

PORTUGAL · ISLANDS · HIKING · WILDLIFE · ADVENTURE · DIVING



Azores

Nine volcanic islands in the mid-Atlantic, about four hours from London, where UK visitors come for crater lakes, hot springs, whale watching and lush hiking country rather than beach lounging. São Miguel is the usual first stop. June to September is the season; the rest of the year is mild but wet, windy and changeable.

 Read the UK government's travel advice for Portugal and entry requirements before you go.

 COUNTRY Portugal	 BEST TIME Jun–Sep	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 4h 10m direct ~£230–£520 return	 DAILY BUDGET £65–£270 ££ Moderate
 WARMEST MONTH August (26°C)	 SEA TEMPERATURE 16–23°C coolest–warmest	 TIME ZONE Azores -1h vs UK now	 CURRENCY Euro £1 ≈ €1.19

Most first trips spend a week on São Miguel, the largest island, driving between the crater lakes of Sete Cidades and Lagoa do Fogo, the steaming valley at Furnas and the tea plantations of the north coast. With ten days or more, add the central group: Pico for its 2,351 m volcano and whale watching, Faial for the yachting harbour at Horta, and São Jorge for its cliff-foot fajãs. Inter-island flights are short, and ferries link Pico, Faial and São Jorge, with more sailings in summer. Weather changes by the hour all year and cloud often hides the lakes. July to September is warmest, with the sea at 22–23°C; spring is best for blue whales.

Highlights

- 1

NATURE

Sete Cidades

Twin lakes, one green and one blue, fill a vast collapsed crater in western São Miguel. Look down from the Vista do Rei viewpoint, then walk part of the rim trail or hire a kayak on the water.
- 2

FOOD

Furnas

A village in a volcanic valley full of fumaroles and hot springs. Soak in the iron-rich thermal pool at Terra Nostra Park, then try cozido das Furnas, a meat-and-vegetable stew slow-cooked in the hot ground beside the lake.
- 3

WILDLIFE

Whale and dolphin watching

Sperm whales live around the islands all year, and blue, fin and sei whales pass through in spring. Boats leave from Ponta Delgada and from Lajes do Pico, a former whaling village with a museum to the trade.
- 4

ADVENTURE

Mount Pico

Portugal's highest mountain, 2,351 m, rises straight from the sea. The marked trail from the mountain house takes five to eight hours return; climbers must register and carry a GPS tracker, and summer gives the safest conditions.

5

NATURE

Lagoa do Fogo

A crater lake high in the mountains of central São Miguel, protected as a nature reserve, with no buildings on its shore. Clear mornings give the best chance of seeing it before cloud settles on the ridge.

Where to stay

WHERE TO STAY

Ponta Delgada

The islands' main town and airport, with the widest choice of hotels, restaurants and whale-watching boats; the practical base for a first week.

WHERE TO STAY

Furnas

A spa village of thermal pools and gardens in eastern São Miguel; suits couples wanting quiet evenings and an early soak before the day-trippers arrive.

WHERE TO STAY

Horta, Faial

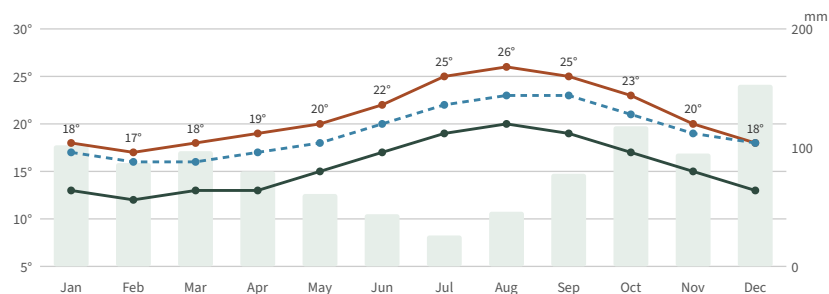
A sailing harbour town facing Pico, with Peter Café Sport and ferries across the channel; suits island-hoppers and anyone climbing the volcano.

When to go to Azores

Best time: **Jun–Sep**.

**Average climate in Ponta Delgada**

— High °C — Low °C — Sea °C — Rain (mm)

**How much does Azores cost?**

SHOESTRING

£65

per person / day
≈ €77.37

MID-RANGE

£135

per person / day
≈ €161

COMFORTABLE

£270

per person / day
≈ €321

Per person per day excluding flights. Return flights from London typically cost £230 off-peak and £520 in school holidays.

Visas & entry for Azores

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Portugal, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events;

for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Portugal are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

 See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Portugal

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 1 Nov 2026	All Saints' Day
Tue 1 Dec 2026	Restoration of Independence Day
Tue 8 Dec 2026	Immaculate Conception
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Sun 25 Apr 2027	Freedom Day
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Thu 27 May 2027	Corpus Christi
Thu 10 Jun 2027	Day of Portugal, Camões, and the Portuguese Communities
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Assumption Day
Tue 5 Oct 2027	Republic Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Check the live webcams for Sete Cidades and Lagoa do Fogo before driving up: the lakes can be clear from Ponta Delgada yet buried in cloud at the viewpoint, or the other way round.

Hire a car on São Miguel, as buses rarely suit sightseeing, and book early for July and August. Pack a waterproof and warm layers whatever the forecast says, even in midsummer.

Plugs, money, phrases, emergency numbers and more: see our Portugal guide.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.