



**AMC ADVENTURE TRAVEL**  
Volunteer-Led Excursions Worldwide

## Azores: Hike and Explore a Cultural Paradise

**October 17 - 27, 2022**

**Trip #2246**



*Caldera (cone) of the Cabeco Gordo*

## Trip Overview

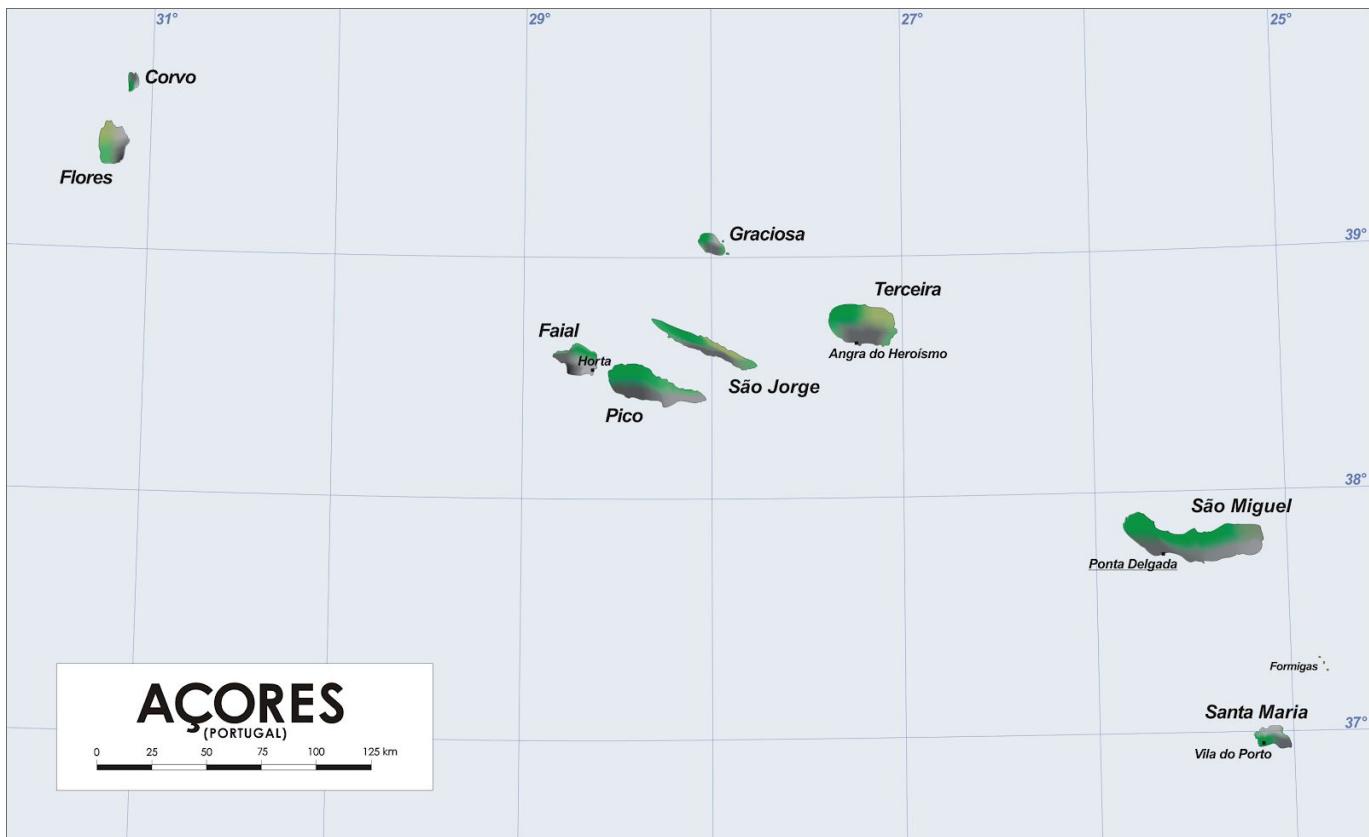
Join us on this unique trip to explore three islands of the Azorean Archipelago, a very special part of Portugal that is relatively undiscovered by tourists. The Azores are an Atlantic island chain approximately 900 miles west of Portugal.

