



A Volcanic Wonderland



HOLIDAY TYPE: Small Group

VISITING: The Azores

BROCHURE CODE: 5512

DURATION: 7 nights

In Brief

Experience the best of the Azores with this seven-night holiday on São Miguel Island. Swimming with wild dolphins, whale watching, kayaking, cycling and venturing underground through wondrous volcanic surroundings are just some of the experiences included.

Our Opinion

“ I can't stress enough how brilliant the Azores are as a whale-watching destination – there are some 24 different species that can be spotted at various times of the year, so you'll definitely be going to the right place! Added to that is the opportunity for swimming with dolphins, which is something you will never forget. You will also be mesmerised by São Miguel Island's volcanic landscape, whether unwinding in a geothermal pool or kayaking on a crater lake. ”

Jono Archer



What's included?

- **Transfers:** all transfers included
- **Accommodation:** 7 nights in Hotel São Miguel Park with the option to upgrade to the Marina Atlantico or the Azor Hotel. All the hotels are located in the coastal town of Ponta Delgada
- **Meals:** 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches
- **The following activities are included in the holiday:** Sete Cidades Adventure Tour, whale watching, Vila Franca do Campo visit*, thematic tour of Furnas, swimming with dolphins and jeep tour to Fogo (the order of activities is subject to change)
- Fully qualified guides and instructors during activities
- Equipment, training, and supervision for all activities with expert local guides
- If you are travelling outside 15th June to 15th September you will visit the Oficina Museu instead

Trip Overview

Ocean wildlife, volcanic culture, and outdoor activities: this seven-night Azores holiday to the island of São Miguel puts an exotic twist on your typical European getaway.

Marine animals inspire awe in just about everyone, and seeing them in their natural habitat is one experience that is sure to feature on your bucket list. Our itinerary allows you to tick it off three times – you will watch for whales from a tour boat, be taken to swim with dolphins in the Atlantic, and snorkel close to a colourful variety of fish and other underwater fauna when snorkelling at the islet of Vila Franca.

The rich volcanic heritage of the Azores is something you will be able to enjoy first-hand. You will bathe in a naturally heated spring at the Terra Nostra Botanical Garden. You will also be able to taste a 'Cozido das Furnas' stew – an Azorean piece of geothermal gastronomy that puts a twist on the traditional Portuguese 'cozido' by cooking it with natural steam.

The extraordinary island environments are perfect settings for activities. You will kayak on the crater lakes of the Sete Cidades Lagoon and cycle in the surrounding area. Slower-paced activities include walking through part of Sao Miguel's longest lava tunnel and relaxing in the warm Caldeira Velha

waterfall.

You will stay in the modern São Miguel Park Hotel or, if you have upgraded, in the Marina Atlântico or the Azor Hotel. All the hotels are located in the coastal town of Ponta Delgada.

Image credits: Futurismo Azores Adventures

Agenda

Please note the order of activities is subject to change

DAY
1

ARRIVAL AND WELCOME

Reaching João Paulo II Airport, you will be collected and transferred to your hotel. Check in, unpack and relax – your Azorean adventure is about to begin.

Included Meals: None

DAY
2

SETE CIDADES ADVENTURE TOUR

A filling breakfast will have you all set for the Sete Cidades Adventure Tour. This day-long excursion takes you to 'Lagoa das Sete Cidades' on the west side of São Miguel Island. The 'Lagoon of Seven Cities' consists of two blueish-green crater lakes ringed by trees.

On the way, you will stop at various viewpoints to enjoy this beautiful landscape. One of the stops will be at the Vista do Rei, probably the most famous viewpoint of Sao Miguel Island from where you can enjoy the views of the two lakes and the surrounding landscape.

When you reach the lakes, you can cycle over a largely flat ten-kilometre trail, of which ten minutes will be spent moving uphill or you can kayak over the sparkling lake.

A picnic lunch is included today.

Back at the hotel, you can relax before heading out and sampling the local cuisine (not included).

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY
3

WHALE WATCHING AND VILA FRANCA DO CAMPO OR OFICINA MUSEU
AND PINEAPPLE FARM VISIT

Breakfast is followed by a morning whale-watching tour. You will usually enjoy the whale watching

from a catamaran, however, some trips will be in a RIB boat. If you have a preference, please inform us in advance (restrictions may apply for pregnant women and people with lower back problems).

