



Self-Guided Walking in the Azores - Sao Miguel Island

AZORES, PORTUGAL - TRIP CODE WSAZ

WALKING AND TREKKING

Why book this trip?

Discover Sao Miguel the largest and one of the most fascinating islands of the Azores archipelago. Walk in woods of aromatic trees, vast pastures, humid forests with lush vegetation, and all around are the geological reminders of a volcanic past.

- **Sete Cidades** - Crater walk to Boca do Inferno for stunning lake views
- **Furnas Valley** - Thermal springs, natural ovens and bubbling mud pools
- **Ponta Delgada** - A traditional centre home to some beautiful examples of Portuguese architecture dating back to the 17th century



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 7



TRIP STAFF
None



TRANSPORT
None



ACCOMMODATION
7 nights
comfortable hotel



WALKING GRADE:
Moderate

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts Ponta Delgada

On arrival in Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL), a private taxi will take you to your accommodation in the capital of the island and the archipelago.

If you arrive early, you'll have time to explore this beautiful city by the sea. Through the city gates lies a traditional centre home to some beautiful examples of Portuguese architecture dating back to the 17th century. A whole day can easily be spent here, visiting the museums, churches and harbour to see the 3-arched city gates and the Gothic-style Church of St. Sebastian. You spend the next two nights in this beautiful capital.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Matriz (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Walk the Crater of Sete Cidades

This morning after breakfast, you will be taken to the beginning of your first walk. Today's route follows the edge of the crater Caldeira Sete Cidades. Along the way you have views to the ocean on one side and the crater on the other, with two lakes below. A striking panorama, which originated with the explosion of an enormous volcano. The walking route ends in the village of Sete Cidades, on the shore of Lagoa Azul. Here you will be picked up by the taxi and driven back to your accommodation.

Today's 12km walk is expected to take between 3.5 and 4 hours and you will ascend 130m and descend 570m.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Matriz (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Hike the Rota da Agua or Water route

The day starts with a 30-minute private taxi to Remedios, situated in the southern part of the island near Lagoa. Your walk begins with a descent through fields, following dirt tracks to reach the source of a river or Janela. The most interesting part begins when you enter a woodland and traverse a series of tunnels and aqueducts, formerly used to supply water to the distillery in Lagoa and now used to supply water to the area. The highest point is at Janela do Inferno, a vertical wall with a small waterfall, home to newts. Then you retrace your steps back down to Remedios. Along this trail, enjoy beautiful views over the municipality of Lagoa and Ponta Delgada. Afternoon private transfer to the village of Furnas where you spend the next four nights. Approaching the village, you will smell the sulphurous aroma coming from the Caldeiras (hot springs). Furnas is know as the one of the most beautiful villages in the Azores with its white buildings, decorated churches and cosy little streets. The Terra Nostra gardens (optional) are well worth a visit to see the mix of European deciduous trees next to tropical plants, date palms and cedar and fern trees as well as the geothermal pools.

Today's 9km walk is expected to take between 2.5 and 3 hours and you will ascend 250m and descend 250m.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Vale Verde (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Lagoa das Furnas and its Caldeiras

Today you will have plenty of opportunities to admire the volcanic phenomena near Furnas. At various points along the walk around Lago de Furnas, you can see steam coming out of the ground and pits where locals cook their meals. On the south side of the lake you can visit the modern visitors' centre, dedicated to the restoration of natural vegetation (closed on Mondays from mid-September to mid-May). Option of ascending to the vista point at Pico do Ferro, with amazing views of the lake and valley.

Tonight you could try a local speciality on the restaurant menu, Cozido nas Caldeira, a stew prepared in traditional volcanic cooking pits.

Today's 12km walk is expected to take between 3 and 4 hours and you will ascend 150m and descend 380m.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Vale Verde (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Hike along the southern coast to Lomba do Cavaleiro

You will be taken to a spot just outside Furnas, on the road to Povoacao. First you'll walk through an amazingly lush forest to reach the fishing village of Ribeira Quente, a colourful place to stop for a drink or meal. There is the option of finishing the route here on the beach or continue along the spectacular coastline through fairy-tale woodlands to Lomba do Cavaleiro. In clear weather, you will have magnificent views along the way - to Santa Maria island off in the distance.

Today's 11km walk is expected to take between 3 and 3.5 hours and you will ascend 500m and descend 650m.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Vale Verde (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Waterfall walk and fairy-tale forest

Today's 35-minute transfer takes you from Furnas to Faial da Terra for a shorter but still very beautiful walk. Through a green valley, with occasional slippery sections, you traverse spectacular vegetation to reach the waterfall at Salto do Prego. From there you return to Faial da Terra, passing the abandoned ruins of the village of Sanguinho. Taxi transfer in the afternoon back to your accommodation.

