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AZORES REGION
BY NATURE

VISITAZORES.COM





The First QualityCoast Platinum Destination in the World

The Azores have won many "best destination" accolades, including the 2014/2015 QualityCoast Platinum Award, the first destination in the World to win this accolade. This international award distinguishes destinations with sustainable tourism development that have preserved local identity and nature heritage, as well as cared for and respected the natural environment.

The Allure of the Azores

Explore, relax and enjoy.

Rich in culture, abundant in wildlife and one of the best whale watching spots in the world, the Azores, set of 9 Portuguese islands, is an archipelago of lush green volcanic islands. The Azores lie at the heart of the North Atlantic, their remote location offering visitors access to an unspoiled paradise. The huge array of activities offered means you could be visiting a UNESCO Heritage Site one day, walking up a snow-capped mountain and soaking in thermal rock pools the next, then swimming with wild dolphins and watching sperm whales the day after. Whether you are an outdoor enthusiast, nature lover or just want to relax on a beautiful, exotic island, the Azores has something for you. In fact, it's only 4 hours direct flight from Boston and Providence and 11 hours from Oakland on Azores airlines.

Below you can check the flights:

Boston to Ponta Delgada – non stop flight – Year round – 4 hours

Boston to Terceira – non stop flight – June to September 2017 – 4 hours

Providence to Ponta Delgada – non stop flight – end of June to September - 4 hours

Oakland (California) to Terceira – non stop flight – June to September – 9:30 hours

Why go?

1. Year round direct flights from Boston and Toronto

Nine Portuguese Islands secluded in the North Atlantic with non-stop flights.

2. Feeling the European charm

Feel and see History surround you while you relax in a cosmopolitan atmosphere.

3. An archipelago of unsurpassed natural beauty

Breathtaking landscapes, impressive flora, fascinating volcanic nature.

4. An outdoor paradise for exciting adventure activities

A world of top class trails for hiking and cycling, whale watching, enthralling underwater adventures, championship golf courses.

5. Nine Islands to explore any season of the year

The Azores enjoy a temperate climate allowing comfort and year round outdoor activities.

6. Sustainable and respectful of Nature and local traditions

Granted with Quality Coast Platinum award, as World's most Sustainable Tourism Destination, certified by Global Sustainable Tourism Review, and 4 United Nations Biosphere Reserves.

7. Two UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Historical Centre of Angra do Heroísmo and the Landscape of the Pico Vineyard Culture.

8. Safe, welcoming and affordable

Feel safe and comfortable from your very first welcome in Portuguese "Bem-Vindo".

9. Rich gastronomy, based on regional products of excellence

Seafood, fresh fish, tender meat, tea, cheese, wine, and pastry.

10. Lodging options for every budget. Nine islands to choose from

From Rural Houses to historic manor houses, from apartments to five star properties.



Travel Information

Getting there and around

Time Difference: GMT -1 Hour

Language: Portuguese. English is widely spoken.

Currency: Euro

Cost of meal for two in midrange restaurant (excluding wine): €20 per person

Average

maximum temperatures:

Summer: 75 – 77°F (64°F at night)

Winter: 60-63°F (52°F at night)

Humidity throughout the year – 76%

Water surface temperature:

Summer: 73°F (max),

Winter: 61°F (min)

The nine volcanic islands of the Azores are 950 miles off the Portuguese coast. Divided into the Eastern, Central, and Western Groups, the whole archipelago extends over 370 miles.

The islands of São Miguel and Terceira can be reached by nonstop flights from Boston and Providence in just 4 hours. São Miguel with year round flights and Terceira from March to October. There is also a direct flight from Oakland (California) to Terceira Island in the summer season. All these flights are made by Azores Airlines. There are also plenty of onward travel options, with each of the islands linked via the local airline, SATA Azores Airlines and the Atlânticoline ferries which connects the different groups of islands and offering island hopping. On all islands, except Corvo, there are buses and taxis, as well as car rentals.

Climate

The Azores have a temperate climate year-round. Their remote location in the Atlantic does mean they get rainy days throughout the year, but June to September offer longer spells of dry weather and higher temperatures.

