



Adventurebug Worldwide Ltd

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Apto. Correos 1031, 29680 Estepona, Malaga, SPAIN TEL (34) 635 817 819

Essential Azores - Walking Discovery Tour

10 Nights Hiking & Cultural Discovery



The **Azores archipelago** consists of 9 islands and a combined population of approximately 250,000 people living mostly in rural settlements. The region is a mid-Atlantic treasure that escapes tourism of grand proportions. On one hand, a throwback to old-style Portugal - one of narrow cobbled streets and red roofed townhouses with ornate shutters and wrought-iron balconies. On the other, a botanical Eden that rivals Hawaii in botanical diversity yet maintains an old world maritime culture. It is truly a land of contrasts and offers a feast of delights for the active traveler – primarily a marriage between a walking discovery over unique and somewhat unreal landscapes and a journey back in time. White arum

lilies, red cannas and spires of orange crocosmia grow wild. Hydrangeas make up roadside hedges while lines of bamboo separate fields. Then there are agaves, cacti, succulents, fir trees, plane trees with trunks and branches covered in lichen, and azaleas bursting into bloom. The Azores are a sheer delight.

Hiking the islands is like taking a trip through an open-air botanical garden. Then there's the volcanoes and hidden lakes – trapping microclimates, lush and bursting with song birds and exotic insects. Along the coastlines, home to an abundance of whales and dolphins, maritime traditions remain unchanged and society is molded by the rigors of powerful mid Atlantic swell, making the Azores one of the most determined fishing cultures on earth.

All our Adventure Bug guides are experienced in worldwide treks and expeditions and we are pleased to offer you this exciting journey to the Azores in. We welcome those seeking a unique blend of scenic, inspiring and educational hikes that encompass cultural highlights and focus on all things natural over our visit to the islands. Welcome to the Azores!

Tour Features & Highlights

This hiking tour comprises 10 Nights duration in 3 hotel destinations - Ponta Delgado (Sao Miguel), Madalena (Picos) & Furnas (Sao Miguel). We'll make visits to Sao Miguel, Pico and Faial Islands – staying in comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels throughout, all with pools. Transfers by private and public bus, taxis, inter-island air and ferry connections are all included. We offer guide-led hikes and cultural



highlights throughout – including wine tasting opportunities and special focus on authentic local dishes! Expect lush flora and fauna - particularly local seasonal flowers, indigenous and non-native plants, birds and marine life. By undertaking this tour, you are creating opportunities to enhance aspects of rural tourism to the Azores lesser travelled regions. This is still a lesser visited European destination and one that is highly praised for its authenticity.



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ITINERARY

Day 1 - Arrival to Sao Miguel, (Ponta Delgada)

Arrival to *Ponta Delgada*, the Azores capital city on Sao Miguel Island (normally USA flights arrive by 7 am). Airport transfers not included but it's easy and inexpensive to reach our tour hotel. After settling in and rest we'll meet at 15:00 for a walking tour of Ponta Delgado with a special focus on ethnography and Island traditions including a walk through the *Jardim (Garden) Antonio Borges* – a pleasant introduction and acclimatization to begin our discovery of the region. Hiking time 2 hours / easy / no elevation gain. This evening we'll dine in a local restaurant specialising in Azorean dishes. Meals included: Welcome Dinner. Hotel: Hotel Marine Atlantico (4 stars). <https://www.bensaude.pt/hotelmariinaatlantico/>



Day 2 - SAO MIGUEL ISLAND (Ponta Delgado - Sete Cidades Village & Lake Walk)

Today we hike the *Sete Cidades* lake and volcanic cone region, a rural area of natural beauty and geological wonder. This charming village area is located on the shore of a lake (Lagoa Azul) at the bottom of an extinct volcano caldeira (crater). We hike the wonderful caldeira area taking in widespread views of the sea and Atlantic fishing villages and enjoying a vast array of botany. On return we'll see the island's pretty west coast landscape before visiting a unique pineapple plantation where we enjoy a tasting of this local delicacy. Today's hiking will range from 4-5 hours total / 7 miles minimum. Transport by private bus service from Ponta Delgada. Accommodation: Ponta Delgado – Hotel Marino Atlantico / breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner included.

Day 3 - SAO MIGUEL ISLAND (Lagoa do Forno Hike)

Today we transfer to the central highlands to the Lagoa do Forno (Lake of Fire). This scenic lake hike into the crater offers a range of island botany and diverse topography - this is a linear route (out and back). Following the hike, we visit the Caldeiras (hot springs), in a lush tropical canyon and take in the brilliant interpretive display on volcanism and geothermal activity before descending to Ribeira Grande for a liquor tasting and time permitting, an easy walk around this historic North Shore town. Hiking time 4-5 hours / elevation gain 1000 feet. Transport via private bus from Ponta Delgado. Accommodation: Ponta Delgado – Hotel Marino Atlantico / breakfast and picnic lunch included.

