

# Azores Island Hopping

**Tour Style:** Island Hopping

**Destinations:** Portugal & Portuguese Islands

**Trip code:** AZWHW

**Trip Walking Grade:** 2



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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An autonomous part of Portugal, the Azores are an archipelago of nine volcanic islands which sit far out in the Atlantic Ocean. The soil here is fertile and the climate warm so the islands are awash with sub-tropical plants sporting exotic and colourful blooms. This Guided Walking and Sightseeing holiday takes you to explore five of the islands to enjoy their stunning volcanic scenery, lush gardens and interesting geology. There's the option to climb to the top of Mount Pico (2,351m) – a volcanic peak which is Portugal's highest mountain – and a visit to an impressive lava tube. There are hydrangea-lined paths to explore, crater lakes to admire, the opportunity to swim in a thermal pool and sweeping views across the islands to enjoy. The trip also includes a full day geo-tour accompanied by a local geologist to provide a fascinating insight into the islands' geology.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- 14 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half board from breakfast on day 2 to breakfast on departure day, plus lunch on day 14
- A full programme of guided walks and sightseeing with expert local guides and an HF Holidays' leader
- Travel by minibus, taxi or coach around the islands
- Travel between the islands by plane or ferry
- Tips

## HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk the crater rim of the blue and green lagoons of Sete Cidades on São Miguel
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage areas of Pico and Angra do Heroísmo
- Sail from Faial to the mighty Mt Pico, the highest peak of the Atlantic



## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Arrival Day

On arrival at Ponta Delgada airport, and after passing through security, there's a short transfer to our hotel.

### Day 2: Geo - Tour And Fly To Faial

Today we enjoy a full day geo-tour, driving from Ponta Delgada. We'll be accompanied by a local geologist who will explain how the island was formed, the changes that have taken place from various eruptions and how this affects the landscape today. We'll concentrate on the centre of the island and head up towards Lagoa do Fogo (Fire Lakes). This crater lake forms one of three volcanoes which make up the island of Sao Miguel, the others being Sete Cidades and Furnas.

Later in the morning we head north towards Caldeira Velha and the new geo-thermal power station which produces approximately 50% of Sao Miguel's electricity. We usually have lunch in Caldeiras (a small spa village), which you can explore on foot.

Throughout the day there will be short walks to points of interest.

In the afternoon we will fly to Faial.

### Day 3: Caldeira And Capelinhos

Faial, known as the blue isle, is part of the central group of islands which include Pico, Sao Jorge, Terceira and Graciosa. Today we have a busy day exploring the island by bus and on foot.

We start the day with a short drive to the Caldeira in the centre of the island. The crater floor is a protected area, but for those wanting to stretch their legs you can walk from the view point to the highest point on the island, Cabeco Gordo at 1,043m with 400 feet (120m) of ascent.

From the Caldeira we head down towards the coast and Capelinhos where the last volcanic eruption in the Azores was in 1957. There are options for short walks in the area and a visit to the Capelinhos museum, which tells the story of the eruption.

#### **Day 4: Sail To Pico**

A short ferry ride today takes us to the nearby island of Pico, and a short morning tour. Pico is the most obviously volcanic of all the nine islands and is dominated by its impressive volcanic cone of Pico Alto (2,351m), the highest point in Portugal.

In the afternoon we head up towards Mt Pico to start our walk at Frei Matias, gradually descending back to Madalena along farm trails and paths. There is an option (at additional cost, payable locally) to ascend Mt Pico, the highest mountain in the Atlantic. This involves a steep ascent and descent of 3,700 feet (1,120m) with some difficult terrain, and stout boots are required. The walk takes about 8 hours. If the mountain is covered by cloud it's recommended to not attempt the ascent; you'll be advised locally if it's possible.

#### **Day 5: Monte Guia And Porto Pim**

Today we have a morning walk to Monte Guia and Porto Pim on the outskirts of Horta. The afternoon is free, allowing you to explore independently at your own pace or to simply relax around the hotel. An option for you this afternoon could be a whale and dolphin watching trip (payable locally, approx. £60pp).

#### **Day 6: Sail To São Jorge**

We take a morning ferry to Velas, São Jorge and transfer to the hotel. For the next 3 nights we are based in Velas, the island's pretty capital. Like most of the smaller islands, this is a sleepy place with a few small hotels, shops, cafés and restaurants. This afternoon we have an optional guided walk from the hotel to the small volcanic cone opposite and chapel of Senhora Livramento. En route we pass a couple of bathing areas where you can swim or snorkel in the warm Atlantic (approx. 22°C).

#### **Day 7: Three Fajãs Walk**

This is purported to be the best walk in the Azores. Most of Sao Jorge's population is concentrated along the numerous island 'fajas' - the small coastal plains created by the erosion of the steep cliff sides.

