

Azores Island Hopping

PORTUGAL - TRIP CODE AZ

WALKING AND TREKKING

Why book this trip?

Discover the best of five Azores unspoilt islands; Sao Miguel, Terceira, Sao Jorge, Flores and Faial. This gentle walking holiday explores the beautiful and varied landscapes; crater lakes, extinct volcanoes, vineyards, thermal springs and craggy coastlines.

- **Sete Cidades** - Crater walk with stunning views of the twin blue and green lakes
- **Whale watching** - Opportunity to take a boat trip alongside whales and dolphins
- **Faja dos Cubres** - Follow a hydrangea lined path down to this unique lagoon



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 13
Lunch: 1



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Ferry
Flight
Public Bus
Taxi



ACCOMMODATION
11 nights
comfortable hotel
2 nights premium
hotel



WALKING GRADE:
Easy To
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
10 - 16

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Ponta Delgada, on the island of Sao Miguel

Arrive in Ponta Delgada, Located on the harbour of Sao Miguel, the Azores largest island, Ponta Delgada is a charming historic city with narrow cobbled streets and some interesting buildings worth a visit, such as the Municipal city hall with its reflecting pool in the city centre of Baixa.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting and for those that wish, there is the chance to go out for dinner. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Ponta Delgada at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive at João Paulo II Airport in Ponta Delgada (PDL) which is around 10 minutes' drive from the hotel. Should you miss the meeting, your leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to take a stroll along the harbour front promenade past the 16th century fort to the marina or visit the Convent and Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Esperança with its unique quadrangular tower.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Vila Nova (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Walk around Sete Cidades, see the colourful crater lakes

Basing ourselves at Ponta Delgada, the island's capital, we spend our first 3 days exploring Sao Miguel - the largest of the islands we visit. We use a mixture of local and private buses to transfer us to and from our walks. For our first day walking we drive to Sete Cidades. From here we walk within and around some of the crater to Vista do Rei to view the splendid blue and green lakes before returning to Ponta Delgada by bus later that afternoon.

Today's easy eight kilometre walk is expected to take around two-and-a-half hours with 270 metres of ascent and descent.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Vila Nova (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Enjoy lakeside walk and lunch amongst volcanic scenery

Our second day exploring Sao Miguel begins by driving to the north side of the island. We make a stop at Gorreana, Europe's oldest and only remaining tea factory and continue to Lagoa das Furnas. Here we take a short walk of approximately forty-five minutes on the shores of the lake, stopping to see the natural ovens (cavities in the rock). Here in the huge hollow of Furnas Valley, diverse volcanic activity has also created thermal springs and boiling mud pools. Today we have an included lunch - a traditional Cozido cooked in the volcanic fumeroles. We also have time to visit the botanical gardens of Terra Nostra, planted over 200 years ago, with an outdoor thermal pool where we can bathe (optional). Back on the bus we continue to a viewpoint to Lagoa de Fogo, the islands highest crater lake, where we will stop to take photos before continuing back to Ponta Delgada.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Vila Nova (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 4 - Free day; optional boat trip to look for whales

Today is left free to explore more of the island on and off shore. You may wish to do one of the many walks around the island, options include the Salto do Cabrito trail (seven-and-a-half kilometres) to the waterfall or a linear route that connects the village of Sao Vicente Ferreira and Calhetas on the north coast (six-and-a-half kilometres). Another option is to take a whale searching trip.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Vila Nova (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Fly to Terceira Island, explore Angra do Heroismo town

An inter-island flight brings us to the island of Terceira. During our stay here, our base will be the small harbour settlement of Praia da Vitoria. After transferring to our hotel, we cross the island to the largest settlement on Terceira, the old town of Angra do Heroismo. An afternoon here gives us time to explore the town, with its distinctive architecture, its cathedrals and churches. Angra was the first settlement in the Azores to receive city status, in 1534, and remains one of the finest examples of Renaissance town planning. It was the Azores seat of government until the early 19th century and its palaces and churches are the legacy of its supremacy. A walk up to the fort gives good views over the harbour and the narrow streets of the old town are well worth exploring at your own pace. Other options this afternoon include walking the circular trail to Monte Brasil (visible from the town) or to visit the Algar do Carvao caves, the only volcanic pit you can visit in the world, before returning to Praia.

