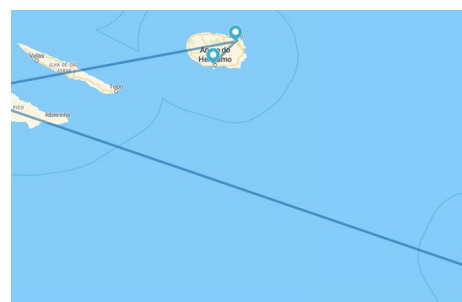


Portugal (Azores), 8 Days · Tailor-made by car

## Route through the Island of São Miguel, Faial and Terceira

Savour every moment you spend behind the wheel as you explore the Azores, one of most beautiful and exuberant destinations in Europe. Its islands, which could easily be mistaken for Bali and Hawaii, are a traveller's dream come true, featuring everything from heavenly white-sand beaches to volcanic sands where lava and ash blend with the sea. A sea of amazing flora and fauna awaits you in the Azores. Just put on your dive mask and fins and launch yourself into the islands' natural pools or enjoy unforgettable outings where you'll spot whales, sharks, dolphins and turtles. This marvel of seabeds also translates into a varied and mouth-watering cuisine. Fish, in its infinite varieties, is one of the star products, along with the local beef. The pastures are generous and feed some of the best European cattle. A pleasure for your taste buds! Talking of your senses, a pleasure for your sight will be the wonderful sunrises and sunsets that can be seen from the privileged viewpoints that you'll find along the route. And complementing this natural spectacle are miles and miles of tropical fruit trees and flowers. But the Azores are much more than nature. At the wheel, you'll be able to explore fascinating cities such as Ponta Delgada, Horta or Angra do Heroísmo at your own pace. Colonial cities with cosmopolitan airs, brimming with stories and legends as incredible as the waterfalls of Salto do Farinha or Caldeira Velha. The islands of São Miguel, Faial and Terceira offer a unique showcase for lovers of eco-tourism, nature, relaxation and the good life. And everything is very close to home. Fancy it?



NATURE

FAMILIES

**Departure date:** Departures from June 2026 till June 2027

**From:** Cork, Shannon, Dublin

### Travel details

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## DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - SÃO MIGUEL (PONTA DELGADA)

Flight departure from the city of origin to São Miguel and rental car pick-up. Now you're in the capital of the Azores! The first thing you should do before going to pick up your car is take off your watch and get ready to experience an unforgettable holiday. The Azores archipelago is made up of 9 islands and São Miguel is the largest, as well as home to the capital city. Getting around by rental car is the best option because of its compact size: 65 kilometres long and between 8 and 16 kilometres wide. We'll start off by exploring Ponta Delgada, the most important city on the island. Founded in the fifteenth century, a quick stroll around will reveal the Brazilian influence on its buildings. The main attractions include its wide promenade, perfect for a leisurely stroll along the waterfront or a light bite at one of the many terraces. The city centre boasts two must-see gardens: the University Gardens and the José do Canto Botanic Gardens. Diving enthusiasts can head off to "El Dori", a 130-metre shipwreck off the coast of the city. It is a natural sanctuary and a must-visit for lovers of the underwater world. If diving doesn't rock your boat, then no worries, the local cuisine is well worth dipping into. As to be expected from an island, the flagship product is fish. Lots of tuna and lots of cod, the signature dish of Portugal. The real surprise, though, is the beef reared in São Miguel. Thanks to its lush green meadows, these cattle graze on the best pastures and their meat is a prized delicacy. Pineapple and cheeses are also very typical. Try out everything you can! When the sun goes down and the street lights are turned on, it's time to head over to the charming São Sebastiao Church square. This is a pedestrian zone, but don't worry because you can park your car on the seafront. If you're with your other half, take their hand and just stroll in silence around the square and the church. It's pure magic. You can have dinner in this area, which is home to some of the coolest restaurants in town. Overnight stay in Ponta Delgada.