This archipelago consists of nine islands with a combined population of approximately 250,000, living mostly in rural settlements. The region is a mid-Atlantic treasure. On one hand, a throwback to old-style Portugal - one of narrow cobbled streets and red roofed townhouses with ornate shutters and wrought-iron balconies. On the other, a botanical Eden that rivals Hawaii in botanical diversity yet maintains an old world maritime culture. It is truly a land of contrasts and offers a feast of delights for the active traveler. Hiking the islands is like taking a trip through an open-air botanical garden. Then there are the volcanoes and hidden lakes – trapping micro climates, lush and bursting with song birds and exotic insects. The coastlines are home to an abundance of whales and dolphins, where maritime traditions remain unchanged.

We will be accompanied throughout the trip by a local experienced guide who will help us enjoy and understand this remarkable island chain. On our daily hikes, we will not only experience incredible scenery, but also gain insight to the history and culture of this remarkable place.

We'll make visits to Sao Miguel, Pico and Faial Islands – staying in comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels throughout, all with pools. Transfers by private and public bus, taxis, inter-island air and ferry connections are all included. In addition to the hiking, there will be wine-tasting opportunities and a special focus on authentic local dishes! By participating on this tour, you are creating opportunities to enhance aspects of rural tourism to the Azores lesser travelled region praised for its authenticity. Bring your curiosity, your sense of adventure, and your camera!





## Trip Difficulty

This trip is rated #4 (moderate). We will hike from 4 to 5 hours per day. The typical daily elevation gain is 500–1000 feet. We will hike at a modest pace, which will permit time for photos and rest breaks. Participants should be in excellent shape and be able to hike for 4 to 5 hours per day for 10 consecutive days. Every evening the leader will describe the walk/hike for the following day so participants can plan accordingly. For more information about the trip rating system, please use this link.

AMC Trip Rating System: [Ratings](#)

## Daily Itinerary

### Day 0 Oct 16 (Sun) Depart USA for the Azores

Azores Airlines (SATA), have night departures from Boston and other locations.

## **Day 1 Oct 17 (Mon) Arrival to Sao Miguel, (Ponta Delgada)**

Arrival to *Ponta Delgada*, the Azores capital city on Sao Miguel Island (USA flights typically arrive by 7 am). You will be transferred to our Ponta Delgada Hotel (20 min.) for an early check in with breakfast (NOTE – *this early check in also includes for the night of Oct 16 – in case you wish to arrive the day earlier*). After settling in and rest we'll have a walking tour of Ponta Delgado with a special focus on ethnography and Island traditions including a walk through the *Jardim (Garden) Antonio Borges* – a pleasant introduction and acclimatization to begin our discovery of the region. Walking time 3 hours / easy / no elevation gain. This evening, we'll have our welcome dinner at a local restaurant specializing in Azorean dishes. Accommodation: Hotel Marino Atlantico (4 stars). Meals included: buffet breakfast and Welcome Dinner.



## **Day 2 Oct 18 (Tues) SAO MIGUEL ISLAND (Ponta Delgado - Sete Cidades Village & Lake Walk)**

Today we hike the *Sete Cidades* lake and volcanic cone region on the western end of the island, a rural area of natural beauty and geological wonder. This charming village area is located on the shore of a lake (*Lagoa Azul*) at the bottom of an extinct volcano caldera (crater). We hike the wonderful caldera area taking in widespread views of the sea and Atlantic fishing villages and enjoying a vast array of botany. On return we'll see the island's pretty west coast landscape before visiting a unique pineapple plantation where we enjoy a tasting of this local delicacy. Today's hiking will range from 4-5 hours total / 7 miles minimum. Transport by private bus service from Ponta Delgada. Accommodation: Ponta Delgado – Hotel Marino Atlantico. Meals included: breakfast, picnic lunch, dinner.

