

Walking in the Azores

Trip Code: SGSM

Version: SGSM Walking in the Azores



WALK & TREK



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk to Sete Cidades Caldeira with its mystic blue and green crater lakes
- Enjoy the chance to get up close to nature on a whale watching boat tour
- Delight in the freedom to get off the beaten track
- Stay in 2-star and 3-star family-run hotels in Ponta Delgada, capital of the Azores, and the volcanic hot springs area of Furnas

- Option to upgrade to 4-star hotels for the entire trip, including 3 nights at the renowned Terra Nostra Garden Hotel in Furnas

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days walking and sightseeing
- Daily departures available
- Join at / End in Ponta Delgada

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 4 nights Hotel
- 3 nights Hotel with swimming pool

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

The Azores - nine little islands amidst the wild Atlantic that are full of mystery, staggering volcanic scenery, and a history of great explorers. This one-week self-guided walk and drive holiday gives you the opportunity to delve into the amazing world of Sao Miguel, known as the Green Island thanks to its dense and incredible vegetation - a reputation it certainly lives up to!

Your walks will take you to the stunning Sete Cidades Caldeira with its blue and green lakes, to the Fogo Lake nature reserve that teems with birds and other wildlife, to the summit of Pico da Vara to stand on top of this amazing island, to the lush Furnas Valley, past waterfalls, and to the forgotten village of Sanguinho. You will also have the opportunity to visit the oldest and only remaining tea plantation in Europe as well as embark on a whale watching tour so you can experience all sorts of facets of life on this enchanting island. Spending 4 nights in Ponta Delgada and 3 nights in Furnas on a B&B basis gives you the freedom to really get the most from your holiday and to soak up local life.

Is this holiday for you?

We have specially designed this holiday with flexibility in mind, to give you the opportunity to make the most of your holiday and everything this gem of the Atlantic has to offer. By designing this as a hike and drive itinerary, hiring a car means that you can have even more freedom - pre-booking your hire car well in advance is highly recommended. Your walks will take you to the natural masterpieces of Sete Cidades Caldeira, Fogo Lake, and through lush valleys punctuated with waterfalls. You will walk for an average of 3-4 hours per day on marked paths, which allows plenty of time to make stop-offs at viewpoints both along your walks and during your drives, as well as to enjoy your accommodation's facilities.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive in Ponta Delgada and explore the capital of the Azores.

Arrive on the island of Sao Miguel and make the short journey to your hotel in Ponta Delgada, capital of the Azores. Depending on your arrival time you can head out to explore what used to be a simple fishing village attracting fisherman to its calm coves. This once sleepy village soon became the key port for the island and today it is a cosmopolitan city that embraces five centuries of history, creating a captivating atmosphere.

Take a stroll under the three-arched city gates and through the historic centre filled with cobbled streets, informative museums, and manicured gardens. The white buildings edged in local black volcanic rock provide a photogenic backdrop to the city's everyday life as you relax at one of its inviting cafes or simply wander along and soak up the atmosphere. We recommend a visit to the Convento de Nossa Senhora da Esperança, a convent dating back to 1545 and which is one of the most important in Portugal thanks to its statue of Santo Cristo dos Milagres that was gifted by Pope Paul in the 16th century. The statue has such significance that it is the star of the Santo Cristo festival, when the statue is paraded around the churches of the city, illuminated by thousands of lights.

SANTO CRISTO FESTIVAL: The ritual dates back to 1700 and take place on the fifth Sunday after Easter and is well worth seeing if you are visiting the Azores at this time.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Explore mysterious Lagoa do Fogo.

On your first walk of the week you will get to explore the mysterious nature reserve at Lagoa do Fogo, or 'Fire Lake'. Even the journey to the start of your walk is impressive as you experience the landscape change around you, travelling away from the urbanised port through the countryside and into the volcanic realm to begin your walk. Your route will take you to the stunning 'lake of fire', surrounded by steep-sided cliffs within a nature reserve. This walk is an excellent introduction to the magnificent landscapes of Sao Miguel, the diversity of the island and the wonderful endemic flora and fauna which thrive on the fertile soils.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 520M	 Descent 500M	 Time 4-5 hours	 Distance 12KM
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DAY 3

Walk to captivating Sete Cidades.

Today begins with the short journey to the magnificent Sete Cidades Caldeira and its two crater lakes; one blue and one green, separated by a seven-arched bridge which represents the 7 cities of lost Atlantis. Your route allows you to explore this magnificent area, taking you past sweet-smelling hydrangeas to a viewpoint for simply breathtaking views of this natural marvel. Legend has it that the lakes were formed by the tears of a shepherd and princess on the island who shared a forbidden love, however we will let you draw your own conclusions.

