

Double S Travel

118 Talbot Road
Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 7RA
Telephone 01582 752752
ABTA 16297 and ATOL 6766
E-Mail steve@doublestravel.co.uk
Web www.doublestravel.co.uk



Double S Travel Worldchoice - Celebrating Twenty Three Years of service to residents and businesses in the South Bedfordshire area 1985 – 2008

The Azores

9 volcanic islands reputed to be part of the legendary lost continent of Atlantis.

Discovered in the fifteenth century by Portuguese navigators on their way to the New World.

Named "Açores" after the hawks that constantly circle the islands which the sailors mistook for vultures.

Set in the middle of the Atlantic

1000 miles West of Lisbon,

For five hundred years the Azores have remained almost totally unspoilt.

Tranquillity is ideal for those who wish to escape from the pressures of modern day life.

Leisurely pace of agriculture and fishing has only recently been interrupted by the Autonomous Government's realisation that tourism can also bring financial benefits.

So holidaymakers to the Azores are relatively few.

In the height of the summer Portuguese from the mainland rapidly fill the small number of beds available.

The cuisine of the Azores is rich and varied.

Fish dishes, seafood, meat and cheese, pineapple

Famous Verdalho wines of the islands of Pico and Graciosa (once the table wines of the Tsars of Russia)

Not to be missed is the excellent "cozido" at Furnas on São Miguel, where sealed cooking pots containing a mixture of meats, vegetables and spicy sausages are buried in the ground for 5 or 6 hours and the food is slowly cooked by the steam from the ground near the sulphurous springs.

Traditional handicrafts reflect the folk law and activities of the Azores and include: scrimshaw, (ornamental objects made from whale bone and teeth) usually miniatures of whaling boats.

Partners: SJ Pattenden TD & KJ Pattenden MSc. VAT Number 449 3040 53.

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2006, 2007, 2008

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

Finalist Best Specialist Website 2006 www.railchoice.co.uk.

Runner-up, Corporatechoice Business Travel Agent of the Year 2005,

Runner-up, TIPTO Agent of the Year 2005, Nominated Travel Agent Achievement Awards 2005.

Artificial flowers made from fish scales.

Wicker work.

Glazed earthenware

Delicate carvings made from fig pith.

Communications

SATA, Air Azores now has a direct flight from Gatwick to Ponta Delgada on Sao Miguel

Inter-island communication is quite sophisticated with British Aerospace ATP fifty seater turbo prop aircraft flying regular shuttles.

Two Ferries, "Cruzeiro das Ilhas" and "Cruzeiro do Canal", each about 80 feet long with seats on deck and below, a bar and TV lounge operate scheduled trips between Faial, Pico, São Jorge and Terçeira, taking just half an hour between Faial and Pico, 50 minutes between Pico and São Jorge and about five hours to Terçeira.

Day trips are therefore an attractive proposition and a considerable saving over the inter-island air fare is achieved by using these services as part of the holiday itinerary.

Climate

The climate of the Azores is equable all year round.

Temperatures range from a mild 14 degrees Centigrade (57 Fahrenheit) in winter to a comfortable 22 degrees Centigrade (71 Fahrenheit) in summer.

However the climate is, as one would expect, very much a maritime climate: one can therefore expect a wide variety of conditions within a very short period. A single day can produce wind and calm, and hot sun and showers in any combination! It is said that if you don't like the weather in The Azores – just wait 10 minutes!

These temperatures are average temperatures in the shade and ignore the strength of the direct sun.

Hire Cars

Hire cars are available on most Islands but are relatively expensive compared with the mainland.

In many ways it is more instructive to take the scheduled excursions available from Holiday Representatives or better still take a car and guide/driver.

Taxis

Simply take a taxi from outside the relevant Airport to the Hotel and vici-versa and a good deal cheaper.

Partners: **SJ Pattenden TD & KJ Pattenden MSc. VAT Number 449 3040 53.**

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2006, 2007, 2008

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

Finalist Best Specialist Website 2006 www.railchoice.co.uk.

Runner-up, Corporatechoice Business Travel Agent of the Year 2005,

Runner-up, TIPTO Agent of the Year 2005, Nominated Travel Agent Achievement Awards 2005.