Today's easy optional seven-and-a-half kilometre walk to Monte Brasil is expected to take around two-

and-a-half hours.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Teresinha (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Coastal walk to Biscoitos

Today we head for the northern regions of the island by private bus. From Quatro Ribeiras the walk follows the contours of the coast with marvellous views out to sea. We arrive at Biscoitos (there is the option to take the bus for the last section which is along an asphalt road), where there is the chance to swim in the lava rock pools. In the late afternoon we return to Praia da Vitoria stopping at the Serra do cume viewpoint on the way for views over the patchwork interior.

Today's moderate 12.5 kilometre walk is expected to take around four hours with 320 metres of ascent and 465 metres of descent.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Teresinha (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Fly to Sao Jorge Island, free time to explore Velas town

There may be some free time in Praia da Vitoria, depending on the flight time, before we take the short

flight to Sao Jorge. This curiously elongated island is some 56 km long, but only 8 km wide, having been created by a series of linear volcanic eruptions. The island remained almost isolated for many centuries, due to the lack of shelter offered to ships. After transferring to our hotel, we are free to wander the streets of the small maritime community of Velas, where we are based. Alternatively we can take an optional walk to the old whale watching tower which is positioned on a volcanic crater from where we can enjoy views down on to Velas town (2hrs).



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Sao Jorge Garden (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Walk through Caldeira de Cima gorge down to Faja dos Cubres

We spend two full days walking on Sao Jorge, a place of precipitous cliffs, narrow valleys and tiny coves. On our first day, we'll head from Velas to the north side of the island. A stunning walk starting from the 700m high ridge of Sao Jorge leads us through the beautiful gorge of the Caldeira de Cima and down to the coast. From here we follow the rocky coastline passing the Caldeira de Santo Cristo Lake walking to Faja dos Cubres. Fajas are the small plains at the foot of the steep coastal cliffs which are dotted with traditional hamlets and fertile orchards.

Today's moderate 10 kilometre walk is expected to take around two-and-a-half hours with 600 metres of descent.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Sao Jorge Garden (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



DAY 9 - Free day; choice of optional walks

Our second day is left free for optional walks, and your tour leader will advise on the various possibilities. Views of the surrounding islands are excellent from Pico da Esperanca ridge walk (1,053m) in the centre of the island, while a walk along the fajas on the south coast of the island offers a contrast in scenery from the north.

Today's moderate optional 12.7 kilometre ridge walk is expected to take around three-and-a-half hours.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Sao Jorge Garden (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Ferry to Pico Island, free time to explore local area

This morning we take a ferry to Pico Island and transfer to our accommodation at Madalena. The rest of the day is free to explore this small fishing port, or perhaps take a walk through the coastal vineyards or visit the Grota do Torres Lava Tunnel.

Today's easy optional five kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Caravelas (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



DAY 11 - Coastal walk to Lajes, optional boat trip and Pico ascent

Pico is dominated by its volcano, Pico Alto, reaching up to 2350m. The island covers some 42 km by 16 km. For those interested in the history of the island, there are many small fishing ports, several with reminders of the old whaling industry once so vital to the island. Today's walk is along the south coast of Pico. We walk to the village of Lajes, which has a small whaling museum. There is the opportunity to take a whale-watching trip (optional) from Lajes to spot sperm whales as well as several species of dolphins.

Today's easy six-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with 450 metres of ascent and descent.

There is the option today for those who wish to make the ascent of Pico volcano. This is a very strenuous and steep 6-7 hour climb. Those interested in walking can take taxis part way up Pico Alto, from where there are fine views across the straits to Faial, while behind the peak of the volcano rises into the clouds. There are dozens of small volcanic cones on the slopes of Pico Alto and some caves created by past lava flows to explore for example, Furnas Frei Mateus. There are magnificent and unforgettable vistas of neighbouring islands. The eight kilometre moderate to challenging trek up Pico, with a local guide, is expected to take three hours each way with 1,000 meters of ascent and descent.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Caravelas (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Take the ferry to Faial Island

This morning, we cross by ferry to the charming island of Faial, where the harbour is often full of yachts, half way through their transatlantic crossing. The remainder of the day is free to stroll the streets and harbour of Horta, there is a circular walk from the hotel on the Monte da Guia headland which provides views over town, our tour leader will provide directions.

Our accommodation for the last two nights at the modern Azoris Faial Garden Hotel is a relaxing way to end this walking holiday. Set within an extensive landscaped garden with coastal views and an inviting outdoor swimming pool.

Today's optional three-and-a-half kilometre walk is expected to take around one and-a-half hours.





