

Wild Earth Travel

Small Ships, Big Adventures

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ISLANDS OF THE AZORES: BASALT PEAKS TO VOLCANIC VINEYARDS CRUISE

Towering basalt peaks, bubbling hot springs, emerald-green farmlands, fascinating seafaring history, world-class wine and cheese and captivating fado music--this is just some of the beauty and vitality you'll discover as we explore the dramatically beautiful Portuguese archipelago of the Azores aboard the state-of-the-art National Geographic Endurance.



ITINERARY

DAY 1 São Miguel, Azores, Portugal / Embark Ship

Arrive on the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores where we embark the National Geographic Endurance.

Arrival Time: Arrive before 9:00 a.m. local time.

Arrival City: Ponta Delgada, Azores

Meals Included: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2 Pico

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The tallest mountain on the Atlantic Ridge, the long dormant Ponta do Pico, is a defining feature of this beautiful island whose claims to fame are whaling history and wine. Visit the once-booming former whaling village Lajes do Pico and learn about the importance of the whaling industry to these islands at the Whalers' Museum. Then travel to the wine region, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where the moonscape terrain left by the lava flows has been painstakingly converted to vineyards. See the unlikely lava stone corrals that protect the precious vines before ending the day with a tasting of these very special wines.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 Faial

More than 20 types of cetaceans can be spotted in the waters surrounding the Azores, and today we go in search of these gentle giants in the channel north of Pico and Horta. A researcher from the biology department of Azores University will join us and share details of the university's ongoing studies as we scan the sea. Once ashore on the island of Faial, we head to Capelinhos, where we can see how dramatically the landscape changed when its volcano erupted in 1957. Farms and villages were covered with ash, which added nearly an extra mile of land to the island. Later, stroll in the marina, visit the excellent scrimshaw museum, and raise a glass at Peter Cafe Sport, a legendary pub where sea adventurers historically dropped off their mail. This evening enjoy a very special musical performance of achingly beautiful fado. The genre may trace its roots to mainland Portugal, but the islands have made it their own.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 São Jorge

This morning visit Sao Jorge, formed by volcanic fissures. An impressive mix of imposing sea cliffs and fajãs--coastal plateaus formed from lava flows--the island has fertile soil that supports picturesque grasslands and farms. On trails

that crisscross the ridge and beaches, hike to Caldeira de Santo Cristo Lake, known for its clams; visit the small villages perched on the fajãs; explore the coffee and tea plantations; and taste world-renowned Sao Jorge cheese. Be on deck with your binoculars this afternoon as we sail around the tip of the island, passing cliffs with nesting sea birds and looking for Risso's dolphin and whales. We'll go ashore by Zodiac to explore the secluded saltwater lagoons of Faja dos Cubres and Faja de Santo Cristo, "Wetlands of International Importance."

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Terceira

First settled by Portuguese navigators around 1450, Terceira became a popular port of call for merchant ships and the economic and religious center of the Azores. We will wind along the coastline and explore historic villages like Porto Judeu, a small fishing community; Sao Sebastiao, which has a notable 15th-century parish church; and Altares, with its quaint whitewashed houses capped with traditional chimneys and painted cones. Upland at Algar do Carvao, be amazed by a huge lava tube adorned with stalactites and stalagmites, and later stroll the streets of Praia da Vitoria. Or, take a walking tour with local guides to see the forts, palaces, churches, museums, and gardens of Angra do Heroismo. Step back in time in this 15th-century UNESCO World Heritage site and see firsthand the indelible mark left by the ancient explorers, conquerors, and religious leaders.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 Santa Maria

As we cruise towards the island of Santa Maria, be on deck to search for the islands' many cetaceans. Go ashore at Santa Maria, historically significant as the first landfall of Christopher Columbus on his return from the Americas in 1493. We'll see a statue of the explorer in the village of Anjos and admire breathtaking vistas as we travel along the coast. Those who choose to hike the Pico Alto-Baia dos Anjos trail will travel from the highest point on the island to the sea to observe marine birds in their azure surroundings.

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Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 São Miguel

Today we explore the Furnas Valley and its famed hot springs, hiking the trails or perhaps visiting a tea plantation or the lovely garden of Terra Nostra. Sample a typical Azorean dish for lunch: naturally cooked underground from the heat of volcanic activity, cozido is a dish made with a variety of meats and vegetables.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 São Miguel / Disembark Ship

This morning we disembark and travel to Sete Cidades, a lovely village set amongst green and blue lakes. We will explore the lakes and village and conclude our expedition with a traditional Azorean lunch before transferring to the airport and homebound flights.

Departure Time: Depart after 4:00 p.m. local time.

Departure City: Ponta Delgada, Azores

Meals Included: Lunch

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION

YOUR SHIP:	National Geographic Orion
VESSEL TYPE:	Luxury Expedition
LENGTH:	103 metres
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	102 (in 53 cabins)
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2003 / Refurbished 2014



With just 53 cabins, National Geographic Orion offers an intimate and refined platform for exploring some of the world's most remote and culturally rich regions--from the Pacific Islands and Asia to Antarctica and the Mediterranean. Purpose-built for expedition travel, she boasts an ice-class hull for navigating polar waters and exceptional manoeuvrability that enables access to secluded bays, narrow inlets and winding rivers--places far beyond the reach of larger cruise ships.

Life aboard Orion is designed to immerse guests in the natural world, with panoramic deck spaces, a whirlpool hot tub, and ample opportunities for wildlife viewing. Her public areas include two relaxed dining venues, a lounge with bar, an observation library, fitness centre and spa, as well as the OM System Photo Gear Locker to support photography at all levels. Open-Bridge access allows guests to connect with the ship's officers and learn about navigation first-hand. Whether sailing through polar pack ice or anchoring off a tropical atoll, Orion delivers a seamless blend of adventure and comfort.

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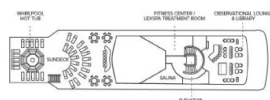
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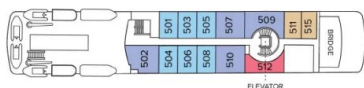
INSIDE YOUR SHIP

Observation Deck



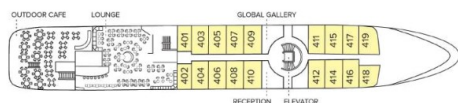
Bridge Deck

- Category 4
- Category 5
- Category 6
- Category 3 Solo



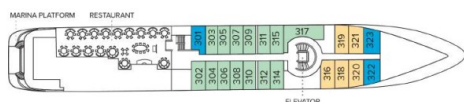
Upper Deck

- Category 3



Main Deck

- Category 1
- Category 2
- Category 1 Solo



Expedition Deck



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PRICING

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