

Escape the gray everyday life - gather new strength for 2 weeks in the Azores

Overview

Escape the cold and gray everyday life for two weeks and discover the beautiful nature of the Azores! Take a deep breath and forget all the stress of everyday life. There's not much happening on the islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean in winter and the pace is much slower. You'll have more time to listen, feel and encounter nature - the perfect place to find yourself again and catch your breath after a busy summer. Surrounded by active volcanoes, rugged coasts of black lava rock, green forests, and the deep blue Atlantic Ocean, you can find peace and quiet and relax to your heart's content.

As well as the opportunity to relax and unwind, there is of course plenty to explore: beautiful hot springs, hiking trails, cave tours, whale watching, UNESCO World Heritage sites, exciting museums, delicious wine and much more. There is a great variety waiting to be discovered by you. Just as the mood takes you. With some flexibility, all these activities are also possible in winter. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, the islands are blessed with mild temperatures and the sea is warm enough for swimming even in autumn. Azoreans joke that every single day has four seasons, where an hour ago thick rain clouds were still hanging in the sky, now a bright blue sky can invite you to go for a walk - and that applies to all seasons.

So, escape the gray and dreary everyday life at home and enjoy your next vacation on some of the nine islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.

Of course, the order of the islands can be adapted to your personal wishes. The accommodations are all upmarket, often with massage and wellness facilities and fantastic views! Even in stormy weather enjoy your stay with a glass of wine, until the clouds have cleared. But even when it rains, there is plenty to see in the Azores: churches, art galleries, museums or would you prefer grottos and underground caves? Of course, you can also choose more budget-friendly accommodations, just get in touch with us and we will put together an individual offer for you.

This journey is not suitable for people with reduced mobility. Please contact us for further information.

Details

1. DAY



International arrival on Terceira

Acquire your rental car directly at the airport. Drive to the south coast to Angra do Heroísmo, a beautiful UNESCO World Heritage town. Your stylish accommodation, the Zenite Boutique Hotel & SPA is centrally located in Angra.

3 nights Zenite Boutique Hotel & Spa, double room with breakfast

2. - 3. DAY



Explore the island of Terceira

After a leisurely breakfast, set off on your individual tour of the island in your rental car. Whether along the coast or inland, there are various enchanting hidden spots and villages to be discovered. The island's capital Angra do Heroísmo is worth an extended visit. Another attraction of the island is the town of Praia da Vitória on the east coast, which provides one of the longest sandy beaches in the Azores. Even though it might be too cold for a swim, a walk along the surf is worth it.

Recommendations for your stay on Terceira:

Island tour: Get to know the third largest island in the archipelago on an island tour. Recommendable is a drive past green landscapes to the mountain lake Lagoa do Negro, next to which is a grotto worth visiting. In the village of Biscoitos on the northern coast of the island, a wine museum awaits you (but it's only open at the owner's whim). Nearby, the natural swimming pool "Piscinas Naturais" invites you to marvel at the mighty Atlantic Ocean - and perhaps take a refreshing dip. We'd also highly recommend paying a visit to the Algar do Carvão, an impressive volcanic vent in the center of the island. The vent is around 100 meters deep and was nominated a regional natural monument. Visitors descend the lava tube via a staircase, past stalagmites, and stalactites, surrounded by mosses, lichens and ferns. This cave, which hosts a small lake at its bottom, is thought to have been created around 2,000 years ago.

Angra do Heroísmo: Visit the unique island capital, the Renaissance town of Angra do Heroísmo, whose city centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It impresses with its extraordinary architecture, manor houses, palaces, parks, and a picturesque bay. The city's history is very interesting and a visit to the city museum is worthwhile. Go for a hike or drive by car, up to the 205-meter-high local mountain "Monte Brasil". It provides a great view of Angra do Heroísmo and the south coast of Terceira.

Our tip for bad weather: For culture enthusiasts, a day at the museum in Angra do Heroísmo is recommendable; there are also beautiful churches to visit. Alternatively, a trip to the Algar do Carvão, a volcanic cave in the middle of the island, is well worthwhile. Please check the special opening times!

4. DAY



Domestic flight to Faial

Drive back to the airport, return of your rental car and flight to the island of Faial. The flight approx. takes about 40 minutes. Acquire your rental car directly at the airport. Drive to your accommodation, the Hotel Azoris Faial Garden, which is located on a hill in the main town of Horta. Today, get to know the small town of Horta with its open and globetrotting atmosphere, the heart of which is the marina frequented by sailors from all over the world. The many colorful paintings of the sailors on the harbor walls are truly unique - as is the atmosphere in the "Peter Café Sport". It's probably the most famous bar in the Atlantic, and much more than just a meeting place for sailors from all over the world. A visit is worth it!

