



Trip Dossier for Azores – Azores Adventure

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This family holiday provides a great combination of nature, discovery and culture in these remote and unique volcanically-created Atlantic Islands. We visit two contrasting islands to give the best opportunity to discover the unique Azores Archipelago, from the volcanoes, caves, pretty towns, beautiful walks and the excitement of whale and dolphin watching. Sperm, Pilot and Baleen Whales pass by the islands in May. You will have the opportunity of seeing the playful dolphins Bottlenose, Common, Stripped and Spotted, as well as loggerhead turtles, throughout the spring and summer months. During your stay, we have fun, interactive and informal talks and presentations on both whales and dolphins, which will help you to identify these beautiful mammals while out on the water. Boat trips are 3 hours long and all safety equipment is provided.

Please note since the publication of the 2010 brochure, due to operational reasons there is a change in the accommodation on Pico Island to a delightful guesthouse.

Day 1 Fly to the Azores

You will take a morning flight to Lisbon and change planes for the flight to Horta on Faial Island. These islands isolated in the Atlantic Ocean offer a rare chance to step back a bit and enjoy the quiet magic they give out. Green and mountainous, with dreamy lagoons and rambling pathways, you'll relish the unhurried way of life. On arrival, you'll be met at the airport by our local representative and driven to your guesthouse, 'the star of the Atlantic', with breathtaking views of Pico volcano from the upstairs rooms.

Faial is known as the 'Ilha Azul', the Blue Island, because of its countless blue hydrangea bushes across the island. Faial covers an area of 173 sq. km (21km long and 14km wide) which makes it the archipelago's fifth largest island. The island is dominated by the Calderia, this is a huge crater with a diameter of 2km and 400m deep, but the biggest attraction is the picturesque town of Horta. During your stay there is plenty time to walk around the harbour and look at the large Atlantic yachts, or sit on the quayside at 'Peter's Bar' the famous haunt of the trans-atlantic yachtsmen with a cappuccino and watch the world go by. **3 nights Guesthouse (breakfast)**

Day 2 Visit the Old Town: Optional visit to the Buried Village

This morning you can set off on a visit to Horta old town, a delightful harbour with fishing boats coming in and out, artists displaying their paintings along the quayside, this cosmopolitan pavement-café lifestyle is a delight to explore with its Horta Castle dating back to 1567 built to defend the harbour. Horta has two adjacent bays, one small and rounded and the other Baia Do Porto Pim, a gently shelving long sandy beach - a lovely beach to spend the afternoon with a picnic. Here you can visit the old whaling station which is now a museum and a marine science museum, all situated at the far end of the beach.

Alternatively, you may wish to take the optional excursion to Capelinhos, the site of the major 1957 eruption. The cooled lava from volcanic eruption added another 2km to Faial's coastline. In it's wake the lava flow buried the lighthouse and village house of Capelinhos and, as time passes, more and more of the village is being exposed as the Atlantic breezes uncovers the fate of this tragic human drama. We'll visit the local museum and through various visual aids and diagrams see how the forces of nature shaped this island.

Day 3 Caldaria Crater Tour

It is said the best time of day to walk the Caldaria is pre-dawn so you can sit and watch the amazing sunrise coming up over Pico Volcano. This is an option you and your group could discuss with your local host. However, for a more leisurely walk, we suggest you set off after breakfast with a picnic. Remember to wear sensible walking shoes to tackle this uneven terrain, take plenty of water and a few snacks to munch along the way as we hike into the Basin and you will be taken to a delightful traditional restaurant at the end of the hike (meal is payable locally).

Day 4 Ferry to Pico Island

Following breakfast, it is time to continue your adventure and exploration of the Azores Archipelago. Your local host will bid you farewell as you leave for the ferry to Pico (30 minutes ferry ride). Probably the most distinctive island of the archipelago Pico is dominated by the its eponymous dormant volcano, at 2,351m Portugal's highest mountain. With its volcanic landscapes Pico became the centre of whaling in the Azores and wine making was its other main economic activity. On arrival at Pico Island your local island guide will meet you from the ferry. The guide will take you on the cave tour which lasts approx one hour with a geological presentation. This will be



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followed by a buffet lunch in Madalena (this is payable locally approx €10) at an excellent local restaurant. There may be time to visit the vineyards and walk around the coast before being taken to the guesthouse. The lava caves at Gruta das Torres are a series of tunnels created by lava flows from the eruption of Cabeco Brava that go deep into the depths of the earth. Grottos are covered with stalactites and stalagmites (do you know which is which!). Safety helmets and torches are provided. Like Faial Island, historically Pico, was the centre of whaling for centuries. The first American whalers introduced this trade to the island in the 18th century and it became the main source of income for the islands. By the beginning of the last century, two-thirds of sperm whales harpooned were caught off the Azores. Nowadays, whaling in this area has ceased and Pico is now the top destination for whale and dolphin watching. We pay a visit to Sperm Whale Museum to see how whaling shaped the history of the Azores Archipelago. During your stay on this island, you will have the opportunity to visit the ideal viewpoints and travel out to sea and watch these amazing animals. On arrival at the guesthouse there will be a welcome briefing and a chance to walk around the local village to get oriented and swim in the local sea swimming pools and snorkel. There is a fabulous seafood restaurant where you can eat together (this meal is payable locally). **4 nights – guesthouse (breakfast basket)**

