

BOOK BY MAR 29
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MAGICAL AZORES ISLANDS

SEP 12-21, 2024 | 10 DAYS | 21 MEALS
JOURNEY LEADER: ROMY HAHN

A stunning view of Furnas Lake and its shores surrounded with lush green forests

Sprinkled across the Mid-Atlantic, the Azores' nine islands stand as testaments to a rich past, where quaint villages and verdant farms blend seamlessly with modern life. Discovered in the 15th century, these islands quickly became essential stopovers for ships laden with treasures brought over from the Americas.

Today, under Portuguese autonomy, the Azores epitomize natural splendour. Volcanic peaks, quaint homesteads, and fishing hamlets dot the landscape, offering an escape into unspoiled nature. Our journey through São Miguel, Terceira, Faial, and Pico reveals the unique spirit of each isle. We will meander through vibrant harbourside plazas, across rolling pastures, and peer from belvederes into luminous crater lakes.

Over nine days, from the misty heights of mountains to the carefully tended vineyards, we will experience the multifaceted allure of the Azores.



Highlights

- Two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: The town centre of Angra do Heroísmo and the Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture
- Pineapple plantation on the outskirts of Ponta Delgada
- Magnificent views of the twin lakes of Sete Cidades
- Ponta Delgada, the capital of the Azores
- Europe's only tea plantation
- Valley of Furnas' hot springs
- Visit the Interpretative Centre of Capelinhos Volcano and learn all about the 1957-1958 underwater eruption that expanded Faial's size by 2.4 square kilometres

Inclusive Features

- Return economy group airfare from Canada to the Azores Islands on SATA Airlines
- Comfortable first class centrally located hotels as indicated or similar
- 21 meals (B - 8 breakfasts, L - 7 lunches, D - 6 dinners)
- Comprehensive tours of each island visited including all entrance fees as indicated
- Welcome and farewell dinners
- Wine, water, juice and coffee at all included dinners
- All gratuities, surcharges, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare
- Services of our Canadian journey leader plus professional drivers and guides in destination

Journey Leader

Born in Northern Ontario to a Parisian/German father and a Franco-Ontarian mother with Greek heritage, **Romy Hahn** developed a passion for life and travel from an early age. Spending summers in Paris and taking trips across Europe while growing up fostered this passion.



After attending Ryerson University's Business Program in Toronto, Romy built a career as a senior professional in the print industry. An avid photographer and adventurer, she has embarked on trips across Europe, North and Central America, with a backpacking journey across Italy while staying in monasteries ranking among her most cherished travels. With many fond memories accumulated from past voyages, Romy looks forward to sharing new travel experiences with all who join her.

SEP 12, Thursday

DEPART CANADA
Travellers from across Canada gather in Toronto for the SATA Airlines flight to Terceira island (with a connection in Ponta Delgada).

SEP 13, Friday

TERCEIRA ISLAND
The name translating to "Third" in Portuguese, fittingly reflects its status as the third island discovered and the third largest. Upon our arrival, we will be greeted by our local guide and then proceed to Angra do Heroísmo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This charming city offers a delightful glimpse into an era long past. Its snug harbour is protected by a volcanic cone and played a pivotal role from the 16th to 18th centuries. Ships laden with treasures from the Americas would stop here on their way to Europe, making it a major staging point for transatlantic trade. Our exploration will take us to the Public Gardens and the Convent of São Gonçalo, the oldest convent in Angra do Heroísmo. Here, we can delve into the beautiful Baroque church's interior, featuring a collection of 18th-century Portuguese tiles. Moving on, our next destination is the Cathedral of Angra do Heroísmo, where we can marvel at its unique Indo-Portuguese lectern, exquisite silverwork in the holy chapel, and a 16th-century wooden painting in the main chapel. As the day concludes, we will savour our welcome dinner at the hotel.

Terceira Mar Hotel (2 nights)

D

SEP 14, Saturday **TERCEIRA ISLAND**

Drive to Monte Brasil for commanding views over the whole island and stop at Pico das Cruzinhas Belvedere for the most impressive vista over Angra do Heroísmo. In the island's centre, we visit Algar do Carvão, an ancient 100-metre deep lava tube full of fascinating geology. On the east coast, observe typical settlements and traditional houses contrasting with lush green fields bordered by lava stone walls. One of the oldest on the islands, the parish church in São Sebastião contains exquisite frescoes. Nearby is an "Império", a small chapel characteristic of the Azorean towns. These Impérios play a central role in the popular Holy Ghost religious festivals, a medieval tradition rarely seen elsewhere in Europe. After lunch in a typical local restaurant, we drive to Praia da Vitória and then to Serra do Cume, taking in pastoral scenes overlooking Lajes and the ocean. Pass by the area where wild bulls are used in Terceira's bullfights (Touradas) before reaching Biscoitos, where we will admire the natural lava swimming pools and visit a local winery. BLD



The natural pools of Biscoitos on Terceira Island

SEP 15, Sunday **TERCEIRA / FAIAL ISLAND**

Early this morning we will catch a quick 40 minute flight to Faial Island. We will explore Horta on foot, this small city that was one of the most important harbours in the early days of settlement. Afterwards we will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Hotel do Canal (3 nights) BL

SEP 16, Monday **FAIAL ISLAND**

From the breathtaking vantage of Espalamaca Belvedere, we take in captivating views of Horta, its lively harbour, and the surrounding landscapes. We continue upwards to Faial Island's highest point—the Caldeira, a large crater brimming with gorgeous scenery and rare flora. Our next stop is Capelinhos, where an underwater eruption during 1957-1958 formed new land, expanding Faial's size by about 2.4 square kilometers. Here we witness the islands' continuing evolution and visit the Interactive Centre detailing Capelinhos Volcano's history. For lunch, we pause at Varaduro, a delightful spa and summer resort famed for its distinctive natural swimming pools. BLD