On your drive home we recommend taking a little detour along the northern coastal road. Here you will find peaceful villages with traditional white houses, quaint harbours and secluded swimming areas where you can enjoy a dip in the Atlantic waters. In the evening, you will return to Ponta Delgada where you can enjoy one of the island's many culinary delights at a nearby restaurant.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 130M	 Descent 280M	 Time 2-3 hours	 Distance 7KM
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DAY 4

Visit Europe's only tea plantation and walk along Sao Miguel's northern coast for panoramic views.

Today you will drive to your second base for the week, set within the volcanic realm of Furnas on the western side of the island. The entire Furnas valley sits within a giant crater known for intense geothermal activity, with numerous fumaroles, mud pots, and hot springs. Although the last major eruptions occurred in the 17th century, there is no mistaking that this part of the island is very much alive! Lush verdant forests and beautiful bright hydrangeas flourish in the fertile volcanic soils, while the hot springs bubble away, and steam holes put on a show for passers-by.

Along your drive, you have the opportunity to stop off at Gorreana to discover Sao Miguel's unexpected crop, tea. The island is home to the only tea plantation in Europe, in operation since 1883. Here you can walk the fields, take a tour of the factory and see its traditional machinery that is still being used and discover the process of making this popular brew, before driving on to the small village of Maia on the north-east coast where you can walk between nature and culture along the serene black-sand beach of Praia da Viola. This fantastic walk will take you out to the coast to one of the most beautiful natural beaches of the archipelago.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel with swimming pool	 Ascent 240M	 Descent 240M	 Time 2 hours	 Distance 6KM
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DAY 5

Hike the active volcanic crater at Furnas, and bathe surrounded by verdant foliage at the Terra Nostra hot springs.

On today's walk you will get to explore the Furnas volcanic crater, with its lake surrounded by the lush vegetation that prospers in the fertile soils. This bubbling volcano also heats the delightful hot springs for which this part of the island is so well known, so remember to bring your bathing costume. This natural heating system has influenced many facets of Sao Miguel's traditional island culture: as well as the social aspects and health benefits of relaxing in its hot springs, the volcano's natural geothermal energy is harnessed in the cooking of one of the island's tastiest dishes - the famous cozido. This stew-like one-pot dish is considered a significant element of Portuguese heritage and is a hearty meal for any walker.

After your walk you will have time to experience the benefits of the island's thermal hot springs for yourself at the world-renowned Parque Terra Nostra (day pass entry to botanical gardens and hot springs approx. €17pp, April 2026). Relaxing in the soothing waters of these natural hot springs set within woodlands and gardens makes for a unique experience in nature not to be missed - and this really is the perfect way to unwind after a day of exploring!

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel with swimming pool	 Ascent 150M	 Descent 150M	 Time 3 hours	 Distance 11KM
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DAY 6

Discover the tranquillity of the Ribeiro do Faial da Terra and the forgotten village of Sanguinho.

Today's route takes you to discover the landscapes of the south-eastern part of the island, where you will hike through the exuberant vegetation of the Ribeira do Faial da Terra. You will ascend this vibrant valley that is punctuated with historic mills and dramatic waterfalls to reach the village of Sanguinho, known as 'the lost village'. The traditional stone houses of Sanguinho were home to some of the island's wealthiest inhabitants for over a century, and the remote location provided refuge from the Faial da Terra River. However mass emigration for the Americas in the sixties and seventies and the quest for the amenities of modern life have left this once-bustling village abandoned and waiting for you to explore. The views from here are fantastic and you will soon understand the location's appeal.

Returning to your accommodation you will have time to enjoy a dip in the pool or visit the Parque Terre Nostra once more to further relax in its inviting hot springs. In the evening why not venture out to delight in the tasty Azorean cuisine in one of the nearby restaurants.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel with swimming pool	 Ascent 265M	 Descent 265M	 Time 2 hours	 Distance 5KM
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DAY 7

Spot whales and dolphins on a half-day whale watching excursion and see the island anew.

What better way to spend your final day on the archipelago's 'green island' than hopping on a boat for a spot of whale watching! After enjoying a delicious breakfast at your accommodation you will drive along the southern coast to the charming village of Vila Franca, a typical fishing port which originally came into prosperity thanks to trade in wheat, woad and sugar. Although the town is full of architectural charm, its crowning glory sits just off the coast - the islet of Vila Franca do Campo, the result of a sunken volcanic crater that is open to the sea and filled with water. This small natural harbour with its sandy beach faces Sao Miguel and is protected from the wild Atlantic waters by its crater rim on which rare endemic vegetation is found. You will have time to enjoy a coffee and a stroll through the town before, weather permitting, boarding your boat for a 3-hour whale watching excursion (included).