ACCOMMODATION:
Azoris Faial Garden (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Full day excursion of the island. Walks at the Caldeira and Capelinhos volcano

Today we explore the Ilha Azul, taking a tour of the island by private bus. We head to the stunning Caldeira often shrouded in cloud, where we view the lush green-carpeted crater and walking along its edge (the Calderia trail will take approximately two-and-a-half hours to walk). The views over the island are particularly impressive in summer, when the wild blue hydrangeas that form many of the hedges are in flower. We then continue to the western end of the island to visit the Capelinhos volcano, now extinct, here there are some walking trails which we could take or visit the Capelinhos Volcano Interpretation Centre. Later we return to Horta, an attractive little town with some good restaurants.

Today's easy optional five-and-a-half kilometre walk to Varadouro is expected to take around two-and-a-half hours.



ACCOMMODATION:
Azoris Faial Garden (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - Trip ends in Horta, Faial Island

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Horta.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Horta at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Horta Airport (HOR) which is around 15 minutes' drive from the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Portugal

Climate

Overall, spring, early summer and autumn are ideal times for a trip to Portugal - though the weather varies enormously from region to region. The northern high plains has both extremes, stiflingly hot in summer, bitterly cold and swept by freezing winds in winter. The Atlantic coast, in contrast, has a tendency to damp and mist, and a relatively brief, humid summer. The Mediterranean south is warm virtually all year round. The islands have very different weather patterns due to their positioning and can have sudden rain falls throughout the year so waterproofs are recommended even in the summer.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Portuguese

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Sao Miguel - Half day whale watching €55pp

Terceira - Algar do Cárvaos Caves entrance fee €8 1 cave, €10 2 caves, transport in shared taxi €15.

Sao Jorge - Rosais shared taxi €10pp; Ridge Walk Pico de Esperanza €15/20pp shared taxi; Coastal walk and dinner shared taxi €10pp (plus dinner)

Faial - Capelinhos Volcano Interpretation Centre €10pp.

All taxi costs are based on a minimum of 4 people sharing.

Clothing

July and August are the warmest months, though the islands are freshened by cooling sea breezes. Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. It can become cool, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier, a warmer fleece is recommended as a mid layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans.

- Breathable wind and waterproof jacket (you may also wish to bring waterproof trousers)
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved tops
- Sunhat
- Long trousers
- Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)
- Swimwear and towel
- Midlayer Fleece/pullover
- Socks (liner and thicker pair)
- Insulated jacket

Footwear

Walking boots with ankle support are essential and bring comfortable trainers or sandals for relaxing. Plastic sandals are useful if swimming off laval rocks.

We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20Kg

Luggage: On tour

Bring one main piece of luggage and a 20-30 litre day sack is recommended. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a raincoat, jumper, camera, sun-cream, water and picnic lunch. On hot days you will carry fewer clothes but more drinking water.

Equipment

- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Small Torch (with spare batteries and bulb)
- Camera
- Walking poles (if you usually use them)
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit - On each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Small waterproof dry bag (for items such as your mobile phone)
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre) - Get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore
- Lunch bag/Tupperware (for packed lunches)

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that has done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It is a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we would recommend £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow approximately £10 of local currency for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Portugal

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£18

Beer price

£2.00 - 3.00 depending on your location, well touristed areas are usually slightly more expensive.

Water price

£1.4

Foreign Exchange

Local currency Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euro.

Take the majority of your spending money in Euros cash.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Cash-point machines are available in all major towns. Bankcards with the Cirrus logo are accepted.

Credit Card Acceptance

Visa and Mastercard are generally accepted in larger restaurants and some shops.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can be exchanged in all major towns but are not recommended due to the high rate of commission.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals**Transport Information**

Bus, Ferry, Flight, Public Bus, Taxi

Accommodation notes

Accommodation and service levels in the Azores are generally very good. In Ponta Delgada at the beginning of the trip you'll stay at the Hotel Vila Nova. This centrally located hotel is a comfortable base; facilities include a heated outdoor swimming pool and generous buffet breakfast.

In Horta on Faial Island at the end of the trip, you will stay at the premium graded Azoris Faial Garden Hotel. Set in extensive gardens with coastal views this hotel has a lounge, bar, restaurant, indoor and outdoor pools and health club with comfortable and spacious rooms. The hotel is very well located in the centre of Horta with easy access to many great restaurants, the marina and beach.

Food and drink

Please ensure that we are fully aware of any dietary requirements in order for us to best accommodate and advise. If you have a gluten free diet it may be advised to bring some snacks with you. These are small islands with only one supermarket in close proximity and it is not always possible to find gluten free bread in each location.

