
Essential Information

Swimming with Wild Dolphins

Sao Miguel Island, Azores

Whale'come!

This information sheet is to wish you a wonderful trip to the Azores and to confirm any last minute details. We are sure you are getting very excited by now. This is a very beautiful time to visit the Azores and the sightings of dolphins and whales continue to be exceptional so be prepared for anything!

Money

The local lingo is Portuguese, although most people we work with speak excellent English. The currency is in Euros. There are cash machines in town. You can pay by credit card for food at the hotel and for souvenirs at the whale watch base or hotel or carry some cash.

Please read this carefully and ensure you have sent us your completed signed booking, medical & liability release forms & read our safety briefing.

Please also ensure that when you arrive in the Azores, you hand your Accommodation Voucher to the hotel reception and your Activity Voucher to the boat base reception.

If you need to contact us before departing for the Azores Please contact the Dolphin and Whale Connection office in the UK Tel: + 44 (0) 1273 882778 email: info@dolphinandwhaleconnection.com

If you need to contact us once you have departed for the Azores regarding any alterations to your travel plans Please contact our local representatives in Ponta Delgada: Futurismo tel: +351 296 628 522 or +351 296 010 083 or or TM +351 967 805 101 (24hrs)

Please call our UK office on + 44 (0) 1273 882778 or our UK mobile + 44 (0)7932 154690 if you experience any problems contacting our local representatives.



What you will need to bring

- Wet suit hire is included in the cost of your holiday. Its use is highly recommended for added buoyancy and protection. Sea temperatures are 22-24oC. Perfectly warm to swim for short periods.
- Masks and snorkels are included in the cost of your holiday. These are standard adult size. We recommend that younger children bring their own mask & snorkel for a better fit. Fins are not included and you do not need them. However, if you are confident using them and have experience with fins, we recommend using these (particularly the shorter ones) for a more streamlined and effortless swimming style and help to enhance your encounters. Fins are sold locally in sports shops including Decathlon and Sports Zone in Ponta Delgada's shopping centre, Parque Atlântico (ask the staff at your hotel reception for directions).
- Light waterproof/windproof jackets are useful for the occasional shower on the boats or land. The boat company will supply rainproof jackets in the event of heavy rain. Bring clothes that dry quickly as humidity can be high.

Getting There

Please give yourselves plenty of time to check in for your flight to the Azores (especially if you are flying from Stansted - it gets VERY busy there!)

Baggage delays and what to take on board We suggest you bring essentials in your hand luggage, a change of clothes and a wash bag in the event that the airline delays your baggage (more likely if you are transferring planes).

Transferring flights at Lisbon Some flights are direct to Ponta Delgada (PDL) and others involve a plane change in Lisbon. Please note that Lisbon Airport has 2 terminals, so check which one your PDL flight departs from. If your luggage has been checked through to the Azores you will NOT have to collect it in Lisbon. If you are staying in Lisbon make sure the taxi takes you to the correct terminal for departures to Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel Island in the Azores.

Your transfer from your airport in the Azores You will be met at Ponta Delgada Airport, Sao Miguel Island, Azores by our representative from **Futurismo** holding a sign with our logo on it and/or their company's logo (see below)



We have your flight information and have arranged your transfer according to the information provided to us. If you miss your connection in Lisbon, please inform our local representatives Futurismo tel +351 296 628 522 or +351 296 010 083 or or TM +351 967 805 101 (24hrs). If your flight arrival in the Azores is delayed, our local transfer representatives will know about it and will still meet you.

On arrival at your hotel Please present your Accommodation Voucher to the hotel receptionist on arrival. This details what has been pre-paid for your accommodation. You will be able to pay the hotel directly for additional items such as use of the mini bar or room service when you check out. You can purchase drinks and light snacks in the hotel bar on arrival. If you have time, you can visit the boat base and main office for an orientation and to check your boat schedule.

- Sun hats that stay on, sunglasses and sun protection are essential.
- If you are prone to seasickness please bring some medication.
- Valid passport, standard health and valuables insurance, drivers license (If you want to hire a car)
- Waterproof bag/rucksack for the boat to protect your camera equipment from the occasional sea spray. Shoes that grip.
- Beach towel to use on the boat to dry off between swims. The hotel provides all towels and linen.
- Warm fleece, warm hat layers or sweater for the boat if temperature drops and wind picks up or if you feel cold after being in the water.

