Tour Code
MS2

ADVENTURESABROAD

MACARONESIA

Azores, Madeira & Canary Islands

14 days

Created on: 12 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrival in Horta, Azores, Portugal

Arrival in Horta, on Faial Island in the Azores. Faial is the third most populous of the Azorean islands and the westernmost of the Triangle Islands, with Pico and Sao Jorge.

Welcome to Macaronesia, four North Atlantic archipelagos belonging to Portugal, Spain and Cape Verde. The name comes from the Greek for "islands of the fortunate".

Horta grew as a watering stop for whaling fleets, then became one of the North Atlantic's great yacht harbours. Sailors from dozens of countries have left painted murals on the harbour wall, an open-air gallery worth a stroll on arrival.

The day is free until this evening, when we gather for our welcome dinner and trip orientation.

Overnight in Horta.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Capelinhos Volcano & the Scrimshaw Museum

We spend the morning at Capelinhos, site of one of the 20th century's most dramatic eruptions. In 1957 an underwater volcano erupted off Faial's western tip for thirteen months, adding a new peninsula to the island. Half of Faial's population emigrated to North America in the aftermath, and the cultural ties to New England remain.

The Capelinhos Volcano Interpretation Centre charts the 1957 eruption and the tectonic forces still shaping the Azores, which sit on the junction of the North American and Eurasian plates. The landscape outside is ash fields and eroded lava.

Back in Horta, we visit the Scrimshaw Museum, above Peter's Sport Cafe, one of the waterfront's best-known meeting places. Scrimshaw, the engraving of whale teeth with ships, mermaids and hunt scenes, was the sailor's craft. The private collection is among the finest in the Azores. Like tomorrow’s Whalers' Museum on Pico, it shows the sailors' side of the trade, when American and European whalers crowded Horta's quays to reprovision.

Overnight in Horta.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Faial & Pico Islands

We take the ferry to Pico, about 30 minutes, for a full day on the island.

We start at Furnas Frei Matias, a lesser-known lava tube explored with helmets and flashlights. Few visitors come here, and our group has the cave to itself. Stalactites and lava formations line the chambers, and our guide explains the volcanic activity that shaped the Azores.

In Lajes do Pico, known as the whalers' village, the Whalers' Museum occupies 19th-century boathouses and an old forge where whalers kept their boats and tools. It covers the whaling industry's influence on the island's economy and society. Whaling in the Azores ended in the 1980s, and the whales are now worth far more alive, an important part of local tourism.

Lunch, included today, features local dishes made from locally sourced ingredients, with a chance to taste the wines Pico is known for.

After lunch we take an easy walk through the Criacao Velha vineyards. Vines grow in small plots sheltered by lava stone walls that hold heat and keep out wind and salt spray. UNESCO recognized the method, and the wine tradition around it, in 2004. Our roughly circular route follows the coast, with stops for views and a look at Pico's lava stone houses with their colourful trim. The ferry then returns us to Horta for

the night.

NOTE: The ferry crossing is weather-dependent and the order of the day may change.

Overnight in Horta.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 4 Fly to Ponta Delgada: Pineapple & Wine

A short flight of about 30 minutes takes us east to Sao Miguel, the largest island in the Azores, and Ponta Delgada.

We visit a family-run pineapple plantation that still uses heated greenhouses, a centuries-old method. Each fruit takes two years to grow, which helps explain why Azorean pineapple is considered among the world's finest. The visit ends with local cheeses and the island's pineapple wine.

Time permitting, we explore the historic centre of Ponta Delgada, a graceful town of cobbled streets, squares and gardens built when it was an important trading port in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The Portas da Cidade, or City Gates, a trio of arches from that era, are the city's symbol.

The Igreja Matriz has a baroque interior, and the streets are laid in black and white Portuguese pavement patterns. The marina is lined with restaurants, and a stroll along the harbourfront promenade gives a good overview of the city.

NOTE: Flight times may change the order of the day.

Overnight in Ponta Delgada.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Sao Miguel: Whale Watching & West Island Exploration

A whale watching excursion from Ponta Delgada opens the day. After the Scrimshaw Museum on Faial and the Whalers' Museum on Pico, we see the animals the industry once hunted. Our vessel is large and stable, yet nimble enough to respond to spotters on the hills, some of whom once alerted hunters. Nature guides lead the trip and collect scientific data.

A biologist briefs us first on safety, observation rules and what we may see. The Azores are a home or a passage for more than a third of the world's whale and dolphin species. Sperm whales and dolphins are present year round, and we are here at the right time for blue and fin whales, the two largest.

