

ESPAÇO TALASSA'10

Whale watching since 1989



"Dance with dolphins" Swim with dolphins



The excursion "Dance with dolphins" places at your disposal a logistics based on 20 years of experience swimming with dolphins. However it is also possible during a trip to observe whales.



8 DAYS FIXED PRICE

- > Welcome and transfer from Faial or Pico airport to hotel in Lajes do Pico.
- > 7 nights in hotel 2** with breakfast.
- > Fixed price (boat, gasoline, costs carriage, on-board equipment, location...) for 5 exits at sea, dependent on the weather and the cetaceans' location.
- > Maximum 8 people on board, in order to let everybody get a better swimming experience.
- > Crew of 2 men, one for manoeuvring the boat and the other to care for the safety of all the swimmers.
- > Access to the services of BOCA, like bikes, kayaks, diving gear (apnoea), information, library...
- > Tickets to the Whalers museum.
- > Insurance, taxes and whale watching licence included.



The whale watching package runs weekly from Saturday to Saturday.

Extra charge when arriving and/or departing on day other than Saturday 45 euros per pax only from Faial airport.

From March 27th to November 6th



Important

- > *In order to minimize accident risks and to limit the negative impact with dolphins, since 2004, we supply this activity only on a 8 days fixed price format. Moreover the framing is ensured by a specialist (Master swimmer) who will individually direct you at the time of the meeting with the animals and also during training. It's him who gives you the authorization (or not) to launch yourself in the water to meet the dolphins.*
- The Azorean Law (Decreto 99/9-A) defines clearly this activity rules.*



Observation

- > *We may lend you masks and tuba, but we do not have fins or water suites for you. It is possible to rent some in Pico, approximately 35 euros.*
- > *You will not be authorized to get in the water if you do not present a medical certificate which stipulates that you do not carry any counter-indication to the practice of this activity.*
- > *The price is based on the occupation of a double room, supplement of 95 euros for a simple room and reduction of 85 euros on the third participant for a stay in triple room.*
- > *It is possible to book in 4**** hotel, supplement of 150 euros per person.*

	LOW SEASON <i>from 02/10 to 06/11</i>	MEDIUM SEASON <i>from 22/05 to 09/07 from 28/08 to 01/10</i>	HIGH SEASON <i>from 10/07 to 27/08</i>
8 days Package	595 euros	675 euros	775 euros
Package 5 boat excursions	310 euros	340 euros	376 euros
Accompanying person (excluding the boat excursions) per pax. for the 8 days package	285 euros	335 euros	399 euros



NOTE ON "DANCE WITH DOLPHINS"

In 1987, I met my first dolphin without any apprehension and I must admit with any precautions when kind of naive, I slipped into the water to watch him a little bit closer, in his own element, the way I had seen him on TV in Captain Cousteau's reports. Ever since, many miles have been scoured and over the years we have acquired more experience and developed our sensitivity.

In the Azores, the animals we observe are wild and free. Dolphins are sensitive animals, and over those 20 years of experience, we have observed that the time spent at sea, the stress of the swimmers, the well-being felt in the "water" element, the species watched, the presence of young in the group are so many factors making this "Dance with dolphins" successful or not. Furthermore, swimming on the open sea involves some risks.

Not only aware of the impact that this kind of activity might have on the animals' well being, but also aware of your security, Espaço Talassa proposes that "Dances with Dolphins" only takes place within the framework of complete respect for our Ethical Charter and its particular rules:

1. Swimming with an animal will be limited to the following 5 species: the Common dolphin, the Spotted Atlantic dolphin, the Striped dolphin, the Bottlenose dolphin and the Risso dolphin. Regional legislation does not authorise swimming with any other species such as the Sperm Whale.
2. We practice the technique of "soft encounter". This simply means that we let ourselves float on the surface, never trying to pursue the animal. On the contrary, we will give the animal the complete liberty to approach a human, motivated only by its own curiosity.
3. Only two swimmers at a time are authorised to go into the water simultaneously, equipped with only a mask, snorkel and flippers. We never use scuba equipment. In order to better look out for your safety, there will be a second crew member on the boat whose only role is to watch over your encounter with these animals. These "meetings" should never exceed 15 minutes.
4. In all cases, it is the skipper who will authorise each swim with the dolphins. His decision will be based on his experience and will take in to account the sea conditions, your physical condition and, last but not least, the behaviour of the animals on the surface... they will always be given the last say in this matter.

