AN ISLAND ODYSSEY: AZORES, MADEIRA, CANARIES & CAPE VERDE

16 DAYS/13 NIGHTS – NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER

EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience a rare visit to remote islands with deep-seated cultures, unique cuisine, and seafaring traditions.
- View spectacular geology: an active volcano, stunning lava formations, hot springs and the natural wonders of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- Enjoy opportunities to search for marine wildlife including dolphins, sperm whales at the height of the season, plus the possibility of blue, sei, orca and pilot whales.

Immerse yourself in the theme of island exploration and make plenty of discoveries of your own: secluded archipelagos and unique island flora and fauna, whale-watching, island cultures and ancient lore. Explore three archipelagos known as the Macaronesia region: the Azores, Madeira (both belonging to Portugal) and the Canaries (Spain). Then voyage to isolated Cape Verde off the coast of West Africa. Travel back in time to a slice of centuries past.

SEP. 21 AND 22: U.S./SÃO MIGUEL, AZORES, PORTUGAL
Fly overnight to Ponta Delgada on the island of São Miguel in the Azores, where we embark National Geographic Explorer. (Sep. 22: D)

SEP. 23: FAIAL, AZORES
We devote three days to the Azores. Today we explore the Furnas Valley and its famed hot springs, hiking the trails or perhaps visiting a tea plantation or the lovely garden of Terra Nostra. Savor a traditional cozido lunch, naturally cooked from the volcanic activity—underground! (B,L,D)

SEP. 24: FAIAL, AZORES
The Azores are a whale-watching mecca, where more than 20 different types of cetaceans can be spotted. We go in search of these gentle giants in the channel north of Pico and Horta islands. Once ashore on the island of Faial, we head to Capelinhos, where we can see how dramatically the landscape changed when the volcano at the western end of the island erupted in 1957. Later, stroll along the marina, visit the excellent scrimshaw museum, and raise a glass at Peter’s Café Sport, a legendary pub where sea adventurers historically dropped off their mail. For those interested, we can arrange for scuba diving beneath startlingly clear water. Or see some of the countryside on foot with a guided hike. (B,L,D)
SEP. 25: SANTA MARIA, AZORES
Our local whale experts have centuries of ties to their surroundings and an instinct for scouting its wild inhabitants. They will guide us on our morning whale-watching. In the afternoon, we go ashore at Santa Maria, historically significant as the first landfall of Christopher Columbus on his return from the Americas in 1493. Optional hiking trails allow us to experience the scenery and atmosphere of the island. (B,L,D)

SEP. 26: AT SEA (B,L,D)

SEP. 27 AND 28: MADEIRA, PORTUGAL
Often referred to as the ‘floating garden of the Atlantic,’ Madeira has beautiful scenery, with a beautiful climate. Walk in the Laurisilva forest, endemic to Macaronesia and now a UNESCO Site. Wander along the levadas (former irrigation channels) that network the island or visit the Botanical Gardens. Sample Madeira’s seafood and hear a performance of authentic Fado singing. Sample the famed Madeira wines, and browse the exquisite embroidery and wicker crafted here. Zodiac cruise around the nearby islands of Desertas, a nature reserve, to see the multi-colored coastline geology and search for the rare endangered monk seal. (B,L,D)

SEP. 29: AT SEA/CANARY ISLANDS, SPAIN
After a morning at sea, arrive in the lush, European-flavored Canary Islands, known for their sunny climate and historical heritage. La Palma is known as Isla Bonita, the “pretty isle,” for its mountain slopes set against azure waters. Head up to for beautiful views and visit the church of Our Lady of the Snows, with its Spanish-Moorish architecture. (B,L,D)

SEP. 30: EL HIERRO, CANARY ISLANDS
El Hierro is a hidden gem, boasting unique wildlife, breathtaking hiking trails and stunning lava formations, trees that are a thousand years old, and giant lizards on the verge of extinction. Declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, each corner of El Hierro reveals something spectacular, whether strolling through a small village or taking in the view atop the towering sea cliffs. (B,L,D)

OCT. 1 AND 2: AT SEA (B,L,D)

OCT. 3 AND 4: CAPE VERDE
The spectacular mountainous volcanic islands of Cape Verde comprise one of the world’s smallest independent nations. See impressive landscapes on Santo Antao: terraced hillsides, eucalyptus forests and deep valleys. Visit the island of Fogo, and add volcano-gazing to your life list. We drive 5,000 feet up the volcano to sample the local wine at its source: inside the caldera! (B,L,D)

OCT. 5-6: PRAIA, SANTIAGO ISLAND, CAPE VERDE/DISEMBARK/U.S.
Disembark in Praia, the bustling capital of Cape Verde. This morning we see the old fortress, cathedral and the pelourinho, a relic of the slave trade. Or you may want to hike the countryside. Dotted with small villages, it offers an insight into daily life on the island. In the late evening we transfer to the airport for our overnight flight home, arriving on Oct. 6. (Oct. 5: B,L)

OPTIONAL BONUS:
OCT. 6-12: ATLANTIC CROSSING-
Cape Verde to Salvador, Brazil
Guests who choose to continue to Salvador, Brazil will stay aboard National Geographic Explorer on a bonus six-day Atlantic crossing, with time to relax, hear talks from our staff, and watch for whales and other marine life. We arrive in Salvador, Brazil on Oct. 12 for disembarkation and transfer to the airport for an overnight flight to the U.S., arriving Oct. 13. (B,L,D daily aboard ship)

Aboard the 148-guest National Geographic Explorer

2014 Departure Date: Sep 21

2014 Cost Per Person Double Occupancy

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Sole Occupancy

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Advance Payment: $1,000

Sample Airfares: Miami/Sao Miguel, Azores, return Praia, Cape Verde/Miami. Ask for other gateways.

Economy from $1,650
Business from $6,000

Subject to change.

Cost Includes: Accommodations; meals indicated; excursions; services of Lindblad Expeditions’ Leader, Naturalist staff and expert guides; use of kayaks; all port charges and service taxes.

Not Included: Air transportation; immigration/passport/visa fees; personal items such as alcoholic beverages, emails, laundry, voyage DVD etc. Gratuities to ship’s crew at your discretion.