



## The Azores

### MYSTICAL ISLANDS OF THE MID-ATLANTIC

**April 21 – 28, 2022**

The Azores have long held a privileged place as one of Portugal's earliest outposts during the Age of Exploration. They have longer still enjoyed an important place in natural history. Situated along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge on the border of two tectonic plates, this archipelago has literally risen from the ocean's depths, gradually colonized by far-flung organisms whose descendants adapted to the local conditions and constitute a distinctive set of endemic species and subspecies found only here, with plants and birds as the standouts. The islands would also become a beacon for many cetaceans who either made the Azores their permanent home or an annual migratory port-of-call. On this inaugural tour, we will have a chance to discover this archipelago on the edge of two worlds and contemplate the seeming impossibility of its existence!

Our explorations will cover both land and sea. On São Miguel, we'll get a first taste of the rugged volcanic landscapes and shorelines that define the Azores. We'll explore the woodlands of a type found nowhere else. The bird life is also distinctive and various species here have diverged from their nearest relatives in Europe. Over 25 cetacean species have been recorded here and their ranks include several dolphin species as well as the legendary Sperm Whale and Blue Whale, so our time on land will be complemented by our time at sea, where we can watch for whales and dolphins on our private boat tours. The timing of our tour coincides with the return of several 'great whale' species so we have the chance to see the largest variety. Various hardy seabirds call the Azores home and accompany us on our forays! The distinctive feel of the islands is enhanced by their unique culture, which we'll discover in part through their food and fine beverages.



## Tour Leader

**Alan Watson** is a faculty member in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph, where he teaches nature interpretation, environmental stewardship and a conservation field course, and he recently retired from his long-standing role as Director of the university's Arboretum. He has over 25 years of experience leading nature tours, including to such places as southern Ontario, Canada's Maritime Provinces, Trinidad and Tobago, the Lesser Antilles, Costa Rica, Brazil, Tanzania and the Galapagos Islands. Alan is also a cetacean expert who has studied the Harbour Porpoise in depth. You will benefit from his keen interest in marine and terrestrial life alike and his excellent teaching skills!

## Signature Moments

- 🌿 Cruising for the legendary Sperm Whale
- 🌿 Exploring the lush highland laurel forests
- 🌿 Watching for the endemic Azores Bullfinch
- 🌿 Walking through Pico's heritage vineyards
- 🌿 Enjoying the distinctive Azorean way-of-life

## Our Route



São Miguel



Cory's Shearwater  
© Amanda Guercio



European Robin

# Detailed Itinerary

## Thursday, April 21: Arrive at Ponta Delgada Airport, São Miguel

This morning upon arrival we'll transfer to our hotel for an early check-in and a chance to settle in a bit following our overnight flight. As you may wish an opportunity to rest up, we are including accommodations for the night of April 20 so that you can check-in immediately. Finally, we'll convene for briefing, then head for lunch as a nearby local restaurant. We'll enjoy a tour of the town of Ponta Delgada ("narrow bridge"). After returning to our hotel for some rest and a chance to freshen up, we'll head to another local restaurant for our Welcome Dinner with Quest leader Alan Watson.

*Overnight: Marina Atlântico Hotel, Ponta Delgada, São Miguel*

*Meals: Lunch, Welcome Dinner*

## Friday, April 22: Whale watching, Sete Cidades

This morning we'll enjoy an introduction to the fantastic marine life of the Azores as we enjoy our first of two whale-watching expeditions. Although there are never any guarantees, we have an excellent chance of seeing various whales and dolphins at close range. The Blue Whale, Fin Whales and Sei Whale will be passing through the Azores on their northward migrations, and we'll be watching for them. The star attraction, however, is the Sperm Whale (of "Moby Dick" fame), which is a resident species here and the most frequently seen large whale! We'll also watch for sea turtles, including Loggerhead and Leatherback, and various seabirds including the ubiquitous Cory's Shearwater, half of whose Atlantic population breeds in the Azores! Before setting foot in our vessel, we'll receive a briefing from a resident marine biologist on what we can expect, and then we'll set forth! Later we'll return to Ponta Delgada where we can enjoy lunch. Later, we'll go to Sete Cidades ("seven cities") in the west part of São Miguel. Sete Cidades lake is one of the most famous and legendary lakes of the island,