Day 5 Presentation and Whale and Dolphin Watching (3hrs); visit Sperm Whale Museum

This morning after breakfast you will drive (15 mins) to the whale watching base. Take all you need for the boats. There will be a power-point presentation and talk about the Marine life of the Azores, the whales and dolphin by the resident marine biologist. This provides an opportunity to learn all about these magnificent creatures before you go out onto the water. The history of the Azores is entwined with that of the Sperm Whale as they are year-round residents along with dolphins. But you may also see the Blue Whale, the world's largest animal, the Fin and Sei whales, and even a migrating Humpback. The rest of the morning is free to relax, perhaps snorkel in the lagoon, visit the newly built whalers museum or visit the "vigia" which is the lookout who spots the whales from his unique vantage point with binoculars (he may let you try!) There are restaurants in town to take a light lunch. This afternoon you will go out on your first whale and dolphin watching trip. You will be taken the short distance to your boat, a rigid inflatable (RIB) with cushioned seats and all safety equipment. However, please be aware that if you suffer from back problems you should take advice before going on the RIB, as we can also offer a more stable boat numbers permitting. (NB there is no toilet on board.) The trip lasts about three hours and your guide will help you spot the whales and identify the different species. Photography is encouraged. This evening, it is suggested the group eats at a nearby charming hotel set in landscaped gardens and enjoy their excellent cuisine in the outside restaurant under the vines and sample their selection of local wine (this meal is payable locally).

Day 6 Whale Watching (3hrs)

After your trip yesterday, you will know what to expect and perhaps spot the whales and dolphins first. Listening to the sound of the whales as they come near the boat is quite extraordinary. Dolphins seem to bridge their world and ours with their inquisitive natures and tales of interacting with humans. You'll be entranced as you encounter pods of these delightful creatures dancing and jumping by the RIB. There are five species that you will probably encounter including the common and bottlenose dolphins. Once back at the harbour, the rest of the afternoon and evening is free and you can discuss with your local guide extra activities if you wish to be more active, you can snorkel at the nearby lagoon, take a picnic in the local park on the coast or go hiking. If anyone wishes to climb the volcano this can be prearranged and this is a good time to schedule it in (weather permitting) If you wish to do this and/or the jeep tour we can introduce you to the local mountain guide so you can join an excursion

For optional climbing the volcano on Pico Island – Pre-dawn ascent.

It is an awesome and spectacular experience. Please remember this climb requires good equipment for those who are fit. The 4 am departure for the sunrise is popular, or some people sleep a night in the crater, in stone caves. This may be too cold for some children. We have a guide available to accompany the group for a small supplementary cost. We do not recommend anyone to do the climb alone. It is possible to do a part climb in the day without special equipment. However if you wish to get above the clouds, (4 hour ascent) then: **You will need** strong walking shoes, poles (optional) and warm, waterproof protective clothing, gloves and hats, (it gets very cold at night) a torch. The guide can provide tent and sleeping bag for those wishing to sleep in the crater.

Day 7 Free Day for Optional Activities – Cultural Island Tour or Jeep Excursion

Today is free, although if any whale-watching trips were lost to due to bad weather it can be made up today. There are two guided tours to choose from: one cultural island tour or a jeep excursion. On the guided cultural tour of the island (3-hour tour) you'll learn about the flora and fauna, its culture, churches, history and wildlife. You'll visit the Vigia which was where they used to look out for the whales in the days of whaling; a 'blow' could be seen from over 20 miles away and then the men would fire a rocket to alert the whaling boats. Or join a jeep excursion and explore the island. This can be a 4-hour trip including visit to the volcano and caving and climbing. There is also the option of a full day Jeep tour. On both jeep tours you'll visit famous sightseeing spots revealing the Island's history. Both tours have a visit to the vineyards with an exceptional wine tasting activity included serving local culinary delicacies, a cultural museum and activities for the children.



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Alternatively, you could take an optional extra boat trip or relax at the guesthouse, walk into town and do some craft shopping, armed with a map you may go on a self-guided walk around a local nature reserve, or play some tennis or football. As it is our final evening, we suggest a meal in the local town (meal from €10pp) and with some evening celebrations, and sharing of photographs and tales. Or your host at the guesthouse may be persuaded to put on a BBQ, which he loves to offer of fresh fish and salads.

