

# AZORES

David & Katarina · July 2–14, 2026

São Miguel · Faial · Pico

*Living itinerary: [azores.dramawerks.com](https://azores.dramawerks.com)*

KEY: • Activity / logistics → Context & tips ! Open item / reminder

## Flights & Logistics Overview

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### Outbound — Jul 2

Flt 1: UA4174 DCA → EWR — departs 20:25, arrives EWR 21:58 (conf EETY9R)  
Flt 2: UA216 EWR → PDL (conf EETY9R) — departs 23:05, arrives PDL 08:40 Jul 3

### Intra-Azores Flights

Jul 7: SATA SP446 PDL → HOR — departs 15:05, arrives HOR 16:00 (ref Z4EMXI, last check-in 14:35)

Jul 13: SATA SP431 PIX → PDL — departs 19:00, arrives PDL 19:50 (ref Z4GJ5N, last check-in 18:30)

→ SP431 is the Jul 13 return from Pico: departs Pico (PIX) 19:00, arrives Ponta Delgada 19:50 — a direct 50-min hop. Drop the rental at Pico airport by 17:00.

### Return — Jul 14

Flt 1: UA217 PDL → EWR — departs 11:00 (Azores time), arrives EWR 13:15 ET  
Flt 2: UA4486 EWR → DCA — departs 15:30, arrives DCA 16:50

## Car Rentals

**São Miguel:** Europcar PDL Airport — Peugeot 2008, Jul 3–7, res 1201025915

**Faial:** My Volcanic Wheels — Citroen C3, conf 1205383197

**Pico: Picauto (Madalena) — Dacia Sandero (automatic), Res 824 / conf 76283398 · pickup Madalena ferry port 11:00 Jul 9, drop-off Pico airport by 17:00 Jul 13 · tel +351 292 622 951**

→ *You need the car in Faial to reach Caldeira and Capelinhos — both are 20–25 min from Horta and have no public transit.*

! **Faial–Pico ferry: buy tickets at [atlanticoline.pt](http://atlanticoline.pt)**

! **Luggage decision open: Quince ~\$170 / Monos ~\$295 / Away (Chase \$200-off-\$500)**

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### Wednesday, Jul 2 — Travel Day

#### FLIGHTS

- UA4174 DCA → EWR — departs 20:25, arrives EWR 21:58 (conf EETY9R)
- UA216 EWR → PDL (conf EETY9R) — departs 23:05 EWR
- *Overnight transatlantic — departs late night Jul 2, arrives PDL 08:40 Jul 3. Eat a real meal before boarding; airport food options at EWR are limited past security.*

### Thursday, Jul 3 — Arrive São Miguel · First Night in Furnas

#### LOGISTICS

- Arrive PDL Airport
- Pick up Europcar Peugeot 2008 — res 1201025915
- Drive to Furnas (~1 hr from PDL, scenic route over the mountains)
- Check in: Terra Nostra Garden Hotel · Jul 3–6

#### TERRA NOSTRA GARDEN & THERMAL POOL

- Thermal pool: 40°C (104°F), fed by iron-rich volcanic springs — one of the most famous thermal experiences in the Azores
- *IMPORTANT: The iron-rich water permanently stains light fabrics. Bring a dark swimsuit you do not mind dedicating to thermal pools for this trip. White or light swimwear will come out rust-orange.*
- *Hotel guests get free pool access. Use it early morning or after day-trippers leave in the evening — the pool fills with outside visitors mid-day.*
- *The garden is considered one of the 250 best botanical gardens in the world, dating to 1775. Worth a slow walk even if you do not swim.*
- *Two smaller, clearer, hotter pools are tucked into the garden vegetation — worth finding.*

#### FURNAS VILLAGE

- Caldeiras das Furnas — geothermal hot springs and fumaroles at the edge of Furnas Lake
- *The fumaroles vent steam at up to 100°C. This is where the Cozido cooking pots are buried. Go around noon on Jul 4 to watch the pots being retrieved — it is a genuine spectacle.*
- *Smell is strong near the vents — sulfurous. Normal, not a problem, just worth knowing.*

