

Faial - The Blue Island - Activities 2023

Sunvil can pre-book a variety of activities on Faial.
Please note that any pre-booked activity with Sunvil must be requested 14 days or more before departure.



Horta Private City Tour

Explore the city of Horta on foot with a local guide, taking in the major sights and learning all about the local architecture, history and culture of the islanders. It is a city with a real strong connection to the sea, with its science and culture focused around it. These particular features make this a historic and cosmopolitan centre, with a wealthy heritage, surrounded by amazing landscapes – such as the view to the highest mountain of Portugal, Mount Pico. This city tour will allow you to get to know the city – several historic monuments and symbolic spaces, as well as the gardens and green parks. Tour Itinerary: Peter Cafe Sport, Santa Cruz Fort, Regional Parliament, Carmo Church and Convent, Clock Tower, Florencio Terra Garden, University of the Azores – Department of Oceanography and Fisheries, Faialense Theatre, Republica Square, Imperio dos Nobres, Sociedade Amor da Patria, Municipal Market, Matriz Church, Jesuit College Church, City Hall, Horta Museum, Banco de Portugal, Infante Square and Horta Marina.

Price is £81 per person based on 2 people. Prices on request for different numbers of people.

Notes

- Meeting point is Horta Marina at 09:00
- Half Day: 2½ hours
- Children aged 5yrs or younger go free of charge
- Bring comfortable footwear and clothing, light jacket, water and sunscreen



Diving

Enjoy an unforgettable adventure filled with caves, volcanic drop-offs, underwater arches and an abundance of both Atlantic and Tropical fish life – parrot fish, groupers, sting and eagle rays, moray and conger eels, barracudas, amberjacks, turtles and dolphins. A fully equipped PADI dive centre is based in Horta.

Princess Alice bank (Jul-Sep)

The setting in the middle of the Atlantic offers the unique possibility to dive in the realm of seamounts. One of the few truly diveable oceanic seamounts of the Atlantic is located 45 miles SSW of the dive centre, the Princess Alice bank. Here you are venturing into the kingdom of the sea nomads and the large oceanic predators. Glide among dozens of manta rays, giant jacks, barracuda walls and massive schools of skipjack tuna. An experience you will never forget.

Meet at Horta marina at 07:30; 3 hour trip each way with about 4-5 hours at the site; 2 dives are included with a break on the surface (1-2 hours); About 8-9 hours at sea in total; Not recommended for those who suffer from sea sickness; Varied diving experience accepted as the sea bank is 32m deep, and there are always two trained guides present. Those with less experience can stay at a lesser depth because the mammals also come to the surface; A snack and soft drinks are included.

Price is £304 per person (2 dives from a Catamaran) or £273 (2 dives from a Zodiac) - minimum 6 people

Notes: A check dive is required before diving in Princess Alice Bank at an additional cost of £66 per person

Shark Dive (Jul-Sep)

If you choose to venture into the nearby Condor bank, the domain of one of the most beautiful and elegant ocean predators – the blue shark, then you will experience a dive unlike any other in the whole of Europe.

Meet at Horta marina at 08:00; Duration of the trip is about 4-5 hours, depending on when the sharks appear – usually it takes less time; Picnic lunch (sandwiches and fruit) included; Divers and snorkellers welcome; Sharks are brought to the surface by feeding them sardines, mackerel and tuna blood; Dives no more than 10 metres required; No cages required as the species that they usually see in the Azores are Blue Sharks (*Prionace Glauca*), Mako Sharks (*Isurus Oxyrinchus*) and Hammerhead Sharks (*Sphyrna Zygaena*).

Price is £203 per person - minimum 4 people

Note: A check dive is required before diving in Princess Alice Bank at an additional cost of £66 per person

Shore Dives (Apr-Oct)

There is a wide variety of dives targeting different species in different locations, banks near the coast, volcanic caves, etc. Locations are chosen depending on the experience of the divers. It is possible to dive in these locations with good visibility and no current between the months of April to October.

