



**Thomson Family
Adventures**



Azores Multi-Sport Adventure



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AZ MSA -- Azores Multi-Sport Adventure

Itinerary - 1

YOUR ITINERARY

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Arrive in Ponta Delgada, Azores

Bem vinda! Welcome to the Azores! After a day of travel and an international flight, land on the beautiful São Miguel Island, the largest and most populous of the Azores. Get ready for a unique family adventure in these lush, volcanic islands, where you'll kayak and snorkel in pristine crater lakes, whale-watch in one of the world's best places for sightings, experience the archipelago's ancient viniculture and hike to some of Europe's most gorgeous vistas. As they say in Portuguese, "Apreciar!" Enjoy!

❖ **Check In to your Day Room for a Morning Rest**

❖ **Bike tour along coastline of Ponta Delgada - Optional**

❖ **Spa & Bathing Site of Ponta Da Ferraria**

On the western tip of Sao Miguel, between Ginetes and Mosteiros, is the therapeutic water spring Ponta Da Ferraria. This natural spa and swimming site has been used by Azoreans since the 15th Century. A hot spring feeds fresh water into the swimming pool, getting the ocean temperature up to 80 degrees! It's a great place to relax in the water, lie out on the rocks, and enjoy the beautiful and serene ocean of the Azores Islands.

❖ **Welcome Dinner at A Tasca**

Get to know the other families you'll be traveling with for the next week over dinner at A Tasca, a popular tapas bar and seafood restaurant in the heart of Ponta Delgada.

Accommodations: São Miguel Park Hotel

Meals Included: Lunch, Dinner





Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel

Historians believe Portuguese navigators discovered the island of São Miguel I right after the island of Santa Maria, sometime between 1427 and 1431. Established around 1440 with the arrival of Portuguese monk and explorer Gonçalo Velho Cabral, the initial settlement was set up by Portuguese from the Estremadura, Algarve and Alentejo regions. The fertile soils and the existence of some safe bays quickly transformed the island into a busy trading post, attracting other foreign settlers including Moors, Jews, and French, among others.

❖ Mountain Biking & Kayaking in Sete Cidades

We'll find adventure on "The Green Island" with its legendary lakes, verdant plains, and high mountain peaks. We will visit Sete Cidades, a quaint village in a dormant volcano known for its twin crater lakes, Lagoa Verde and Lagoa Azul. Visit the bottom of the crater to ride bikes along the shore or kayak in the serene lakes.

❖ Lakeside Picnic Lunch

Take a break with a lakeside picnic. You'll be able to relax on the shore and enjoy the gorgeous surroundings of Sete Cidades.

❖ Five Senses Cultural Immersion

Travel to a Five Senses Tour at a local farm and make a stop at Escalvados' viewpoint for a spectacular view of the countryside. We'll spend time with locals and learn about Azorean history, take a carriage ride, learn about life on a typical Azorean farm, milk cows (hopefully not a grumpy one!), plow soil, and knead dough to bake delicious traditional bread or biscuits.

❖ Friends Across Borders Meeting (Pen Pals)

As part of our Friends Across Borders program, the kids who exchanged letters with a local student before leaving on their adventure have the chance to meet and play games or share activities together. Everyone enjoys making new friends from a culture different from their own.

Accommodations: São Miguel Park Hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



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Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel

❖ Dolphin and Whale Watching

Experience the area's crystalline waters and its renowned fauna with a half-day whale watching tour. As one of the world's 10 best destinations to spot whales and dolphins (cetaceans)—attracting more than 25 species to the Azores—we may see sperm whales, bottlenose dolphins, turtles, seabirds and much more!

❖ Snorkel Vila Franca do Campo Islet

Aboard a converted traditional fishing boat, we'll journey to the Vila Franca do Campo Islet, a volcanic crater off the São Miguel coast that encloses a natural lagoon. In this nearly perfect circular lake surrounded by lush, endemic vegetation, we'll snorkel calm, crystal clear waters revealing a wealth of protected fish species. This natural reserve is also home to several unique species of birds, crustaceans, and flora.

❖ Dinner at the hotel

After a busy day of adventures, your dinner tonight will be at the hotel.

Accommodations: São Miguel Park Hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel to Horta, Faial

The 18th Century marked Faial Island's foray into whale hunting, attracting fleets of whaling ships to Horta and by the 19th Century establishing the port as an important stopping point for yachts crossing the Atlantic. Today the Horta Marina serves as a main recreational harbor for the Azores, and is among the busiest and most famous marinas in the world.

❖ Flight from Sao Miguel to Faial

Enjoy a change of scenery with a flight to Faial Island (Ilha do Faial), a hexagonal landmass known as "The Blue Island" for the plentiful hydrangeas that bloom there in summer.



