



CARIBOU AZORES

Testimonials Steve & Linda

My wife and I went to Europe many years ago. When she suggested we explore the Azore islands in the middle of the Atlantic, I was totally on board. She told me this would be a little different than our previous adventures. She described that in addition to island discovery there would be a themed experiential week. *Caribou Azores, Atlantic Perspectives: Beyond boundaries* captured my interest. I was a little sceptical but thought, why not give it a try.

Our 'home', the Convento de São Francisco, was a hidden gem! I was simply blown away by this historic setting. The tour the first day offered insight into the symbolism and history, ending on the roof with its spectacular 360-degree view. Wow!

I had never meditated before. My wife said, 'give it a try, you might like it!' So, I gave it a chance. I embarked on this new 30 minutes 'daily morning journey'. Lying on a yoga mat on the grass in the cloister next to the sounds of the fountain was peaceful. I found the 'guided chakra meditation' an interesting experience.

Morning group discussions after breakfast called 'impulses' opened my mind to new concepts. Even though I am not usually comfortable speaking up, I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts with others in this group setting.

The excursions throughout the week were amazing! I particularly liked the whale/dolphin watching and soaking in the geyser pool.

The meals were delicious – especially breakfast. Fabulous dinners were followed by night-caps on the terrace and a story to end wonderful days!

Steve Hanson, Creator of the Portuguese McMuffin (*my personalized sandwich*), MN, USA, August 2024



I was searching for a more meaningful journey for us after our son had gone off to college. When I heard about the Azores, a volcanic island group off the coast of Portugal I was intrigued! Known as the "Hawaii of Europe" these islands in the middle of the Atlantic offered scenic nature trails, a ruggedly beautiful coastline and many other natural wonders to explore. But I wanted something beyond the ordinary. I wanted us to connect in a different way:

- immerse ourselves in the natural beauty and richness of another culture
- stay in a place that would inspire and rejuvenate our souls
- acquire new concepts for living a meaningful life to its fullest

After some research, I found *Caribou Azores*, a not-for-profit association that offered something different, the experience we wanted - immersion in the Azorian island culture and introspection.

To say the island of São Miguel in the Azores is spectacularly beautiful is an understatement. The Convento, our home for the week, was a lovingly restored historic monument from the 17th century. Upon arrival, Urban, one of the two founders of the association, gave our group a tour of the premises describing the symbolism of the architecture.

Our typical day during *Atlantic Perspectives: Beyond Boundaries* began with a morning meditation in the cloister area. The serenity of the space with its bubbling fountain was a fabulous way to start the day. Morning group discussions, called 'Impulses' (announced by the cow bell), allowed us to explore concepts such as dualism/trinity, spiral dynamics, and karma.

Each day brought a new part of the Azores to explore. Whales and dolphins, volcanic geysers, beaches, and picturesque villages abound. We were truly shown the magical places of the island of São Miguel.

And then there was the food. A healthy breakfast featuring locally grown foods and other island culinary specialties. Incredible dinners (one even cooked in a geyser!) were followed by night-caps on the Convento terrace. We were treated to stunning views over the Atlantic, the stars, and the bright face of the moon. Every night after a thoughtful good-night story, we returned to our rooms enriched by our experience.

Linda Whittaker, Queen of Queijada (*local small cake*), MN, USA, August 2024