgada is a charming historic city with narrow cobbled streets and some interesting buildings worth a visit, such as the Municipal city hall with its reflecting pool in the city centre of Baixa.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Ponta Delgada at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive at João Paulo II Airport in Ponta Delgada (PDL) which is around 10 minutes' drive from the hotel. Should you miss the meeting, your leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to take a stroll along the harbour front promenade past the 16<sup>th</sup> century fort to the marina or visit the Convent and Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Esperança with its unique quadrangular tower.



### DAY 2 - Enjoy lakeside walk, lunch among volcanic scenery and visit thermal pools

Basing ourselves at Ponta Delgada, the island's capital, we spend our first 3 days exploring Sao Miguel - the largest of the islands we visit. We use a mixture of local and private buses to transfer us to and from our walks. For our first day walking we drive to the north side of the island. We make a stop at

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Gorreana, Europe's oldest and only remaining tea factory and continue to Lagoa das Furnas where we take a short walk of approximately forty-five minutes on the shores of the lake, stopping to see the natural ovens (cavities in the rock). In the huge hollow of Furnas Valley, diverse volcanic activity has also created thermal springs and boiling mud pools. For lunch today we'll enjoy a traditional Cozido cooked in the volcanic fumeroles.

We also have time to visit the botanical gardens of Terra Nostra, planted over 200 years ago which has an outdoor thermal pool in which you may like to take a dip. Back on the bus we continue to a viewpoint to Lagoa de Fogo, the island's highest crater lake, where we will stop to take photos before continuing back to Ponta Delgada MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

### **DAY 3 - Walk around Sete Cidades, see the colourful crater lakes**

This morning we drive to the Sete Cidades volcano for a beautiful walk within and around this iconic crater. The 500-metre deep, three-mile long volcanic crater contains two lakes, Lagoa Verde and Lagoa Azul, one blue and one green.

The trail starts at Vista do Rei viewpoint, heading along the crater ridge until the parking lot of Várzea. Throughout the walk, there are views of the Sete Cidades lakes to the right and views over the coastline of Sao Miguel Island and the sea to the left.

Today's leisurely five kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with 270 metres of ascent and descent. The last section of the trail before the village is quite inclined and can be slippery. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

### **DAY 4 - Free day; optional boat trip to look for whales**

Today is left free to explore more of the island on and off shore. You may wish to do one of the many walks around the island, options include the Salto do Cabrito trail (seven-and-a-half kilometres) to the waterfall or a linear route that connects the village of Sao Vicente Ferreira and Calhetas on the north coast (six-and-a-half kilometres). Another option is to take a whale searching trip. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

### **DAY 5 - Fly to Santa Cruz on Flores Island; optional boat trip**

Today we take a short flight to the island of Flores. On arrival it's just a ten minute walk to our hotel (our luggage is transferred by taxi). After checking in to the hotel we plan to take an orientation walk around Santa Cruz das Flores. The island is well known for an abundance of flowers, it was even named after them, and our walks will be relaxed to allow plenty of time to make the most of the natural environment. Weather allowing, there's the option this afternoon of taking a boat trip along the coast to view the dramatic cliffs cape. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST



#### **DAY 6 - Enjoy spectacular West Coast views on a hike to Faja Grande**

After breakfast today we'll take a short transfer to Fagjazinha, the starting point for today's walk. We'll be following the PR02 route to Faja Grande. Leaving the village of Fagjazinha we'll walk north to Mosteiro village, with views of the cliffs a constant to our left. After Mosteiro we'll move inland slightly and continue walking until we reach the beautiful waterfall of Poco da Ribeira do Ferreiro and a small watermill house powered by the water. As we near Faja Grande there are small bathing areas which give us a chance to dip our feet, or alternatively wait until the walk is over and brave the refreshing Atlantic waters! After some time to relax we'll transfer back to the hotel.

Today's moderate 11 kilometre walk is expected to take around four-and-a-half hours with 450 metres of ascent and 715 metres of descent. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

#### **DAY 7 - Fly to Terceira Island where we stay in Angra do Heroismo**

An inter-island flight via Horta brings us to the island of Terceira. During our stay here, our base will be the old town of Angra do Heroismo. Angra was the first settlement in the Azores to receive city status, in 1534, and remains one of the finest examples of Renaissance town planning. It was the Azores seat of government until the early 19th century and its palaces and churches are the legacy of its supremacy. After checking in to our hotel there's time to head out for a walk up to the fort for views over the harbour, the narrow streets of the old town are well worth exploring at your own pace. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

#### **DAY 8 - Walk the Algar do Carvão and Furnas do Enxofre Trail**

Today we head to the centre of the island by private bus. We take a circular walk connecting the two Natural Monuments of Algar do Carvao and Furnas do Enxofre. Walking through native forest we climb gently to reach the geothermal borehole and cross the plateau passing by a patch of Laurisilva forest. View the Furnas do Enxofre fumarole field before the final climb to be rewarded with panoramic views to Pico do Alpanaque and Caldeira do Guilherme Moniz. On days with good visibility, it is possible to spot the volcanic Serra de Santa Bárbara massif and the islands of Sao Jorge and Pico on the horizon as well.