❖ **Hike the Capelinhos Volcano**

Get to know Faial Island's volcanic history with a journey to its westernmost point, Capelinhos Volcano. The site of the Azores' last volcanic eruption—a 13-month bout from September 1957 to October 1958—entering this area of gray volcanic ash feels like walking on the moon. We'll take an easy hike past Capelinhos and Costado da Nau volcanoes, revealing the dramatic contours and colorful rock layers inside them.

❖ **Picnic Lunch at Nature Park**

Enjoy a quiet picnic lunch in the Nature Reserve & Recreation Park of Capelo.

❖ **Visit to Capelinhos Volcanic Interpretation Center**

Through a 3-D movie and the interpretation center's staff, we'll learn all about the formation of the Azores Islands and some important geological aspects of the Capelinhos Volcano. We'll also get the chance to visit the lighthouse, which offers an incredible view of the "new" part of the island, which was formed by a volcanic eruption in 1957. The black volcanic rock and sand is a stark and beautiful contrast to the blue ocean waters.

❖ **Canto da Doca Dinner**

We'll get to play "chef" this evening, cooking our dinner at Canto da Doca, a popular restaurant in Horta. Choose from an assortment of fresh fish and meat, using special stones that are heated up to 500 degrees to cook a truly unique Azorean meal.

Accommodations: Hotel do Canal

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Horta, Faial Island

Pico Island is in the central cluster of the Portuguese Azores Islands. It also happens to be one of the best places to visit. It is home to not only the tallest point in Portugal but also the highest point in the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, Pico Mountain. Pico has earned itself the nickname Black Island (Ilha Preta). The name comes from the rich volcanic soil of the island, which is, you guessed it, black in color. The black soil gives the island its character and its thriving viticulture. The island is well known for its wines and UNESCO declared the historical vineyards of Pico a World Heritage site.

❖ **Short Ferry Ride to Pico Island**

Take a ferry ride out to Pico Island (approx. 25 min), home to Azorean wine country and the highest point in Portugal, Pico Mountain. Whether exploring an underground lava tube, enjoying the viticulture of this UNESCO World Heritage Site or hiking a mountain, we'll have a full day of adventure on this unique island.

❖ **Option to Climb Pico Mountain**

For those interested in a challenge, climb Pico Mountain, the highest point in Portugal. Hike through ancient lava flow and up steep trails toward the dormant volcano crater, ascending to the summit for mind-blowing views of Faial Island from the top of Pico Mountain. This hike needs to be reserved in advance of your departure. (Optional)



❖ **Walk Through Azorean Wine Country**

Stroll through Vinhas da Criação Velha, a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its preservation of the island's 15th-Century winemaking traditions. Witness the collection of rectangular, stone walls that once protected the numerous small, soilless plots (currais) from wind and salt spray. We'll discover the island's wine tradition, flavors and scents still cultivated in volcanic earth—particularly around the village of Criação Velha.

❖ **Lunch at the Adega "A Buraca" winery**

Lunch at the Adega "A Buraca" a small family owned winery.

❖ **Explore the Volcanic Caves of Gruta das Torres**

We'll experience a subterranean exploration of Pico Island at Gruta das Torres (towers cave), a 3.1-mile lava tube formed from the flow and cooling of subterranean magma rivers, the longest lava cave in the Azores.

Accommodations: Hotel do Canal

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Faial to Furnas, Sao Miguel

The frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions on the Azores Islands throughout centuries have spawned some of the archipelago's religious traditions still held today. During Lent, for example, the Romeiros (pilgrims) walk the island of São Miguel in a tradition that dates back to the 16th Century, when inhabitants prayed for divine assistance to placate nature's wrath. As a way for people to express their thankfulness for divine intervention, these pilgrimages have endured through modern times.

❖ **Flight from Faial to Sao Miguel**

Transfer to the airport for a flight to São Miguel Island.

❖ **Lunch at Santa Barbara Beach**

We'll head to Praia de Santa Bárbara (Santa Bárbara Beach), where we'll eat lunch on a terrace overlooking beautiful, black-sand beaches.

❖ **Jeep Safari to Fire Lake**

Explore the island in a fun-filled jeep safari to Lagoa do Fogo, "Fire Lake," a pristine, blue crater lake that's one of the most beautiful in the Azores. We'll also pass through streams and see a stunning waterfall, "Salto do Cabrito."

❖ **Visit the Microbiological Center of Furnas**

During this visit, learn about the microbial living beings and their importance in the Azores thermal springs. The microbial diversity inside of the thermal springs is amazing and everyone is sure to learn a thing or two! Kids will even have the chance to be like scientists themselves and participate in different activities while exploring the center.



❖ **Dinner at the hotel**

After a busy day of adventures, your dinner tonight will be at the hotel.