Heritage Vineyards of Pico



Whale watching, sperm whale tail

occupying a former crater. After a walk here, we can drive along the south coast and stop in Ferraria, a delightful beach where the sea water is heated during the low tide by an underwater thermal spring. You may choose to enjoy the warmth! Later we'll return to Ponta Delgada.

*Overnight: Marina Atlântico Hotel, Ponta Delgada, São Miguel*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Saturday, April 23: Whale watching, fly to Faial

This morning we'll enjoy a second whale-watching opportunity from the port of Rabo de Peixe ("fish tail") on the north side of the island for a change of scenery, and possibly different whale species altogether. After lunch, we'll transfer to the airport for our internal flight westward to the island of Faial in the 'Central Group' of islands. After settling in, we'll enjoy dinner in anticipation of tomorrow's events.

*Overnight: Hotel do Canal, Faial*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

## Sunday, April 24: Pico and Faial

After breakfast, we'll transfer to the port of Horta where we'll take a 45-minute ferry ride to Lajes do Pico. We'll have a chance to scan the seas as we transit; among other wildlife, we may spot Roseate Terns, of whom most of their Old World population breeds in the Azores. Arrived in Pico, we'll have our third whale-watching excursion in this different setting and we'll watch again for various whales and seabirds. After lunch, we'll have a leisurely walk through the enigmatic vineyards of Pico; called Vinhas da Criação Velha ("old-growth vines"), the vineyards feature enclosed pens that feature walls of hand-placed native volcanic rock, a form of construction that creates a warm microclimate for the vines growing within. We'll also have a chance to taste the local wine! Later, we'll take the ferry back to Faial and have dinner at a local restaurant.

*Overnight: Hotel do Canal, Faial*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Capelinhos Volcano

### Monday, April 25: Capelinhos Volcano, return to São Miguel

This morning we'll drive to Capelinhos ("capayleenyos") Volcano, the most recent eruption in the Azores Islands from 1956-57. We'll gain insight into the volcano's impacts during a brief stop at the interpretation centre, and then go up the historic lighthouse for a view of how the landscape has changed and how the human installations have been reconstructed since. The contrast of black volcanic rocks, sand, and blue ocean will make you feel like you've been transported to another planet! From the lighthouse, we'll embark on a 'walk on the moon' over the affected area and continue on a short hike to appreciate the unique vegetation persisting here. Later, we'll return to Horta for lunch and a short town tour, and then transfer to the airport for our flight back to São Miguel.

*Overnight: Hotel Terra Nostra, São Miguel*

*\*Owing to very limited availability, single rooms cannot be guaranteed at this specific lodge.*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Tuesday, April 26: São Miguel, Nordeste

This morning after breakfast, we'll depart for a full day of exploration of the Nordeste (Northeast) region of São Miguel. Nordeste is considered by many to be the island's most beautiful region and is biologically significant owing to its tremendous endemic flora. We'll stop at various lookouts, including Povoação, the site of the first human settlements here. We will continue onwards to the Priolo Environmental Center to visit the interactive exhibition that provides the visitors interesting facts and information about the area of Serra da Tronqueira, its fauna and flora, and more specifically about the Priolo (the Azores Bullfinch), which is endemic to São Miguel and – naturally – a source of pride. The entire global population of perhaps 1,000 individuals is found here in this eastern part of the island. Naturally, we'll look for them! The centre also includes a garden featuring endemic plants of the Azores, so we'll get a better sense of the flora we're looking at during our travels. After lunch in the area, we'll return to Furnas via Ribeira dos

Caldeirões along the way. This reserve features an idyllic waterfall in refreshing surroundings. Dinner at a local restaurant around 7pm.

