Cruise Details

Name:	Expedition Azores: An Atlantic Hiker’s Paradise
Reference:	HAPAGNAT2809
Operator:	Hapag-Lloyd Cruises
Cruise Type:	Ocean
Cruise Rating:	Expedition
Ship:	HANSEATIC nature
Regions:	Western Europe
Departs On:	25 Apr 28
Departs From:	Funchal, Madeira
Arrives On:	09 May 28
Arrives At:	Lisbon
Cruise Nights:	14
Total Vacation Days:	15

Itinerary

Day 1: Funchal, Madeira (Portugal)

Arrives On: 25 Apr 28

Day 3: Santa Maria Island (Portugal)

Get to know the varied faces of Europe’s westernmost archipelago intensively when your small expedition ship calls at all nine of the nine islands.A warm welcome will be reserved for you at the idyllic island of Santa Maria, the southernmost and oldest island. With its sunny climate, golden sandy beaches and rolling hills, it stands out from the volcanic landscape of its sister islands. Here time seems to go more slowly: tranquil Vila do Porto, the oldest town in the Azores, tells the tale of seafaring legends and the discovery of the New World. You will also be enchanted by the white houses and small farming communities on the island. Santa Maria is a paradise for nature lovers and hikers, with its hidden bays, red desert landscapes and lava caves. It will both awaken your spirit of adventure and invite you to stop for a while and enjoy the peace of the Atlantic.A hint of the

colonial past can still be sensed in the Azores today. The capital of the archipelago, Ponta Delgada on Sao Miguel, symbolises the islands' vibrant history. Churches, squares and the city hall exude baroque flair that you can soak up on a stroll at your own pace. The green island also enchants visitors with fertile valleys, thermal springs and Europe's only tea plantation. The crater lakes of Sete Cidades – which range from deep blue to turquoise depending on the light – reflect the creative power of nature. Your feelings of discovery will keep pace with the fantastic panoramas when you discover the hiker's paradise on foot – with its river valley, waterfalls and beaches.

Arrives On: 27 Apr 28

Day 5: Azores (Portugal)

Your route will also take you to Sao Jorge with its wide plateaus shaped by volcanic cones that look like a dragon – appropriately, Saint George the dragon slayer is the patron saint of the island. Find out more about this from your experts on board. The island is a great place for a hike* in the rich, endemic vegetation. Particularly stunning are the many fajas, lush, green stretches of land formed by cooled lava, where tropical fruits and even coffee are cultivated. Thousands of cows graze on the evergreen pastures of the highlands. On your explorations, make sure you try the products of the dairy farmers, like the famous Sao Jorge cheese: the island is also known as the "cheese island" thanks to its high-quality, certified cheeses.

Arrives On: 29 Apr 28

Day 6: Azores (Portugal)

Corvo, the smallest inhabited island in the Azores archipelago, is just 17 km² (6.5 mi.²) and is actually the crater of a massive volcano. Seen from a distance, it looks like a green mountain that seems to float in the dark-blue Atlantic. In the island's interior there is a deep caldera, with emerald-green lakes and grassy hills at its bottom. Your experts will explain the origins of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and the history of the Mediterranean windmills. There is only one word to describe a hike* along the crater rim: spectacular. The steep cliffs and broad expanse of sea around the island are a paradise for bird watchers and adventurers. What is it like to live here? Find the answer in the island's only town, Vila do Corvo, as you wander around its narrow streets with black stone houses.Flores, the westernmost island in Europe, is an authentic gem of the Azores for hikers, divers and those seeking peace and tranquillity. The island is a geological wonder, with thundering waterfalls on its steep slopes and rocky bays revealing the power of the ocean. Its small villages are a great place to meet the welcoming islanders. With a bit of luck, you might spot sperm whales, Risso's dolphins and large porpoises from the Zodiacs on the waters off the coast of Flores. The marvellous marine spectacles continue ashore with seas of vibrant flowers: the wild and beautiful flower island certainly lives up to its name. A nature retreat that remains unaffected by the hectic pace of the rest of the world.

Arrives On: 30 Apr 28

Day 8: Pico Island (Portugal)

Pico, dominated by Portugal's highest mountain at more than 2,300 m (7,546 ft) – which also gives its name to the island – is home to volcanoes and whales. Discover the secrets of the crater island between bizarre, rugged rock formations and lush green vegetation. With its walls of volcanic rock and the craftsmanship of its cultivation practices, its wine region has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Find out more when you explore Pico with your experts. The history of whaling is also present here – but all that's hunted here today are the best photos and the chances of capturing those are good. On board, your knowledge will be enriched with interesting expert presentations: delve deep into the world of the ocean giants.The island of Faial in the Azores is known for its cosmopolitan flair – with the famous Peter Cafe Sport in Horta's harbour, a mix of coffee house and tavern that has become a meeting point for sailors from all over the world. Listen to their tales of the high seas and try the Atlantic's best gin and tonic. With idyllic views over Pico, the marina is a great place for a stroll along the harbour walls with "artworks" painted by the sailors. It is said that those who don't leave something behind for posterity will have bad luck with the weather on their onward journeys. Learn all about volcanology when you visit the Capelinhos volcano – around 12,000 years old, the caldera has a diameter of some 2 km (1.2 mi.). Enjoy the views of the island on a circumnavigation of the volcano.A genuine insider tip among explorers and seldom visited, the appeal of Graciosa lies in its natural beauty. The pioneering spirit of past Portuguese seafarers will come to life when your expedition ship docks at the pier. Thanks to your experts on board, you will discover the special contrasts of the island. Graciosa, the "graceful" island, is simply idyllic with its little villages – and is all the more untamed around 100 m (328 ft) below ground: hot springs bubble in an impressive sulphur cave and rising steam creates a mystical atmosphere. Climb down to see this volcanic wonder up close. Typical of Graciosa are the old windmills, like silent guardians of the island. They are white underneath and have red, rotating, onion-shaped roofs.When your expedition ship reaches Terceira, you will travel back in time. Where Portuguese settlers set foot on dry land in the 15th century, your pioneering spirit will also be brought to life. The island was already on the transatlantic trade routes in the 16th and 17th centuries. Angra do Heroismo, once a supply port for Spain and Portugal, is now considered the most beautiful town in the Azores and has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In its narrow streets, the typical white houses, the cathedral and the palace have a story to tell of times gone by. As well as the rich culture and history of the island, Terceira's landscapes are also impressive: featuring hot springs, fumaroles and caves with lava tubes of basalt stalactites and stalagmites. The hike* through the wild highlands is one of the most beautiful routes on the island and takes you through unspoilt natural scenery.

Arrives On: 02 May 28

Day 15: Lisbon (Portugal)

Arrives On: 09 May 28

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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