The warming influence of the Gulf Stream provides for a more constant sea temperature, which ranges only 43°F, with average temperatures between 61°F and 72°F and peaks reaching a maximum of 75-77°F.

How to book

A list of tour operators and online travel agents that feature the Azores can be found on www.visitazores.com - Click Book Your Trip



Hiking in paradise

Known as a Hiking Paradise, the Azores offers a network of old well-maintained trails, which have served various purposes over time. For centuries these paths and shortcuts were used by locals when travelling between villages either for trade, to move cattle, for religious pilgrimages or as the only access to farmlands and forest areas.

In every turn of these trails there are hidden places with waterfalls that flow into magnificent bays, natural coastal pools to swim in, exceptional geological formations, fajãs and exclusive fauna and flora, altogether making these islands an important center of global biodiversity to be explored.

Currently, about 80 approved and signposted Hiking trails, including 5 long distance Routes, which are perfectly articulated in the 9 islands, accumulate to almost 500 miles of official paths. There are plenty of itinerary options with different levels of difficulty and distances, which are safe and suitable for all ages, and can be experienced either as a family, group or individually.

Exploring the islands on foot

There are marked trails for all abilities on each of the islands. Information, including GPS data can be found on trails.visitazores.com

Gastronomy

Azorean Gastronomy is so rich and diverse that to mention only one dish or only some products would not do it justice. So we can start with what we can get from the sea: a great variety of fresh fish and seafood. The weather conditions of the Azores favor the growth of green pastures that feed the animals, therefore, the archipelago offers excellent meat. The grass fed cattle is also responsible for the quality of the delicious Azorean cheeses, such as the internationally renowned São Jorge cheese. The sweet and juicy pineapple of São Miguel, the melon of Santa Maria and Graciosa, the coffee of Fajã dos Vimes and the tea of São Miguel, which are unique in Europe, are the perfect ending for a perfect meal. The wine and vineyards, grown in lava stone fields, are also very important in the Azores. The Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a great example of this authenticity. We must mention some of the famous Azorean dishes: the "Cozido das Furnas", "Alcatra de Carne" (Beef stew), "Caldo de Peixe" (Fish Soup) and also the Espírito Santo soup ("Holy Spirit Soup": bread and meat stock), which is the most common dish in the Azores and which varies from island to island.



A gastronomic destination

Tasting the Azorean cuisine means savoring unforgettable sensations, flavors and traditions.
taste.visitazores.com





Rich, Cultural Heritage

Europe, America and Africa have all played their part in the History of these small islands. Colonial streets bustle with product and craft markets, labored chapels and palaces grace the countryside, windmills and *quintas* give a sense of antiquity. For serious culture buffs the Azores offers two UNESCO World Heritage Sites. 'The Central Zone of the Town of Angra do Heroísmo' is a port in Terceira Island which linked the world's great civilizations for three centuries. The city is also home to the 400-year-old São Sebastião and São João Baptista fortifications. Another major UNESCO Site is the Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture, in Pico Island, and its distinctive brand of viticulture dating back to the 15th century. It offers beautiful walled vineyards and 19th century manor houses.



4 Biosphere Reserves

The islands of Corvo (2007), Graciosa (2007) Flores (2009), and São Jorge's Fajãs (2016) are designated Biosphere Reserves by UNESCO, as on these islands there are ecosystems, which help to reconcile biodiversity preservation with its sustainable use.



Exceptional Diving

An extraordinary marine world

Diving is possible year round with the main season being from April to September. Larger species can be seen later in the summer as the ocean warms. The Azores would have the biggest mountains in the world if the bulk of them were not hidden underwater. Dip beneath the surface and you will uncover a world of lava rock reefs, tunnels, multi-chambered caves and wrecks. The crystal clear blue waters of the Atlantic are warmed by the sub-tropical Gulf Stream and this combined with the unique geography of the islands allows for a huge array of smaller fish as well as several large marine species. With visibility at an incredible 98 feet, this is one of the best places to dive with whale sharks as well as spot mantra rays, blue sharks, and other pelagic fish.

Highlights

Blue sharks and manta rays;
Whale sharks; Cave Diving;
Wreck diving.