Descending back to the car park there is the option to visit the Algar do Carvao lava caves, walking through the lava tunnels to the chamber. In the late afternoon we return to Angra do Heroismo stopping at the Serra do cume viewpoint on the way for views over the patchwork interior.

Today's moderate 7 kilometre walk is expected to take around two-and-a-half hours with 225 meters of ascent and descent. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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#### **DAY 9 - Free morning in Angra do Heroismo town before flying to Sao Jorge Island**

Depending on flight times, you may have the morning free to further explore the town before we drive to the airport for our flight to Sao Jorge. Time allowing there's also the option to walk a circular trail to Monte Brasil (visible from the town).

This curiously elongated island is some 56 km long, but only 8 km wide, having been created by a series of linear volcanic eruptions. The island remained almost isolated for many centuries, due to the lack of shelter offered to ships. After transferring to our hotel, we are free to wander the streets of the small maritime community of Velas, where we are based. Alternatively we can take an optional walk to the old whale watching tower which is positioned on a volcanic crater from where we can enjoy views down on to Velas town (2hrs).

Today's leisurely optional eight kilometre walk to Monte Brasil is expected to take around three hours with 350 meters of ascent and descent. MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

#### **DAY 10 - Walk through Caldeira de Cima gorge down to Faja dos Cubres**

We spend two full days walking on Sao Jorge, a place of precipitous cliffs, narrow valleys and tiny coves. On our first day, we'll head from Velas to the north side of the island. A stunning walk starting from the 700m high ridge of Sao Jorge leads us through the beautiful gorge of the Caldeira de Cima and down to the coast. From here we follow the rocky coastline passing the Caldeira de Santo Cristo Lake walking to Faja dos Cubres. Fajas are the small plains at the foot of the steep coastal cliffs which are dotted with traditional hamlets and fertile orchards. *Today's moderate 10 kilometre walk is expected to take around two-and-a-half hours with 600 metres of descent.*

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**DAY 11 - Free day; choice of optional walks**

Our second day is left free for optional walks, and your tour leader will advise on the various possibilities. Views of the surrounding islands are excellent from Pico da Esperanca ridge walk (1,053m) in the centre of the island, while a walk along the fajas on the south coast of the island offers a contrast in scenery from the north.

Today's moderate optional 20 kilometre ridge walk is expected to take around five hours with 420 metres of ascent and 1,230 kilometres of descent.

**DAY 12 - Take the ferry to Faial Island**

This morning, we cross by ferry to the charming island of Faial, where the harbour is often full of yachts, half way through their transatlantic crossing. The remainder of the day is free to stroll the streets and harbour of Horta, there is a circular walk from the hotel on the Monte da Guia headland which provides views over town, our tour leader will provide directions.

Our accommodation for the last two nights at the modern Azoris Faial Garden Hotel is a relaxing way to end this walking holiday. Set within an extensive landscaped garden with coastal views and an inviting outdoor swimming pool. Today's leisurely optional four-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with 160 meters of ascent and descent.





### **DAY 13 - Full day excursion of the island. Walks at the Caldeira and Capelinhos volcano**

Today we explore the Ilha Azul, taking a tour of the island by private bus. We head to the stunning Caldeira often shrouded in cloud, where we view the lush green-carpeted crater and walking along its edge. The views over the island are particularly impressive in summer, when the wild blue hydrangeas that form many of the hedges are in flower. We then continue to the western end of the island to visit the Capelinhos volcano, now extinct, where we can walk around or visit the Capelinhos Volcano Interpretation Centre. Later we return to Horta, an attractive little town with some good restaurants.

Today's leisurely seven kilometre Calderia trail is expected to take around two-and-a-half hours with 280 metres of ascent and descent.

### **.DAY 14 - Trip ends in Horta, Faial Island**

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Horta.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Horta at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Horta Airport (HOR) which is around 15 minutes' drive from the hotel.



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## Route



Easy to moderate walking

All hikes may be subject to change due to weather.

Getting there: Direct flights are available from major North American Hubs.

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**Dates and Prices – all prices are per person, in Canadian dollars and subject to confirmation on booking.**

Date	Double Occupancy	Optional Single Room Supplement
May 16	\$4720	\$1250
June 2	\$4990	\$1430
June 16	\$5080	\$1610
July 7	\$4410	\$1310
July 21	\$4180	\$1310
Aug 4	\$4650	\$1710
Aug 18	\$4160	\$1310
Sept 8	\$4700	\$1560
Sept 22	\$4630	\$1250
Oct 10	\$4170	\$1130

**Included**

- 13 Breakfasts 1 lunch
- 11 nights comfortable Hotel, 2 nights premium hotels
- Experienced guide
- Group size 10-16

**Not Included**

- Optional tips
- Meals not mentioned above
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Travel insurance is required

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### **Optional activities**

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your holiday contract.

Terceira - Algar do Cárvaro Caves entrance fee €8 1 cave, €10 2 caves, transport in shared taxi €15.

Sao Jorge - Rosais shared taxi €10pp; Ridge Walk Pico de Esperanza €15/20pp shared taxi; Coastal walk and dinner shared taxi €10pp (plus dinner)

Faial - Capelinhos Volcano Interpretation Centre €10pp.

All taxi costs are based on a minimum of 4 people sharing.

This is a partner tour.