Essential Information**Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and

customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Portugal: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. The Azores: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the

joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Portugal

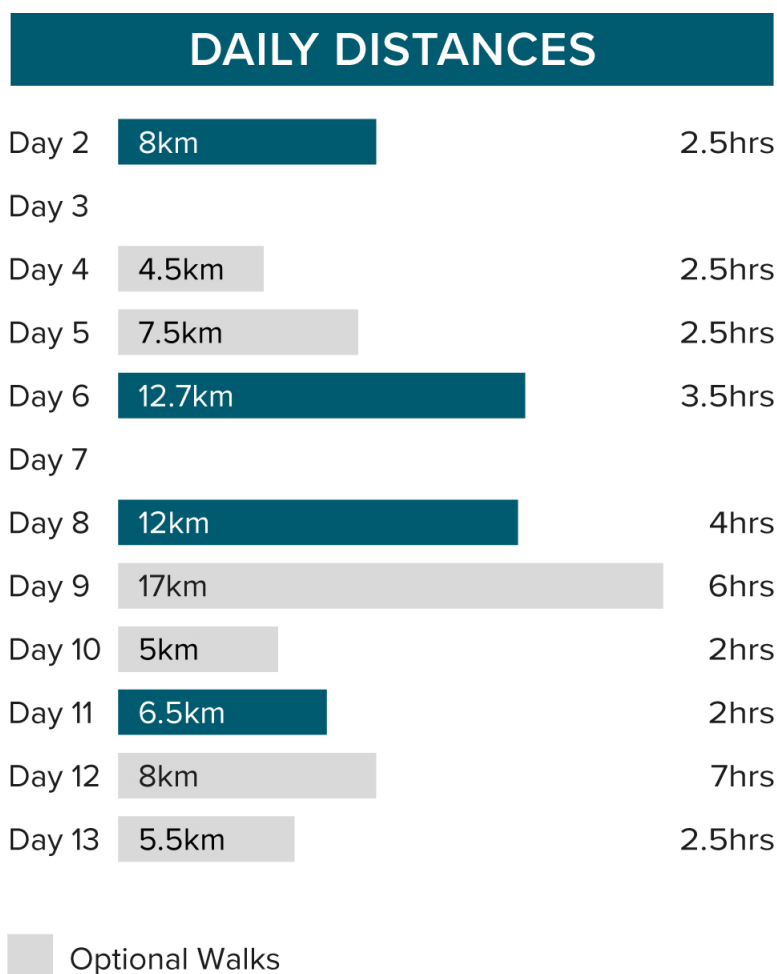
Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory but Tetanus is usually recommended as a precaution. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list.

Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and

vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Walking and Trekking information



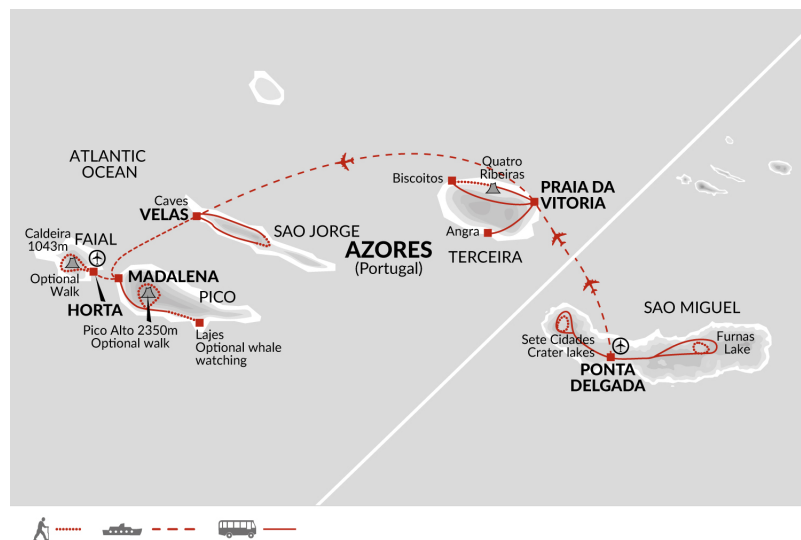
Walking grade

Easy to moderate

Trek details

This is a flexible trip with included walks on 4 days. Walks are between 2 to 4 hours and the terrain is generally undulating along well-defined paths with a longer and steeper descent on day two. There are also additional optional walks including climbing Pico Alto, the Azores' highest mountain (2,350m).

Additional Information



Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



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