**Day 3 Oct 19 (Wed) SAO MIGUEL ISLAND (Lagoa do Forno Hike)** Today we transfer to the central highlands to the Lagoa do Forno (Lake of Fire). This scenic lake hike into the crater offers a range of island botany and diverse topography - this is a linear route (out and back). Following the hike, we visit the Calderas (hot springs), in a lush tropical canyon and take in the brilliant interpretive display on volcanism and geothermal activity before descending to Ribeira Grande for a liquor tasting, and time permitting, an easy walk around this historic North Shore village. Hiking time 4-5 hours / elevation gain 1000 feet. Transport via private bus services from Ponta Delgada. Accommodation: Ponta Delgado – Hotel Marino Atlantico. Meals included: breakfast, picnic lunch, dinner.

#### **Day 4 Oct 20 (Thur) PICO ISLAND (flight) and Madalena's Vineyard Hike**

Morning flight to Pico Island (1 hour). Private transfer to *Madalena* on Pico Island (20 min) and check in at hotel. Today we hike the historic vineyards, a World Heritage Site, following stony basalt paths leading to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Parish Church and Windmill. The viniculture tradition – famous for its century old production of Verdelho wines on volcanic soil, is a must see. *Madalena* is a charming port town located at Pico's western reaches and in view of Faial Island. It serves as the economic and socio-cultural hub of Pico Island itself. Hiking time 3-4 hours / elevation gain 200 feet). Accommodation: *Madalena* – *HOTEL CARAVELAS 3 stars*. Meals Included: Breakfast, dinner.



*Hiking the Lake of the Capitao, Pico summit in distance*

*CARAVELAS*. Meals included, breakfast, picnic lunch, dinner.

#### **Day 5 Oct 21 (Fri) PICO ISLAND Hiking Lagoa do Capito and the Sea Side Grottos**

Today we hike the wonderful path from the upper nature reserve at *Lagoa Capito*, considered an important migratory area for a variety of bird species - down to *Cais do Pico*, a pretty hamlet area of the north shore where we'll visit the Lava features and some very special *Pico* hamlets. Picnic lunch on route and throughout the day fantastic views of Pico Volcano itself – Portugal's single highest land mass.

Hiking time 4-5 hours / elevation gain 300 feet & descent 1500 feet).

Accommodation: *Madalena* – *HOTEL*

## **Day 6 Oct 22 (Sat) FAIAL ISLAND**

Morning transfer by ferry (45 min) to the Azores's fifth largest island, *Faial* - a name derived from the local Faya tree and termed the 'blue island' for its bounty of *hydrangeas* that adorn the island in summer months. We take a private bus transfer (1 hour approx.), and stop at the remarkable CAPELO Volcanic complex – where we have an interpretive hike to understand how in 1957 the island of Faial grew by 2.4km square. From here we drive to the top of the island and hike the Caldera (cone) of the Cabeco Gordo (1043m) before driving to the island's lively port of *Horta*, considered the Azores's most cosmopolitan center due to passing trade from international sailors and yachts. Early evening return ferry to Picos. Hiking time approximately 4-5 hours.

Accommodation: Madalena – *HOTEL CARAVELAS*.

Meals included: breakfast, picnic lunch, and dinner.



## **Day 7 Oct 23 (Sun) OPTION DAY: Climb Pico, Lava Tubes, Whale & Dolphin Discovery on Pico Island**

Today we offer a few options to explore more of Pico Island. You can climb the imposing *Pico Volcanic Cone* (7715 feet) with your AMC and local Leader / rated challenging. Or, there is the *Whale & Dolphin Discovery Program* or even deep sea fishing from the Port of Madalena. These options are not included in the tour price but we recommend them for those wishing to experience what the Azores are most passionate about, marine life. Additionally, there are also a number of museums and of course the Gruta do Torres Lava Tubes worth visiting. Accommodation: Madalena – *HOTEL CARAVELAS*. Meals included: breakfast.