#### MEALS

- Dinner: Terra Nostra hotel restaurant — easy first night, no reservation needed

! **Call Cozido das Furnas restaurant first thing tomorrow morning to reserve dinner for Jul 4**

## Friday, Jul 4 — Furnas · Breakfast with Goats + Cozido

### MORNING ACTIVITY

- Breakfast with Goats — PAID & CONFIRMED (\$127)
  - *Charming farm experience in the Furnas valley. Expect a slow, pastoral morning — good reset after the overnight flight.*

### MIDDAY — CALDEIRAS DAS FURNAS

- Go around noon to watch the Cozido cooking pots being retrieved from the geothermal holes
  - *The pots go in at 5 AM and cook for 6–8 hours in the volcanic heat — entirely without fire or electricity. Watching the retrieval at noon is part of the experience. This is one of the only geothermally-cooked dishes in the world.*

### AFTERNOON

- Free time in Furnas — more thermal pools, walk the lake path, or rest
  - *Poça da Dona Beija is a popular public thermal pool near the village (separate from Terra Nostra) — worth a soak if you want a different experience.*
- Optional: Parque da Grená — open 9AM–7PM, €10/person (50% non-resident discount)
- Optional: José do Canto Forest Garden — open 9AM–7PM, €4/person
- Optional: Miradouro da Ponta do Sossego — scenic garden viewpoint on the northeast coast, ~35 min from Furnas
  - *Worth a detour in the afternoon if you have energy — much less visited than Sete Cidades and stunning on a clear day.*

### MEALS

- Dinner: Cozido das Furnas — call that morning to confirm, order cozido
    - *Portions are generous and best shared. Expect a rich, smoky stew of pork, chicken, blood sausage, cabbage, taro, and carrots. Distinctive flavor — not delicate. Cost ~€15–25 per person.*
- ! Call Cozido das Furnas FIRST THING in the morning to reserve dinner — they prepare cozido on request only**

## Saturday, Jul 5 — Sete Cidades + Lagoa do Fogo

### SETE CIDADES

- Drive to the western end of São Miguel (~45 min from Furnas)
- Vista do Rei — the iconic viewpoint over the twin crater lakes (green and blue)
  - *Vista do Rei is one of Portugal's 7 Natural Wonders — two lakes in a single volcanic caldera, one blue, one green, separated by a bridge. The color difference is real and visible on a clear day.*
  - *Arrive before 9 AM if possible — the main viewpoint has a 20-minute parking limit and fills fast in summer. Fog is common; check conditions before you drive up.*
- Boca do Inferno viewpoint — easy 1.2 km trail from the parking area for a second angle on the crater
  - *Slightly more walk than Vista do Rei but generally fewer people. Bring a layer — it gets windy at the crater rim.*

### LAGOA DO FOGO (OPTIONAL, TIME PERMITTING)

- Crater lake in the center of São Miguel — arguably the most pristine lake on the island
  - *SUMMER ACCESS RULE: From mid-June through September, access is by shuttle bus only, 9 AM–7 PM. Tickets €5/person at the shuttle stop. No private vehicles during these hours.*
  - *The 4-hour hike from Praia is excellent but a commitment. If time is short, there is a 30-minute path from the upper viewpoint down to the lake and back — still worth it.*
  - *Weather changes fast here — misty and cloudy is common. Check the Lagoa do Fogo webcam before committing to the drive.*

### MEALS

- Dinner: A Quinta, Furnas — walk-in, no reservation needed

## Sunday, Jul 6 — Drive to PDL · Katarina's Birthday

### MORNING — CAVE TOUR

- Cave Tour on the North Coast of São Miguel — 9:30 AM–12:30 PM · Rabo de Peixe · Hosted by Tomás
- PAID & CONFIRMED — \$176.22 · Confirmation TAPPXXMM
- Check out of Terra Nostra first, do the tour, then continue to Ponta Delgada (~30 min from Rabo de Peixe)