Day 8 Transfer to airport for flight to Lisbon

Sadly, it is time to say farewell to the Azores and you'll be transferred to the airport for your flight to London, via Lisbon.

Each itinerary is planned many months in advance and although it is our intention to operate the itinerary as printed in the brochure and detailed here, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of alterations to flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors which are beyond our control. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops may vary from those outlined but we will always endeavour to keep you informed of any such changes. Included meals are indicated in the daily itinerary.

Optional Activities – price per person

Buried Village visit on Faial	€30
Pico Cultural Island Tour	€30
Jeep Excursion on Pico island (half day/ full day)	€35 / €60
Pico Volcano Trek (min 4 persons)	€40
Extra boat trip	€50
Hotel evening meal (per person)	From €10
Buffet Supper at local restaurant	€10 - €15

All prices are approximate & subject to change

Climate Sitting in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, the Azores enjoy a maritime climate with mild temperatures year round and although it can rain it is never persistent. Locals say you can have all four seasons in one day. The temperature of the sea is fairly constant too and people will swim throughout the year.

Average monthly temperatures are given below for the Azores (Horta).

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Max °C	16	16	17	16	19	21	24	25	24	21	19	17
Min °C	12	11	12	13	14	16	18	19	19	17	15	13
Rainfall (mm)	112	98	81	65	56	49	35	54	90	100	115	120

Is this right for your family? A great holiday filled with unique experiences, to whale and dolphin watching, discovering a buried village and exploring caves. There is free time to relax on the clean and sandy beaches, or snorkel in the lagoon. Accommodation is clean, comfortable and family friendly hotels and guesthouses, with great views across the Azores. The tour is structured to be more relaxing for the first 3 days and then is action packed during the time on Pico! You will be able to easily walk to the various attractions and there will be transport arranged for the Caldeira tour and we can help arrange taxis for any additional activities you choose to take. In Pico you will be met by the local guide who will drive you to your accommodation and take you to the scheduled activities.

Lone Parents Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries, including the UK, require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the relevant country embassy for further information on exactly what may be required. These details can be found on the Foreign & Commonwealth Website under the appropriate country www.fco.gov.uk/travel

Accommodation is based on twin-share or family suites with private facilities. On Faial Island you will be staying at a guesthouse, ideally situated with great views of Pico Volcano, with a small pool, trampoline and badminton net set in a delightful landscaped garden. On Pico Island, we stay in a lovely guesthouse comprising of three main residential areas, all with seaviews and outdoor seating area. There is a shared kitchen where breakfast will be served. Breakfast is a basket of fresh bread, cereals, jams and fruit juice, tea and coffee. All the guestrooms are en-suite, with TV and internet access, some rooms can take three / four people. The guesthouse is within a 10-minute walk to dedicated swimming zone, a 15 minute walk to a large open area great for taking a picnic and short distance to a small local shop and café.



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Currency The unit of currency is the Euro. At the time of writing UK£1 = €1.15 and US\$1 = €0.79 (Nov 2009). banks in the main centres have ATMs. We recommend that you change money at the airport. Credit cards are accepted in hotels and some souvenir shops including the whale watch base, but not many restaurants. There is very little to spend money on for the serious shoppers, so be prepared!

Tipping is not a requirement, however, a modest tip may be offered for personal service. Please remember that all tips should be a way for individuals to thank staff for good service.

Language The official language in the Azores is Portuguese, although with a noticeably different dialect to mainland Portugal. Many people speak good English on the island.

Time The Azores are GMT minus 1 hour

Packing List Please refer to our separate "packing list"

Clothing & Equipment List for Azores Adventure

The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive and experienced travellers may well take a good deal less luggage than we recommend.

CLOTHING	NUMBER PER PERSON	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Trainers or sandals	1 pair		Soft-sided bag 50 litres	
Waterproof jacket	1 – lightweight		Waterproof daypack 20 - 25 litres	
T-Shirts/ Polo shirts	3		Sunglasses	
Trousers	2		Personal First Aid Kit	
Shorts	3		Camera, memory cards	
Fleece or sweatshirt	2		Washing Kit	
Hat / Baseball Cap	1		Snorkelling equipment	
Casual wear	For evenings		Sunscreen (waterproof)	
Swimwear	1		Insect repellent	
Beach towel / Travel towel				
Walking Shoes/poles	If wanting to do the volcano walk			

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Passport		Small Sewing Kit & Safety Pins	
Air Tickets		Universal travelling adapter	
Money/Credit Cards		Notebook/Diary/Pen	
Insurance Documents		Guide Book & Map	
Trip Information and Itinerary		Torch and batteries	
Money Security Belt/Pouch		Wet suit / shortie (optional)	
		Binoculars (optional)	

For details regarding **hand luggage restrictions** please visit www.baa.com