



AMC ADVENTURE TRAVEL

VOLUNTEER-LED EXCURSIONS WORLDWIDE



An Exotic Hiking Holiday in the Azores Archipelago

Sept 2-12, 2017

AMC Adventure Travel #1731

Join us for the unique opportunity of exploring three islands of the Azorean Archipelago, a very special part of Portugal that for the most of the time seems to be forgotten and not yet fully discovered by tourists!

The Azores archipelago consists of 9 islands and a combined population of approximately 250,000 people living mostly in rural settlements. The region is a mid-Atlantic treasure that escapes tourism of grand proportions. On one hand, it is a throwback to old-style Portugal, the one of narrow cobbled streets and red roofed townhouses with ornate shutters and wrought iron balconies. On the other hand, it is a botanical Eden that rivals Hawaii in topography yet maintains an old world maritime culture. It is truly a land of contrasts and offers a feast of delights for the discerned, active traveler- primarily a marriage between a walking discovery over unique and somewhat unreal landscapes and a journey back in time.

White arum lilies, red cannas and spires of orange crocosmia grow wild. Hydrangeas make up roadside hedges while lines of bamboo separate fields. Then there are agaves, cacti,

succulents, fir trees, plane trees with trunks and branches covered with lichen, and azaleas bursting into bloom.

Hiking the islands is like taking a trip through an open-air botanical garden. Then there is the volcanoes and hidden lakes- trapping micro climates, lush and bursting with song birds and exotic insects. Along the coastlines, home to an abundance of whales and dolphins, maritime traditions remain unchanged and society is molded by the rigors of powerful mid Atlantic swell, making the Azores one of the most determined fishing cultures on earth.

Join Ginette Beaudoin and Anna Panszyzck from the AMC and regional guide Matt Butler from Adventurebug Worldwide, who are pleased to offer this exceptional journey to the Azores in 2017. We welcome those seeking a unique blend of scenic, inspiring and educational hikes that encompass cultural highlights and focus on all things natural over our 10 days on the islands. Welcome to the Azores!

Tour Highlights & Features:

This Hiking Tour comprises 9 Nights duration in 3 island destinations - Madalena (Picos), Velas (Sao Jorge) and Ponta Delgado (Sao Miguel). We also visit Faial Islands for a day. The day hikes are diverse and utilize a variety of terrains from old cobbled tracks to rims of extinct volcanoes and rural farm roads. Accommodation is in comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels in great locations. Transfers by private bus, air and ferry boat - Guided hiking and cultural highlights program throughout - Wine tasting opportunities and special focus on authentic local dishes - Lush flora and fauna - particularly local seasonal flowers, indigenous and non-native plants, birds and marine life. By undertaking this tour, you are creating opportunities to enhance aspects of rural tourism to the Azores lesser travelled regions. This is still a lesser travelled European destination and one that is highly praised for its authenticity.

We will be visiting four of the most beautiful of the Azorean islands; Sao Jorge, Pico, Faial and Sao Miguel.

Sao Jorge Island, is part of Azores' central group and lies 11 miles off Pico. It has an indented coastline with a mountain range of volcanic cones forming the backbone of the island. The highest peak, the Pico Da Esperance at 3455 feet offers great views of the other islands of the central group.

Pico Island, named for its imposing mountain, is one of the most beautiful and underrated of the island of the Azores. Only second to Sao Miguel in size, the "Mountain Island" stands majestically in the middle of the Azorean central group. Pico Island history was built on the destiny of its whale hunting and winery traditions. The famous Pico wines and the UNESCO world patrimony designated vineyards, as well as wooden boat building, are contemporary

fixtures of Pico. Whale hunting, long gone, gave way to a movement of fair treatment study and observation of whales, dolphins and other sea mammals. Whale and dolphin watching trips can be organized (as an optional activity) in Madalena. Volcanic eruptions ended 300 years ago and Pico is considered a dormant volcano, adding to the mystique of the island, and serving as a magnet for scientists.

The Pico Island landscape is a sublime mixture of lava rock and exotic vegetation in an ever changing scenery that envelops this scarcely populated island. Pico features some of the best swimming holes in the Azores.