Day 4 - PICO ISLAND (flight) and Madalena's Vineyard Hike

Early breakfast today! Morning flight to Pico Island (1 hr). Private transfer to *Madalena* on Pico Island (20 min) and check in at hotel. Today we hike the historic vineyards, a World Heritage Site, following stony basalt paths leading to the 17th Century Parish Church and Windmill. The viticulture tradition – famous for its century old production of Verdelho wines on volcanic soil, is a must see. Madalena is a charming port town located at Pico's western reaches and in view of Faial Island. It serves as the economic and socio-cultural hub of Pico Island itself. Hiking time 3-4 hours / elevation gain 200 feet). Accommodation: Madalena – HOTEL CARAVELAS 3 stars (<http://www.hotelcaravelas.com.pt>) Breakfast and dinner in the hotel included. (*lunch can be obtained upon arrival or en route pending final flight time)





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Day 5 - PICO ISLAND Hiking Lagoa do Capito and the Sea Side Grottos

Today we hike the wonderful path from the upper nature reserve at *Lagoa Capito*, considered an important migratory area for a variety of bird species - down to *Cais do Pico*, a pretty hamlet area of the north shore where we'll visit the Lava features and some very special *Pico* hamlets. Picnic lunch on route and throughout the day fantastic views of Pico Volcano itself - Portugal's single highest land mass. Hiking time 4-5 hours / elevation gain 300 feet & descent 1500 feet).

Accommodation: Madalena - HOTEL CARAVELAS. Breakfast and picnic lunch included.



Day 6 - FAIAL ISLAND Hiking Visit

Morning transfer by ferry (45 min) to the Azores's fifth largest island, *Faial* - a name derived from the local Faya tree and termed the 'blue island' for its bounty of *hydrangeas* that adorn the island in summer months. We take a private bus transfer (1 hour approx), and stop at the remarkable CAPELO Volcanic complex - where we have an interpretive hike to understand how in 1957 the island of Faial grew by 2.4km square. From here we drive to the top of the island and hike the Caldeira (cone) of the Cabeco Gordo (1043m) before driving to the island's lively port of *Horta*, considered the Azores's most cosmopolitan center due to passing trade from international sailors and yachts. Early evening return ferry to Picos. Hiking time approximately 4-5 hours. Accommodation: Madalena - HOTEL CARAVELAS 3 stars - Breakfast, picnic lunch and dinner included.

Day 7 - OPTION DAY: Climb Pico, lava tubes, Whale & Dolphin Discovery on Pico Island

Today we offer a few options to explore more of Pico Island. You can climb the imposing *Pico Volcanic Cone* (7715 feet), with our guide / rated challenging. Or, there is the *Whale & Dolphin Discovery program* or even deep sea fishing from the Port of Madalena. These options are not included in the tour price but we recommend it for those wishing to experience what the Azores is most passionate about, marine life. Additionally, there are also a number of museums and of course the *Gruta do Torres* lava tubes worth visiting. Accommodation: Madalena - HOTEL CARAVELAS. Breakfast only provided today.



Day 8 - PICOS ISLAND to SAO MIGUEL ISLAND (Furnas Village)

This morning, return flight to Sao Miguel. Today our destination is *Furnas* (1 hour from the airport of Ponta Delgada). *Furnas* (Portuguese for cavern or crater), is one of the Azores most unique destinations. A village of approximately 1900 residents, its colorful history dates back to the 1500's and includes pirate invasions, a once booming forest industry and of course,

healing spring waters and steam vents making this one of the Azores's finest natural attractions. We have 3 nights here to enjoy some wonderful hikes within the archipelago's natural phenomena and gardens. Upon arrival, check into Hotel Terra Nostra Garden and time permitting, an exploration in the immediate area on foot



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- perhaps visiting the botanical gardens and enjoying the natural hot springs and hotel surroundings. Prior to reaching Furnas today, we visit Europe's only Tea Plantation for a guided tour and tasting including a short hike within the plantation to take in surreal views of the terraced tea hedges. Hiking time approximately 2 hours (500 feet gain). Accommodation: Furnas - *TERRA NOSTRA GARDEN HOTEL 4 stars* (<http://www.terranostragardenhotel.com>). Breakfast only included today.



Day 9 - FURNAS AND THE LAKE WALK

Today we hike to the *Furnas Lagoa* and surrounding natural area directly from hotel. Today's hiking can be of varying distances and includes a small summit challenge (Pico de Ferro view point). Reaching the

lake is a highlight as well as passing the numerous caldeiras (hot springs), where stew dishes are cooked in the earth near colonial farmsteads, bamboo forests and more. This hike offers lake views and a wide variety of birds and unique flora along the way. Total hiking time today approximately 5 hours / 900 feet elevation gain. Accommodation: Furnas – same as above / breakfast, picnic lunch and a special Caldera cooked stew (from the earth) dinner is included.