This walk begins at the top of the island and descends to sea level through some of the archipelago's most beautiful scenery. The hydrangea-lined path takes you through 'forests' of tree heather and pastures down to Faja do Santo Cristo where 'clams' are farmed in its sweetwater lagoon. The undulating path continues through two more fajas before ending at the café in Faja dos Cubres.

#### **Day 8: São Jorge Spine Walk**

This high-level walk follows a cinder track along the spine of the island circling between the green crater peaks including the island's highest, Pico da Esperanca at 3,455 feet (1,053m). The walk undulates across the top of the island before descending to the small village of Norte Grande. For those who have walked far enough today, we can arrange for you to be picked up from the café and transferred down to Faja Ouvidor on the north coast (where the walk ends) for a refreshing dip in the sea!

The top of the island is often shrouded in cloud which blows in and out during the day but, when clear, there are spectacular views to Terceira and Graciosa on one side and Pico and Faial on the other.

## Day 9: Fly To Terceira, Angra Do Heroísmo

A mid-afternoon flight to Terceira, and a 20- minute transfer to the Pousada Sao Sebastao in Angra. Our hotel is situated just above the harbour and is a short walk from the historic city centre. The city was devastated by an earthquake in 1980 and has since been meticulously restored to its former glory. In 1983 Angra was declared a UNESCO Historic World Heritage Site.

## Day 10: Island Exploration

Today we enjoy a full day tour of Terceira with some short walks. We head into the centre of the island, which is a mix of farmland and pristine forests of juniper and areas of dense sphagnum moss. These wild areas give you an idea of what the islands were like before they were colonised by the Portuguese.

A real highlight of the day is a visit to Algar do Carvao (Cavern of Coal), which is a solidified lava tube which was once full of molten lava gushing from a volcano. The cavern was given this name not due to the presence of coal but because of the dark black lava that the tunnel is made from. From here we head north to the wine growing region of Biscoitos which is known for its Verdelho wines. In the afternoon we return via Praia and visit the small bird reserve near the harbour which is popular with waders.

## Day 11: Praia And Birdwatching.

Half day hike descending to Biscoitos or Lagoa do Cerro, transfer to Praia to visit the interpretation centre of Cabo de Praia and birdwatching.

## Day 12: Fly To San Miguel

Transfer from hotel to the airport and fly to Sao Miguel, (TER/PDL). Transfer to the hotel. Afternoon city walking tour of Ponte Delgada.

## Day 13: Sete Cidades Crater Walk

Drive to famous crater lakes known as Sete Cidades (Seven cities). Path contours half the crater rim then descends to the village of Sete Cidades

## Day 14: Sightseeing Around Furnas

Today we drive east to the volcanic basin of Furnas. We spend part of the morning walking around Furnas lake (approx. 1 hour) before heading down to the Parque Terra Nostra and its thermal pool, in which you can swim. The gardens of Parque Terra Nostra were first created in 1770 by Thomas Hickling (the US consul to the islands). Since those early days the gardens have been extended and have matured into one of the finest to be seen anywhere in the world.

## Day 15: Departure Day

Return flight back to the UK

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Hotel Talisman, São Miguel - Azores

The art deco 4-star Hotel Talisman in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, has two restaurants, a café terrace and a rooftop pool. It is in the centre of town, just minutes from the seafront.

## Accommodation Info

### Rooms

All rooms are en-suite with air conditioning, free WIFI access, cable TV, telephone, mini bar, safe box and kettle.

### Hotel Do Canal - Azores

Situated opposite the marina with views of Pico beyond, this modern 4-star hotel is in keeping with the marine feel of Horta with a decked balcony and nautical photographs. This is a great base for exploring Horta.

## Accommodation Info

### Rooms

All rooms are en-suite with air conditioning, TV, mini bar, hairdryer, WiFi and tea and coffee making facilities.

### Hotel São Jorge, São Jorge - Azores

A 3-star hotel located right on the seafront in Velas, São Jorge, looking out over the sea towards Pico. All the rooms have balconies overlooking the sea and there is a large outdoor pool.

## Accommodation Info

### Rooms

All rooms are en-suite with TV, hairdryer, mini bar, radio and air conditioning

### Hotel Pousada Sao Sebastiao, Terceira - Azores

On Terceira, we stay in the historic Hotel Sao Sebastiao, one of two Pousadas on the Azores. Situated within a fortress, it has 28 bedrooms. All rooms have an en-suite bathroom, heating/air conditioning, mini bar, phone, cable TV, hairdryer, safe and internet access.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Essential Information

#### Passport Requirements

You may need to renew your British passport if you're travelling from 1 January 2021.

