

2-week discovery trip to paradise (with guesthouses)

Overview

Experience the diversity of the Azores archipelago in your own way during this round trip. Explore the islands of São Miguel, Faial, São Jorge and Pico on your journey of discovery. Each island is different and has its own charm and peculiarities. Travelling with your own car gives you the freedom to choose which places to visit. We will give you good advice for each day.

Why making a discovery trip to paradise? The Azores are a heavenly place. These nine islands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean are (fortunately) spared by mass tourism. Most of the Azores islands lack big white sandy beaches. "Oh dear, I'll never go there," some will say. "Wonderful, heavenly and without crowds," others will respond in astonishment, perhaps envisaging the Azores as a potential holiday destination. Untouched nature, lush greenery, volcanoes, as well as craters and crater lakes can be found in the Azores archipelago. Idyllic places, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, informative museums, beautiful hiking trails, cave visits and whale watching; there is an immense diversity waiting to be discovered by you, whatever your mood. Most activities and your daily schedule can be decided spontaneously on site.

You will be accommodated in guest houses. These guest houses can certainly be called "country-typical" accommodations. They don't provide great comfort, but are always in a good location and have friendly owners and staff. They are usually very charming.

On São Miguel you can choose whether you would like to stay in Ponta Delgada, in a centrally located guest house, or rather in a rural setting, in a guest house in Furnas (the place of the hot springs). On the island of Faial, you will be accommodated in a centrally located, loving guest house in Horta. On the island of São Jorge, your accommodation is located in a country house on the edge of the main town of Velas, providing great views over the bay. A private bathing area at the ocean and a small pool in the spacious property invite its guests to linger and to relax. The host of the guest house is an excellent cook. On Pico you are accommodated in a family guest house under German management on the edge of the main town of Madalena. Of course, the itinerary (including visiting order of the islands) as well as the type of accommodation can be changed according to your individual wishes.

Details

1. DAY



International arrival on São Miguel

International arrival on São Miguel; you'll receive your rental car directly at the airport. Drive to your accommodation, located either in the heart of the Azores capital, Ponta Delgada, or in Furnas, the village of the hot springs. Take a first walk through the charming capital of the Azores archipelago with its winding streets and lively ambience; or go for a stroll in Furnas, with over 20 hot springs and the Terra Nostra Park, the largest botanical garden in the Azores with its natural thermal bath.

4 nights including breakfast, guest house in Ponta Delgada or Furnas

2. - 3. DAY



Discover the island and 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. There is also a very well developed network of official marked trails.

Recommendations for your stay in São Miguel:

Discover the west of the island: the highlights in the west are the legendary crater lakes of Sete Cidades. Enjoy the great view at the lakes Lagoa Azul and Lagoa Verde from the view point of Vista do Rei, which is located at an altitude of 550 meters. On your way back to Ponta Delgada, you can visit a pineapple plantation with enormously tasty pineapples, grown in greenhouses; the only pineapple greenhouses in the world. Explore Ponta Delgada, the capital city of the island of São Miguel by yourself: it's recommendable to make a tour through the historic old town with its many historic buildings, beautiful black and white patterned sidewalks, its decorated balconies, the colorful market, lively squares, winding streets, beautiful gardens and a variety of churches. The historic old town presents over 500 years of history.

The lake Lagoa do Fogo: the "lake of fire" is situated in about 600m height in a crater, in the uninhabited interior of the island. From several view points, you can marvel at the impressive lake and the beautiful colors of nature. The crater lake is considered to be one the most beautiful one of the entire Azores.

Nordeste, the east of the island: on your way to the northeast it's recommendable to make a detour to the Chá Gorreana tea factory, which has a tradition of more than 100 years. Heading along the north coast towards the east, you'll reach Nordeste, a nice little town at the eastern end of the island of São Miguel.

4. DAY



INCLUDED FOR YOU: COZIDO AND TERRA NOSTRA PARK

Today, a day trip to Furnas is on the schedule. Explore the charming, traditional spa with over 20 hot springs. Enjoy the "Cozido" stew for lunch, which is cooked with geothermal heat in holes in the ground.

Take a walk through the Terra Nostra Park, which many consider to be Portugal's most beautiful botanical garden. Enjoy a dip in the natural thermal bath, which has a constant temperature of 38 degrees Celsius. The nearby lake of Furnas invites visitors for leisurely walks; that's also the place where the Cozido is cooked in the ground. The traditional Cozido lunch and the visit of the Botanical Garden "Terra Nostra Park" in Furnas is included for you is. More than 2,000 different plants that cover an area of over 12 hectares can be discovered in the botanical garden. Inside the park there is also the natural ferruginous thermal pool with its 38 degrees water temperature all year around

5. DAY



Domestic flight to the hiking island of São Jorge

Drive back to the airport, return of the rental car and flight to the island of São Jorge. Upon arrival, you'll receive your new rental car directly at the airport. A stylish country house pension with garden and pool awaits you. It is situated above the idyllic harbor town of Velas, the main town of the island of São Jorge. The pension is located in a nice and quiet environment and provides marvelous views.

3 nights including breakfast, guest house at the edge of Velas

6. - 7. DAY

The Fajãs of São Jorge

With your rental car, you can discover the island at your own pace. The island of São Jorge offers various spectacular hiking trails. For those who love trekking, it's recommendable to explore these wonderful trails.

Recommendations for your stay in São Jorge:

Fajã de Caldeira de Santo Cristo: a flat coastal plain, thinly populated, only with weekend and holiday cottages and no access for cars. The electricity derives from a generator, it's quiet and peaceful. Very tasty clams thrive in the lagoon of the fajã.