Today's 5km walk is expected to take 2 hours and you will ascend 330m and descend 330m.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Vale Verde (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Lagoa do Fogo crater lake

Today starts with a slightly longer transfer. Then you'll do a tough yet beautiful ascent on narrow paths, following the irrigation channels from sea level up to the 600-metre high Lagoa do Fogo, the most pristine

crater lake in the Azores. You can choose to walk down to the lake shore, a lovely spot for a picnic or a swim. After a short ascent out of the crater, you do a long descent down a green valley back to the coast, where you can enjoy a paddle in the ocean. Here you will be picked up and taken to your accommodation for tonight, in Ponta Delgada.

Today's 11km walk is expected to take 3 hours and you will ascend 480m and descend 480m.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Matriz (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends Ponta Delgada

After breakfast, a transfer will be arranged back to Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL). If you are staying on at the end of the trip, this transfer will not be provided for you.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Azores

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.

Furnas Monitoring and research Centre - €3

Jose do Canto Forest Garden (Lagoa das Furnas)- €3

Terra Nostra Garden (Furnas)- €8

Caldeira Velha (Ribeira Grande) - €3

Jardim Botanico José do Canto (Ponta Delgada) - €4

Whale watching tour (price on request)

Clothing

July and August are the warmest months, though the islands are freshened by cooling sea breezes. Waterproofs are essential, as is a fleece for cooler mornings and evenings.

Footwear

Paths in forests might be muddy, so waterproof boots are highly recommended. In addition to walking boots please take with you comfortable trainers, shoes or sandals for evenings and relaxing. 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

One main piece of luggage and a daypack. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a raincoat, jumper, camera, sun-cream, picnic lunch etc. On hot days you will carry fewer clothes

but more drinking water.

Luggage transfer

Included between hotels.

Equipment

We recommend a waterbottle, sunhat, towel, sunscreen, repellent and sunglasses. You may find walking poles useful. If you would like to snorkel, please bring your own equipment.

Azores

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.

Foreign Exchange

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

Recommended airport

Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL)

Flying to your destination

Sata (Azores Airlines) connects London Gatwick with Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL) via Lisbon; Ryanair with London Stansted once a week, direct.

Arrival and departure information

Fly into and out of Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL). A private transfer will take you from the airport to your hotel on arrival.

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.

Azores

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

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2	12km	3.5-4hrs
Day 3	9km	2.5-3hrs
Day 4	12/15km	3/4hrs
Day 5	11km	3-3.5hrs
Day 6	5km	2hrs
Day 7	11km	3hrs

 Optional Walks

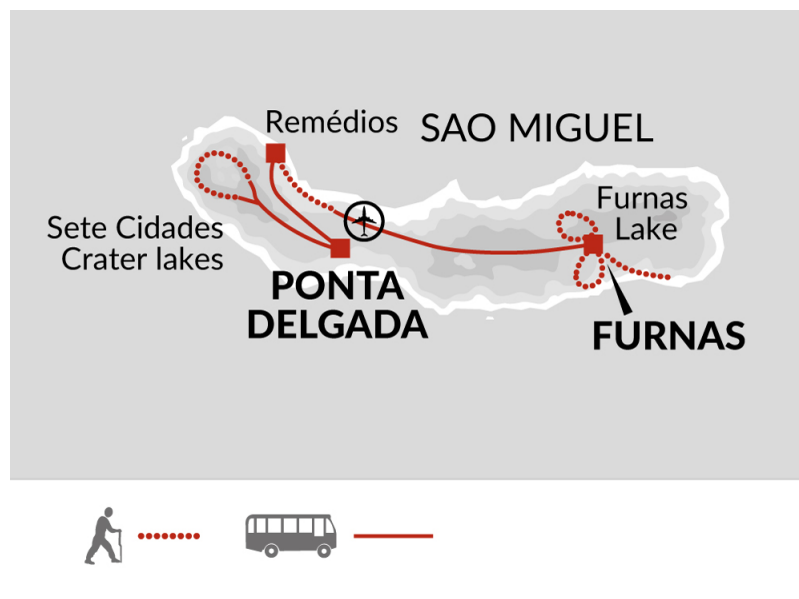
Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks of 3 to 5 hours with an average ascent of 290m and descent of 360m on well-maintained un-surfaced tracks and footpaths, with occasional sections on surfaced tracks or tarmac roads when unavoidable. The route distances vary from 5 to 15km. In winter, rain can make the paths and tracks muddy and therefore slippery. We have graded the trip easy.

Additional Information



Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**