The Azores are one of the world's largest whale sanctuaries, with whale watching season lasting from April right through to October during which time some 20 different species of cetaceans pass through the waters surrounding the islands. Some of these majestic mammals are resident in the area and others are journeying through on their annual migrations. There is simply nothing quite like the exhilaration of witnessing whales frolic in their natural habitat and dolphins jumping alongside the bow of the boat. Be sure to bring your binoculars with you and hopefully you will get to see whales in their natural environment before you return to Ponta Delgada to raise a glass to a great week in the Azores.

Meals: **B**

 Accommodation Hotel

DAY 8

Departure Day.

Enjoy a leisurely morning on the island and take a final stroll along the coast before making your way back to Ponta Delgada Airport for your onward journey.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Whale watching boat trip (3 hours, weather dependant)
- GPX tracks supplied

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to/from Ponta Delgada Airport
- Visas (if applicable)
- Tourist taxes may apply and are usually around 2 Euros per person per night
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Hire car and fuel for the hire car
- Any car parking charges
- Any additional transport
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit and the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook, and all your relevant documents, no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start-date. We will send your documents using a signed-for courier so that you can track your package and know that it is safely on its way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our Sales Team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker, so please remind them to pack it before setting off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start-date, please inform our Sales Team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Car Hire

This holiday has been designed to give you the ultimate flexibility and independence with arranging your own hire car.

There are numerous car hire agencies on Sao Miguel, with offices at Ponta Delgada Airport. Arranging your car independently, you can choose the type of vehicle you prefer, the number of drivers required, and the level of excess protection desired. Car hire brokers such as [Zest Car Rental](#) are a good resource for comparing rental deals. We highly recommend that you pre-book your hire car so that it is ready to collect on arrival, and to do this as early as possible if you are visiting the island between May and August to help ensure you get your first choice of vehicle.

Our sales team would also be happy to provide you with a quote for car hire through our preferred partner, Zest Car Rental. If you choose to arrange your hire car through KE, you would benefit from financial protection of your full holiday package.

Rental conditions will vary according to the provider; these will be presented with your quote. General terms and conditions for hire can be found here: <https://www.zestcarrental.com/terms/>

As a minimum service level, car rental arranged through KE would come with:

- Excess protection

- Top-up insurance

- Unlimited mileage

- Breakdown assistance

Upgrades such as additional days' hire, automatic transmission, or electric or hybrid vehicles can also be requested (subject to availability).

You can also find answers to frequently asked questions and further information about car hire [here](#)

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for most of our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, so please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking or cycling holiday for your family, a centre-based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a day's walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool, or visiting museums is calling instead.

Please discuss this further with our Sales Team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts and ends at Ponta Delgada Airport. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis, allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method that best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Ponta Delgada Airport, well-served with departures from UK regional airports. There are numerous car rental agencies available at Ponta Delgada Airport - pre-booking your hire car is highly recommended.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

Food in the Azores features Portuguese and Mediterranean flavours, yet is more rustic and hearty than its mainland counterparts. Azorean cuisine includes dishes such as kale soup with chunks of potato and sausage, and pot-roast style dishes baked with tomatoes, onion and garlic. An interesting dish for which Furnas is famous is Cozido - a one-pan stew cooked by being buried in a small pit and covered by hot volcanic soils. This is fascinating to see as well as an adventure to taste with the smoky volcanic flavours imparting themselves to the food. Blood sausage served with the local pineapple for which the Azores was once the world's leading exporter is also popular. Seafood is a large part of the diet as well, as expected in such a location, with grilled limpets (Lapas) served in their shells in a butter, garlic and chilli sauce, huge juicy clams (Amêijoas) served with an onion, tomato and white wine sauce, octopus (Polvo), delicious seafood stews and beautiful freshly-caught local fishes on many menus. For a snack you might want to do like the locals and choose Bolo Lêvedo - a bit like a Portuguese version of an English muffin. Slightly sweet, they are a staple at breakfast time and also make a great morning or afternoon snack - and make perfect sandwiches for a picnic. For a sweet treat you can't miss Queijadas, small sweet cheese-based pastries made with eggs, milk and powdered sugar. Although found throughout Portugal's territories, the ones made on Sao Miguel at Vila Franca do Campo are perhaps the most famous of all. Very sweet desserts tend to be found on the menu too, several of which feature the locally grown pineapple. A speciality is dough balls rolled in sugar that have a similarity to doughnuts (yum!). The Azores also make some excellent wines and even produce gin; if you prefer a soft drink you might like to try Kima, a sparkling drink made from real fruit using the local passion fruit.