It is no understatement to say that the Azores are one of the best places in the world for this activity – so much so that everyone from the National Geographic to the BBC has paid visits.

You will receive an in-depth briefing on safety measures and responsible observation prior to heading out on the tour; life vests and waterproofs will be provided (except on the catamaran). Depending on luck, there will be a range of cetaceans that you might see. July and August are good months for spotting beaked and Atlantic whales, as well as striped dolphins. Sperm whales are also known to make an appearance at this time while bottlenose and common dolphins can be seen all year round.

If you are travelling between 15th June to 15th September, lunch will be had in Vila Franca do Campo, a pleasant southern town. A refitted fishing boat will then transport you to the splendid islet of Vila Franca, which is a circle of green around a crater lagoon that is open to the sea. Receiving snorkelling equipment, you will go in to look at life under the water. Species found here include small red scorpionfish, rainbow wrasses, and Guinea-fowl puffers.

If you are travelling outside 15th June to 15th September, lunch will be had in the Ponta Delgada Marina. You will then be driven to Capelas for a trip to Oficina Museu, where you will learn about Azores life in the mid-twentieth century, observing how island culture and lifestyles developed over time. There will also be the opportunity to watch local craftsmen making typical pieces of art. Rounding off your day is another cultural experience: a visit to some of São Miguel's pineapple farms. The favourite fruit of the Azores takes two years to reach your plate – a delicious product that is well worth the wait.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY
4

THEMATIC TOUR OF FURNAS

Learn about the volcanic heritage of the Azores with today's thematic tour to Furnas. After breakfast, your first stop of the day will be a highlight for tea-lovers. You will be taken to the Gorreana Tea Estates, one of Europe's oldest remaining tea plantations. In addition to seeing the growing areas, you will have an opportunity to try some of the produce.

You will then head to the Caldeiras das Furnas, where you will see the famous fumaroles and mineral springs. Make sure you try the water from each spring. You might notice the variety in tastes because of the different minerals present.

At lunch, you will get to try 'Cozido das Furnas', the classic Portuguese 'cozido' stew of slow-cooked meats and vegetables with an Azorean twist: preparation using natural steam from the ground.

Following that, there will be a look around the exceptional Terra Nostra Garden. This visit will finish with the chance to get into the iron-rich waters of a geothermal pool, which has a soothing temperature between 35°C to 40°C. (Please take old swimming costumes as the mineral water will stain them a light brown colour).

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY
5

SWIMMING WITH DOLPHINS AND FREE AFTERNOON

Once you have had breakfast, it will be time for a true bucket list experience: swimming with dolphins. A RIB will take you out to locate a group of these highly intelligent marine mammals. Day 3 had you searching for them from a boat – now you should hopefully be able to get closer. Before entering the water, you will be given a presentation on how to use the provided snorkelling equipment and swim responsibly.

We have left the afternoon free for you to spend as you please. You could remain in the harbour area and head for lunch in one of the coastal cafés, or transfer back to your accommodation and eat in a restaurant nearby or on-site.

Please note that restrictions may apply for pregnant women and people with lower back problems.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY
6

FOGO JEEP TOUR AND FREE AFTERNOON

Today, you will enjoy amazing views of Lagoa do Fogo, the shimmering 'Lake of Fire', from a viewpoint. Lagoa do Fogo is a part of a marvellous natural reserve that stuns all with its beauty and the lake is one of the most beautiful lakes on the island. Next is a trip to the Caldeira Velha waterfall – bathe in its comforting, warm water. You will also look at the smoking fumaroles of Caldeiras.

On the way back to the hotel, you will stop at the beautiful waterfall Salto do Cabrito (please note: depending on the road and weather conditions, a short steep walk to the waterfall might be necessary).

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY
7

FREE DAY

Following breakfast, you have a free day to see more of São Miguel, also known as "The Green Island".

You could remain in the area and explore Ponta Delgada on foot or book an excursion locally.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY
8

DEPARTURE

After a final breakfast at your hotel, you will be transferred to João Paulo II Airport to catch your direct flight home.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Included Accommodation

Other options are available - see below for details.

