



8 Days

The Azores

An Environmental Science Expedition

The Azores are a hidden gem in the mid-Atlantic; an archipelago of volcanic islands they are the perfect destination for Environmental Science students boasting a startling array of geo thermal features and fabulous wildlife. This 8 day Environmental Science itinerary has been designed to showcase the best elements the island of São Miguel has to offer. A visit to a geo thermal power plant, hiking tours in stunning volcanic scenery, cooking local delicacies in steaming craters and kayaking in a crater lake.



Recommended tour itinerary

Day
1

Arrive & get comfy

On arrival, we will transfer to our accommodation at the Pousada da Juventude de Ponta Delgada. The rest of the day will be spent settling in.

Day
2

Adventure tour in Sete Cidades & five senses—back to the roots

Let's explore the west side of São Miguel. Sete Cidades lake is one of the most famous and legendary lakes of the island. We will venture down to the bottom of the crater where we will get the chance to ride a bike and paddle a kayak - definitely the best ways to enjoy the Sete Cidades environment, feeling the amazing energy and beauty of the place. Our lunch will be enjoyed on the edge of the lake and in the afternoon we will be taken on a trip back in time, taking part in activities typical of the Azorean lifestyle 50 years ago. We will bake fresh bread and biscuits, milk a cow, plough the earth and participate in traditional activities and games. This is a fun-filled day that is perfect for anybody wanting to feel down to earth while connecting with nature and time-old local traditions.

Day
3

Whale & dolphin watching & lecture with marine biologists

Today we will have the opportunity to spot and observe some of the 25 cetacean species that can be found in the Azores. Although nature offers no guarantees, whales and dolphins are regularly seen during these half day tours, along with turtles, seabirds and other marine life. Prior to the boat trip, local biologists will brief us on which cetacean species can be observed, safety measures aboard, how we respect the animals and rules of observation at sea as well as some historical facts. After the boat trip and a scenic picnic lunch, we will spend the afternoon with some of the island's biologists. They will help us understand about the island's biodiversity, the conservation of species, as well as past and current scientific research.

Day
4

Hiking in Salto do Cabrito (Distance-7KM: Difficulty-Easy)

Today we start our tour by visiting the Geothermal Power Plant in Ribeira Grande. We will learn all the sustainable processes of generating electricity that represents 40% of energy of the island. On our way to the Salto do Cabrito waterfall we will find the ruins of one of the oldest hydroelectric central stations built on the island of São Miguel. This station was opened in 1902 and produced its last electricity in 1972. We will follow the path of the ancient water tubes and learn about their history. The hillsides along the stream are densely forested. It is possible to find diverse range of vegetation such as: the Japanese cedar, acacias, eucalyptus, incense, kahili ginger, and violet yellow berry shrub. At the end of the trail we will come to the 38 metre drop that forms the beautiful waterfall named "Salto do Prego" where we will have picnic lunch. Shortly after lunch we will visit Caldeira Velha, a natural park with a visitors centre on the area and with geological information about the islands. Here we can take the opportunity to experience the warm iron-rich waterfall and pool for the first time before heading up to the amazing natural reserve of Lagoa do Fogo, to finish day 4 off in style! Some of the best views on the Island can be found here. Time for the compulsory photo of everyone in their STC t-shirts enjoying nature at its best!





Day
5

Azores Bullfinch Conservation Centre

The Azores bullfinch is one of Europe's most endangered birds. It is only found in the east of the island of São Miguel, in just a few square kilometres of wood in Serra da Tronqueira. The finch was a locally abundant pest of fruit orchards in the nineteenth century but became rare after 1920. Changes to the native vegetation of the Azores have destroyed the species' natural habitat and led to a decline in numbers to just 120 pairs. The population today is around 1000 individuals. The recovery is largely due to a conservation project which works to re-establish the native vegetation by habitat management including the creation of fruit tree orchards, clearance of alien invasive plant species and planting native species in the core area and buffer zones. We will spend today at the project helping with planting and clearing invasive plants. On our way back we will visit a Wind Farm to learn about wind as a sustainable source of energy. We will also stop at the Gorreana Tea Factory and plantation, where we will visit the working tea factory and have a lovely break to taste the tea.

Day
6

Pineapple plantations with R&R

On our visit to the pineapple plantations, we will learn about the different stages of plant growth and have the opportunity to plant some pineapples ourselves. Each pineapple we plant will be labelled so that later on photos can be taken and sent to us to follow up on the plant growth. Did you know that this exotic fruit takes almost two years until it is ready to be served on your table? The afternoon is free for some well needed R&R before our last full, action-packed day in The Azores.

Day
7

Hiking in Faial da Terra (6KM Difficulty: Medium), Terra Nostra Botanical Garden & Cozido cooking

Our first stop of the day will be at Furnas where we will have a special leader joining us – the “Cozido” Chef. He will walk us through the village where we will buy all the items we need to cook dinner – ‘anyone speak Portuguese?’ We will then head to the lake where we will have a cooking lesson with all the purchased ingredients which we will use to prepare our dinner. We will prepare the special “cozido meal” which will cook underground for 6 hours using only the steam of the Earth. While dinner is in the oven we will have a picnic lunch followed by our hiking trail in Faial da Terra.

After the walk, we will return to Furnas to visit the most impressive botanical garden of the Azores and bathe in its iron-rich thermal water swimming pool. At 6.00pm we will collect our dinner in the natural holes where it has been slowly cooking.

Day
8

Last goodbye & departure

This morning we say our final goodbyes and transfer to the airport for our flight back to “sunny?” England.

Further information

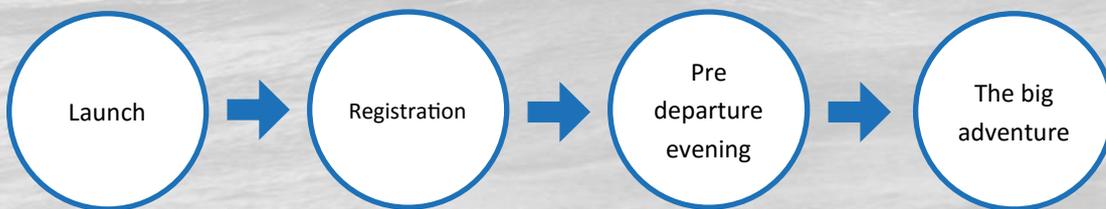
Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch evening
- Pre-departure preparation evening
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your educational journey timeline



Physical journey rating:



Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

Culture shock rating:



Expect to find local life broadly familiar to that in the UK, however aspects of the trip are likely to be in remoter areas where differences are more profound. Whilst English may not be the native language, you can expect it to be widely spoken. There may be some cultural differences and although western pallets should be well catered for there will be the opportunity to try new dishes.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey.



1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your educational travel itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

3 Arrange a trip launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with a comprehensive information evening and an opportunity for questions.



t: 01392 660056 | e: schools@thestc.co.uk | w: www.thestc.co.uk