Day 10 – RIBEIRA QUENTE (the Sleepy Fishing Village) WALK

Today we hike the coastal paths of *Ribeira Quente* over the historic footpaths of fish sellers and pirates through forests and valleys with unique terrain consisting of ferns, ginger, cheesewood and honeysuckle. At our destination, we cross black volcanic sands for an optional swim and café stop. Historically an impoverished fishing village, the region is a delight for visitors with its warm hospitality and popular seafood. Return to Furnas via private transfer (20 min). Hiking time 4-5 hours today / 700 feet elevation gain. Accommodation: Furnas – same as above / breakfast, lunch and a farewell dinner in local restaurant included this evening.

Day 11 - DEPARTURE FROM PONTA DELGADO

Pending final group flight time, free morning in Furnas to enjoy the hot springs and rich flora surrounding the hotel and village area. Afternoon private group transfer direct to airport (1 hour approximately), for departure home or onward travels (departure time depends on majority of group). Breakfast only included.

Inclusions

- **10 nights** accommodation in comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels – centrally located
- Meals as per itinerary
- Airport transfers and internal island transfers via private vehicle, public bus, taxis
- Airline ticket to/from Picos Island and ferry transfer to/from Faial Island
- Guided tour program led by an experience Adventurebug tour leader and local guides where applicable
- Local taxes and all booking and service fees
- Included TIPS are: tips at included meals in restaurants and all bus services except airport transfers
- Wireless Internet service available for free at all hotel destinations



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NON INCLUSIONS are **PERSONAL TRAVEL INSURANCE, beverages at meals, additional entrance fees to larger attractions (where applicable ie. Whale Tours, Lava Tubes, registration fee for climbing Pico summit, etc.), additional transfers and / or private airport transfers (outside of the scheduled group transfers), room service bills and housekeeping tips.*

TRAVEL IN THE AZORES & PORTUGAL: What to Know...

- *Euros are the currency. Bank Machines are widely available and we recommend obtaining small amounts of Euros for your daily travel. Traveller's Cheques are rarely accepted these days, bank ATM cards or Visa / MC are best.*
- *Language of the Azores is Portuguese and English is spoken in the main tourist areas.*
- *The Azores are a series of small, sparsely populated islands that for many years was very impoverished. Society relies on fishing and agriculture for sustainability and tourism is the region's biggest income earner. Standards of living can be very different from what you are accustomed too. The pace of life on the islands is slower and levels of customer service may appear 'less ambitious' than what we are normally accustomed too.*
- *The Azores islands are volcanic and seismic activity can occur. Large, destructive earthquakes or lava flows have not existed in current history and the Portuguese Government regularly promotes the region as a family, holiday destination with minor risks.*
- *Road travel in the Azores is good but expect narrow, winding, tarmac roads through mountainous countryside. Our transfers are normally less than 1 hour at a time and with frequent stops at scenic locations. We do have a few transfers that are up to 2 hours on this excursion.*
- *Your internal flight between islands is with SATA (Azorean Airlines). Economy class seats are provided and you are allowed a maximum 1 piece of luggage checked 23 kg. You may also bring a carry on bag of 8 kg.*
- *The ferry service between islands is a medium, well-equipped boat that has both internal and outside seating areas. There are bathroom services on board for the 45 minute channel crossing.*
- *For packing, essentially bring loose fitting, comfortable hiking garments that are quick to wash and dry. Ensure you have suitable hiking shoes that are close-toed for the longer hikes and have ankle support. Some easier level hikes are town/country based and can be done in sneakers or good hiking sandals. Expect some areas for swimming during the hiking sessions (weather dependent!). Hiking poles are recommended as well as good quality sun protection and a quality camera. Binoculars will come in handy as will a head lamp, small first aid kit and your usual toiletry items.*
- *Weather patterns throughout the Azores are erratic and similar to the maritime climates of the Eastern US – however much milder. Rain, squalls and strong winds are the norm for certain hours of the day and periods during the year. May can be a rainy month but most showers are short lived and spread over the islands.*
- *Travel disease issues are not a concern in the Azores. Immunisations or travel vaccinations are not necessary. However we always recommend that travellers bring their own prescriptions (including glasses), from home. Tap water is generally very safe in the Azores – we discourage the purchasing of plastic water bottles when tap water is of great quality.*
- *Hospital and health coverage for visitors is very good and meets European criteria. Please ensure your travel insurance is up to date and covers the Azores.*
- *The Azores are approximately 4 hours air travel time from Boston and is on GMT - 1 hour (1 hour behind the UK time (GMT) zone. Mainland Portugal is a few hours further east of the Azores.*