World class whale and dolphin watching

The deep waters surrounding the islands provide some of the best whale and dolphin watching opportunities in the world. From the shore you can spot the flukes of resident sperm whales, as well as pods of bottlenose, common and Risso's dolphins as they frolic in the waves. For close-up sightings there is nothing like sitting on board a boat a few feet from a whale breaching or diving into the clear blue sea and swimming with wild dolphins. At certain times of year you can also spot migratory species including blue, fin, minke and humpback whales, as well as loggerhead turtles.



World destination for whale watching

Once a center for whale watching, the Azores has transformed itself into a world class destination for whale watching. Old factories are now museums and "vigias", whale watching lookouts, are used to spot the ocean giants for both tourist trips and observational studies.

Other things to do

Besides the stunning walking trails, the diverse and unique underwater landscape which beckons divers, the ability to watch whales in their natural habitat or to dive with the ever gentle dolphins, there is a wide range of activities to be experienced on each of the beautiful Azorean islands.

Bird watching, horseback riding, cycling and mountain biking are some of the activities that nature has to offer. You may also play golf on one of the best and less explored courses in the world (as is considered by the IGTM - International Golf Travel Market), or relax in natural carbonic or iron waterpools and waterfalls.

A paradise for fishing enthusiasts, the harbors that have welcomed sailors from all over the world for centuries, are the perfect spot from which to depart for a leisurely boat trip, canoeing or kayaking, which, aside from the open sea, can also be practiced on beautiful lakes inland. Explore the great waves and uncrowded surf spots on all the islands. Enjoy body boarding, stand-up paddle boarding or windsurfing. It is your choice. You'll make unforgettable memories, which will make you long for another visit.



Geoparks

The Azores belong to the Global Geoparks Network. It is unique in the world and includes 121 geosites scattered throughout the nine islands and surrounding marine area, 2 UNESCO Heritage Sites, 4 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and 13 RAMSAR sites.



The Islands

Santa Maria

The white sand beaches flanked by beautiful terraced vineyards are a perfect escape for those looking for sunshine and relaxation. The southerly location of this island makes it the warmest of all the islands and it offers an unhurried pace of life. Surfers enjoy its beaches and point breaks, whilst divers are lured by the promise of manta rays and larger fish and mammals at the spectacular deep dive sites of Baixa do Ambrósio and Formigas Islets.



Highlights

Whale shark diving;
White sand beaches;
Unique geological formations.

São Miguel

Known as “The green Island”, this is the largest in the archipelago. Dazzling lakes, sandy beaches and dramatic mountains provide a stunning backdrop whilst tea plantations and pineapple groves make full use of the hillsides. Visit fascinating villages like Furnas, built inside a volcanic crater, and geological wonders such as Sete Cidades, twin crater lakes linked by a narrow passage. It is also an excellent base from which to explore the wide variety of outdoor activities that make the Azores a top destination amongst discerning holiday-makers. Ponta Delgada, the major city of the island, is a 10 minute drive from the airport and has a fascinating history. The cobbled streets of the old town are lined with restaurants and bars and the new marina development is very lively on the weekend.



Highlights

Whale watching;
Hiking;
Horseback riding;
Kayaking;
Swimming in thermal pools;
Wreck diving;
Surfing;
Golfing;
Cycling and birdwatching.
Sete Cidades;
Furnas volcano crater;
Ponta Delgada old town;
Tea and Pineapple plantations;
Botanical gardens.



Terceira

Highlights

UNESCO Heritage Site;
Colourful Festivals;
Volcanic Caves;
Walking in magnificent rural landscape;
Golf;
Whale Watching.

The second most populated island of the Azores, Terceira is a top destination for both natural and cultural heritage. The UNESCO city of Angra do Heroísmo is one of the main draws, offering a fascinating insight into early trading between Africa, America, Asia and Europe. Visitors can also walk in the volcanic plateau, enjoy the wineries and lava pools of Biscoitos or descend into the chimney of a volcano at "Algar do Carvão". Islanders love to celebrate and Terceira is home to many flamboyant festivals.

Graciosa

Highlights

Furna do Enxofre;
Diving;
Thermal SPA.