This afternoon we drive west across the island. Time (and whales) permitting, we start at Pico do Carvao, where the north and south coasts are both in view.

A short walk to the Boca do Inferno viewpoint gives an angle over the Sete Cidades crater. At Vista do Rei, fog permitting, the caldera opens below us. Two lagoons, one green and one blue, make up the largest freshwater lake in the Azores, nearly 5 km/3 mi long. Cliffs drop 500 m/1,640 ft to the water in places. We then visit the farming village of Sete Cidades, on the crater floor.

On the way back we stop at the Ilha Sabrina viewpoint and at Miradouro do Escalvado, where the view takes in the fishing village of Mosteiros and its natural pools.

NOTE: Sightings are not guaranteed, and sea conditions can change the schedule.

Overnight in Ponta Delgada.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Sao Miguel: Furnas & East Island Touring

Today's route loops through the east of Sao Miguel, with the geothermal valley of Furnas at its centre.

We start in the island's interior at Pico da Barrosa, 947 m/3,107 ft, for views across the area. Lagoa do Fogo, the Lake of Fire, sits in a crater in a protected reserve, with endemic plants on its walls and no settlements. At Caldeira Velha, a waterfall runs down the north slope of Fogo Volcano.

At Lagoa das Furnas, inside a large volcanic caldera, hot springs and medicinal mud draw bathers. We spend time among the geysers and bubbling pools.

A walk takes us up to Lombo dos Milhos where, mist permitting, we look over the Furnas valley.

Lunch is a cozido, cooked underground in the thermal vents. Afterwards we visit Terra Nostra Park and its botanical garden.

We then head northeast to Parque Natural da Ribeira dos Caldeiroes, with waterfalls and gardens. The Gorreana plantation, one of the few tea estates in Europe, is next, followed by Miradouro de Santa Iria, which looks over the north coast and, weather permitting, to Sete Cidades and Pico da Vara, the island's highest point at 1105 m/3,625 ft.

Overnight in Ponta Delgada.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 7 Ponta Delgada, Azores - Fly to Madeira Island

We fly early this morning to Madeira, a Portuguese island off the coast of Africa, then tour Funchal, its capital.

Funchal became a city in the 1500s and grew rich on sugar, the white gold, at a crossing point between the old world and the new. We walk the Old Town and visit the covered Mercado dos Lavradores.

Rua de Santa Maria, Funchal's oldest street, dates to the 15th century. After the storms of 2010 damaged the old town, the Art Open Doors project invited artists to paint the street's doors.

A cable car, 15 minutes and 560 m/1,837 ft up, takes us to Monte for a view over Funchal and the Atlantic. The Madeira Story Centre nearby covers the island's history. The Church of Our Lady of the Monte holds the tomb of Charles I, the last Austro-Hungarian emperor. The bell tower terrace, reached by stairs, has a wider view.

NOTE: Early start. The Old Town is cobbled and steep in places.

Overnight in Funchal.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Madeira: West Island Touring

We tour Madeira's west today, crossing mountain passes and the island's highest plateau before dropping to the north coast.

We stop first at the Pico da Torre viewpoint above Camara de Lobos, a fishing village whose small harbour sits at the bottom of a bay ringed with houses.

Cabo Girao follows, a sea cliff of 580 m/1,903 ft, among the highest in Europe. A glass skywalk hangs over the edge. Erosion has carved caves and terraces along the coast below, and farmers work small plots on them.

In Ribeira Brava we see the 16th-century mother church and pass the fort of Sao Bento on the promenade. We continue to Ponta do Sol, considered by many the island's prettiest village, its old restored buildings set in the folds of a steep valley.

The road then climbs through Laurissilva forest to Paul da Serra, a name that translates roughly as mountain plain. At 1400 m/4,593 ft, it is Madeira's largest and highest plateau. A levada walk here follows one of the irrigation channels that cross the island.

Porto Moniz, in Madeira's most north-western valley, is known for its natural volcanic rock pools. The coastal route continues through Seixal, with its vegetable gardens and vineyards, past the Veu da Noiva waterfall that falls directly into the sea, to the fishing village of Sao Vicente.

Overnight in Funchal.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 East Madeira Exploration

We explore Madeira's east today, with its mountain, forest and coastal views. Camacha, a short drive from Funchal, is a cultural village known as the village of basket makers and the centre of the island's willow craft industry.

We then climb to Pico do Arieiro, 1818 m/5,965 ft, one of the island's highest peaks and the highest that can be reached by road, with wide views over the mountains. From there we descend to Ribeiro Frio, a popular starting point for levada walks.