3 nights at Hotel Azoris Faial Garden, double room sea view with breakfast

5. - 6. DAY



Capelinhos and the Caldeira - discover the highlights of Faial

During your days on Faial, you can visit the highlights of the island, Capelinhos and the large volcanic crater in the center of the island at your own pace. Horta is also home to one of the largest and most beautiful sandy beaches on the island, located in a somewhat remote bay. Wonderful vacation relaxation is pre-programmed there.

Recommendations for your stay on Faial:

Capelinhos: After a leisurely breakfast, head to Capelinhos, the site where the volcanic eruption of 1957/58 took place. Even today, the bizarre lunar landscape and the old lighthouse, which has been dug up again from the second floor, are reminiscent of that time. A visit of the impressive underground volcano museum, which includes an ascent of the restored lighthouse, provides a lot of information about volcanism in general and about Faial in particular. The lighthouse and other viewpoints around it provide spectacular views of the New Land. A walk on the grounds of Capelinhos, paved with dark ashes, is worthwhile.

Caldeira: Also highly recommendable is a visit of the large Caldeira, an impressive collapsed crater, situated in the center of the island. Its highest spot has an altitude of about 1,000 meters. The collapsed crater is one of the most imposing craters of the Azores, with a diameter of about 1.4 km, and with almost vertical walls. We recommend a circular walk along the crater (approx. 3-hour walk), which starts and ends at the parking lot. When the view is clear, it provides fascinating views.

Discover the cosmopolitan yachting town of Horta: Horta has a number of museums worth a visit that you can take a day to visit: the Whale Museum, a former whale processing factory on the bay of Porto Pim; the Scrimshaw Museum, displaying art on sperm whale teeth, on the 1st floor of the Peter Café Sport; and the Town Museum (in a former monastery building together with the main church), in which filigree artwork made from fig tree marrow, as well as filigree paper cuttings are particularly interesting. The island's small botanical garden, located between Horta and the town of Flamengos, provides detailed information about the island's endemic plants. Why not take a stroll through the picturesque town with its many historical buildings or visit the fascinating marina with its sailors' paintings - both absolutely worthwhile!

Our tip for escaping the next rain shower: Explore the volcano interpretive center in Capelinhos. You can spend hours in the underground museum and still make new discoveries. The city museum and various churches in Horta are also worth a visit. Or wait out a short rain shower in the Peter Café Sport - perhaps you'll meet a few sailors who tell you about their adventures?

7. DAY



By ferry to the neighboring island of Pico

Drop off your rental car at the port in Horta and ferry-trip to the island of Pico (passage takes approx. 30 minutes). After arriving at the ferry port in Madalena, acquire your rental car and drive to your accommodation, the new and very stylish Lava Homes complex. Part of the complex is a very recommendable restaurant called Magma. A fully equipped holiday home with one bedroom awaits you - the view from there is fantastic. Breakfast is served daily in the on-site Magma restaurant. However, nothing else can be reached on foot, as the accommodation is surrounded by nature and offers pure relaxation.

3 nights Lava Homes, holiday home sea view with breakfast



Discover the diversity of Pico

Enjoy your days on the second largest island in the archipelago, which is also known as "Ilha Negra", the black island, due to its many black lava rocks. The nature is very different from that of the other islands. In addition to the recommendations listed below, the island of Pico offers wonderful natural bathing spots in the sea, which will give you great pleasure in the summer months. Snorkeling is also wonderful, and you can marvel at the diversity of marine life. Unfortunately, there are almost no sandy beaches on the island...

Recommendations for your stay on Pico:

The museums on the island are absolutely worth a visit: the Wine Museum, housed in an old Carmelite Convent in the main town of Madalena, gives information on the history of the cultivation and production of wine. In the convent's garden there is the largest dragon tree colony of Macaronesia. Some of the trees are between 500 and 800 years old. On the north coast of the island, in São Roque, there is a former whale-processing factory, now converted into a museum. And on the south coast of Pico, in Lajes, there is a whaler's museum that provides interesting information about the history of whaling on the island.