Price is £86 per person (Baptism - 1 dive)

Price is £76 per person (Night or Cave dive)

Notes

- Meeting point is Norberto Diver base in Horta marina at 08:30 for a normal dive; 07:30 off shore dives (Princess Alice); 08:00 Shark dives (or can be taken in the afternoon on request)
- Daily activity, mid Mar-mid Oct, for baleen whales and other marine mammals
- Suitable for all, from complete beginner to the most experienced, with boat dives
- Catamaran (8-10 people max) and Zodiacs (4-6 people max)
- Best season is Jul-Sep for mantas (devil rays) and other pelagics (bonito tuna, barracudas, skipjack tuna and some

varieties of rays)

- Shore dives include a 15 litre tank (232 BAR), weight belt, dive master guidance and boat transportation to and from the dive sites, within a 6-mile radius
- Minimum age of 12yrs applies if a Junior open water certificate achieved
- All divers have to carry a valid diving and medical certificates confirming fitness to dive
- Supplement per person for hire of wetsuit and regulator applicable locally (20 Euros per dive)
- There is a PADI dive shop in Horta

IMPORTANT

- At the time of booking we need the following information: Participants certification level, number of dives and date of the last dive. Depending on the last dive date, a refresher may be required.
- Waiting the correct amount of time before flying will reduce the nitrogen in your blood. As a general rule it is recommended to wait 24 hours before flying after doing any type of diving.



Guided Walks

The islands of the Azores, with their mild climate (day time temperature ranging from 14-22 degrees), are the most wonderful islands for walking. Our suggested walks incorporate some of the best scenic trails passing through the island's geosites – a site or an area with geological and scientific significance, whose geological characteristics (mineral, structural, geomorphological and physiographic) meet one or several criteria for classifying it as outstanding (valuable, rare, vulnerable or endangered). The Azores has a network of 120 geosites scattered throughout this nine island archipelago. On Faial there are six geosites: Capelinhos and Costado da Nau; Caldeira; Graben of Pedro Miguel; Morro de Castelo Branco; Monte da Guia; and Peninsula of Capelo.

Guided Walk – Caldeira

This 7km (4 hours) walk begins at the Caldeira viewpoint and passes around the crater's perimeter. Located in the centre of the island, the Natural Reserve of Caldeira is a protected landscape and a very important geosite. With around 2km in diameter, it was formed through several eruptions along the last 400 thousand years. The trail's altitude varies between 840 and 1040 metres, where it is recommended only on good weather days with clear visibility. As you circle the Caldeira you will appreciate the views over the North and West coasts, as well as its interior. Several specimens of endemic flora can be seen spotted along the way

- Difficulty: Grade 2 (Medium)
- Duration: Half Day

Price is £51 per adult and £36 per child (6-12yrs)

Guided Walk – Caldeira's Descent

This 10km (8 hours) walk begins, and ends, at the Caldeira viewpoint and circles around the crater's perimeter. You will descend to the bottom of the Caldeira, one of the most spectacular and largest volcanic calderas of the archipelago, where you can find, in perfect state of conservation, the natural vegetation of the Azores. On the descent, it is possible to see the abundant exuberance of the wet Laurel forest. The last part of this trail required extra care as the ground is uneven.

- Difficulty: Grade 3 (Hard)
- Duration: Full Day

Price is £71 per adult and £51 per child (6-12yrs)

Notes (Guided Walks)

- Departures: Daily – all year
- Half day departure time: 09:00 or 14:30
- Full day departure time: 09:00 (includes picnic lunch)

- Pick-up and drop-off: From your accommodation reception on Faial
- Minimum 2 people and maximum 8
- Recommended equipment: walking shoes, waterproof jacket, hat, sunscreen and bottled water



Private Taxi Tours

Sunvil is able to pre-book the following private taxi tours on Faial with an English speaking driver. Tours can also be tailor-made to suit the individual requirements of our clients, please telephone us for a quotation.

Faial Island (Full Day)

Depart from Horta towards Espalamaca, which offers a panoramic viewpoint over the city and over the islands of Pico and São Jorge, then via the mountain road towards Caldeira - the highest point on the island at 1,043 metres, the central crater, and Cabeço Gordo. Continue north to Praia do Norte and Capelinhos, the site of the last volcanic eruption in the Azores in 1957. Visit the museum, which details the evolution of the eruption. Taking the south road, stop at Varadouro to admire the natural swimming pools. Return to Horta with a last stop at the volcanic arches of Ponta Furada.

Faial Island (Half Day)

Take a tour of the island visiting the Caldeira, the highest point on the island at 1,043 metres; Capelinhos, the site of the last volcanic eruption in the Azores in 1957; and the interpretation centre which details the evolution of the eruption.

Price from Horta is £125 per taxi (Half Day) and £211 per taxi (Full Day)

Notes

- Pick-up from hotels on Faial at around 09:00.
- Pick up and drop off from hotels outside of Horta (Faial) at a supplement on request
- Prices are based on a maximum of 3 people per taxi
- Full Day: 7 hours
- Half Day: 3.5 hours
- Not included: Lunch and entrance fees to museums and parks
- A qualified English speaking guide can be provided at a supplement on request

Pico Island (Full Day)

Depart from Horta harbour to Pico Island (30 minutes by boat) – boat ticket not included. Depart from Madalena to the village of São Roque on the north coast of Pico, visiting the black rocks of Cachorro and Lajido (with an option of visiting a small vineyard museum – 2 Euros entry fee per person and sampling some Pico wines (five varieties) for 7 Euros per person) en route. Take the mountain road (altitude 800m) towards Lajes do Pico, for many years, the centre of the whaling industry in the Azores. Continue on to the Whaler's Museum (entrance fee not included) and home to a fascinating exhibition about the industry. Return to Madalena, via the south coast stopping at Misterio de São João and São Mateus church. Return to Faial by boat.

Price from Madalena harbour (Pico) is £165 per taxi (Full Day)

Notes

- Pick-up from hotels on Pico at around 09:00
- Meeting point on Pico (when coming from Faial) is Madalena harbour – meeting time shown on itinerary
- Prices are based on a maximum of 3 people per taxi
- Full Day: 7 hours
- Not included: Lunch and entrance fees to museums and parks and the boat crossing between Horta (Faial) and Madalena (Pico)
- A qualified English speaking guide can be provided at a supplement on request



Whale & Dolphin Watching Trip

Take a trip of a lifetime on board a Zodiac in search of cetacean activity – 27 of the planet's 80 species of whales and dolphins have been sighted off the coast of the Azores.

Important: Children aged 4yrs or under, pregnant women or any person suffering from severe back problems are not allowed on the Zodiac boats.

Price is £76 per adult and £38 per child (6-12 years) by Zodiac (01Mar-31Oct)

Zodiac Notes

- Excursion provider: Azores Experiences
- Meeting point is Azores Experiences base in Horta marina departing at 08:30 or 14:30
- Daily 3-hour excursions
- Transfers to/from the whaling base are not included
- Minimum child age is 6 years (accompanied by a parent or guardian)
- Apr to Sep is the best period to see whales off Faial
- Briefing by a marine biologist (c.20-minute talk)
- Zodiac boats (small, rigid hull inflatable carrying up to 12 people) are used
- We cannot guarantee that you will see a cetacean but it is unlikely that you should be so unlucky
- Pre-booking in July and August is recommended

Price is £76 per adult and £46 per child (5-12 years) by Catamaran (01Apr-30Sep)

Catamaran Notes

- Meeting point is Norberto Diver's base in Horta marina departing at 08:30 or 14:30
- Daily 3-hour excursions
- Transfers to/from the whaling base are not included
- Minimum child age is 5 years (accompanied by a parent or guardian)
- Minimum 5 and maximum 12 people
- Apr to Sep is the best period to see whales off Faial
- Briefing by a marine biologist (c.20-minute talk)
- We cannot guarantee that you will see a cetacean but it is unlikely that you should be so unlucky
- Pre-booking in July and August is recommended
- The catamaran Physeter is a comfortable and spacious boat of 12 metres, suitable for the elderly, people with reduced mobility and families with children, being the perfect boat for day trips. It is used for cetacean watching, private travel and diving at Princess Alice Bank. The catamaran has 1 toilet, kitchen and cabins and a bow platform great for spotting the animals.

