



## AÇORES

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# MAIN CITIES AND DESTINATIONS

Açores - Nine islands, nine small worlds where the friendliness of their inhabitants is shared by all.

To the East, on the island of Santa Maria, the beaches of warm white sand are inviting, and the vineyards covering the slopes like an amphitheater resemble giant staircases. São Miguel, the largest island, is seductive with its Sete Cidades and Fogo Lagoons. The power that emanates from the earth is felt in the geysers, hot thermal waters and volcanic lakes.



In the Central Group, the islands of Terceira, São Jorge, Pico, Faial and Graciosa are set harmoniously in the deep blue sea, where whales and dolphins can be spotted, to the delight of visitors. On Terceira, the World Heritage town of Angra do Heroísmo is steeped in history. Faial is the cool blue of the hydrangeas, the marina painted colorfully by yachtsmen from all over the world and the extinct Capelinhos volcano, which resembles a lunar landscape. In front is Pico, a mountain that emerges from the sea, with vineyards planted in black lava fields, a unique culture that also has World Heritage status. On São Jorge, the highlights are the Fajãs and the cheese, a unique specialty with an unmistakable flavor. Graciosa is an island of green fields covered with vineyards that contrast with its peculiar windmills.

In the Western group, on the island of Flores, the beauty of the natural waterfalls and lakes carved out by volcanoes is dazzling. The tiny island of Corvo has a broad, beautiful crater at its center, and attracts many species of birds coming from both Europe and America.



**Gastronomy:** In the nine islands of the archipelago, the seafood is amongst the tastiest, and there are barnacles and limpets to offer a gastronomic delight on all the islands. Fish can be grilled freshly caught, or cooked in caldeiradas or fish soups. Stewed octopus is another

common delicacy. The rump of beef from Terceira Island is well known throughout the islands as well as the much enjoyed boiled meat dish cozido das Furnas, on the island of S. Miguel, where hermetically sealed containers are placed under the earth and the food is cooked in the natural heat present in the ground. And there is also the traditional recipe for yams with the linguica sausages from the various islands. The islands are home to excellent cheeses. The most famous of these is that of the island of S. Jorge. As regards desserts, pastries are the most common, but there are also tasty queijadas from the island of Graciosa. But do not forget to try the pineapple from the Azores.

**Suggested trips: Whales and dolphins watching** - Among the resident and migratory species you can see more than 24 different types of cetaceans in the waters of the Azores. **Corvo Island** - the smallest of the nine islands, where the only settlement on the island, Vila Nova do Corvo, is located in a lava fajã which forms the island's main level surface; it is a picturesque and unusual village which features facades of black stone with white trimmed windows and doors, and narrow streets, locally called canadas, paved with rolled pebbles and weathered slabs. **Flores Island** - As a part of the global network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, the island of Flores, the westernmost territory of the Azores and Europe, has landscapes that are true havens.



**Explore Portugal's preferred landmarks: Horta's Marina** - a visit is a must for the excitement of seeing the yachts moored there and for the great open air exhibition of paintings made on the jetty by all the visiting sailors. **Lagoa das Sete Cidades** - this is the biggest fresh-water lake in the Azores, situated in the volcanic craters that form the island, constituted by two lagoons (the Green Lagoon and the Blue Lagoon) that form a wonderful scenery of great natural beauty; according to the legend, the blue and green colors of those waters were formed by the tears shed by a couple in a misunderstood love... **Pico Mountain** - Portugal's highest mountain situated at 2.351 m (7,713 ft.) above sea level; the immense volcanic cone of Pico Mountain imposes itself on the island's landscape; inside its main crater there is a cone of lava designated Piquinho, on top of which fumaroles permanently vent steam to remind us of its volcanic nature.