### LOGISTICS

- Check out of Terra Nostra Garden Hotel
- Drive to Ponta Delgada (~1 hr)
- Check in: NINE DOTS Boutique PDL · Jul 6–7

### BIRTHDAY

- Ice cream cake — check local gelataria first; Continente or Pingo Doce supermarkets as fallback
- *PDL has a real city center with proper gelatarias — ask at the hotel on arrival for the closest one. The supermarket option is fully reliable if needed.*

### PDL

- Ponta Delgada is the main city of the Azores — cathedral, city gates, waterfront promenade
- *The city is compact and walkable. Worth an hour of wandering before dinner. The Portas da Cidade (city gates) and the Igreja Matriz are the two most photogenic spots.*

### MEALS

- Dinner: Balcony Restaurant — CONFIRMED 19:00, 2 people · Av. Infante Dom Henrique 113, 9500-150 Ponta Delgada · (booked via TheFork, birthday note added)

! **Source ice cream cake in PDL — ask hotel for nearest gelataria on arrival**

## Monday, Jul 7 — PDL → Faial

### LOGISTICS

- Check out of NINE DOTS Boutique PDL
- Return Europcar Peugeot 2008 to PDL Airport
- SATA SP446 PDL → HOR — departs 15:05, arrives HOR 16:00 (~55 min flight, seats 07A/07B)
- Pick up My Volcanic Wheels Citroen C3 — conf 1205383197
- Check in: Pousada Forte Horta · Jul 7–9
- *Pousada Forte Horta is a historic fort converted into a hotel — one of the best-located properties in the Azores. The marina and painted boat walls are a short walk from the front door.*

### HORTA MARINA

- Walk the marina after check-in — see the painted boat murals
- *This is the world's largest collection of maritime paintings. Since the 1950s, sailors crossing the Atlantic have painted their boat's name, flag, and a personal image on the marina walls before departing. It is now superstition: sailors who leave without painting are said to face bad luck at sea. Nearly 1,500 boats stop here every year. The walls are extraordinary.*
- Optional: Horta Marina natural swimming area — basalt rocks, clear water, good for snorkeling
- *Recently improved with sun access and better sea entry. The marine life around the basalt is rich — worth a look if the weather is good and you want a swim before dinner.*

### MEALS

- Dinner: Restaurante Atlético, Horta — CONFIRMED 19:00

## Tuesday, Jul 8 — Faial

### CALDEIRA DO FAIAL

- Drive to the center of the island (~25 min from Horta) — rim loop of the main volcanic crater
  - *The Caldeira is 2 km across and one of the most dramatic volcanic craters in the Azores. The loop trail (PRC04 FAI) is 6.8 km, ~2.5–3 hours, rated moderate. On a clear day you see into the crater bowl and across to Pico rising from the Atlantic.*
  - *Weather is the variable. The crater rim sits at 840–1040m and clouds move in fast. If it is socked in, it is still atmospheric but you will see nothing. Check conditions before leaving Horta.*
  - *Descending INTO the crater requires a permitted guide — it is a protected natural area. The rim walk is freely accessible.*
  - *Bring a wind layer. Trail shoes. Water.*

### CAPELINHOS VOLCANO

- Drive to the western tip of Faial — the youngest volcano in the Azores, last erupted 1957–58
  - *Capelinhos added 2.5 sq km of new land to Faial during its eruption — you are literally standing on land that did not exist 70 years ago. The landscape is completely alien: ash fields, buried lighthouse, black lava stretching to the sea.*
  - *The Interpretation Center is underground (designed not to disrupt the landscape) and is one of the best volcanic museums in Europe — was nominated for best museum in Europe in 2012. Allow ~1 hour. Walk-in, no booking needed — €10/person, open daily 10AM–6PM. Guided tours require 72-hr advance booking by phone: +351 292 200 470.*
  - *Start at the far end (viewpoint over the buried lighthouse) before going to the museum — that sequence makes more sense.*
  - *Wear sturdy shoes — volcanic sand is loose, and it is windy.*
- Optional: Praia do Morte — black sand beach near Capelinhos, worth a stop while you're at the western tip

