AN ACTIVE EXPLORATION OF THE AZORES
OCTOBER 10 – 15, 2019

On this all-encompassing Azorean journey, experience hiking in the volcanic crater of Sete Cidades and take in expansive views over the lakes at this place rated as one of the 7 wonders of the Portuguese world. Bathe in natural thermal pools in the midst of pure nature. Savor a meal cooked in natural volcanic ovens. Enjoy a world-class whale watching excursion to discover the marine wildlife of the Azores Islands, such as the resident sperm whales and dolphins.

GROUP SIZE: 12 to 23 guests

PRICING: $2,995 per person, double occupancy / $3,890 per person, single occupancy

STUDY LEADER: Jerimiah Trimble. Curatorial Associate of the Ornithology Department of the Museum of Comparative Zoology.
SCHEDULE BY DAY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10
DEPART U.S. FOR PONTA DELGADA, PORTUGAL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11
ARRIVE PONTA DELGADA, PORTUGAL

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12
SETE CIDADES / SÃO MIGUEL / FERRARIA

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13
VILA FRANCA DO CAMPO

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14
FURNAS LAKE / SANGUINHO

After lunch, explore western São Miguel. Drive along the southern coast and stop in Ferraria. If the tide permits, stop to swim in the oceanic pools heated by the surrounding volcanic vents – a wonderful opportunity to relax after your day of activities.

Dinner this evening will be at a local beefsteak house.

Overnight: Azor Hotel (B, L, D)

This morning, arrive on independent flights and transfer to the hotel. Your rooms are booked to guarantee that you can check-in upon arrival and rest.

Meet your fellow travelers and local guide in the hotel lobby this afternoon for a brief information session and welcome meeting.

Begin your visit on the island with a gastronomic experience in the city center. Head to the seafront area on a soft walking tour along Ponta Delgada’s old city. Stop in a few restaurants to taste the Azorean flavors and wines. A diverse selection of starters and main dishes will be brought to the table for a tapas-style meal. Along the way you will see the main attractions in Ponta Delgada: Portas da Cidade, Matriz Church, City Hall, São Bráz Military Fort, and São Francisco Square.

Enjoy a welcome dinner at Azor Hotel in the center of the city.

Overnight: Azor Hotel (L, D)

In the late morning, head to Sete Cidades to experience one of the most legendary lakes on the islands, enclosed in the Sete Cidades volcanic complex. Once at the bottom of the crater, you will have the option of kayaking in the lake of Sete Cidades, hiking along the shoreline, or setting up to take some fantastic shots of the scenery. A typical Azorean picnic lunch will be served on the lake shore.

Overnight: Azor Hotel (B, L, D)

This morning, depart from the hotel and head to Sete Cidades for a half-day trip. You will have the option to kayak or hike around the lake, enjoy a traditional Azorean lunch, and visit the famous Portas da Cidade. After lunch, explore western São Miguel.

On the way back from Vila Franca, enjoy a traditional barbeque in a scenic spot over the sea.

Later, take a Jeep Safari to the natural reserve of Fire Lake, a pristine blue lake in a volcanic crater. During your jeep tour you will pass through streams and the beautiful waterfall “Salto do Cabrito”.

Finally, stop at the only tea plantation in Europe where you will be able to visit a working tea factory and take a break to taste the tea.

Dinner this evening is accompanied by Fado music in a cozy local restaurant.

Overnight: Azor Hotel (B, L, D)

This morning, depart on a soft hiking tour around the Furnas Lake shore. During this hike
you will have the opportunity to appreciate and learn about the variety of endemic flora species of the Azores.

Next, stop at Caldeiras da Lagoa das Furnas (Furnas Lake Calderas) to cook the famous “cozido das Furnas”. Here you will see your dinner going into the “oven”. Dinner in the morning, you ask? Yes, the special “cozido meal” cooks underground for 6 hours only with steam from the Earth.

While dinner is in the oven, you will be transferred to Faial da Terra for a 2.5 hour walking tour in the interior of the island. Your walk starts on a steep, narrow road that leads you to Sanguinho – a village that has been abandoned since the early 70's and is now being restored. The rest of the trail is in the woods, with hilly stretches between dense and beautiful vegetation. Upon reaching Salto do Prego’s waterfall, you will have the opportunity to take a dip before enjoying a picnic lunch on the lake shore.

On the way back, follow a different trail, returning in time for refreshments in town and mingling with the local people.

Before dinner you’ll have free time to dip in the amazing tank of ironed hot water just in front of the hotel in the botanical garden.

For dinner tonight, enjoy your “cozido meal” at the Terra Nostra Garden Hotel.

Overnight: Terra Nostra Garden Hotel (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15
DEPART FOR U.S.

Today, enjoy a light lunch with beautiful views over the beach and coast, or do some last minute shopping in town. Transfer to the airport this afternoon to meet independent flights home (B, L).