Accommodation

We have hand-picked two excellent family-run hotels for this trip, both chosen for their fantastic locations and warm hospitality. You will spend 4 nights in the 2-star Hotel Alcides in the heart of Ponta Delgada's historic centre, whose well-reputed restaurant is popular with locals and visitors alike. You will also spend 3 nights at the 3-star Vista do Vale on the eastern side of the island in Furnas, situated close to the famous botanical gardens and hot springs of Parque Terra Nostra. The hotel also has a swimming pool and a lovely terrace - perfect for unwinding after a day exploring. Both accommodations are on a bed and breakfast basis, allowing you the flexibility to enjoy the many fantastic restaurants on the island.

It is also possible to arrange additional nights' accommodation if you would like to enjoy this magnificent island a little longer - just ask our Sales Team for details.

During high season you may be booked into an alternative accommodation of a similar standard in the area.

WHY NOT TREAT YOURSELF TO A HOTEL UPGRADE?

On this trip we are pleased to offer you the opportunity to upgrade your accommodation to 4-star hotels - perfect if you are looking to treat yourself for a special occasion, or simply prefer to travel with a little more luxury. In Ponta Delgada you will stay in the Hotel Talisman, overlooking a beautiful garden within the historic centre. The Hotel Talisman is full of art-deco charm and boasts a rooftop pool and a cosy lounge area, perfect for relaxing with a good book. You will also spend 3 nights in the 4-star Terra Nostra Garden Hotel, located within Parque Terra Nostra. This luxurious hotel is surrounded by the tranquillity of nature, and its exceptional location within the park allows you exclusive access to the thermal springs once the crowds have left for the day.

Please contact our Sales Team to find out more.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday.

For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Please also consider the luggage capacity of the type of vehicle you choose to hire.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates (*see Health & Vaccinations below*), **and visas for your holiday**. Please ensure that you check the [FCDO](#) for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the [FCDO](#) and [Travel Health Pro](#). For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace, however getting some additional exercise before going on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. After all, the fitter you are the more enjoyable your walks will be. You should be comfortable with walking 3 to 4 hours for consecutive days.

Climate

The Azores are situated in the middle of the Atlantic, so the weather is changeable! However, as the islands benefit from the warmth of the Gulf Stream, temperatures remain mild and moderate throughout the year. During the summer months the temperatures tend to range from 15-30 degrees Centigrade, with the majority of days being sunny, and it can also be quite humid at this time. In the late spring and early autumn, the temperatures are slightly cooler and there is a higher chance of rain. Temperatures rarely ever fall beneath 10 degrees Centigrade, and rainy days can occur across all seasons. It is not uncommon to experience a mixture of weather in the same day at any time of year, rather like in many places in the UK, so it is always best to be prepared with warm and waterproof layers and appropriate footwear.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Azores Bradt Travel Guide - David Sayers
- Field Guide to the Birds of the Atlantic Islands - Tony Clarke

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good-grip soles

- Hiking socks
- Long / short hiking trousers
- Functional base layer top and leggings
- T-shirts
- Fleece / extra warm layer
- Windproof jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Hat, gloves, and neck gaiter
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Sunhat
- Small first aid kit inside your rucksack
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Camera (and batteries / memory card)
- Reusable sealable picnic boxes for picnics

- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Walking poles
- Headtorch with spare batteries
- Personal wash kit
- Your self-guided route notes
- Rucksack (approx. 20L)

Land Only Information

Please note that our 'from' price listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers including solo travellers - contact our Sales Team for a quote.

This holiday requires a hire car to be arranged independently. There are several car rental agencies available on Sao Miguel, with desks at Ponta Del Garda Airport. Our Sales Team can also provide a quotation for car hire if required.

When considering your travel dates, you might like to investigate any seasonal opening times of attractions and points of interest.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights' accommodation before or after your self-guided trip - please ask our Sales Team to find out more about this.

Our Sales Team will be happy to provide you with a quote for scheduled flights, or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

We have designed this trip to showcase the very best of Sao Miguel whilst giving you the ultimate flexibility with a choice of walks on most days, recommended excursions, and even an option to upgrade your accommodation. In addition, we have included a whale watching tour in the cost of your trip to give you the chance to admire these majestic mammals, and perhaps some of their smaller friends, close-up.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 16/06/2026 and the trip is subject to change