### MEALS

- Lunch: Ah! Boca Santa — Horta market hall, walk-in
- Dinner: Canto da Doca, Horta — CONFIRMED 19:00

## Wednesday, Jul 9 — Faial → Pico

### LOGISTICS

- Faial–Pico ferry — buy tickets at [atlanticoline.pt](http://atlanticoline.pt)
- *The Faial–Pico crossing is short (~30 min) and runs multiple times a day. Not likely to sell out, but buying in advance removes any stress. Confirm return you will not need — this is one-way.*
- Return My Volcanic Wheels Citroen C3 before ferry
- Pick up Picauto Dacia Sandero (automatic) at Madalena ferry port — Res 824 / conf 76283398
- Check in: Simas House Airbnb (Adega Simas), Santo Amaro · Jul 9–13 · host Arminda +351 965 528 928 · conf HMDSPJTFYX · check-in 16:00

### PICO ISLAND

- First views of Mount Pico from the ferry — the mountain dominates the entire island
- *Pico is quieter and more rural than São Miguel or Faial. Santo Amaro is a small coastal village. The pace drops significantly here — lean into it.*

### MEALS

- Dinner: TBD — keep it local and easy, Santo Amaro area (arrival night)

- ! **Ferry tickets not yet purchased — buy at [atlanticoline.pt](http://atlanticoline.pt)**
- ! **Jul 9 dinner not planned — find a local spot near Simas House**
- ! **Early night essential — Pico climb starts at 6:00 AM tomorrow**

## Thursday, Jul 10 — Climb Pico

### THE CLIMB

- Go Climb Pico — CHECK IN 6:00 AM

**Location:** Caminho Florestal nº9, Candelaria (Casa da Montanha)

**Ticket:** GOC-T130660521 · €158 paid

- Mount Pico: 2,351m — highest peak in Portugal, third highest in the Atlantic
- *The climb starts at Casa da Montanha (1,200m) — so you are ascending ~1,150m of elevation. Total time typically 7–9 hours up and back. About a third of climbers do not summit.*
- *The final 70m to the true summit (Piquinho, inside the crater) is a scramble — loose rock, exposed, requires hands. That section can be skipped; the crater rim counts as the summit for most people.*
- *The descent is harder than the ascent — physically and technically. Tired legs on loose volcanic rock. Take it slow coming down.*
- *The trail is marked with 47 numbered wooden poles from Casa da Montanha to the top. If fog rolls in (common), stay on the poles.*
- *What to bring: hiking boots, layered clothing (can be cold and windy at the top even in July), headlamp, 2L+ water, food/snacks, poles if you have them. Your guide will have emergency gear.*

### AFTER THE CLIMB

- Rest. Food. Horizontal position. That is the plan.
- *Do not make any commitments for the evening — you will be destroyed in the best way.*



## Friday, Jul 11 — Whale Watching · Lajes do Pico

### ESPAÇO TALASSA WHALE WATCHING

- Espaço Talassa — 9:00–12:00 departure from Lajes do Pico

Order: 10948 · €150 paid

- The original whale watching company in the Azores, founded 1989 — just two years after the last whale was hunted here
  - *That context matters: Espaço Talassa was founded as a direct response to the end of Azorean whaling in 1987. The pre-trip briefing covers this history. They voluntarily stopped all swim-with-cetaceans activities on ethical grounds and are outspoken about it.*
  - *Sighting rate is ~99% across the season. Species you may see: sperm whales (resident year-round), common dolphins, Risso's dolphins, bottlenose dolphins. July may also bring blue whales, fin whales, or humpbacks on migration.*
  - *Bring: binoculars, camera, water. Guides provide jackets and life vests. It is windy on the water — bring a change of footwear that can get wet, and expect spray.*
  - *Plan to be back by 12:30. You will have the afternoon free.*