Hotel São Miguel Park (Nights: 1-7)



This centrally located four-star hotel is a short distance from Ponta Delgada's beautiful Botanical Gardens and just ten minutes from the airport. Its open and spacious rooms offer fine views and a summery feel. Tuck into delectable buffets of Azorean cuisine at the on-site restaurant and take an invigorating break at the hotel's health club.

Hotel facilities

- Switch your swimming between the hotel's indoor and outdoor pools
- Book a therapeutic massage treatment, relax in the Jacuzzi, or freshen up in the spa.
- Maintain your gains in the well-equipped Fitness Centre.
- Sample cocktails from the hotel bar and fill up on Azorean cooking at the restaurant.

Room Type

Twin/Double Room: These have a twin or double bed. The bathroom has a shower, toilet, and hairdryer. The room also comes with cable television, internet access, and a telephone, as well as air-conditioning, a safe, and a minibar.

Image credits: Futurismo Azores Adventures, Sao Miguel Park Hotel

Other accommodation options

Contact us for a personalised quote.

Marina Atlântico



With nautical themes and incredible views overlooking the ocean, the 4-star Marina Atlântico is a great place to enjoy the island's sea and landscapes. Your central location puts you right in the midst of Azorean culture. Sample the local food, stroll along the streets or visit one of the many museums which are all within walking distance.

Hotel facilities

- Relax in Escuna restaurant or Palhabote bar area
- Make use of the onsite pool and gym facilities
- Enjoy free use of the hotel's bicycles to explore the volcanic landscape further

Room type

- **Double or twin rooms (some with sea views):** All rooms come with a double or twin bed and have air conditioning, a telephone, cable TV, Wi-Fi, radio, minibar (extra charge), safe, hairdryer, gym and spa area

Please contact our Travel Experts for a quotation.

Image Credit: Hotel Marina Atlântico

The Azor Hotel



Another hotel with spectacular sea views, the Azor has a modern touch with a strong connection to the natural wonders of the island.

Hotel facilities

- Workout in the onsite gym or try your luck in the casino
- Make the most of the incredible surrounding views in the outdoor swimming pool or rooftop bar
- Try the delicious food in the hotel's restaurant
- Sample a variety of food and drink in the hotel's market
- Enjoy free WiFi throughout the hotel

Room type

Twin/double rooms: enjoy a sea view from your room with a double or twin beds, air conditioning, minibar, a flat-screen TV and a private bathroom with bath or shower and a hairdryer. An extra bed can be added for a maximum capacity of three people.

Family room: your sea view room comes equipped with two large double beds, air conditioning, minibar, a flat-screen TV and a private bathroom with bath or shower and a hairdryer. Maximum capacity is four people.

Please contact our Travel Experts for a quotation.

Image credits: Azor Hotel

The Specifics

Holiday group size (approximate)

Minimum 2; maximum 21 people.

Please note: if you choose to travel by catamaran during the whale watching, the maximum group size is 76 people.

Group Size

We always try to provide an approximation of the group size you can expect to be with for the duration of each of our holidays. It may be that you are joined by others for parts of your holiday (such as transfers and particular activities) but the above number reflects those you can normally expect to be with from beginning to end. If group size is something which is particularly important to you, please speak to our Travel Experts and they can suggest the best holidays for you.

Tailor-made holiday group sizes will vary for all activities as will the group size for any additional activities you book.

Minimum and maximum age

If a specific minimum age applies to this holiday, it can be found in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page.

Unless otherwise stated in the in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page, the minimum age for participation in an Artisan holiday is typically 8 years old (there may be younger children in some destinations who have booked with other companies). If an adult-only environment is important to you, then please contact our Travel Experts and they will advise on the best dates and destinations for you. If you are looking for a holiday designed specifically for families then please see our sister company www.activitiesabroad.com

Itinerary amendments

The order of activities listed in this agenda is provided for guidance only, your final and detailed itinerary will be provided either with your final travel documents (which are uploaded into your online account around a week prior to departure) or upon arrival.

Terms and Conditions

Our full booking terms and conditions can be found on our website: <https://www.artisantravel.co.uk/booking-conditions>