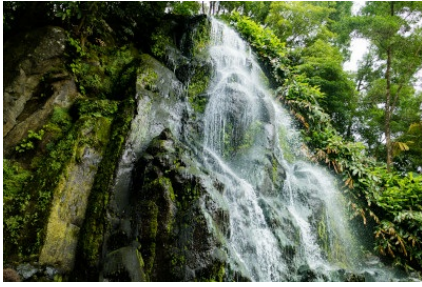
Lajido: a walk through the former wine production village makes you realize that you are in the heart of the wine-growing area. The play of colors of the grey-black lava stone walls, the green vines and fig trees, as well as the deep blue of the Atlantic Ocean is very impressive. It's easy to understand why UNESCO has classified this area as a World Heritage Site; some elements of the 18th century, which was the peak of Pico's wine-growing era, are still visible.

Gruta das Torres: it's the longest lava tube in Portugal and one of the longest ones in Europe. The cave is located south of Madalena near Criação Velha. A guided tour through the cave gives interesting insights into Azorean volcanism and the emergence of the islands. Equipped with a helmet and flashlight, you can marvel at the beautiful shapes several lava flows have created. Pico's fantastic hiking trails invite walkers to explore the island's beautiful unspoiled nature. The days of your visit will pass quickly...

One of the most impressive hikes is the climb of the Pico Mountain; with its 2.351 m the highest mountain in Portugal. The challenging hike starts at the foot of the mountain in the highlands of the island. After an arduous climb, which takes about 3.5 hours (about 1,100 meters in altitude), you will be rewarded with a magnificent view. With good visibility you can see all islands of the central group. The descent, after, is no less laborious. In good physical condition, the climb of the Pico Mountain is a highlight of any Azores holiday. Contact us for more information; you can climb the mountain by yourself, or book a package with us that includes an English-speaking licensed mountain guide, admission, insurance, lunch box and transfer from/to accommodation...

Our tip for stormy weather: how about a wine tasting? There are various winemakers, and wine tastings are often combined with a meal. The Gruta das Torres is also definitely worth a visit. Perhaps the wind will blow you into our office in São Roque?

10. DAY



Domestic flight to the island of São Miguel

Drive back to the airport, return of your rental car and flight to the island of São Miguel. The flight takes about 50 minutes. Acquire your new rental car directly at the airport and drive to your accommodation. There are two different hotels for you to choose from. Both offer sea views and great spa services; also, the price is the same - choose whichever you like better.

1st option: drive to your hotel at the north coast (approx. 15 km), the Hotel Pedras do Mar Resort & Spa, which opened in 2016. The hotel has a national category of 5 stars, but we'd rather classify it as a very good 4-star hotel. A double room awaits you with balcony and sea view.

5 nights at Hotel Pedras do Mar, double room sea view with breakfast

2nd option: drive to your hotel at the north coast, the 5-star Hotel Verde Mar & Spa, which only opened at the beginning of July 2019; here a room with a sea view awaits you.

5 nights at Hotel Verde Mar & Spa, double room sea view with breakfast

11. - 14. DAY



Explore the island of São Miguel and the city of Ponta Delgada

Explore the beautiful spots of the island at your own pace with your rental car. It's recommendable to set out to the east, the central area and the west. In addition to the suggestions below, there are many beautiful little sandy beaches and natural bays on the island; ideal if you travel in summer!

Recommendations for your stay on São Miguel: discover the west of the island. The highlight is the **legendary crater lakes near Sete Cidades**. Enjoy the great view of the lakes Lagoa Azul and Lagoa Verde from the Vista do Rei viewpoint, 550 meters above sea level. There are also beautiful hiking trails in the area, such as a hike on the crater rim. On the way back towards Ponta Delgada, you can visit a pineapple plantation where deliciously flavored delicacy pineapples are grown in greenhouses. The only ones in the world!

Get to know Ponta Delgada, the capital of the island of São Miguel, on your own. There are interesting buildings from over 500 years of history to marvel at. It's worth taking a walk along the beautiful, black, and white patterned pavements through the historic old town with its decorated balconies, colorful market, lively squares, winding alleyways, beautiful gardens, and a multitude of churches. It's worth climbing the tower of the town hall, where you have a wonderful view over the city and the ocean. There are also interesting museums to visit, such as the Carlos Machado Museum, a monastery convent with the largest wooden altar in Portugal. A colorful selection of different restaurants provides options for every taste.

Explore the valley and the town of Furnas. Enjoy the charm of the traditional spa town of Furnas, featuring over 20 hot springs. Try the "Cozido" stew, which is steam-cooked with geothermal heat, dug into the ground. Take a walk through the Terra Nostra Park, which many consider to be Europe's most beautiful botanical garden and enjoy a dip into the park's natural thermal pool which provides a constant temperature of 38 degrees Celsius. The close by Lake of Furnas invites you to leisurely walks; right at the lake there is the place where the Cozido stew is cooked in the ground.