❖ **Outdoor Thermal Pool at Terra Nostra Hotel**

The Terra Nostra Hotel has an outdoor botanical garden and a naturally heated outdoor thermal pool that we'll be able to take full advantage of while exploring Furnas. There isn't a much better way to relax after a day of adventure!

Accommodations: Terra Nostra Garden Hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Furnas

❖ **Terra Nostra Gardens Botanical Park**

After breakfast we will visit Terra Nostra Gardens botanical park. Enjoy the peaceful beauty and local flora of Furnas. Then we will go shopping for the ingredients for our cooking class.

❖ **Cozido das Furnas Cooking Experience**

We'll discover the "Caldeiras da Lagoa" (Lake Calderas) and learn how to cook like a local by using the area's hot soil. Learn the process firsthand at the Cozido das Furnas restaurant, preparing the evening's meal to cook for six hours in the sweltering earth.

❖ **Hiking in Faial Da Terra**

Visit the southeastern village of Faial da Terra to hike to Sanguinho, a village abandoned since the early '70s that's now being restored. We'll journey along cobblestone paths and smell the lush vegetation en route to the trail's end, Salto do Prego's waterfall. Then we'll return to town on a different trail, allowing time for refreshments and mingling with locals.

❖ **Dinner at Cozido das Furnas**

End this magical day with an extra-special farewell dinner, returning to Cozido das Furnas restaurant to enjoy the food you prepared earlier in the day!

Accommodations: Terra Nostra Garden Hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner





Depart Azores

Say tchau to your new friends and guides as you enjoy one last morning on São Miguel Island before going to the airport for your international flight home. Get ready to tell your friends and family back home about the amazing Azorean adventure you've just experienced!

✦ Visit a Tea Plantation

Visit the only tea plantation in all of Europe. We'll tour the working tea factory and get to taste all of the delicious teas that they produce. There is also a small Ice Cream factory which uses local products to produce the ice creams. For kids it's a must taste!

✦ Lunch at a local restaurant

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

✦ Depart Sao Miguel

After our adventurous Jeep Safari we will take some time for touring and shopping in Ponta Delgada. After enjoying a quick snack, one of our representatives will help you transfer to the João Paulo II Airport.

Meals Included: Breakfast



ACCOMMODATIONS (Subject to change until the final itinerary)

São Miguel Park Hotel (or similar)

The São Miguel Park Hotel is located near the center of Ponta Delgada near the Botanical Gardens. The hotel also comes with a pools, fitness center, restaurant, bar, and Free Wi-Fi. Each room has a balcony where you can enjoy the panoramic view over the city and the sea.

Hotel do Canal (or similar)

The Hotel do Canal is in a perfect spot for your family to explore the small town of Horta. The Hotel do Canal has blended contemporary style and amenities into this quaint and classic Azorean hotel. Your family will be a short walk from everything in Horta from restaurants and cafes to the harbor and views of Pico Mountain. The staff is very friendly and always willing to answer any questions your family may have. The rooms are comfortable and the entire hotel offers free Wi-Fi, giving your family everything you'll need to enjoy your time exploring!

Terra Nostra Garden Hotel (or similar)

Rua Padre José Jacinto Botelho, 5, 9675-061 Furnas, S. Miguel - Açores, Portugal

The Terra Nostra Garden Hotel in Furnas is considered among the top hotels in Portugal. Nestled in the geothermal hotspot of Furnas Valley, Condé Nast Traveler recently selected it one of the "World's Best Green Retreats." The hotel has pools, restaurant, bar, spa, fitness center, hot tub, and free access to internet and Wi-Fi. There will also be time to relish in the property's botanical garden and soak in the relaxing, iron-rich outdoor thermal pools.



TRIP DETAILS

Included

- Accommodations based on double and triple occupancy at comfortable and distinctive tourist level hotels
- Airport transfers for families arriving on the scheduled arrival date and departing on the scheduled departure date
- Land transportation and internal air
- Meals as per the above itinerary
- Services of a bilingual guide who will accompany you throughout your trip
- Groups of 8 or more will be accompanied by one of our Rafikis, the fun person on the trip, who provides opportunities for educational and recreational activities
- Water and snacks are provided daily in the vehicles
- Tips for drivers, porters and wait staff
- Complete preparation materials including helpful tips, packing list, trip expectations, tipping guidelines, etc.
- Travel Insurance - Travel Insured International policy (All of our scheduled departures include travel insurance)

Not Included

- *International flights
- *Tips for guide
- *Tips for Rafiki (if applicable)
- *Additional activities not listed on this itinerary
- *Changes in fuel surcharges and taxes on internal flights
- *Internet, laundry and other items of a personal nature
- *Meals and expenses en route to your destination
- *Soda, beer, wine and spirits (where we include dinner, you will need to pay the bar tab)
- *Airport transfers on days other than scheduled arrival and departures dates
- *Travel insurance for international air; we recommend purchasing supplemental insurance to cover these flights