Whale Watching

The Azores in general and specifically the narrow gap between Faial and Pico in particular are on the migratory route for various types of Whale and numerous types of Dolphin.

Hence the old interest of the locals in hunting the whale and the establishment of whaling stations at Lajes do Pico and at Horta on the Island of Faial (the remains of which can be seen today).

Whaling in the Azores stopped in 1987 and there is a most interesting museum of the former whaling industry at Lajes do Pico, showing the amazingly small boats, the harpoons and all the necessary whaling equipment. It is well worth a visit and illustrates vividly the courage and tenacity of the Whalers (Called locally "Sea Wolves").

Only sperm whales were hunted by the Azoreans (because it is the only species which floats when dead) and that the total number of whales ever caught by them is exceeded in one year by a single Japanese whale factory ship.

Lookout towers (called Vigias) were built in strategic positions high on the mountains and there, experienced searchers watched for the arrival of the sperm whales and sent messages for the whaling boats to be launched.

Today the Vigias are used for exactly the same purpose but now the watchers radio to the powerful Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs) who can then take their passengers directly to the area in which the whales are swimming. The boats can manoeuvre to within 50 metres of these enormous mammals - the minimum distance suggested by the Whale Watching Code of Ethics.

In the case of dolphins, however, the boats can manoeuvre much closer and, given the right conditions, parties of 3 persons (plus a diving instructor), can actually swim with the dolphins.

The success rate of actually seeing these fascinating mammals is very high, one operator reported only a 3% failure rate (i.e. nothing spotted at all) in an entire season!

Best time of the year for whale watching is between May and October.

The watchers, high up in their Vigias keep an eye on the RIBs for the duration of their voyage for safety reasons, and of course the boats are fully equipped for complete safety and all passengers wear life jackets.

The 3-4 hour Whale and Dolphin watching excursions are priced.

These trips consist of a 3 hour trip (leaving at 0815hrs or 1415hrs daily) from Madalena (Island of Pico) or Horta (Island of Faial), in a 6m Rigid Inflatable Boat.

Suitable flights (International and inter-Island) and accommodation reservations can be made prior to travel.

Partners: SJ Pattenden TD & KJ Pattenden MSc. VAT Number 449 3040 53.

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2006, 2007, 2008

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

Finalist Best Specialist Website 2006 www.railchoice.co.uk.

Runner-up, Corporatechoice Business Travel Agent of the Year 2005,

Runner-up, TIPTO Agent of the Year 2005, Nominated Travel Agent Achievement Awards 2005.

Our aim is to be your most trusted dream provider

Many people link Whale Watching with SCUBA Diving, Golf and the other activities to create a vigorous and interesting holiday.

Species

Sperm Whales, the largest and most numerous in these waters are individually identified by photographs taken of the undersides of their flukes when diving.

The other toothed Whales frequently sighted are Northern Bottlenose Whales, Pilot Whales, Orcas and Sowerby's Beaked Whales.

The Dolphins sighted regularly in these waters are Common, Atlantic Bottlenose, Risso, Atlantic Spotted and Striped Dolphins.

Excursions

Excursions are in groups of between 8 to 23 persons. There are two organisations in Faial and one in Pico operating these excursions:

Faial or Pico– Norberto Diver

Norberto has 3 boats (RIBs) and 1 bigger solid hull boat and can accommodate all types of passenger of all ages (from 5 years) including those who are physically impaired. Whales are spotted from the original "Vigias" and the boats guided towards the cetaceans. The Vigia remains manned for the duration of the excursion for safety reasons. Life vests are provided. A pre-trip briefing is included. Trips include the coasts of Pico and Faial and up to 10 miles off shore. Skippers speak English and French. Operating from Horta with pick up in Pico. It is sometimes possible to swim with the Dolphins.

Partners: SJ Pattenden TD & KJ Pattenden MSc. VAT Number 449 3040 53.

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2006, 2007, 2008

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

Finalist Best Specialist Website 2006 www.railchoice.co.uk.

Runner-up, Corporatechoice Business Travel Agent of the Year 2005,

Runner-up, TIPTO Agent of the Year 2005, Nominated Travel Agent Achievement Awards 2005.