

WILDERNESS TRAVEL SPECIAL EVENTS PRESENTS

Total Solar Eclipse 2026

WITH POST-ECLIPSE TOURS IN SPAIN, PORTUGAL & FRANCE

Hiking in the Azores

AN ADVENTURE IN A BREATHTAKING ARCHIPELAGO
AUGUST 9-22, 2026

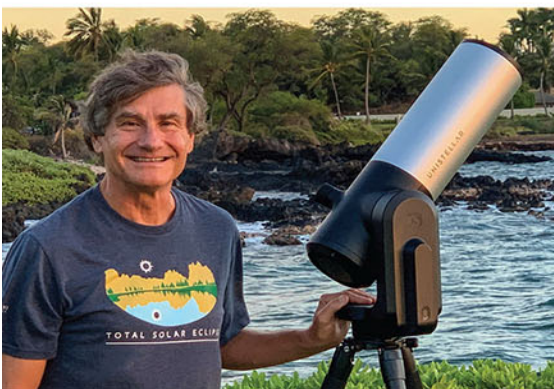


Wilderness Travel



2026 Spain Eclipse Program

Join us in northern Spain in 2026 to experience a total solar eclipse as it sweeps across the Iberian Peninsula. Our exclusive viewing location atop a hilltop winery aligns with the eclipse's centerline. Chosen in collaboration with esteemed eclipse meteorologist Jay Anderson, it promises the finest weather and sweeping views across the flat Meseta Norte—we should be in for a visual treat. Because the total eclipse will occur low on the horizon just one hour shy of sunset, we can look forward to a number of effects being different from when totality is high overhead. Intensified atmospheric scattering should greatly enhance the colors of the surrounding horizon, and the setting sun will appear magnified by the “moon illusion.” Throughout the program, we'll enjoy insightful talks on eclipses and cosmic wonders curated by our distinguished lecturer Dr. Alex Filippenko, Professor of Astronomy at UC Berkeley.



OUR EXPERT ASTRONOMER ALEX FILIPPENKO, PHD

A name familiar to many, Dr. Filippenko is a celebrated professor at UC Berkeley, revered for his expertise in the fields of exploding stars, active galaxies, and universal expansion. His accolades are numerous, and notably, he's been voted “Best Professor” at UC Berkeley a record nine times!

Eclipse Program Locations



BILBAO

We begin the Eclipse Program in Bilbao exploring this Basque capital where timeless traditions fuse with the avant-garde. Bilbao's dedication to innovative architecture and cuisine is felt throughout the city, from the iconic Guggenheim Museum—a shining example of 20th-century architecture housing one of the most important private collections of modern and contemporary art—to its historic Old Town filled with eateries serving pintxos and Txakoli wine.



BURGOS

On our way to Burgos, the capital city of the unified kingdom of Castile and León for five centuries, we'll tour the prehistoric site of Atapuerca, where the oldest known evidence of humans in western Europe was unearthed. In Burgos, we'll visit the famed cathedral, one of the masterpieces of Spanish Gothic architecture and the only cathedral in Spain to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



LERMA

Our lodging during this astronomical event is the iconic Parador de Lerma, once the Ducal Palace and the seat of the Spanish Empire from 1599-1618 under the clandestine rule of the Duke of Lerma, a favorite of King Phillip III. Dating back to pre-Roman times, Lerma experienced significant growth and wealth in the 17th century under the Duke's patronage, including the construction of buildings in the Herrerian style that today are among the best-preserved historical-artistic complexes in Spain.

Eclipse Program Schedule

DAY 1, AUGUST 9: BILBAO

- Arrive in Bilbao and Transfer to the Hotel Carlton
- Welcome Reception and Dinner

DAY 2, AUGUST 10: BILBAO

- Morning Lecture on Eclipses
- Walking Tour of Bilbao, and Cruise Down the Nervión River
- Haute Cuisine Pintxos Lunch Designed by Chef Zuriñe García
- Tour of the Guggenheim
- Afternoon Lecture on the History and Culture of the Basque People

- Late Afternoon Astronomy Presentation

DAY 4, AUGUST 12: LERMA

- Morning Astronomy Presentation
- Free Time to Explore Lerma
- Transfer to Viewing Site
- Pre-Eclipse Presentation, Winery Tours and Tasting
- Eclipse!
- Celebratory Farewell Dinner at the Winery

DAY 3, AUGUST 11: BURGOS / LERMA

- Transfer to Lerma, via Burgos
- Tour of Atapuerca Archaeological Site
- Walking Tour of Burgos' Historical Center and Gothic Cathedral

DAY 5, AUGUST 13

- Depart Lerma on Your Post-Eclipse Tour



Overview



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

- Length:** 14 days
Arrive: Bilbao, Spain
Depart: São Miguel Island, Azores
Lodging: 13 nights hotels
Meals: All meals included except 1 lunch and 2 dinners
Activity: Hiking & Trekking

Trip Level: 1 2 ③ 4 5 6

8 hiking days on moderate trails (some steep sections), 3-5 hours a day, van support

QUESTIONS?

Our Area Specialists are your single point of contact and would be happy to answer any questions about your trip!

800.368.2794 | 510.558.2488

HIGHLIGHTS

- Witness the dramatic phenomena of a total solar eclipse with renowned astrophysicist Alex Filippenko, PhD (veteran of 14 eclipse events with WT!)
- Enjoy the fabulous Parador de Lerma and our private eclipse-viewing site at a hilltop winery
- Hike and explore four lush volcanic islands, each with a unique culture and landscape
- Taste Pico Island's white wines from age-old vineyards
- Search for whales and dolphins in one of the world's largest whale sanctuaries
- Stay in a converted 16th-century fort and the Art Deco grandeur of Terra Nostra Garden Hotel

Introduction



After the thrill of witnessing the total solar eclipse in Lerma, Spain, we welcome you to an island-world of traditional villages, lake-filled calderas, and ancient vineyards—the Azores! On this volcanic archipelago, we explore four enchanting islands: São Miguel, Faial, São Jorge, and spectacular Pico, each with its own personality. We'll hike along crater rims, cross moorlands above a deep blue sea, and follow *canadas* (pathways) that link farms and villages. Along the way, we'll go whale watching, dine on fresh fish at local spots, and relish the unhurried pace of Azorean life. Our Azores accommodations include a 16th century fort and an Art Deco hotel with thermally heated bathing pools.

TRIP DATES

August 9-22, 2026

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Carlton

The Hotel Carlton, built in 1919, is an impressive Beaux Arts monument in the grand style of its era. It is centrally located in the Old Town on Plaza de Federico Moyúa and just a short walk to the Guggenheim Museum. The hotel was the seat of the Basque government during the Spanish Civil War.

Meals: B, L, D

DAYS 1-2 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE PROGRAM, BILBAO TO LERMA, SPAIN

Our eclipse program begins in Bilbao, with a tour of the acclaimed Guggenheim Museum, a masterpiece by Canadian architect Frank Gehry that put Bilbao on the map for art lovers, a cruise along the Nervión River, which flows through the city to the Cantabrian Sea, and a walking tour of the pedestrianized Old Quarter. We'll savor a pintxos lunch designed by chef Zuriñe García, the first Basque woman to get a Michelin star, and enjoy dinner in the old Alhóndiga, or wine warehouse, of Bilbao. Our Guest Astronomer, Dr. Alex Filippenko, will begin his series of lectures on eclipses and other astronomical phenomena, and we'll discover the ancient and mysterious culture of the Basque people with a local historian, Professor Alberto Santana. Our Bilbao accommodation on Days 1-2 is the luxurious Hotel Carlton, a Bilbao landmark. Meals begin with Dinner on Day 1.

Itinerary



Overnight: Parador de Lerma

Built in the 17th century atop a medieval castle, this former Ducal Palace was built by the Duke of Lerma as a place of lodging, rest, and general enjoyment for his close friend, King Felipe III. The palace has a central courtyard surrounded by stately columned galleries, and features interiors from the era of the Hapsburgs, with beautifully designed lighting and décor.

Meals: B, L, D

DAYS 3-4 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE PROGRAM, BILBAO TO LERMA, SPAIN

Departing Bilbao, we visit the prehistoric Atapuerca archaeological site, whose caves hold a rich fossil record of Europe's early humans. Heading to the charming town of Burgos, located on the Camino Frances, we'll tour its imposing Gothic cathedral before continuing to the medieval town of Lerma, where you will have time to explore before we gather for another astronomy lecture. On eclipse day, we'll craft our viewers and enjoy a bit more of Lerma before heading to our private eclipse-viewing site at an expansive winery on a hill-virtually on the centerline. Winery tours and tastings will be available this afternoon as we prepare for the eclipse and enjoy the winery's grounds and views. On Days 3-4, we stay at the fabulous Parador de Lerma, a Ducal Palace originally built for King Felipe III.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Talisman

With a great location in the center of town, near Ponta Delgada's cafes and historic churches, the Talisman is a historic 17th century building converted into a charming hotel. Guest rooms differ in size and shape, but most have views of the port. The hotel is decorated in an Art Deco style with lovely seating areas on the first floor. The rooftop pool is a nice spot for a refreshing dip before dinner.

Meals: B

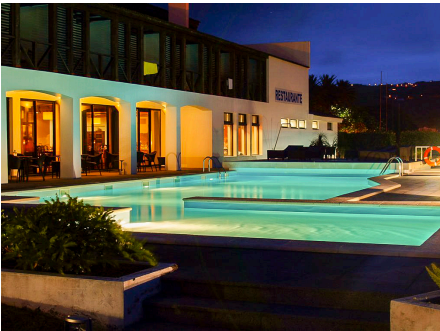


DAY 5 SÃO MIGUEL ISLAND, AZORES, PORTUGAL / PONTA DELGADA

Morning group transfer from Lerma to Madrid (MAD) for your flight to Ponta Delgada (PDL) (see flight suggestions on the Arrival & Departure page). After checking in to our group hotel, which is located in the city's Old Town, you will have the afternoon free to explore the Azorean capital. Ponta Delgada is a port, so it's a delight to stroll the waterfront promenade, Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, which will take you from the 16th-century Forte de São Brás, a fortress at the western end that is still in use today by the Portuguese navy, to one of the city's three original gates, which date to the 18th century. Lunch and dinner will be on your own as people will be arriving at different times into the evening.

An important note: While we work hard to make this itinerary as accurate as possible, the planned daily activities are subject to change as necessary, depending on weather conditions and ferry schedules at the time. Our guides are very knowledgeable and will always provide you with a worthwhile alternative. We will do our very best to follow this itinerary, but please bring your spirit of adventure and flexibility, and be aware that some changes may be necessary. In the event we need to make changes, the goal is to do most, if not all, activities during our time on each island.

Itinerary



Overnight: Pousada Forte Hotel

The Pousada Forte is a restored fortress set along a promenade on Horta's port. It offers comfortable rooms overlooking the harbor and a great swimming pool. The views of Pico Island are breathtaking.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 5.5 miles, 2.5-3 hours, 400 feet ascent/descent

DAY 6 SETE CIDADES HIKE / FAIAL ISLAND

We gather at breakfast this morning for a briefing with the Trip Leader, then set out for an easy hike on the rim of the twin lakes of Sete Cidades, one very blue (Lagoa Azul) and the other distinctly green (Lagoa Verde). They nestle in the crater of a dormant volcano and are separated by a narrow channel. Views on our hike stretch the length of São Miguel, the largest island in the archipelago, and the vegetation along the trail gives us an introduction to endemic species such as *Juniperus brevifolia*, whose timber was used as roofing beams, and Azorean holly, once used as winter cattle feed. An afternoon flight brings us to Faial, known as “the blue island” for its long rows of hydrangea hedges and famed as a stopping-off point for yachts on trans-Atlantic crossings. In the island's main town, Horta, the marina is lively with activity. All Azorean Islands have volcanic origins, and in 1957, Faial erupted over the course of 18 months, adding almost a square mile to the western edge of the island. While we're here, we'll immerse ourselves in its volcanic story. We settle into our comfortable hotel, built as a fort in the 16th century to protect the island against pirate attacks. Welcome Dinner and overnight at Pousada Forte Hotel.

Itinerary



Overnight: Pousada Forte Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 4.7 miles, 3 hours, 450 feet ascent/descent

DAY 7 FAIAL ISLAND / LEVADA HIKE / PONTA DOS CAPELINHOS / SHEARWATER COLONY

Today we become volcanologists! Together with a local guide, we head to the youngest and westernmost point of Faial, where the massive volcanic eruption occurred in 1957. Before visiting the newest part of the island, our hike is along a levada that contours the lush hillsides above. The track alongside affords us fabulous coastal views, endemic vegetation, and the possibility to watch some of the island's birds, including the tiny goldcrest, which flits restlessly between branches, with often just the flash of its spiky, golden crown feathers to be seen. After a picnic lunch we'll head to the Ponta dos Capelinhos, the volcanic formation formed in 1957, with its rocky barren features. The lower part of the lighthouse remains buried by the eruptions. We'll visit the interpretive center, where two stories are told. The first is the birth of Ponta dos Capelinhos, described using holographs and film, and second is the long geological history of the whole Azorean archipelago. Afterwards, we'll take the spiral staircase (66 feet) to the top of the lighthouse for a bird's-eye view of a wild landscape that's just over 50 years old—the views are magnificent. Our chosen restaurant specializes in locally caught fish, some familiar (tuna, cod, and snapper), some less known (such as grey triggerfish, blackspot seabream, or Guelly jack).

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Caravelas

The Caravelas offers clean, comfortable rooms with views of Faial Island and the harbor and a central location for the ferry. The hotel offers an excellent buffet breakfast.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: Moderate Hike, 6.5 miles, 3.5 hours, 100 feet ascent, 2,300 feet descent; Strenuous Hike, 5.6 miles, 8-9 hours, 3,700 feet ascent/descent

DAY 8 PICO ISLAND / CAMINHO DOS BURROS / GRUTA DAS TORRES / OPTIONAL CLIMB OF PICO

Today we have a choice of activities, either moderate or strenuous, accompanied by expert local guides (as with all the hikes, both activities are weather dependent). Our “moderate” day starts with a short drive to the rolling moorland of the central highland plateau for a hike on the Caminho dos Burros (“Path of the Donkeys”). The local people used this path for centuries to transport items to other villages. We’ll have fabulous views towards Pico Mountain and across the sea to the sharply defined ridgeline of São Jorge Island. We’ll pass a small green volcanic cone, Cabecos do Mistério (“Mystery Head”), formed between 1562 and 1564. We’ll descend to the Forest Nature Reserve of Mistério da Prainha, an ideal spot for our picnic. After lunch, we’ll head to the Gruta das Torres (“Grotto of Towers”), near Madalena, the biggest lava tube in all of Portugal. We’ll don hard hats and carry lamps for an hour’s guided tour exploring these intriguing lava tunnels. These show great geological diversity, with different types of stalactites and stalagmites, and ropey lavas. Our “strenuous” option is a climb of Pico Mountain, a very steep climb to the summit at 7,713 feet and not to be taken lightly (we will only be able to do it if the weather conditions are good). The rocky trail starts at Cabeco das Cabras at about 4,000 feet above sea level and continues over small, loose stones to the summit. It is not technically difficult, but walking poles are essential. The views from the highest point in the mid-Atlantic will be well worth the physical effort. This evening we’ll savor traditional dishes washed down with a zesty Pico wine in one of the best restaurants on Pico Island, with superb views toward Faial Island. Overnight at the modern Hotel Caravelas, where guest rooms have balconies facing Faial Island.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel Caravelas

Meals: B, L

Whale Watching: approximately 3 hours

DAY 9 PICO ISLAND / WHALE WATCHING / WHALE MUSEUM / WINERY

A morning ferry crossing of about 30 minutes brings us to the island of Pico, crowned by a dormant 7,713-foot volcano, Portugal's highest. We head to the town of Lajes do Pico, Pico's oldest settlement (its chapel dates back to 1460, the time of the Portuguese discovery of the islands). Once a whale-hunting hub, it is now a major whale-watching destination, with a remarkable 26 species of cetaceans documented in the deep waters offshore. Together with a marine biologist, we venture out by boat for some whale watching. Sperm whales as well as humpback, minke, pilot, fin, and blue whales are seen at different points in the year. Bottlenose, spotted, striped, common, and Risso's dolphins are also found here. After lunch, we'll visit the whaling museum, then make our way to the island's main wine-growing area. The Azores Islands have produced wine for hundreds of years, and in the 17th and 18th centuries, thousands of liters were exported throughout the world. The fact that vines grow in this temperate climate warmed by the Gulf Stream is not remarkable, but what is unique is that the grapes are grown on a surface of volcanic rocks and the vines lay unsupported on the ground, protected by a labyrinth of five-foot-high rock walls (known as currais), that provide a wind break and create heat pockets to help ripen the grapes. We'll be met at Czar, a local winery, where the owner will bring us into his traditional wine barrel storage shed to share the history and techniques of his unique wines. Dinner is on your own tonight and the Trip Leader will be happy to make recommendations.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel São Jorge Garden

The simple but comfortable Hotel S. Jorge Garden has guest rooms with panoramic views of Pico Island, a friendly bar, and a lovely saltwater swimming pool. In the evenings, guests can hear the sounds of the local Cory's shearwaters coming back to their colony to roost for the night.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10 SÃO JORGE ISLAND / CHEESE TASTING

An early ferry ride brings us to Velas, the picturesque principal town on São Jorge Island. The town is a delight to wander around in, with its narrow, cobble streets, colorful town houses, newly renovated town square, and 17th century church. São Jorge is reputed to produce the best cheese of all the islands—in fact, there are more dairy cattle on this island than people! We check into our simple accommodation, Hotel S. Jorge Garden, situated above the Atlantic and facing Pico Island, with fantastic views of Pico Mountain. The hotel has a pool, but if the sea is calm, it is pleasant to bathe in the natural swimming pools carved into the dark lava rocks just a couple of minutes' walk from the hotel. We'll visit the island's only remaining family cheese producers who milk just 40 cows and we'll hear about their production and sample some of their much-prized "Canada" cheese. We'll have lunch and a walk at Fajã dos Cubres. Dinner tonight is in a typical local restaurant.

Itinerary



Overnight: Hotel São Jorge Garden

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 6.2 miles, 4.4-5 hours,
ascent 1,400 feet, descent 1,400 feet

DAY 11 SÃO JORGE ISLAND / COFFEE TASTING AND A HIKE

Before today's hike, we'll stop at Café Nunes, where we'll meet our local guide and her family. Her mother and aunt have a small workshop where they weave traditional woolen bedspreads on wooden looms, and her father operates the largest commercial coffee plantation in Europe, producing Arabica beans for local consumption. We'll enjoy the earthy flavor of an espresso here before heading out on the trail. Our hike starts in Vimes, on the south coast following old, cobbled trails. Turning into the Fajã dos Bodes ("Place of the Goats"), we head steeply up, mainly under a canopy of dense trees, and savor vistas over to the island of Pico and its iconic mountain as well as the rugged coastline of São Jorge. Higher up, we'll see endemic species including Azorean heather and blueberry plants before popping out into the village of Lourais, where cattle graze. A steep descent (hiking poles are recommended) brings us down to Fajã de São João on the coast. This town has narrow, cobbled streets and a small fishing harbor. The only café, opposite the village church, is our final destination. Cold beers are on order after our demanding yet satisfying hike! Dinner tonight is at a wonderful small restaurant with picture windows offering views over to Pico and Faial. All dishes are home-cooked using only local meat and fish, accompanied by organic vegetables and herbs grown in the owners' garden.

Itinerary



DAY 12 FAJÃ DOS CUBRES / SÃO MIGUEL ISLAND / FURNAS / TERRA NOSTRA GARDENS AND THERMAL BATH

Overnight: Terra Nostra Garden Hotel

The historic Terra Nostra Garden Hotel, surrounded by calderas and thermal springs, is the perfect spot to enjoy São Miguel's natural geothermal wonders. You can step right out of your room and straight into the garden to relax in bubbling hot springs. The hotel is sleek and modern, surrounded by vast gardens that date back to 1775.

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: 4 miles, 3 hours, 400 feet ascent/descent

In the morning we head to the northern coast for our hike. A central ridge runs the length of São Jorge, with steep hillsides descending to flat coastal “fajãs,” or fertile plains along the coast created by lava flows and rock falls. Small settlements were established on the fajãs because microclimates created such excellent growing conditions. Our out-and-back hike is one of the best on the trip. A dirt track brings us from Fajã dos Cubres (“Place of the Goldenrods”), a yellow flower that flourishes here, alongside the rugged ocean coastline, through the partly abandoned villages of Fajã dos Tijolos (“Place of the Tiles”) and Fajã do Belo (“Place of Beauty”) and into the pretty village of Fajã da Caldeira de Santo Cristo and its quaint white church. People from around the island make regular pilgrimages to the 19th century church, especially on the first Sunday in September, when long processions of devotees arrive to pray and give thanks. Astonishingly, this remote location is also known as the best place to surf in São Jorge and the only place where clams can be dug out of the nearby lagoons. In the afternoon, we fly back to São Miguel, where we are met and whisked off to the picturesque town of Furnas and our hotel, the Terra Nostra Garden Hotel, an Art Deco hotel dating to the 1930s and surrounded by a large 19th century garden with canals and lakes. If we arrive in the late afternoon, we'll take a stroll around the gardens, then enjoy the thermally heated pools, with their rich iron-red waters, a good way to soothe tired muscles.

Itinerary



Overnight: Terra Nostra Garden Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Hiking Details: Morning (Lagoa das Furnas), 2.5 miles, 1.5 hours, level ground. Afternoon: 3 miles, 2 hours, 630 feet, 740 feet descent

DAY 13 SÃO MIGUEL ISLAND / FURNAS LAKE / COZIDO

On our final full day, our explorations are based around the 19th century spa village of Furnas, nestled inside a huge caldera with many active fumaroles. Taking a short drive to a higher, water-filled caldera, we'll hike along the lake's pretty shoreline. Our hike's end coincides with a chance to see local restaurant owners coming to retrieve their cook pots buried in hot soil in the geothermally active area at the northern end of Furnas Lake. The famous cozido nas caldeiras, a traditional dish, is cooked in pots set in the geothermally heated soil. The large pots are carefully extracted by two men using long metal poles, then driven down the hill to be served up in Furnas as lunch and dinner. Today we'll have a light lunch, saving the hearty cozido dinner for tonight. There is a choice in the afternoon, either to hike or to relax in the thermal pools and spa of the charming Terra Nostra Garden Hotel. If hiking, the guide will decide the most appropriate hike for those walking, as again, there is a choice: either a linear hike along the north coast with a possible swim in the sea, or a circular hike higher up among trees and along a river with waterfalls. Both are of similar length and time. In the early evening we'll gather and raise a glass to toast our hikes and the four islands of the amazing Azorean archipelago. Our Farewell Dinner at the Terra Nostra Garden Hotel is a treat—the traditional cozido meal, with mouth-watering flavors of tender meat (beef, pork, and chicken) and assorted rice and vegetables, and we pair it superbly with the deep red wines from Pico Island.

Itinerary



Meals: B, L

DAY 14 TEA PLANTATION / PONTA DELGADA / DEPARTURE

This morning we make a call at one of only two tea plantations in Europe. Chá Porto Formoso is set on the north coast of São Miguel, where climate and soil conditions have allowed tea to thrive far from its native terrain in Asia. Tea production on São Miguel started at the end of the 19th century with seeds and techniques brought from China. Sitting out on the wooden veranda overlooking the neatly clipped tea bushes that sweep down toward the sea, we'll savor a cup! The teas produced here have an especially aromatic flavor and make a lasting memento of the islands to take home with you. We'll transfer to the city of Ponta Delgada, São Miguel's capital, for an early lunch and arrive at San Miguel Airport by 1:00 pm, in time for your international flight.

An important note: The ferry and flight schedules in the Azores are not always available at the time we are planning our departures. While we have worked hard to make this itinerary as accurate as possible, we want you to be aware that the planned daily activities are subject to adjustment as necessary in the field, depending on conditions and schedules at the time. We will do our very best to follow this itinerary, but please bring your spirit of adventure and be aware that some changes may be necessary.

Pricing

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy

2026

\$11,495 (8-12 members)

\$11,895 (4-7 members)

Single supplement: \$1,870

PAYMENT TERMS

At time of reservation \$1,000 per person

Due 180 days prior to departure: 25% of land cost

Due 90 days prior to departure: Balance

Please note that this differs from our standard policy.