## **Day 8 Oct 24 (Mon) PICOS ISLAND to SAO MIGUEL ISLAND (Furnas Village)**

This morning, pending our flight times to Sao Miguel, we can hike a rural track to the local honey producers in the forest behind Madalena. Today our destination is *Furnas* (one hour from the airport of Ponta Delgada). *Furnas* (Portuguese for cavern or crater) is one of the Azores most unique destinations. A village of approximately 1900 residents, its colorful history dates back to the 1500's and includes pirate invasions, a once booming forest industry and of course, healing spring waters and steam vents making this one of the Azores's finest natural attractions. We have 3 nights here to enjoy some wonderful hikes within the archipelago's natural phenomena and gardens. Upon arrival, check into Hotel Terra Nostra Garden and time permitting, an exploration in the immediate area on foot - perhaps visiting the botanical gardens and enjoying the natural hot springs and hotel surroundings. Accommodation: Furnas - *TERRA NOSTRA GARDEN HOTEL* 4 stars. Meals included: Breakfast, dinner.





**Day 9            Oct 25 (Tues) FURNAS  
AND THE LAKE WALK**

Today we hike to the *Furnas Lagoa* and surrounding natural area directly from hotel. Today's hiking can be of varying distances and includes a small summit challenge (Pico de Ferro view point). Reaching the lake is a highlight as well as passing the numerous caldeiras

(hot springs), where stew dishes are cooked in the earth near colonial farmsteads, bamboo forests and more. This hike offers lake views and a wide variety of birds and unique flora along the way. Later today we visit Europe's only tea plantation for a guided tour and tasting including a short hike above the plantation to take in surreal views of the terraced tea hedges. Total hiking time today approximately 5 hours / 900 feet elevation gain. Accommodation: Furnas –as per above. Meals included: breakfast, picnic lunch and a special dinner of Caldera cooked stew (from the earth).

**Day 10 – Oct 26 (Wed) RIBEIRA QUENTE (the Sleepy Fishing Village) WALK**

Today we hike the coastal paths of *Ribeira Quente* over the historic footpaths of fish sellers and pirates through forests and valleys with unique terrain consisting of ferns, ginger, cheesewood and honeysuckle. At our destination, we cross black volcanic sands for an optional swim and café stop. Historically an impoverished fishing village, the region is a delight for visitors with its warm hospitality and popular seafood. Return to Furnas via private transfer (20 min). Hiking time 4-5 hours today / 700 feet elevation gain. Accommodation: Furnas – same as above. Meals included: breakfast, picnic lunch and Farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 11 - Oct 27 (Wed) DEPARTURE FROM PONTA DELGADO**

Pending final group flight time, free morning in Furnas to enjoy the hot springs and rich flora surrounding the hotel and village area. Afternoon private group transfer direct to airport (1 hour approximately), for departure home or onward travels. Meals included: breakfast.

## Accommodations, Meals and Transportation

We will be staying in three and four star hotels, all with pools, double occupancy. A limited number of single occupancy rooms are available at an additional cost of \$880.00 per person.

All meals will be at restaurants, except for picnic lunches and special outdoor meals. Dinners will be provided for all evenings except October 23rd. Six picnic lunches to be provided and participants will purchase their own lunches on the other days.

All transportation after your arrival on Sao Miguel Island is provided.

## Weather

The weather in October is typically mild: daytime temps in the mid 60s, nighttime temps in the mid 50s. October can be a rainy month but most showers are short lived and spread over the islands. Bring a rain jacket and rain pants, as well as a pack cover.



## Trip Price

The AMC Member price is \$3,625.00. The non-member price is \$3,725.00. To join the AMC (2021 pricing \$50 individual, \$75 family) click [here](#). A limited number of single occupancy spaces are available at an additional cost of \$880.00 per person.