Madeira was once covered in Laurissilva, a subtropical laurel forest that dates from prehistoric times and thrives where humidity is high and temperatures mild and stable. Much of the original forest survives around Ribeiro Frio, and the largest surviving area is a UNESCO World Heritage site, believed to be 90 per cent primary forest. We take an easy walk through it.

At Santana we see the A-framed cottages with thatched roofs for which the village is known. The coast road continues through Porto da Cruz and Canical to Ponta de Sao Lourenco, with some of the best views on the island. Both coasts are in view, with Porto Santo and the Desertas Islands beyond.

We also stop at Curral das Freiras, the Nuns' Valley, a small village set between almost vertical mountains in the heart of the island.

NOTE: Pico do Arieiro is often cool, windy and cloudy, so we recommend a warm layer.

Overnight in Funchal.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Madeira, Portugal - Fly to Tenerife, Spain

We fly from Madeira to Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, and begin sightseeing in Santa Cruz de Tenerife if flight times allow.

The Canaries are an autonomous community of Spain, 100 km/62 mi west of Morocco and the country's most southerly region. They are also an outermost region of the European Union, and the largest and most populated archipelago in Macaronesia.

Santa Cruz, which shares the status of capital with Las Palmas, is a thoroughly Spanish city of brightly painted buildings, excellent museums and a green city park.

Next is San Cristobal de La Laguna, likely a short stop. Widely considered the most beautiful town on Tenerife, it has straight streets lined with pastel-hued mansions. Its layout became the model for many colonial towns in the Americas, and UNESCO added it to the World Heritage list in 1999.

We also go inside the Auditorio de Tenerife, designed by Santiago Calatrava, a centre of the islands' cultural life. We then visit the Palmetum, a 12 ha/30 acre botanical garden that specializes in palms, built on a former municipal rubbish dump. Partnerships with institutions worldwide supplied a collection thought to be the largest in Europe.

Overnight in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Santa Cruz de Tenerife: City Touring

We tour Santa Cruz de Tenerife today, a port on the largest of the western Canary Islands.

Santa Cruz has wide avenues, squares, landscaped areas and some fine modernist architecture. We start at the Museum of Nature and Man, in the former Civil Hospital, an emblematic building and a good example of the islands' neoclassical style. The museum covers the natural riches of the Canaries and holds the most important collection on the Guanche, the native people of Tenerife before European settlement.

We walk to Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion, the main Catholic church in the city, built on the site of a chapel raised by the conquerors of Santa Cruz. Its tower, dating from 1786, is one of the old quarter's most recognizable landmarks. Extensions over the years gave the church five naves, the only one in the archipelago with that many, and it is a fine example of Canarian Baroque.

Overnight in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Tenerife Island Touring

We spend the day in Teide National Park, then continue to the Barranco de Masca. A panoramic route along Monte Esperanza climbs to the park, with photo stops on the way.

Teide National Park, in the centre of the island, is the largest and oldest of the Canary Islands' four national parks, covering 190 sq km/73 sq mi. Mount Teide rises to 3718 m/12,198 ft, the highest peak in Spain.

Roads cross the park to many viewpoints, and two visitor centres and a restaurant and bar serve visitors. Our program here is informal and depends on the weather, with the focus on the park's flora, fauna and landscape.

We then continue to the Barranco de Masca, a ravine with a picturesque village where we make a brief stay before returning to Santa Cruz.

NOTE: The Teide cable car is not included, as it is often closed by weather and takes time better spent in the park.

Overnight in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Ferry to Gran Canaria: Island Touring

A ferry of about three hours takes us from Tenerife to Gran Canaria, where we tour the mountainous centre of the island. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has a character shaped by its colonial past and its position between Europe, America and Africa.

We head inland to Tejeda, home of Roque Nublo, an enormous basalt rock that is the symbol of Gran Canaria. Nearby, Roque Bentayga holds the Caves of the King, a pre-Hispanic sacred site with cave paintings. After the museum in Santa Cruz, this is a chance to see such a site in place.

Forests of Canary Island pine and almond trees cover the area. Artenara lies within the Tamadaba Nature Reserve, near the hermitage of the Virgen de la Cuevita and several archaeological sites. Local potters still make ceramics.

After lunch we visit Teror, a centre of pilgrimage where the faithful from across the Canaries honour the Virgen del Pino, patron of the diocese. We tour the historic quarter, with its religious buildings and ancestral homes.

Overnight in Las Palmas.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Depart

Our tour ends today with departure from Las Palmas, Gran Canaria. Breakfast is included, and transfers to the airport are arranged around each guest's flight time. Guests on later flights may use the remaining morning to explore Las Palmas on their own. Your Tour Leader confirms departure times the evening before.

Buen viaje!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast