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## GEEO ITINERARY

HIKING THE AZORES 3/12/2022- Spring

### **Day 1: Ponta Delgada Arrive at any time.**

Arrive at any time. There are no planned activities until an evening welcome meeting. Check the notice boards or ask at reception for the exact time and location of the group meeting, typically 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. After the meeting, you might consider heading out for a meal in a nearby local restaurant to further get to know your tour leader and travel companions. Please make every effort to arrive on time for this welcome meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up.

### **Day 2: Ponta Delgada (B) Drive to the village of Santo António and walk to the top of Sao Miguel island on the Pico da Vara hike. Then travel to the town of Furnas to visit the hot springs and botanical garden.**

Drive to the village of Santo António to start the Pico da Vara hike which is the highest point on São Miguel island. In the Nordeste Province, the trail starts at an altitude of 2300 feet and climbs upwards through forested land and eventually with shorter vegetation as you reach towards the mountain top. Pico da Vara sits at about 3625 feet above sea level. On a clear day, you can see Santa Maria island and the slope of the mountain down to the town of Povoação, the first settled town on the island. After returning to Algarvia, head into the town of Furnas. There you will have the chance to dip in the natural hot waters of the geothermal hot springs or wander around the Terra Nostra botanical garden. Afterward, return to Ponta Delgada. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs via private vehicle; 4.5 hrs hiking

### **Day 3: Ponta Delgada (B, L) Hike to the shores of Lagoa do Fogo. Then travel to the Sete Cidades Parish and hike the trails for stunning views of the lakes within the caldera.**

This morning we will travel to the highest body of water in the Azores, Lagoa do Fogo, a lake that formed at the bottom of the caldera. Hike through a forest of Eucalyptus, Japanese Cedars, and along a levada waterway on your way down to the shores of Lagoa do Fogo. After a light picnic lunch, walk the rolling hills along groomed trails in the Sete Cidades parish. Hike about 3 hours around the caldera for spectacular views of the crater lakes formed within the former volcano. Marvel at the blue-green lake reflecting two different colors due to sunlight and algae growth. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle; 3 hrs hiking

### **Day 4: Ponta Delgada/Angra do Heroísmo (B) Today we depart São Miguel island on a short flight to Terceira Island. We will hike the Rocha de Chambre trail. In the evening, enjoy a walking tour of Angra do Heroísmo, the capital city, and a UNESCO World Heritage site.**

Board a plane with your group for a quick flight to Terceira Island, considered the capital of Azorean culture. After checking into the hotel your group will hit the Rocha do Chambre trail. This 6-mile circular route takes place in the middle of the island exploring the rich agriculture of Azorean heather, laurel, and juniper plants. The Rocha do Chambre trail is considered rolling terrain. It has some flat sections through the forest which provide very dramatic scenery and a few steep inclines. It crosses a forest and meanders along a small stream up to the top of the Pico Alto crater at just over 2,300 feet. Enjoy beautiful views of the Azinhal Valley and Biscoitos village with its rocky lava formations that meet the sea. The total elevation of the hike is about 1,180 feet. In the evening, enjoy a walking tour of the capital city (30-45 minutes), Angra do Heroísmo, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The city maintains its stunning Renaissance architecture, housing fortresses, churches, and manor houses. Walk through this beautiful city and discover the hidden history of the main streets, squares, and monuments. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by plane, 30 minutes by private vehicle

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**Day 5: Angra do Heroísmo (B, L) Head to the middle of the island with stunning views of the agricultural patchwork fields contrasted by the centuries-old lava flow (often called the Black Lagoon). Hike the Mistérios Negros trail and visit the Algar do Carvão lava caves.**

Hike about 7 kilometers (4.35 miles) on the Mistérios Negros trail, which starts near the site of the last volcanic eruption on Terceira in 1761. Learn about this incredible landscape while traversing uneven trails, over hardened lava flows, and volcanic rock. The highlight of the day is a visit to the Algar do Carvão lava caves, which are a naturally formed tunnel of air developed under the warm lava. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle; 5-6 hours hiking

**Day 6: Angra do Heroísmo (B) Depart at any time.**

Our trip concludes today, and you may depart Angra do Heroísmo at any time. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!