## DAY 2 · SÃO MIGUEL (PONTA DELGADA - CAPELAS - SÃO VICENTE FERREIRA - RIBEIRA GRANDE - SALTO DO FARINHA - FARO PONTA DO ARNEL - CALDEIRA VELHA - PONTA DELGADA)

There's a big day ahead today, so have a hearty breakfast and then get straight out onto the road. Head north on the EN4-1A and in 10 minutes you'll be in Capelas. The natural pools here are the greatest attraction. The Atlantic isn't so benevolent on this side of the island and the inhabitants of Capelas have managed to create a formula that respects the environment and lets them cool off on hot days. It's really weird to be bathing in the calm waters of the natural pool while the waves are breaking on the rocks just a few metres away from you. After a refreshing dip, it's time to head for São Vicente Ferreira. This is a small and very laid-back village, but gives access to one of the island's greatest natural wonders: its cliffs. They stretch up to Ribeira Grande, so don't worry about stopping at the very first viewpoint. Choose one, two or however many you want, and take in the vistas. In fact, if you get there before dawn you'll witness one of the best sunrises in the world. You'll pass by Fenais da Luz, Calhetas and Rabo de Peixe, and after this amazing cliff-top drive you'll eventually reach Ribeira Grande, the second largest town on the island. A must-see is the Ponte dos Oito Arcos bridge. Make sure you take the signposted path to one side and view the bridge from a different perspective. It's also worth taking a stroll through the town centre and the area around the bell tower. Then head towards the northeast of the island until reaching Salto do Farinha. This is a monumental waterfall, around 40 metres in height, that has a considerable water flow in winter. If you're travelling at another time of the year, it's better to ask in Salga - the nearest village - before heading out there. The picnic area and the vantage point are also very pleasant. The next stop is the easternmost point of the island: the Farol Ponta do Arnel. This was the first lighthouse to be built in the Azores. (Note: The road down to the lighthouse is quite arduous. If the uneven terrain seems too much, you can always cover the journey on foot. Awaiting you is an operational lighthouse and endless views). As the island is pocket-sized, it's easy to visit many interesting sights without spending too much time on the road. We recommend taking the same route back and when you get to Ribeira Grande, turn off towards Caldeira Velha, a stunning nature park full of vegetation, streams and the odd waterfall. Don't miss the thermal waterfall that crashes into a sapphire blue lake! The incredible thing is that the water is hot, so swimming is possible in any season. If you still have time and the energy, a good option is to visit Lagoa do Fogo. This is an excursion that can easily be done in under two hours. The prize at the end is the crater of the so-called Volcano of Fire, turned into a lagoon thanks to the abundant rainfall at this location. It's one of the most stunning natural landscapes that can be seen in the whole world, so it's well worth taking a trip there. Overnight stay in Ponta Delgada.

### ● DAY 3 · SÃO MIGUEL (PONTA DELGADA - LAGOA DO FOGO / WHALE WATCHING TRIP / EXCURSION TO ILHÉU DE VILA FRANCA. OPCIONAL)

São Miguel is synonymous with nature. You've already seen a nature park, the views from the Ponta do Arnel lighthouse and also the seascape from the cliffs. Today, you'll discover its fauna up close. One of the best things to do on the island is a whale watching trip. (Note: Tour not included). It's highly recommended, especially as you can spot whales, sharks, dolphins and turtles.

You can choose between half-day and full-day trips. Take your pick! That said, check beforehand because some are only available in the summer, while others take place all year round.

Another option, if whale and dolphin watching isn't your thing, is to visit the Vila Franca island itself. However, the scheduled boat service only operates between the months of June to September. If your trip coincides with these dates, then you're in luck. Take your underwater camera and snorkelling gear for a fantastic dive through an aquatic paradise.

If you're more into adventure sports, though, São Miguel has something for all tastes. The many alternatives include canoeing, climbing, canyoning and horseback riding. These activities will reveal another side of the island. If you wish, you can use the day to take a longer excursion out to Lagoa do Fogo and its surroundings.

Overnight stay in Ponta Delgada.

### ● DAY 4 · SÃO MIGUEL (PONTA DELGADA) - FAIAL (HORTA)

Time to get up early, leave Ponta Delgada behind and head towards the Ponta da Madrugada vantage point. This is the easternmost part of the island. It's an hour's drive away, but will be one of the best hours you ever invest in your life. Watching the sun rise here, before the immensity of the Atlantic Ocean, will be one of the most intense experiences you ever see. But do try to arrive on time! Then, depending on the time of your flight to Faial, you can treat yourself to an extra visit. When ready, head to the airport with enough time, drop off your car and take the flight to your next destination: the island of Faial, the bluest and most cosmopolitan of all the Azores. Arrival at destination and rental car pick-up. Faial is the third most populated of the Azores and its airport is in Horta, the liveliest area of the island. Depending on the time of your flight, we recommend stopping here for the night. There's a host of things to do in Horta, starting at its marina, one of our favourite ports in the whole world. It's like an outdoor art gallery. Have fun watching the sailors at work, who have painted the dock to their liking, or listening to the stories of those en route to or from the Caribbean or the United States. The next stop is the Fort of Santa Cruz. Today it's a hotel and a beach club, but from the 16th century it was an essential fortress that protected sailors from attacks by pirates and corsairs. Where these pirates never managed to enter was the Igreja Matriz do Santíssimo Salvador. The façade of this church is magnificent and its interior is sublime. And, yes, the altar frontal is made from silver. The next stop is Monte da Guia. From this privileged point, you'll enjoy views over the Porto Prim Bay and the whole town of Horta, so it's a great place to watch the sun go down before popping back to the hotel to get ready for dinner. The nightlife in Horta is great! Overnight stay in Horta.

### ● DAY 5 · FAIAL (HORTA - PONTA DOS CAPELINHOS - PRAIA DO NORTE Y RIBEIRA FUNDA - CABEÇO GORDO - CALDEIRA - HORTA)

Before leaving Horta and exploring the rest of the island, you should visit the botanical gardens. They cover 8,000 square metres and boast exotic plants and species. This is a great place to soak up the myriad of colours and scents. But remember that there's lots on the agenda for today. Back on the road. The first stop of the day will take us to the moon. Well, it might as well be because this is a 100% lunar landscape, almost from another planet, due to a volcanic eruption which spewed out millions of tons of lava that has covered much of the surface of Ponta dos Capelinhos. And in the distance, the Faro da Ponta dos Capelinhos. It preserves the magic of all lighthouses, mixed with centuries of legends and stunning views. As it's on the west coast of the island, this is where the sun goes down the latest. The beaches in this area are all of volcanic origin, so plunging into the water over strata of lava and ash is quite an experience. Then take the EN1-1A towards Cabeço Gordo, but not before making a stop at Praia do Norte and Ribeira Funda. But don't get too caught up here as Caldeira is waiting for you. As its name suggests, it's a caldera inside the highest mountain of the island. It's more a volcano than a mountain, but the spectacle is incomparable. Set aside some time to enjoy the views here, because they're definitely worth seeing. Sit back and enjoy. When you're done, back to Horta for dinner! Overnight stay in Horta.

## ● DAY 6 · FAIAL (HORTA) - TERCEIRA (LAJES - ANGRA DO HEROISMO)

After breakfast in Horta, head to the airport with enough time, drop off your car and take the flight to your next destination: Isla Terceira. Arrival at destination and rental car pick-up. Terceira is the second most populated island of the Azores, only surpassed by São Miguel. Get ready to enjoy incredible experiences even before landing, as the runway is pretty close to the sea. The airport is located in Lajes, although the capital of the island is Angra do Heroísmo. But the distances are so short here that it will take just 20 minutes by car to get to the capital. So whenever your flight time allows, take time to make a quick stop-off before arriving in Angra do Heroísmo. There are two options: head to the coastal area of Praia da Victoria or Cabo da Praia and stay in the area; or visit the two towns and then drive inland to Serra do Cume. You choose! Just one suggestion: picture all the shades of green that come into your head. And then all of them, and many more, will appear in the so-called "manta de retalhos". Literally translated as patchwork blanket, this landscape is made up by thousands of different green 'fabrics'. It's actually an agricultural plain divided into individual plots by volcanic stone walls. From the Serra do Cume vantage point, you can admire the landscape in all its splendour. (Note: Bulls and cows are very popular on this island. So much so that don't be surprised to find roundabouts with statues of bulls in the middle or even herds of cows wandering along the road. Bullfights are also famous here. They're usually held between May and September and involve bulls being released into the streets and young people teasing them with umbrellas or other items). If the sun is already going down, stay put at the viewpoint and look to the west. The views are sublime. Angra do Heroísmo is half an hour away by car, so you'll arrive in time to check in, unpack and go for a stroll in town. Overnight stay in Angra do Heroísmo.