Meals Your breakfast will be a delicious buffet with plenty of fresh fruit, breads, cheeses, meats and cereals. There is also cooked breakfast option on the buffet. You can purchase drinks and bar food in the hotel bar which also offers room service until midnight (for those of you arriving late in the evening). The lunch and evening meal is not included in the price of the holiday. There are cafes and shops to buy lunch in the town, and of course the hotel has a very good restaurant offering an extensive range of meals.

WIFI and mobile reception The hotel has WIFI. There is good mobile phone coverage at the hotel and all over the town.

Room facilities Rooms come equipped with a safety deposit box. Bring a small kettle with a European adapter if you want to make hot drinks in your room as there are no tea/coffee making facilities.

Your hotel address and location

Please refer to your Accommodation Voucher sent with this Welcome Letter for your hotel details and hotel contact information. Locate your hotel on the map below to view the distance from the hotel to the boat base (all hotels are within walking distance of the boat base and the marina). The Sao Miguel Park Hotel for example, is a 15 minute walk from the boat base.

Our Boat Base Location in Ponta Delgada

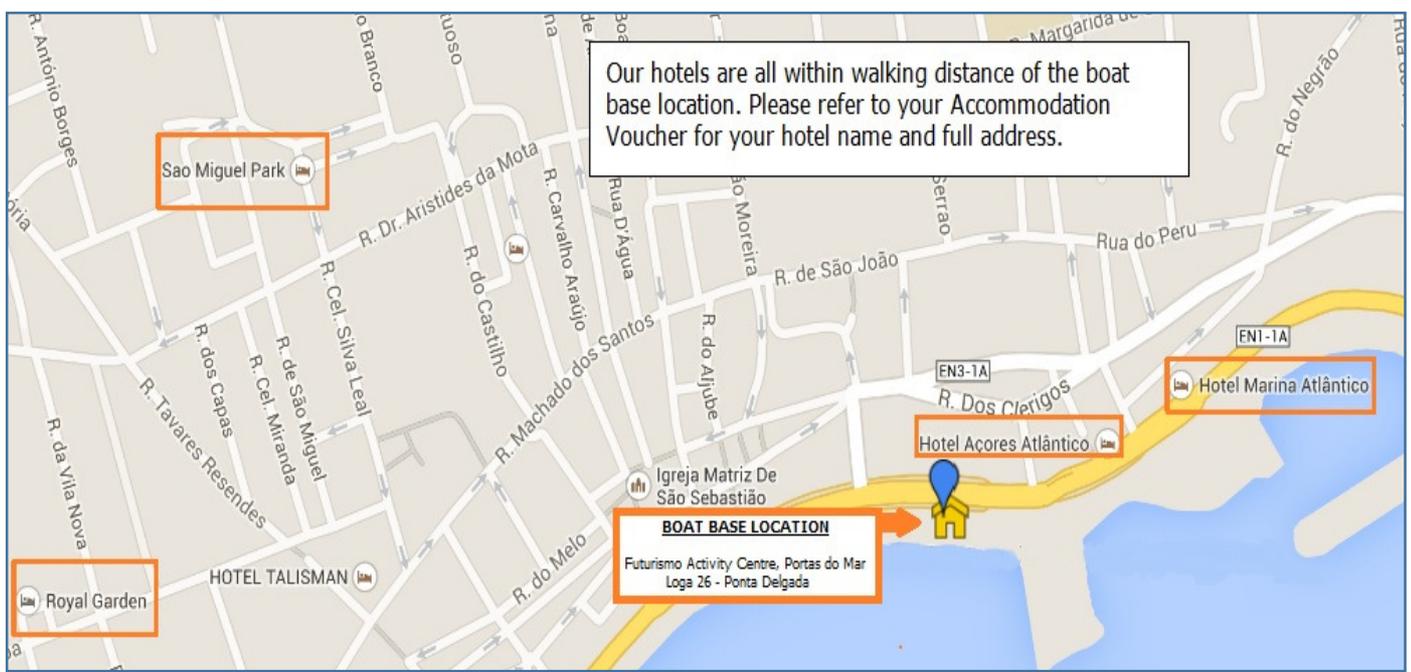
FUTURISMO ACTIVITY CENTRE (see map below)