### Price includes:

- 11 nights accommodation in comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels - centrally located
- meals as per itinerary - wine beer, soft drink and mineral water served at dinners.
- all Azores airport transfers and internal island transfers via private vehicle, public bus, taxi.
- airline ticket to/from Picos Island and ferry transfer to/from Faial Island.
- Included tips are: tips at included meals in restaurants and all bus services except airport transfers.
- wireless internet service available for free at all hotel destinations.
- services of an AMC leader and a local guide.

### Price does not include:

- tips for airport transfers.
- four lunches (October 17, October 20, October 23, October 24).
- one dinner (October 23).
- Any optional activity on October 23.
- alcoholic drinks outside of those served with included meals.
- room service bills, housekeeping tip.
- International airfare estimated to be \$800.00.

## Application Process

We expect a group size of 16 - 17 people, including the leader. This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you

decide that you would like to sign up for this trip, please follow this [link](#) to the application and forms. You could also let Larry know by email or give him a call and he will email you a link to the application forms. The application, medical form and waiver are now all included in this simple application. A reservation deposit of \$1000 per person is due with your application.

Please make your check payable to the Appalachian Mountain Club and mail it with the completed forms to Larry Yetter at 277 E Dunstable Road, Nashua, NH 03062.

You will be considered *qualified* for the trip when the leader has determined by conversation with you that you and the trip seem to be a good match. You will be formally *accepted*, and your check will be deposited, when the trip leader confirms the trip has sufficient number of participants and is going as planned. The second deposit of \$1000 is due on March 1, 2022. The balance of \$1625 is due July 1, 2022

When registration is complete, the trip leader will send all participants the names and email addresses of those going on the trip.

## Terms, Conditions and General Information

Please carefully read the [Adventure Travel Standard Terms and Conditions](#)

### **Subjects include:**

Cancellation Policy

Leaders' Right to Change Itinerary

Leader's Expectations of Participants

Trip Price

Travel Documents

Safety

AMC Activity Rating System

## Trip Leadership

**Larry Yetter:** Larry is an active AMC leader with Adventure Travel and NH Excursions (Hiking) committee. He leads hikes in New England throughout all four seasons and is the Director of the AMC NH Winter Hiking Series. He has lived in four countries outside the US and visited over 40 others located on all seven continents. He has co-led Adventure travel trips to Switzerland and Southwest US with several trips planned for late 2021 and 2022. He looks forward to exploring this unique area with the participants on this trip.



For questions: Larry Yetter [yetter95@gmail.com](mailto:yetter95@gmail.com) or 713 724 2856.



## What to Bring

Please note that due to inter island flight you are limited to one checked bag of maximum 23 kg and one carry on bag of 8 kg. Here is a list of suggestions for what to bring to have a good time on the trip. Most of the items are things you would bring for a day hike in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Passport (must be valid for at least 6 months after trip ends)  
Medical Insurance Card  
Day pack and pack cover  
Personal first aid kit  
Rain gear (both jacket and pants)  
2 one-liter water bottles, minimum, or hydration system  
Wool or pile hat  
Wool or pile gloves  
Extra pile or wool layer for warmth  
Waterproof hiking boots  
Wool socks  
Hiking shorts  
Hiking long pants  
Synthetic T-shirts  
Long sleeve synthetic shirt; synthetic long underwear  
Sunglasses  
Sun hat  
Sunscreen  
Lip protection balm  
Insect repellent  
Leisure clothes for travel and restaurants (moderate amount)  
Personal toiletries  
Hand sanitizer  
Head lamp with extra batteries

### **Optional Recommendations**

Hiking poles (airlines may not allow poles as carry-on baggage);  
Gaiters (for pebbles and dust, not for snow)  
Teva's, Crocs, sandals and/or sneakers for leisure and cultural activities  
Camera  
Binoculars (highly recommended)  
Ear plugs  
Small knife (put in check-in luggage, not carry on)  
Compass  
Extra shoelaces  
Zipper-closure plastic bags for packing lunches and snacks  
Reading material during down time  
Bathing Suit  
Luggage lock

## Photo credits

Photo on page 1 by Dan Stone

Photo of Larry by Larry Yetter

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