CANCELLATION & TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum cancellation fee: \$500 per person

365-181 days prior to departure: \$1,000 per person

180-91 days prior to departure: 25% of land costs

90 days or less prior to departure: 100% of land costs

We reserve the right to treat the reservation as canceled if payments are not received when due.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details:

www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Presentations by Guest Speakers
- Expert Trip Leaders and local guides
- All accommodations based on double occupancy
- Meals as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- All ground transportation and baggage handling from meeting until departure
- All activities as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Entrance fees to museums and archaeological sites
- Gratuities during the Eclipse Program portion of your journey
- A glass of wine or beer with lunch & dinner

TRIP DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Travel to and from the arrival and departure location as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Additional hotel nights outside the trip's scheduled dates
- Optional gratuities to Trip Leaders or staff
- Optional travel insurance
- Other expenses of a personal nature (some alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)

SPECIAL NOTE

This brochure provides an indication of the schedule and scope of the program, including the speakers confirmed at the time of publication. While no changes are anticipated, Wilderness Travel reserves the right to make necessary adjustments and substitutions. In the event of a speaker's cancellation, Wilderness Travel will make every effort to secure a suitable replacement, but we cannot guarantee it. A price adjustment would only be considered if, over the next three years, there were exceptional cost increases or significant currency fluctuations that we cannot absorb.

Arrival & Departure

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Suggested Airport: Bilbao Airport (BIO)

Suggested Arrival Date & Time: Day 1, August 9, 2026, by 5:00 pm

Note: Depending on your routing, it may be necessary to depart from the US one or more days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary.

Meeting Place: We will gather for a Welcome Reception in the Crystal Hall of the Hotel Carlton before dinner. Timing to be advised prior to departure.

Flight to Azores

Suggested Departure Airport: Madrid (MAD)

Suggested Arrival Airport: Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL)
Date & Time: Day 5, August 13, any time

Note: We will organize a Group Transfer from Lerma to Madrid with the intention to arrive at the Madrid-Barajas Airport by 9:00 am. There will be many flights to choose from throughout the day to the Azores, but if you get one around noon, you would normally arrive in Ponta Delgada by about 6:30 pm. Upon arrival at the Ponta Delgada Airport, taxis are readily available outside the terminal and the transfer cost into town is approximately €10. There is also a bus that costs around €2.

Meeting Place: You will meet your trip leader in the lobby of the first hotel the morning of August 14th. Timing to be advised prior to departure.

DEPARTURE

Suggested Airport: Ponta Delgada Airport (PDL)

Date & Time: Day 14, August 22, any time after 3:00 pm

Please do not book a departing flight leaving before 3:00 pm, as we begin our day on the other side of the island and have some scheduled activities and lunch before dropping the group at the airport at around 1:00 pm.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

If you would like assistance booking your flights, there are many online consolidators for booking travel who can help, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 1-800-655-4053 in the US or 1-800-670-2605 in Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com

Please remember that the name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US. Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip (as specific as arrival and departure details could change) and we have sent final arrival and departure instructions.

Once your tickets have been purchased, please forward us a copy of your email flight confirmation from the airline. It is your responsibility to ensure your flight times coordinate with the arrival and departure logistics for this trip.

EXTRA HOTEL NIGHTS

If you are arriving one or more days early, we can book extra nights for you at the group hotel in Bilbao (an 'on your own' expense).

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit wildernesstravel.com/leaders.



SKYE MCDONALD

Skye McDonald lives in Scotland's Highland capital, Inverness. She has worked as a Trip Leader in 35 countries since the millennium and lived in Germany, France, and Tanzania. "Bringing understanding between peoples of very different cultures and backgrounds is one of the joys of being a Trip Leader, and of course, the chance to make friends around the world." Closer to home, she delights in sharing the glories of her native Scotland, and says that a good day scaling some of the beautiful Scottish mountains is hard to beat. Skye speaks German, French, beginners' Portuguese, and unusually, a smattering of Swahili from earlier years as a volunteer agricultural officer in Tanzania. Life continues to be an adventure for Skye, who has recently taken up bee-keeping, wild-water swimming, and scuba diving.