Portas do Mar . Loja 26

Loja A . Ponta Delgada

Tel +351 296 628 522 or +351 296 010 083

TM +351 967 808 666 or +351 967 805 101 (24hrs)



Other activities & tours

For those wanting more activities, the boat base can arrange whale watching trips (there is no component of whale watching on our swimming with dolphins program). The boat base can also book inland tours of the island giving you an excellent chance to appreciate the island's rugged beauty and magical charm.

There is also access to swim in the sea, nearby walks, bird watching, snorkelling in the lagoon and rocky coves (the beaches are mostly volcanic rock). Wonderful hiking, jeep tours, bike tours and nature walks.

Children will enjoy the outdoor swimming pool located by the boat base and the local botanical gardens will be very exciting to explore!

Ponte Delgada's shopping centre, Parque Atlântico, is within walking distance of our hotels; ask staff at your hotel reception for directions.

The program can be as relaxed or active as you choose.

Your Boat Trip Schedule

Please present your Activity Voucher to the reception staff at the boat base when you arrive.

We suggest you go to the base at your earliest convenience after arrival to check your schedule. At this time, you will be given an orientation and answers to any questions you may have.

On your first visit to the boat base, please check boat times and the best time to collect your pre-boarding ticket (we suggest you find out about the quieter times to collect your pre-boarding ticket as the booking desk can get very busy).

Your boat trips will either be in the mornings or afternoons lasting about 3 hours. There are 3 or 5 scheduled trips with additional trips depending upon your preference at booking.

Please note your boat schedule can change, if we have to cancel due to bad weather. In this instance, you will be offered revised times and land activities as an alternative to going out to sea.

Safety & Procedures for Swimming with Wild Dolphins in the Azores

It is assumed that you can swim, that you have had experience swimming in the open sea and that you are competent with a mask and snorkel. There will be a practise session to get comfortable and learn how to climb the ladder back into the boat. Please be aware that swimming in the open ocean can be tiring, especially if there is a lot of wind and there are swells and waves. Also if it is early or late in the season, you can get cold between swims if the sun is not out and wind builds up. Take layers to wear and a towel to dry yourself, even a warm hat. Take your own jacket too so you have the option of a double layer.

You will not go far from the boat and you can ask for a buoyancy aid if you need it. Please follow the instructions of the dolphin swim guides at all times as this will ensure your safety and enhance your experience. In the Azores, most encounters occur as the dolphins are passing underneath. Although not essential,



Weather

Weather conditions are described below. The spring /summer season is generally a very good climate. If there is a bad weather pattern or high winds it generally only stays for a day or so as this oceanic climate is very changeable. The skippers and marine experts can advise us of conditions which can change dramatically in a short space of time. We have to be flexible and go with nature on this. After 10 years of experience, we say on average, if unlucky you could lose 1 day out of 6, due to bad weather.

If a trip gets cancelled, we will re-schedule trips for you. This will not incur any extra charges to you. We do everything in our power to ensure you get out on the water.

PLEASE NOTE: If we are not able to reschedule a cancelled trip, please ask the boat base to exchange this for a half day tour on land or an alternative day at sea. Partial refunds for trips are possible but it is better value for you to exchange for an alternative tour while you are there.

If a guest chooses not to take a pre booked boat trip, they will forfeit this trip. Please note, it is NOT the responsibility of The Dolphin and Whale Connection to provide alternative trips in this instance.

if you are confident with and have experience using fins, we recommend these (especially the shorter ones) as you will be able to swim faster to extend the encounter.

Your confidence will increase after each trip you take, and you will be more relaxed after your first few encounters.



Prior to your first trip to sea, you will be given a full briefing about the guidelines for swimming with dolphins and procedures for getting on and off the boat safely. There are regular audio/visual presentations offered by the marine biologist either in the lecture room or on the boat. This will give you further information about the marine life and also help you understand the behaviour of the different species of dolphin and what to expect when approaching them underwater.