Faial Island, the Blue Island, is part of the Azores central group. Different colors of flue decorate the houses, divide the fields and line the roadsides, giving Faial the name of Blue Island. In the 18th century the development of the whale hunting brought the early whaling fleets to Horta, the principal port city of Faial. By the 19th century, Horta had become an important sea port, and a stopping point for a large number of yachts crossing the Atlantic. In the first half of the 20th century Faial was an important communications center as underwater cable links connected Europe to North America via Faial. The island was also a feature in the pioneer period of aviation where hydroplanes, most notable Pan Am Airlines, made the island a connecting refueling port for their transatlantic voyages. The island is a photographers dream with a green circle of a volcanic cone at the top of a hill, the ochre walls of a fortress, sailboats, unforgettable sunrises, beautiful hydrangeas and quiet inlets of soft sand beaches.

Sao Miguel Island, known as the Green Island, is the largest and most populated island of the Azores. The island covers 293 square miles and has around 150,000 inhabitants, a third of which are located in Ponta Delgada the largest city in the archipelago. Sao Miguel's diverse scenery is a pleasant awakening to visitors, with beautiful lakes, sandy beaches, rolling hills, high mountains, green plains and blue ocean. S. Miguel is also the island in the Azores with the most to offer. Its cosmopolitan town of Ponta Delgada offers the visitor a blend of contemporary life with historic flavor. S. Miguel monuments, turn of the century architecture, parks and cobble stone streets are interlaced with a modern marina, nice restaurants, shopping and ocean-front cafes. S. Miguel is unlike any other destination in the world. Once you come you will want to come back! The island is composed of two volcanic massifs separated by a central ridge with a low altitude. The highest point is at Pico da Vara at 3545 feet. The large craters of Sete Cidades (seven cities), Fog (fire) and Furnas contain wonderful lakes of crystal clear water.

ITINERARY:

Day 1: Saturday September 2 DEPARTURE FROM BOSTON

Depart Boston for Azores (evening flight)

Day 2: Sunday September 3 ARRIVAL PICO ISLAND & MADALENA EXPLORATION

Morning arrival to the Azores with connecting flight to Pico Island (1 hr). At Pico meet your local guide and we have a 25 minute private transfer to our hotel in Madalena. After check in and a light lunch there's time to rest and freshen up before taking a guided exploration of Madalena and surrounding volcanic shore paths. Hiking Time: 2 hours approx (town/village exploration)

Distance: 3 miles approx

Elevation Gain: sea level

HOTEL CARAVALES 4 star <http://www.hotelcaravelas.com.pt/>. Lunch & Dinner included today.



Day 3: Monday September 4 PICO ISLAND LAVA TUBES & VERDELHO VINYARD HIKE

After breakfast we transfer 30 minutes to the impressive Lava Tubes of *Gruta das Torres*. We have a short introductory film in English followed by a guided walk through a circuit in the actual lava tubes. The tour is operated by the Azorean Government and offers tremendous insight into Volcanism. The experience is non technical however hiking poles are recommended. Next we hike around the UNESCO appointed 15th century Vineyards of Verdelho with its stone basalt walls and visit the wine cooperative that has roots to the Russian Czars. Our day ends arriving back to the hotel on foot.

Hiking Time: 4 hours approx

Distance: 5-7 miles

Elevation Gain: 150 feet

HOTEL CARAVALES. Breakfast & Picnic Lunch included today.



Day 4: Tuesday September 5

LAGO CAPITO PLATEAU HIKE

Today we explore some of the higher slopes of Pico Island and the small, natural lake of Lagoa de Capito. Passing through a variety of unique vegetation zones we experience the best Pico has to offer today – superb views, mixed flora and tremendous lava formations on the coast. The hike

offers an easy/moderate and a more difficult option. Time permitting we'll visit the Lava

Grottos and traditional Azorean houses near Lajido after the hike.

Hiking Time: 5 hours approx

Distance: 7 miles

Elevation Gain: Easy route (mostly descent from 2500 feet) Hard route (ascent 2500 feet)

HOTEL CARAVALES. Breakfast, Picnic Lunch and Dinner included today.