The lake Lagoa do Fogo. The secluded "lake of fire" is situated in about 600 m height in a crater, in the uninhabited interior of the island. From several viewpoints on the mountain road, you can marvel at the impressive lake and the beautiful colors of nature. The crater lake is one of the most beautiful ones of the entire Azores.

The north-east of the island - Nordeste. Head north-east and make a detour to the "Chá Gorreana" tea factory. There are a total of two tea plantations in the Azores (the only ones in Europe), but only "Chá Gorreana" can look back on a 125-year tradition. It is worth visiting the factory and taking the easy circular walk through the tea fields. Along the north coast you reach Nordeste. It's a friendly, small place that is still largely undiscovered by tourists. Feel like going for a hike? North of Nordeste, in

Lomba da Fazenda, a small circular hiking trail begins that takes you through the Ribeira da Guilherme valley.

Our tip for stormy and rainy weather: São Miguel offers most of the bad weather alternatives such as shopping centers, museums (like the Carlos Machado Museum), galleries (like the Fonesca Macedo Gallery) and many different churches. There is also a cave to visit not far from Ponta Delgada (the Gruta do Carvão). If you're not put off by a bit of rain, go for a bath in the warm springs - you'll get wet anyway and a little cooling off from above might be quite pleasant.

INCLUDED FOR YOU: WHALE- AND DOLPHINWATCHING

A holiday in the Azores is, in some ways, "incomplete" without a trip to the world of giant marine mammals. They pass the Azores on their migration routes, and they like to take a (long) break in the Azores, due to the abundance of fish. The most common whale is the sperm whale. Like other whale and dolphin species, the sperm whale is native to the area and lives all year round in the waters around the Azores. A male sperm whale grows up to 20 meters long. It's very likely to get to see dolphins, who like to accompany the excursion boats and play with the waves those create. Commercial whaling on the islands came to an end at the beginning of the 1980s. Today, fortunately everything "only" revolves around observing the giants of the oceans. The half-day excursion takes place from/to Ponta Delgada in a zodiac/semi rigid or a larger catamaran/excursion boat with the provider Futurismo.

INCLUDED FOR YOU: COZIDO AND TERRA NOSTRA PARK

Enjoy the "Cozido" stew for lunch, which is cooked with geothermal heat in dug and fixed holes in the ground. After, take a walk through the large "Terra Nostra Park", which many consider to be Portugal's most beautiful botanical garden. More than 2,000 different plants that cover an area of over 12 hectares can be discovered. Enjoy a dip in the natural thermal bath inside the park. It is a ferruginous thermal pool which has a constant temperature of 38 degrees Celsius all year around.

15. DAY



Return journey

It's time to say goodbye to the Azores. Drive to the airport, return of your rental car and flight home.

Dates & Prices		
from	until	Price
01.10.2024	31.10.2024	2.177 €
pro Person bei 2 Reisenden im Doppelzimmer		
01.10.2024	31.10.2024	3.726 €
bei 1 Reisendem im Einzelzimmer		

Included services

- 14 nights including breakfast in a double room or holiday home (as on Pico), all with a sea view (except on Terceira)
- 14 days rental car Rental car category A small car (example models Citroen C1, Toyota Aygo or similar), from arrival/to departure airport on respective island: unlimited free kilometers, including fully comprehensive insurance with reimbursement of excess*; second driver possible at no extra charge; 24-hour emergency service of the rental car company.
- *Reimbursement of the excess: In the event of damage, you must pay the amount for the damage incurred to the rental car company on site (maximum excess amount: €700). If you submit the damage report, photos, proof of the deductible and the rental vehicle contract to the ALLIANZ insurance company in Germany on time after returning the car/after your vacation, the amount will be refunded to you. This is because vista verde azores has taken out this additional insurance for all travelers there. The additional insurance reimburses the contractually owed and charged deductible of the comprehensive insurance for passenger vehicles in the event of accident and theft as well as the contractually owed and charged necessary costs due to damage to the underbody, tires, windshield, side and rear windows, exterior mirrors and roof of the rental vehicle in the event of an accident.
- Domestic flights Terceira-Faial and Pico-São Miguel
- Ferry tickets Faial-Pico
- Cozido lunch and admission to Terra Nostra Botanical Garden in Furnas (São Miguel)
- Half-day Whale Watching tour from/to Ponta Delgada (São Miguel)
- Detailed travel documents and 24-hour emergency mobile number on site (English and Portuguese speaking)

not included services

- International arrival and departure (possible with TAP Air Portugal, Azores Airlines and other seasonal airlines)
- Gasoline for the rental car
- Additional meals and personal expenses as well as other activities
- Travel insurance