All through the trip the guide on board will be giving you information and is there to assist you with anything you may need. They are extremely helpful and really happy to answer any questions you may have. Please ask lots of questions!

In the Azores, there are specific codes of conduct and guidelines around swimming with dolphins. All this information and any emergency signals will be explained to you.

Your skipper knows the best way to approach the animals with sensitivity and respect. He will put the boat in the best position to maximise your chances of having a good underwater



encounter. Only enter the water when the skipper and guide gives the word. You will be guided how to get off the boat and

Average rainfall & temperature
in the Azores

	Rainfall (mm)	Min°C	Max°C
Jan	112	12	16
Feb	98	11	16
Mar	81	12	17
April	65	13	16
May	56	14	19
June	49	16	21
July	35	18	24
Aug	54	19	25
Sept	90	19	24
Oct	100	17	21
Nov	115	15	19
Dec	120	13	17

slip in the water quietly with no splashing and when re-entering the boat there is a ladder (you will need some strength in your arm or one of the crew can assist you back onto the boat). If you have any injuries please let them know the best way to assist. Only 2 people at a time enter the water and are watched by the



guide who gives instructions from the boat about which direction to swim. In between swims, people usually keep their wetsuit on or take the top section down to keep cool if the weather is hot.

Overall, when in the water with the dolphins, stay calm look all around you, keep your hands close to your body. The dolphins are very curious and often approach swimmers or may just swim beneath. It is a very magical and beautiful experience.

Enjoy...

Your transfer back to the airport from your hotel

Please confirm the pick up time & hotel (detailed on your Activity Voucher) for your transfer to the airport with Futurismo (the boat company who also organise your airport transfers for you).

You can do this anytime during the week of your holiday at the boat base. Your pick up time from the hotel is always 2 hrs prior to your flight departure time (check your latest flight information from your travel documents and ensure that Futurismo have the correct pick up time for you).

Ponta Delgada – mini restaurant guide

We have compiled the following list of our favourite restaurants in Ponta Delgada which we hope will be useful to you. Your hotel reception will be happy to make reservations. Many of these restaurants get fully booked so we recommend booking a table.

Conmaya 5 mins from the Sao Miguel Park Hotel, great local cuisine with an international style.

Collegio 27 International Cuisine and Jazz club Tel: (00 351) 910 441 214. One of our favourites, everything cooked with an exquisite attention to flavours and presentation, great atmosphere.

Anfiteatro Tel: 296 206 154/5 Close to the whale watch base and yacht club. **Downstairs** at the very end of the Pavilhao do Mar – views of the harbour and boats, relaxed atmosphere. Great salads, wraps and “deli” food with sushi sometimes on the menu. **Upstairs** - big open plan restaurant serving international cuisine with an emphasis on experimental dishes good selection of wines and a taster menu with wine to go with each course.

Tasca Rua do Aljube Tel: 296 288 880 Busy, local fare and tapas, great atmosphere “Art, Food, Friends”

Cais Tel: 20 962 822 004 or 296 384 811 Local fish restaurant with great sea views and 15 min drive from the centre. The restaurant will do a free pick up from the hotel and then drop you back. Popular with the locals, it has a lively atmosphere, authentic Azorean sea food and is reasonably priced.

Rotas - Rua Pedro Homen (49) VEGETARIAN Tel: 296 628 560 Excellent vegetarian restaurant with an alternative “arty” feel, fantastic unusual dishes and mouth watering desserts.

Mimo.it Tel: 296 282 290 Excellent Italian cuisine

Arriba Mexican, Reasonably priced, near the centre (ask at reception for details)

Sao Miguel Park Hotel If you are staying at the Sao Miguel Park Hotel, a buffet is served from 7 - 9:30pm every evening which costs 15 euros per person or 22 euros per person with unlimited wine & beer!

Reserva Tapas Bar Tel: 351 910 543 159 highly rated on Trip Advisor.

We wish you a wonderful adventure and a very memorable and fulfilling experience with the whales & dolphins. Please do not hesitate to call should you have any more queries. It has been a pleasure helping you make this trip happen and we are looking forward to meeting you in person and sharing the ocean adventure together,

With warm wishes, dolphin delight and wonderful whales

Amanda & The Team at The Dolphin and Whale Connection