*Overnight: Hotel Terra Nostra, São Miguel*

*Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch, Dinner*

### Wednesday, April 27: São Miguel, Lagoa de Fogo

Today, we'll have special access to a nature reserve located at Lagoa de Fogo ("Lake of Fire"). Situated inside an extinguished volcanic crater, the hillsides inside the crater are cloaked in heathlands composed of many endemic plants and that serve as habitat for various birds, many of which represent unique Azorean subspecies descended from ancestors on the European continent. The Azorean subspecies of Common Blackbird, Eurasian Blackcap, and Common Buzzard are just a few of them. The lake within is lined by a beach. There will be an opportunity to hike. If you prefer instead, it would be possible to arrange an alternate private activity today, such as: cooking your own *cozido* (a traditional Portuguese stew); swimming with wild dolphins; or going to a full-day hike from either Faial da Terra to Salto do Prego, or in Moinhos da Ribeira Funda. You can decide during the tour. Later today, we will enjoy our Farewell Dinner with Alan Watson as we celebrate our discoveries in this remote and intriguing archipelago!

*Overnight: Hotel Terra Nostra, São Miguel*

*Meals: Breakfast, Picnic Lunch, Farewell Dinner*



Common Dolphin

### Thursday, April 28: Departure

This will be a relaxed final day. After breakfast and some time at leisure, we'll have a lunch in town for a final look and some time for last-minute shopping before we head to the airport for our flights onwards.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

*Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this detailed itinerary are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.*



## Tour Details

**Tour Cost (per person):** Approx. US\$4695  
*Including all taxes and gratuities of US\$200*

Single Supplement: US\$895

*If you are travelling alone and you are willing to share, we will attempt to match you up with an appropriate roommate.  
If we cannot, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.*

**Group Size:**  
10 – 12 participants

### What's Included:

- Accommodations based on double occupancy in hotels listed or similar
- Gratuities for services provided by Quest
- All activities as described in the detailed itinerary
- Ground transportation and park entrance fees
- Airport transfers, if travelling as per the group flight itinerary
- Meals as specified in itinerary
- Services of local English-speaking guides
- Bottled water on bus
- Services of your Quest leader Alan Watson

### Not Included:

- Return airfare from your home to the Azores
- Fuel surcharge (if applicable)
- Airport departure taxes
- Airport transfers, if not arriving with the group
- Alcoholic beverages and bar expenses
- Phone calls and items of a personal nature
- Additional transportation required due to any emergency or other situation
- Items not mentioned in "Included Features" above
- Additional costs associated with optional activities.

### Payment Details:

A non-refundable deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. A second payment of US\$1000 per person is due six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.



Hermitage of Our Lady of Peace

# What to Expect

## Joining Instructions

This tour begins upon arrival at the Ponta Delgada airport on April 21. All travellers arriving on the start date of the tour will be met on arrival and transferred to the group hotel. This transfer is included in the cost of the tour. When you book the designated pre-trip accommodation with Worldwide Quest, your transfer from the airport to our group hotel on arrival is included. If you are making your own pre-trip arrangements, this transfer can be provided at additional cost. The tour concludes with a single included transfer to the Ponta Delgada airport on April 28. Please contact us to verify timing of this transfer prior to making any flight arrangements. Your accommodations on the night of April 20 are included.

## Level of Activity: Moderate

We will be walking at a leisurely pace, with frequent stops and long days in the field in addition to some uneven and inclined trails. You should be able to walk over a few kilometres for a couple of hours at a time. You will also need to be able to get in and out of a small boat.

## Accommodation

All our accommodations in the Azores are smaller, comfortable hotels or lodges with friendly service. All have double rooms with two beds, and most have private en-suite bathrooms. While some are more rustic than others, they have all been chosen for their location in or proximity to natural areas, as well as for their service and facilities.



Hotel Terra Nostra, São Miguel

## Transportation

We will be travelling in comfortable, air-conditioned traveller vans with excellent passenger visibility and in 4x4 vehicles.