Mount Pico, the highest peak in the Azores

SEP 17, Tuesday **PICO ISLAND**

We depart Horta on a ferry bound for Pico Island. Upon arriving in Madalena, our tour commences around the rugged island terrain. At Arcos do Cachorro, the ocean crashes against an impressive rock formation, creating an exciting show of sound and colour. Moving on, we explore the Misterios area, characterized by black rock remnants from past volcanic eruptions. The journey continues through São Roque, along a scenic road that cuts across to the island's southern side. Here, we are surrounded by native greenery, including Azorean Juniper and Mahogany, along with Laurel Trees. After lunch en route, we will have the chance to visit the Whaler's Museum, offering a glimpse into the island's historical connection with whaling. Our tour concludes with a ferry ride back to Horta from Madalena.

BL

SEP 18, Wednesday **FAIAL / SÃO MIGUEL ISLAND**

After a relaxed beginning to the day, we take flight to São Miguel, the largest and most geographically diverse of the islands. Following lunch, our exploration begins on foot along Marginal Avenue. We pass the iconic "Portas da Cidade" (City Gates) before continuing to the city hall, past the gleaming statue of St. Michael Archangel, the island's



Rolling hills of lush, verdant tea bushes blanket the landscape on São Miguel



The quaint town of Horta, Faial Island

patron saint. From there we head to the Matriz Church and the Museum of Sacred Art nestled within the Church of the College. We will culminate our exploration at the convent da Esperança, home to the venerated Sanctuary of Santo Cristo dos Milagres.

Grand Hotel Acores Atlantico (3 nights) BLD

SEP 19, Thursday THE EAST END

Today is a full day exploring the eastern side of the island. We journey along the southern coast to Vila Franca, the first capital of the island, and visit São Miguel Church, one of the oldest Gothic churches in the Azores. Continuing onward to Povoação, where early Portuguese navigators first landed, we make a stop at Ponta da Madrugada Belvedere, renowned as one of the island's most scenic overlooks, to take in the dramatic seascapes. Nordeste is a beautiful coastal village, noted for its lush vegetation, delightful gardens, and waterfalls. After lunch here, we continue along the north shore, passing several pleasant villages on the way. BLD

SEP 20, Friday LAGOA DO FOGO / FURNAS

Venturing high into São Miguel's mountains, we will overlook the stunning Lagoa do Fogo (Fire Lake) — a sapphire volcanic lake whose name hints at its fiery origins. This serene crater lake encapsulates the island's mystical landscapes. As we cross one of the island's highest points, we will be treated to vistas of both the southern and northern coasts. In Ribeira Grande, the 17th and 18th-century Baroque architecture will transport us back in time, before we return to the dramatic present-day coastline, sculpted by volcanic rock. Our visit to Gorreana, home to Europe's only commercially grown tea, reveals meticulously cultivated terraces. Heading back inland we make our way to the spa town of Furnas. Its town centre boasts over two dozen bubbling, steaming caldeiras (hot springs) that bubble up through the ground, which we will see firsthand in the nearby Valley of Furnas. We will stop to enjoy lunch at Casino Terra Nostra and stroll through the adjacent botanical gardens. Our day concludes in Ponta Delgada with a farewell dinner at a local restaurant featuring a folkloric show. BLD

SEP 21, Saturday PONTA DELGADA / CANADA

Depart towards the westernmost part of the island, renowned for its scenic mountains and lakes. Revel in the coastal beauty adorned with green landscapes and charming cattle farms. Stop at the King's Vista overlooking the Blue and Green Lakes nestled within an enormous volcanic crater. As we return to Ponta Delgada, we take a mountain road along the island's northwest, stopping at Pico do Carvão to take in views of both coasts. On the outskirts of Ponta Delgada, visit local pineapple plantations and see how this tropical fruit is grown in greenhouses. There will be free time for lunch before our transfer to the airport for our direct flight back to Toronto, connecting us to various destinations across Canada. B

CT Rating 3/5 - Moderately Challenging: This tour is designed as a leisurely, in-depth experience with two or three nights at most hotels. The journey includes extensive touring through the hilly islands. There will be opportunities for longer walks but these are optional for those interested. A number of walks are included which will involve hills, cobblestones and some steps. The islands themselves are quite hilly and this may affect those with limited mobility. All members need to be physically fit and able to meet our basic criteria to fully enjoy this journey.

**Book and deposit by March 29, 2024
and save \$200 per person**

Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars per person

Land Only* (Join / Leave at hotel)	\$4,395
Toronto	\$5,795
Ottawa / Montreal	\$5,995
Halifax / Winnipeg.....	\$6,175
St. John's	\$6,295
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver	\$6,225
Victoria / Saskatoon / Regina	\$6,295
Single Supplement	\$1,375

*Land Only price does not include the cost of any internal flights in the Azores (these will be quoted, subject to confirmation). Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Airfares and air carriers are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Refer to inclusive features for details. Prices are based on a minimum of 20 members and on rates, taxes and fees effective November 2023. Prices are subject to change due to factors beyond our control. Group to be escorted with a minimum of 20 travellers.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window — please contact our staff to receive a quote. Your coverage starts on the effective date of your confirmation of coverage. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for terms and conditions.

Final payment will be due June 26, 2024
First deposit is \$500 per person at booking
Second deposit is \$1,500 per person due May 9, 2024

To reserve your spot on this tour, complete the enclosed enrollment form, indicating the tour you wish to join and your home city, and forward it with your deposit to:



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