## ● DAY 7 · TERCEIRA (ANGRA DO HEROISMO - ALGAR DO CARVAO - GRUTA DO NATAL - NATURAL POOLS OF BISCOITOS - SANTA BARBARA - ANGRA DO HEROISMO)

Terceira is known as the lilac isle, but you'll have seen yesterday that the predominant colour here is green. It is present even in the capital, Angra do Heroísmo. This is a modern city built in 1980, although it'd be more appropriate to say that it was rebuilt in 1980.

An earthquake devastated many of the streets and houses, which were then reconstructed in keeping with the original plans. So now, although recently built, the town preserves its original appearance. A leisurely stroll through its streets will evoke colonial Brazil, but this is not the only bit of Rio in the city.

Head up to Monte Brasil and look for the Alto da Memoria obelisk. Here you'll enjoy unique views of the town and a wonderful sunset. But there are still many hours and many emotions to experience before sunset. Take advantage to visit the many convents and castles that are in the area, although we strongly recommend a visit to the Fortress of São João Baptista and its walls. This perfectly-preserved structure was perhaps the most important construction used to defend the ships and goods coming back from the Americas in the sixteenth century. Check the opening hours and ask a local to explain the history. Before leaving the town in search of adventure, take a stroll through the fishing port and breathe in the sea breeze, as your next stop will be underground. Then back on the road. Algar do Carvao is a volcanic chimney, one of the few that can be so easily visited in the world, so we really recommend a visit. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk inside a volcano and enjoy the stalactites that populate the ceiling after centuries of formation. Just five minutes away is Gruta do Natal, a grotto of more than 600 metres in length that will transport you back in time. And mere 15-minute drive away is a universe of natural pools, known as the Biscoitos. Located right on the coast, you'll be able to take a dip in these pools sheltered from the waves. They're so natural that it's highly recommended to put on your dive goggles and fins to fully enjoy the seabed. When you've dried off, head for Santa Barbara. This is the highest point of Terceira and you can get there by the Gruta Do Natal road or by driving along the coast. This will take another ten minutes, but it's definitely worth it. If you can see that it's misty, then think twice before climbing to the top because the views will be limited, but don't think twice if it's a clear day.

Overnight stay in Angra do Heroísmo.

## ● DAY 8 · TERCEIRA (ANGRA DO HEROISMO - LAJES) - CITY OF ORIGIN

Depending on the time your plane leaves, you can set today aside for cultural tours. The Angrense Theatre and the Angra do Heroísmo Museum are the greatest cultural exponents of the area. Remember that the airport is in Lajes.

Arrival at the airport with enough time to drop off your rental car and flight back to the city of origin.

Arrival. End of the trip and our services.

## Your trip includes

### Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Ponta Delgada.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Ponta Delgada.
- ✓ Flight from Ponta Delgada to Faial Island.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Faial Island.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Faial Island.
- ✓ Flight from Faial Island to Angra do Heroísmo.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Angra do Heroísmo.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Angra do Heroísmo.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.

### Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Possible toll charges.
- ✗ Insolvency protection.
- ✗ Whale watching boat trip.
- ✗ Boat to the island of Vila Franca.

## Destinations Visited

Ponta Delgada



Capelas



Ribeira Grande



Horta



Lajes



Angra do Heroísmo



## Important remarks

- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.

- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.