Day 5: Wednesday September 6 *PICO VOLCANO CLIMB & FREE DAY OPTIONS*



Today we offer a free choice day or the opportunity to climb Pico Volcano – a long scramble to Portugal’s highest elevation. The free choices today consist of taking an island tour, whale watching, deep sea fishing, scuba diving or rest and relaxation. These experiences are not included in the trip cost. The Pico Volcano climb is a scramble to 7,710 feet. It follows a mostly treeless - rutted, stony path up lava folds –

often just over wide slabs of stone but the footing is good when dry. Hiking poles and solid footwear definitely recommended and bring plenty of water.

Hiking Time: (Pico Summit) 6-8 hours return approx

Distance: 7 miles approx

Elevation Gain: Route starts at 4,038 ft and summit is 7,710 ft (total gain 3672 ft)

Information on Pico Summit: <http://climbingpicoazores.blogspot.com.es/p/the-climb.html>

HOTEL CARAVALES. Breakfast only included today.

Day 6: Thursday September 7

FAIAL ISLAND VISIT

After breakfast we ferry (45 min) across to *Faial* (The Blue Island). Arriving to the famous port of *Horta*, our private coach transfers us to *Capelinhos Volcano* for an exploratory visit on foot (1 hour) hiking in this region and then to the island’s high point - the *Caldeira of Faial*. Our main hike at the Calderia is always weather dependent – it



may be a linear route or possibly the entire circuit. Regardless we will enjoy a wide range of experiences on Faial Island and expect to be on your feet for most of the day. Prior to returning by ferry to Madalena (Pico), we have some time to visit the port town of Horta.

Hiking Time: 5 hours approx

Distance: 6-7 miles

Elevation Gain: 250-500 feet

HOTEL CARAVALES. Breakfast, Picnic Lunch included today.

Day 7: Friday September 8 SAO JORGE ISLAND – HIKING NORTE GRANDE

This morning we check out of the Caravales Hotel and transfer to *Sao Jorge* Island by ferry (1hr 20 min). We will be carrying our luggage on / off the boat so please consider this when packing. Sao Jorge is a linear island with nearly 10,000 inhabitants. The highest point is 3,455 ft and it's steep green cliffs give it a striking, exotic appearance. After checking into the Sao Jorge Garden Hotel at *Velas* town, we have a short transfer to hike a half day route in the *Norte Grande* region of the island.

Hiking Time: 2-3 hours approx

Distance: 4 miles

Elevation Gain: 300-500 feet

HOTEL SAO JORGE GARDEN 3 Stars <http://www.motelsjorge.com/en/index.php> Breakfast, Picnic Lunch and Dinner included.

Day 8: Saturday September 9 SAO JORGE ISLAND – ESPERANCA PEAK



After breakfast a short transfer brings us to the trail head for the island's highest route - *Pica de Esperanca* (3,455 ft). Although not difficult or as high as Pico's summit, the route is long and passes through distinct ecological zones – including a classified forest reserve and finishes on the coast at the small agriculture zone of *Faja de Ouidor*.

Hiking Time: 5 hours approx

Distance: 10.5 miles

Elevation Gain: Trail starts at 2,295 ft and finishes at sea level (total gain 850 ft)

HOTEL SAO JORGE GARDEN. Breakfast, Picnic Lunch & Dinner included.

Day 9: Sunday September 10 FREE DAY SAO JORGE ISLAND

Today you are free to relax around Velas town, visiting the *Urzelena Rural Exhibition Center* or relax at our comfortable hotel. You may also take a guided tour to other cultural highlights of this unique, less explored island. If you prefer more trail time, join us on a half day hike in the region.

Hiking Time: 2-3 hours approx
Distance: 4 miles approx
Elevation Gain: To be announced (under 1000 ft)

HOTEL SAO JORGE GARDEN. Breakfast only included.