Variety of fajãs: Take your time to drive down serpentine paths, until you reach sea level. There are various impressive fajãs with picturesque villages. Whether on the north coast of the island (e.g. Fajã do Ouvidor, providing a beautiful bathing area) or on the south coast (e.g. Fajã dos Vimes with a small café, where homegrown coffee is served), they are all worth a visit.

East and west of the island: In the east of the island, in the municipality of Norte there is a beautiful lighthouse and an appealing ocean swimming area. The view of the small offshore islet and the neighboring island of Terceira is impressive. The West of São Jorge is also worth a visit. There is the Forest Park of Rosais, a recreational area with a large variety of tree and plant species. There are also several viewpoints, so-called "Miradouros"; one of them is located at an old whaler's lookout.



8. DAY



Ferry trip to Pico

In the morning return of the rental car at the port in Velas and ferry trip to the island of Pico (ferry trip takes about 50 minutes up to 1 1/2 hours, depending on the port on Pico). At the ferry terminal on Pico you'll receive your new rental car. Drive to your accommodation, which is beautifully located on the edge of the main town of Madalena. A drive up to the highlands of the island is recommendable. Take your time to explore the plateau, enjoy bizarre landscapes and make a detour to the Lagoa do Capitão, the "captain's lake".

4 nights including breakfast, guest house in Madalena

9. - 10. DAY



Discover the diversity of the island of Pico

Enjoy your days on the second largest island of the Azores archipelago. The island is also called "Ilha Negra", the black island, due to its many black lava rocks. Pico's natural landscape is very different from the other islands. With your rental car, you can flexibly organize your days according to your mood. In addition to the recommendations below, the island of Pico offers beautiful natural ocean swimming pools, which provide great pleasure in the summer months. Snorkeling is also very recommendable; right by the coast you can marvel at the diversity of marine life. Only sandy beaches are almost not existent 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: English speaking licensed mountain guide, admission, insurance, lunch box and transfer from/to accommodation...

11. DAY



SPECIALLY INCLUDED FOR YOU: WHALE WATCHING

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 Lajes on the south coast of Pico.

12. DAY



Ferry trip to the neighbouring island of Faial

Drive to the ferry port in Madalena, return of the rental car and ferry trip to the neighboring island of Faial. The ferry trip only takes about 30 minutes. You'll receive your new rental car directly at the ferry port in Horta, the main town of Faial. It's only a short drive to your accommodation, centrally located in the main town of Horta. Explore the town of Horta with its open and cosmopolitan atmosphere. The heart of the town is the marina, which is frequented by sailors from all over the world. There are many unique and colorful paintings of the sailors on the harbor walls. Right at the marina there is the "Peter Café Sport", probably the most famous bar in the Atlantic, and far more than just a meeting place for sailors from all over the world. A visit is undoubtedly worthwhile.

2 nights including breakfast, 4 star hotel in Horta

13. DAY



Capelinhos and Caldeira; discover the highlights of Faial

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. 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. Don't forget to explore the world-famous sailing destination Horta with its marina.

14. DAY



Back to São Miguel

Drive back to the airport; return of the rental car and flight back to São Miguel. Upon arrival taxi-transfer by your own to Ponta Delgada (taxis are available at the airport). Your guest house is located in the heart of the historic old town. Enjoy the last hours of your vacation with a nice Azorean dinner and a stroll along the marina.

1 night including breakfast, guest house in Ponta Delgada

There is also the possibility to book international flights from Faial (via Lisbon). In this case, you would not go back to São Miguel (the starting point of your journey on the islands); in exchange, you would stay a third night on Faial and fly home from there.

15. DAY



Trip back home

It's time to say goodbye to the Azores. Transfer to to airport by yourself and trip back home.

| Dates & Prices | | |
|--|------------|---------|
| from | until | Price |
| 01.04.2024 | 31.05.2024 | 1.358 € |
| pro Person bei 2 Reisenden im Doppelzimmer | | |
| 01.04.2024 | 31.05.2024 | 2.084 € |
| bei einer reisenden Person im Einzelzimmer | | |
| 01.06.2024 | 30.09.2024 | 1.616 € |
| pro Person bei 2 Reisenden im Doppelzimmer | | |
| 01.06.2024 | 30.09.2024 | 2.599 € |
| bei einer reisenden Person im Einzelzimmer | | |
| 01.10.2024 | 31.10.2024 | 1.358 € |
| pro Person bei 2 Reisenden im Doppelzimmer | | |
| 01.10.2024 | 31.10.2024 | 2.084 € |
| bei einer reisenden Person im Einzelzimmer | | |

Included services

- 14 nights with breakfast in guest houses
- 13 days rental car category A small car (sample models Citroen C1, Toyota Aygo or similar), from arrival/to departure on the respective island: unlimited free kilometers, inclusive fully comprehensive insurance with deductible; second driver without extra charge; 24-hour emergency service of the rental car company
- domestic flights São Miguel-São Jorge and Faial-São Miguel
- ferry tickets São Jorge-Pico and Pico-Faial
- Cozido lunch and entrance to the Terra Nostra Park at Furnas (São Miguel)
- half-day whale watching tour from/to Lajes (Pico); in low season 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 flights (possible with TAP Air Portugal, Azores Airlines and Ryanair)
- fuel for the rental car as well as additional insurances for the rental car (bookable on site)
- other meals and personal expenses
- taxi transfers from and to the airport at the end of the trip on São Miguel
- travel insurance