## Weather

Weather in the Azores is pleasant and refreshing in character. We could have sunny and clear skies alternating with overcast skies, and light rain, typical of spring in a temperate North American setting. We expect an average high temperature of 17°C (63°F) and lows of 11°C (52°F). Temperatures on the water will feel cooler.

## Travel Documents

You will require a passport for your trip to the Azores, which are a department of Portugal. Please make sure it is valid for six months after the date of your return home. Before booking, please refer to the Canadian government website to obtain travel advice for the destination(s) you are visiting: [www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)

# Additional Info

## Extend your Stay

If you are interested in exploring more of this region, we would be happy to design a personalized extension for you either before or after this tour. Please let us suggest some options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

## Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946).

## Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

## Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.



### Worldwide Explorers Club

Travel twice with us and you become a member of the Worldwide Explorers Club. Earn 5% off all your subsequent, catalogue-advertized group tours. The bonus is non-transferable and cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount or credit. Note that some exceptions may apply. Members also get access to special offers and exploratory tours!

**Can't make the  
dates of this tour?**  
**Make it a Private Journey!**

### We can plan this tour:

- For your dates
- For your specific interests
- And we deliver all our signature touches...

We'll tailor most of our small group tours to suit your time frame, budget, and interests, or plan a completely customized itinerary to suit your exact specifications. With a Worldwide Quest Private Journey, you have the same attention to detail, logistical expertise, and imaginative details of our small group tours, expertly designed especially for you, as a couple, a family, or a group of friends. Private Journey are surprisingly affordable. *Please call us to get started.*

# How to Book

Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666 | [travel@worldwidequest.com](mailto:travel@worldwidequest.com)



TICO#: 2667946

## The Quest Nature Tours Experience

We aim to contribute to nature conservation by providing our travellers with the chance to experience wild spaces and learn about wildlife in natural habitats. We're delighted to welcome back our many repeat travellers who enjoy our unique programs, our expert leaders and our style of travel. We're equally delighted to introduce our programs to a growing number of Quest first-timers who enjoy learning about the wildlife and natural environments we share. Our tours are all about exceptional and educational nature experiences, camaraderie and fun. We're small and we plan to keep it that way. **We focus on the elements we call the Quest Essentials:**

**Small Groups.** Our groups are typically in the size range of 8 – 16 participants. On our daily excursions we may divide into even smaller groups, so that you can be with fewer than eight others as you explore. Our small group size allows us to be attentive and quiet, giving us greater opportunity to observe wildlife. Our logistics are flexible. We use smaller vehicles and vessels to limit our environmental impact. All our activities, such as talks, meals and gatherings are enjoyable and focused.

**Expert Leaders.** Every Quest tour is led by one of our team of expert Canadian naturalists. They are knowledgeable, congenial and extraordinarily capable. Their objective is to ensure that our Quest travellers get the most out of the nature experience. A local naturalist also accompanies all tours outside North America. Each is a highly trained expert with exceptional knowledge of the flora and fauna of his or her local region. Local guides help us to find and identify wildlife and share their knowledge of the habits of the creatures we encounter as well as the dynamics of the environment as a whole.

**More time exploring.** Our tours are carefully conceived and executed to maximize your time in the field. Our daily itineraries are full, but not exhausting, and we build in ample opportunities for rest. There is nothing routine about our days. While we travel with a goal and destination in mind, we always give priority to field observations by choosing routes that allow us to maximize wildlife viewing along the way and modifying our itinerary as necessary and possible.

**All taken care of.** From the moment you call our office, we'll take care of all the details from pre-departure information to post-tour species compilations. Virtually everything is included in the tour cost: accommodations, meals, transportation, activities and gratuities. We travel off the beaten path without sacrificing comfort. Our meals can be simple but are always of good quality. And we place the focus on where it should be: discovering our natural world.

**We invite you to call us, email us or visit us in our Toronto office and let your travels begin...**

**1-800-387-1483 | [travel@worldwidequest.com](mailto:travel@worldwidequest.com)**