Day 10: Monday September 11 SAO MIGUEL ISLAND – PONTA DELGADA VISIT

This morning we fly to Sao Miguel Island and the capital of the Azores, *Ponta Delgado*. After transferring to the hotel (20 min), you are free to take lunch followed by a free, optional guided walk Ponta Delgado's highlights. On foot we explore the preserved cobbled streets,



of

unique stone architecture and churches dating back to the 15th century. We visit the 19th century botanical gardens of *Antonio Borges* – witnessing the wide variation of Azorean plant life and the grottos made from basalt stone. Completing our tour we pass the Portuguese Fort and old fishing port before returning to the hotel. A final, farewell dinner is included tonight offering a last opportunity to sample tasty Azorean dishes.

Hiking Time: 2-3 hours approx (town walk)

Distance: 3 miles

Elevation Gain: Sea level

HOTEL MARINA ATLANTICO 4 star <http://www.bensaude.pt/hotelmarinaatlantico/en/> .

Breakfast & Farewell Dinner included

Day 11: Tuesday September 12 DEPARTURE HOME

Depart Ponta Delgado after breakfast in our group airport transfer.

Breakfast only included

Trip price includes:

9 nights' accommodations in comfortable centrally located 3 to 4 star hotels

Services of two AMC trip leaders

Meals as per itinerary: 9 breakfast (at hotels), 6 lunches and 5 dinners.

Group airport transfers and internal island transfers via private vehicle

Entrances to: Lava Tube visit & Wine Tasting at vineyard

One way airline ticket from Sao Jorge Island to Ponta Delgado and ferry transfers to/from Faial Island and to Sao Jorge Island

Guided tour program led by Matt Butler (an employee of a well-established adventure travel outfitter) and local guides where applicable Local taxes, restaurant and bus tips

Tipping for meals provided in itinerary and bus transfer tips

WIFI Internet service available for free at all hotel destinations.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?

Trip cancellation insurance

Private airport transfers and additional private transfers

Beverages at meals other than breakfast

Mineral water

Room bills for communication, bar tabs, private services etc.

Breakfast on Day 2, lunches on day 5, 9 and 11; and dinner on days 3, 5, 6 and 9 of the itinerary

Trail snacks

Optional activities on free days

Tip for non AMC guides, hotel housekeeping

TRAVEL IN THE AZORES – What to Know...

- The Euro is currency in the Azores, it is a state of Portugal and therefore all European laws and regulations apply.

- Bank Machines are widely available and we recommend obtaining small amounts of Euros for your daily travel.
- Traveller's Cheques are rarely accepted these days, bank ATM cards or Visa / MC are best.
- Language of the Azores is Portuguese and English is spoken only in the main tourist areas.
- The Azores are a series of small, sparsely populated islands that for many years was very impoverished. Society relies on fishing and agriculture for sustainability and tourism is the region's biggest income earner. Standards of living can be very different from what you are accustomed too. The pace of life on the islands is slower and levels of customer service may appear 'less ambitious' than what we are normally accustomed too.
- The Azores islands are volcanic and seismic activity can occur. Large, destructive earthquakes or lava flows have not existed in current history and the Portuguese Government regularly promotes the region as a family, holiday destination with minor risks.
- Road travel in Portugal is good but expect narrow, winding, tarmac roads through mountainous countryside. Our transfers are normally less than 1 hour at a time and with frequent stops at scenic locations.
- Weather patterns throughout the Azores are erratic and similar to the maritime climates of the Eastern US – however much milder. Rain, squalls and strong winds are the norm for certain hours of the day and periods during the year. April, can be wetter but it's a particularly good month for active holidays.
- Travel disease issues are not a concern in the Azores. Immunisations or travel vaccinations are not necessary. However we always recommend that travellers bring their own prescriptions (including glasses), from home. Tap water is generally very safe in the Azores.
- Hospital and health coverage for visitors is very good and meets European criteria. Please ensure your travel insurance is up to date and covers the Azores region.
- The Azores are approximately 4 hours air travel time from Boston and is on GMT -1 hour (1 hour behind the UK time (GMT) zone).

COST:

Per person cost based on double occupancy is: \$2625; sea view room supplement at last night's hotel is \$31.50.