On the day you travel, you'll need your passport to both:

- have at least 3 months left
- be less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left)

Use the [government website](#) to see if your passport is valid for this holiday

## EHIC Cards

The UK government has officially launched the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which will replace the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). UK residents can now apply for one of the GHIC cards, which will gradually replace the EHIC cards as they reach their expiry dates. Every family member travelling requires a GHIC. You can make an application for yourself and on behalf of your partner and any dependent children under the age of 16. Both cards will offer equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare needs when in the EU on a temporary stay, which includes holiday, study and business travel. Necessary healthcare includes things like

- emergency treatment and visits to A&E
- treatment for long-term or pre-existing medical conditions
- routine medical care for pre-existing conditions that need monitoring
- oxygen and kidney dialysis

The public only need to apply for their free GHIC cards when their current EHIC expires. The process is likely to take two weeks. For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>.

The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. We advise all holidaymakers to also invest in travel insurance that covers healthcare, so they are covered for other issues that may arise, as well as cancellations and lost luggage.

## Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

## Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

## Trip Information

### Passports

Generally we recommend that passports have at least 6 months validity beyond the end date of your holiday.

### Visas

Visas are not currently required for UK travellers; however, this may change depending on the outcome of negotiations on the UK's exit from the EU. For current travel advice we recommend checking the Portugal page on the [FCO website](#).

Visas are not required for Australian, Canadian & US passport holders. Other countries should consult the embassy for advice.

Insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We have negotiated special holiday insurance and full details of this cover can be found in our brochure or at [www.hfholidays.co.uk](http://www.hfholidays.co.uk).

There is no extra charge for pre-existing illnesses. If you would like to purchase insurance from us, please call us on 020 8732 1220 or email [holidayservices@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:holidayservices@hfholidays.co.uk).

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers).

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary. Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 2,000m, which will cover you for a wide range of our holidays.

This information is subject to change. In all cases, we highly recommend you consult your GP both for up to date details and for more information on what is appropriate to your situation.

As a rule, travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations and boosters as recommended in the UK - including, for example, the MMR and diphtheria, tetanus, polio vaccines.

Requirements can change, and we recommend you check in good time ahead of your holiday.

Some travellers may require vaccinations for:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B

Please note: the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is banned in some countries.

If you will be carrying medication, please check with the country's embassy/consulate prior to travel. As an extra precaution, it is recommended to:

- Keep medication in its original packet
- Take a copy of your prescription
- If possible, ask your chemist to write the name of your medication in the language of the country you're visiting

For further information on country specific advice, visit [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) or [www.traveldoctor.co.uk](http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk)

## Useful Information

1 piece checked-in luggage (max 20kg) for inter-island flights. Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

**Tiping:** Tips have been included in your holiday price for key services such as local guides/ driver/restaurants. Any additional tips are at your own discretion.

**Climate:** The Azores have a mild climate influenced by the warm Gulf Stream. Expect daytime temperatures to be in the region of 15°C to 20°C with temperatures at night dropping to about 13°C. Ponta Delgada has an annual rainfall of 70cm so it is likely that there will be some rainfall during our visit. However, rain is rarely persistent.

**Local currency & money matters:** Euro (EUR,). Credit cards are widely accepted. ATMs (Multibanco) are available at larger supermarkets / shopping areas.

**Language:** The main language spoken in the Azores is Portuguese.

**Suggested reading and maps:** David Sayers, Azores (Bradt Travel Guides, 2016). Although you won't need them, if you'd like any maps of the destination, you can obtain some in advance from The Map Shop: [www.themapshop.co.uk](http://www.themapshop.co.uk)

**Electricity:** 220V, round European two-pin sockets. Adapters are needed for UK plugs

**Group size:** Typical group size is 10 to 18 guests plus an HF leader and local guide(s)

**Time difference:** GMT/UTC -1 hour

## HOW TO BOOK

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When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 9am – 1pm, Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

### PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

### NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit [hfholidays.co.uk/membership](http://hfholidays.co.uk/membership) for details.

### BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: National Westminster Bank, Account Name: HF Holidays Limited, Account Number: 48904805, Sort Code: 60-00-01, IBAN: GB90NWBK60000148904805

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking



confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

## MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the [Manage My Booking](#) function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

## YOUR FINAL BALANCE

Your final balance payment is due 6 weeks before departure if you are staying in an HF Holidays UK country house, 8 weeks before departure if you are travelling on one of our holidays in Europe and 10 weeks before departure if you are on a Guided Trail staying in one of our partner hotels or are travelling on a Worldwide holiday. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on [01702 427 236](tel:01702427236) or visit [hfholidays.co.uk/insurance](http://hfholidays.co.uk/insurance)

## PEACE OF MIND

### ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website [atol.org.uk](http://atol.org.uk)

### MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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## PRICE GUARANTEE

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We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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