The gentle rolling hills peppered with windmills and white-washed houses make the landscape of Graciosa appear very tranquil. But, a trip to Furna do Enxofre (the sulphur cavern), will remind you that there is more to most Azorean islands than meets the eye. Climbing down a spiral staircase deep into the volcano you enter a 328 foot tunnel that opens out into a breathtaking grotto 262 feet high.



São Jorge

A single volcano set in a magnificent mountain range provides the backbone to this pretty island. Particularly recommended for walking, much of the island can only be reached by foot. The wide range of trails snake down the mountainside on steep cliff paths taking in stunning panoramic views, dropping to the coast where there is opportunity to explore the “fajãs”, eroded cliffs that have collapsed and been transformed into tropical fruit orchards, farmland and dairy pastures.

Highlights

Remote villages accessible only by foot; canyoning; speciality cheeses.

Pico

With the largest mountain in the Azores at its heart, Pico's landscape is a fascinating mix of lava rock and vegetation which makes for some excellent walking and biking. The topography also contributes to the wine production of the island, whose vineyards have been awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site status. Pico was the centre of the whaling industry, but now thrives as a centre for whale observation and study.

Highlights

Whale watching and swimming with dolphins; Climbing Pico Mountain; UNESCO walled vineyards; Shark Diving.



Faial

If São Miguel is green, Faial must be the blue island, with its houses painted in an array of shades that reflect the expansive skies and ocean. Majestic Pico Mountain on the neighbouring island, Pico, contributes to a fantastic panoramic view, and the headland of Ponta dos Capelinhos is an impressive reminder of the 1957 volcanic eruption. Capital city Horta has a beautiful and colorful marina and old town, both steeped in history and perfect for willing away an afternoon.

Highlights

Whale watching; Swimming with dolphins; Deep sea fishing;
Diving with manta rays; Horta marina and old town; 1957 eruption information centre; Stunning caldeira.

Flores

Deep valleys, huge crater lakes, plunging waterfalls, high peaks and of course a profusion of wild flowers from which the island gets its name, have all helped Flores gain the reputation of being the most beautiful spot in the Azores. It is a nature lover's paradise and there are many opportunities for hiking around the beautiful landscape, visiting tiny white-washed villages and looking out for some of Europe's rarest birds.

Highlights

Flowers, waterfalls, stunning scenery;
Off the beaten track
Adventure;
Canyoning.





Corvo

45 minutes (by boat) north of Flores, Corvo is the smallest of the islands. Sitting in the shadow of a mighty volcanic crater, with just one small community living in a maze-like village, this really feels like the end of the earth. Visitors can Kayak around the most westerly point in Europe and enjoy the exceptional walking and views around Monte Gordo as part of a day trip from Flores.



Highlights

Stunning vistas;
Kayaking; Bird
watching;
Most westerly
point of Europe.

Awards

Top 10 Regiões a visitar em 2017, pela revista Lonely Planet

This remote archipelago simply abounds with adventures; it is, in fact, the Hawaii of the mid-Atlantic. It has world-class whale watching, sailing, diving, hiking and canyoning; excellent surfing and other watersports; rich opportunities for on horseback, on bikes or, for the daredevils, by paraglider. Then there is the landscape itself: a wonderland of seething mud pots, fantastical caverns, and vivid crater lakes.



The Azores Have The Most Beautiful Landscapes Of Europe By European Best Destination

The Azores islands 'landscape has a wide range of forms, peculiar rocks and structures derived namely from the types of eruption, its dynamics and the subsequent actions of the hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere.



The Azores Are The Most Beautiful Destinations For Whale Watching In Europe By European Best Destination

In the Azores the hospitality of our whales and dolphins guarantees each encounter as a privileged unique experience for the visitor. Here we can observe, along the year, up to eighteen species of dolphins: the rough toothed dolphin, common dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, atlantic spotted dolphin, striped dolphin, false killer whale, killer whale, risso's dolphin, short finned pilot whale, long-finned pilot whale and fraser's dolphin.



The Most Beautiful Place In The World By Belgian Dutch Edition Of National Geographic Traveler



The Azores were considered the most beautiful place in the world by Belgian Dutch edition of National Geographic Traveller, in a list of 20 places to vacation or conduct business in 2016.



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