Single supplement (for those traveling alone and not wishing to share a double room) is: \$ 565 for a regular room and \$595 for sea view room at the last night's hotel

Schedule of Payments:

Deposit: \$ 1000 with application plus supplements for single/seaview rooms

2nd Payment \$ 1625 by May 1st, 2017

Checks should be made payable to **AMC-Adventure Travel** and mailed along with the application form, AMC liability form, AMC confidential medical information form to:

Ginette Beaudoin, 66 Graham Street, Biddeford, ME 04005

Cancellation Policy:

Cancellation must be in writing and post marked prior to dates listed below:

Prior to April 25th, 2017 - All money returned except \$50 Nonrefundable portion

After April 25th, 2017 ----Cancellation fee is \$200 plus any additional money necessary to keep the trip cost from increasing and creating a greater expense to other trip participants. The cancellation fee will be limited to \$200, **IF** a qualified replacement can be found by the trip leaders. We will establish a waiting list. Thus if you cancel and are not replaced, you will forfeit the \$205 plus the per capita expenses already incurred and any other unpaid expenses for which the trip cannot obtain a refund. Your cancellation shall not raise the cost of the trip to any of the participants or the leaders. You may forfeit the entire trip fee. Flight tickets once purchased become your property and are generally non-refundable. We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance. Information on a company recommended by the AMC will be sent to you. Trip insurance is recommended, since an illness, accident or death in the family can interfere with your plans. Trip insurance can be obtained through your travel agent or the leaders will provide you with a brochure/information of a company recommended by AMC.

PLEASE NOTE: The price of the Major Excursion is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates and is subject to change. Any tariff/rate increases will be passed on to participants.

LIKEWISE: Any funds left over at the end of the trip once all the accounting has been reported and accepted by AMC will be divided amongst the participants and refunded.

Air Costs:

Leaders will explore the best possible options for air travel. You will receive notification when we are aware of a good fare. For this trip we estimate a range of \$650 to \$750 from Boston to Sao Miguel Island via SATA Airlines. We will assist you in any way to make your reservations, but you should not make any booking on your own without consulting the leaders. Once you purchase air tickets, they are wholly owned by you. It is your responsibility to get yourself to the first hotel if your flight does not arrive in time to meet the group at the airport in Sao Miguel.

TRIP LEADERS:

LEADER: GINETTE BEAUDOIN



Ginette has been a member of the AMC since 1988 and has led several day and weekend trips in the White Mountains of NH, as well as various parts of Maine. She has led adventure trip in July 2014, July of 2011, August 2012 and July/August to Austrian Alps. She has also lead Adventure travel trips to Yosemite National Park, Azores Archipelago, Tuscany and Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota for the AMC. She has participated in numerous AMC Major Excursions to Switzerland and Austria, involving hiking and cross country skiing. She has hiked in the Stubai valley as part of a 2006 Major Excursion and hiked to 26 of the high Alpine Huts throughout Austria, Germany and Switzerland. She has hiked all of the NH 4000 footers. Her interests include hiking, photography, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, travel, information volunteer for AMC and introducing others to outdoor activities.

ADDRESS: 66 Graham Street, Biddeford, Maine 04005

PHONE: (207) 294-6302, (207) 590-4431

EMAIL ADDRESS: ginette4000@yahoo.com



CO-LEADER: ANNA PANSZCZYK

Anna is a Boston Chapter INTRO (AMC) Leader. Anna has co lead AMC Adventure Travel trips to Austria, Azores, Yosemite National Park, Minnesota and Morocco. Anna leads hiking trips in the White Mountains and most recently led an excursion to Waterville Valley and Craftsbury Vermont for snowshoeing and cross country skiing. She has also co led the Claybrook ski trip on previous years. During the summer of 2014, she and the trip leader backpacked the Haute Route from Chamonix France to Zermatt Switzerland. This is in addition to trips that she takes to all corners of the world! Anna has completed SOLO Advanced Wilderness First Aid course as well as CPR training.

ADDRESS: 22 Alfred Rd, Arlington, MA 02474

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