DAVID MONTEIRO

David Monteiro was born in Mindelo, Cape Verde, an archipelago on the west coast of Africa, and moved to Portugal with his family when he was a child. After working as a CPA for more than 20 years, he felt the need for a change and began to lead hiking, mountain biking, and rock-climbing trips, all sports he had enjoyed since his childhood. When not guiding, David indulges in his passion for photography, literature, and history.

What to Expect

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated **Level 3, Moderate**, according to our trip grading system. You will need to be comfortable hiking up to 7 miles a day and being on your feet for 5 hours a day. With the exception of one day, there are no alternative hiking options, so you will need to be able to keep up with the moderate but steady hiking pace of the group. Trail conditions, weather, and the group's level of fitness can affect hiking times and pacing.

Average Hiking Day

- 6 miles
- 3-4 hours
- 800 feet gain and 1,200 feet loss

Challenge Day

- Day 6 - 5.5 miles, 4 hours, 2,300 feet gain, and 400 feet loss; includes 1.5 hours by ferry and 2 hours of driving

TERRAIN

We'll hike along crater rims in a volcanic landscape, traverse rugged moorlands above a deep blue sea, and follow ancient *canadas* (pathways) that crisscross the islands linking farms and villages. Occasionally there are steeper paths and steps on the coastal walks, and the ground can be uneven with some sharp rocks. If there has been rain, it can be muddy and slippery. Hiking poles will be beneficial on many days. Many of the trails are on rocky and uneven ground, so it is important that your footwear is comfortable and has a good hiking sole. On non-hiking days, we'll still be on foot for many hours as we explore the towns and sites.

WEATHER

The Azores have a subtropical maritime climate with mild temperatures throughout the year. In the summer, temperatures average between the mid-60s°F to the low 80s°F during the day and the 50s°F and 60s°F at night. It can be humid, and although it is usually sunny in the summer, clouds and rain is a very real possibility all year round- it is not uncommon for rain in the morning and sunshine in the afternoon. A light waterproof shell of a rain jacket and pants in your day pack are highly recommended for the short rainstorms that may pass us while hiking.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our accommodations include a refurbished 16th century fort, a 17th century townhouse, and an Art Deco hotel with geothermally heated bathing pools. Since they are in historic buildings, the rooms are not always of uniform or international size. Our leaders do their best to assign rooms in a fair way so that all participants experience an equal advantage throughout the trip as a whole. Single rooms can be requested but are not always available, due to the limited space in the hotels. If you prefer a single room, please make your request as early as possible.

What to Expect

CUISINE We'll enjoy the fresh and varied cuisine of the Azores which include many Portuguese specialties. The islands are known for excellent seafood, spicy stews, sweet desserts, and local wines from the island of Pico. Lunch will be picnic-style, at our hotel, or at one of the local restaurants. Dinner will be at our hotel or a local restaurant in town. Please note that in Europe, the dinner hour is considerably later than what it is in the US. We do our best to secure early reservations for our groups, but most often the evening meal will be at 7:30 pm.

TRANSPORTATION Our van will transport the group's luggage, so you only need to carry a daypack for items you need during the day (rain gear, sweater, camera, water bottle, etc.). Trip members are always free to skip a day's hike and travel to the next destination in the support vehicle (or remain at the hotel if we are not transferring that day). On one day, we will spend a few hours in a 16-seater RIB for whale watching. We will also take ferries between the islands and take various forms of transportation on each island.

Additional Information

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 or email us at info@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this trip.

ABOUT NEW TRIPS

This is a new adventure and one that we are particularly excited about offering. However, as with all new departures, flexibility and a spirit of adventure are always appreciated! Activities are described in the itinerary but they can vary, sometimes considerably, depending on weather conditions, the group, and other factors.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts



MEN'S T-SHIRT



WOMEN'S T-SHIRT



PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST
+ KLEEN KANTEEN 27OZ WATER BOTTLE



PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at wildtrav.com/resources/toucan-club.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel stainless steel water bottle by Klean Kanteen and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia (\$100 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia (\$130 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of \$500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.



WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

- World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 2022, 11-time winner
- Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveller*, 2022, 3 years in a row
- Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row
- Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*
- Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner
- 50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row
- Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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