### AFTERNOON — LAJES DO PICO

- Explore Lajes — the old whaling capital of the Azores, small and atmospheric
  - *There is a Whaling Museum (Museu dos Baleeiros) in Lajes if you want more context on the whaling history after the Espaço Talassa briefing.*

### MEALS

- Lunch: Danny's Café, Lajes do Pico — walk-in
- Dinner: flexible / explore Pico

## Saturday, Jul 12 — Pico Vineyards + BIOMA

### PICO VINEYARD LANDSCAPE

- UNESCO World Heritage Site — the most visually unusual vineyard landscape in the world
  - *Pico's vineyards are not what you picture: no rolling hills or neat rows. Instead, thousands of tiny lava stone enclosures (currais) protect individual vines from Atlantic wind and seawater. The black rock walls stretch for miles along the coast. It was inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage in 2004 — a 500-year-old agricultural system that still functions today.*
  - *Best viewed from the coastal road between Madalena and Lajes. Stop anywhere that looks interesting — there are no formal gates or tours required.*

### MUSEU DO VINHO

- Wine Museum, Madalena — housed in a former Carmelite convent
  - *Good overview of the history and culture of Pico wine production. Tastings available. Worth an hour if wine interests you — the Verdelho grape grown here is genuinely distinctive and hard to find elsewhere.*

### MEALS

- Dinner: BIOMA Mesa Açoriana, Lajes do Pico — CONFIRMED 20:00
  - *BIOMA focuses on hyper-local Azorean ingredients and producers. This is not tourist food — it is the most serious culinary experience on Pico. Worth dressing slightly for.*

## Sunday, Jul 13 — Pico → São Miguel · Last Night

### LOGISTICS

- Check out of Simas House Airbnb
- SATA SP431 PIX → PDL — departs 19:00, arrives PDL 19:50 (ref Z4GJ5N)
- Return Picauto Dacia Sandero at Pico airport by 17:00 — Res 824 / conf 76283398
- Arrive PDL 19:50
- Check in: Neat Hotel Avenida PDL · Jul 13–14

### EVENING IN PDL

- Dinner: TBD — casual, walkable from Neat Hotel Avenida, ~20:30
- *Neat Hotel Avenida is on the main boulevard in PDL, close to the waterfront and central restaurant strip. Plenty of casual options within walking distance. No need to plan far in advance — just pick something when you arrive.*

! **Jul 13 dinner not planned — find casual spot near Neat Hotel Avenida**

## Monday, Jul 14 — Depart

### LOGISTICS

- Check out of Neat Hotel Avenida PDL
- UA217 PDL → EWR — departs 11:00 (Azores time), arrives EWR 13:15 ET
- UA4486 EWR → DCA — departs 15:30 EWR, arrives DCA 16:50

### MEALS

- Grab breakfast near the hotel or at PDL airport before departure
- *PDL airport is small — limited food options past security. Eat before you go.*

## Open Items Summary

*Everything still needing action:*

- ! **Source ice cream cake for Katarina's birthday Jul 6 — local gelateria preferred, supermarket fallback**
- ! **Plan Jul 9 dinner — Santo Amaro area, casual arrival night**
- ! **Plan Jul 13 dinner — casual near Neat Hotel Avenida, late arrival ~20:30**
- ! **Buy Faial–Pico ferry tickets at atlanticoline.pt**
- ! **Decide on luggage: Quince ~\$170 / Monos ~\$295 / Away (Chase \$200-off-\$500)**
- ! **Lagoa do Fogo (Jul 5): shuttle-only access mid-June through September, €5/person — no private car during day hours**