In 1996 I wrote a text ending with those words:

"You are even more who wish to swim with dolphins and dive into their element so as to share a bit of their intimacy. I remember last year that one of us exclaimed after his return to the land "Great, I went to their home!". That is very true, when you enter into the blue Atlantic, you push the door of another dimension, you enter their home... My deepest wish is to see you going back on board with a broad smile lighting up your face and hear you say: "Great, I was in their element. He looked me in the eyes".

Today, the Espaço Talassa team takes up this philosophy so as to develop a responsible tourism and out of respect for our customers and animals, we won't offer this "one-day" activity anymore. The future will no doubt tell us that we took the right decision.

Serge Viallelle, General manager



10 clients = 1 tree

By choosing Espaço Talassa, you are choosing to limit your ecological footprint. Espaço Talassa plants trees and contributes for the "micro-reserve" project, to partly compensate the ecological deficit and the CO2 emissions related to our whale watching activity, in collaboration with association "Quercus". For each customer approximately 0,50 cent will be donated, with the purpose to plant "Cabeço Santo" (GPS position: 40° 32' 10" N et 8° 20' 15" W) in the mountain range of Caramulo, victim of a terrible forest fire in 2005. Soon the indigenous vegetation will substitute eucalyptus, acacias and other infestants.

It's true: "the sea is blue because forests are green"!

THE "SOFT ENCOUNTER" WHAT IS IT?

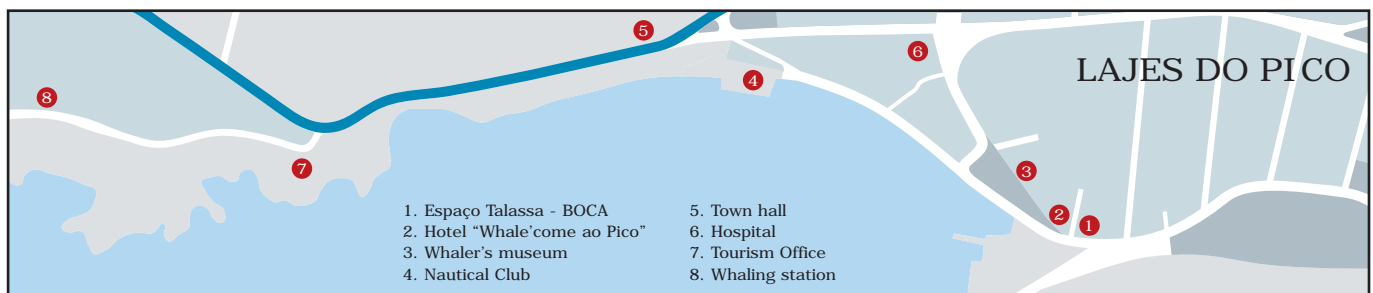
The "Soft Encounter" is a technique by which humans and dolphins can experience one another. Using only fins, mask and snorkel, we just float calmly on the surface of the water, without swimming, and the dolphins' natural curiosity does the rest. They approach, look, sound, listen...

Cetaceans are extremely sensitive and they can detect our presence very quickly and precisely, so any rapid or uncontrolled movements will make them flee. Sometime this technique can be frustrating because the choice of an encounter lies with the animal, and we are only being invited into their world; meanwhile, if you respect these few rules, you will be putting luck on your side and should certainly find an animal in his own natural world: free, amused and curious.

- Before getting in the water, check that your mask and fins are on securely and comfortably so that you will be more relaxed and can forget technical matters more easily. A "shorty" of 5mm thickness is recommended.
- Let yourself slide into the water without any splashing. Don't dive or jump. Your guide will have positioned the boat, with the motor idling, to give you the best possible chance of an encounter.
- Do not swim, do not try to follow them – in any case they are much better swimmers than you. Let them approach you. Our experience has shown that they won't come towards you on the first encounter, but they will circle around you, do a few "cambrioleto", and "sound" you. These first moments of proximity are decisive for an unforgettable encounter!

Once this "seduction" phase is over, you can get a little closer to them by gently diving down about 2 or 3 metres, always very calmly and without hitting your fins on the surface. Let yourself "slide" under the water, rather than doing a "duckie".

Our experience also shows us that dolphins are very sensitive to your "inner" state. A stressed swimmer who is not much at ease technically or in the deep will only get a furtive encounter of short duration. As you gradually get more experience with these animals, the quality of your encounters will get better.



"DANCE WITH DOLPHINS" – DAY TO DAY



Day 1 - Reception and welcome at the airport of Horta or Pico

Afterwards we reach Lajes do Pico, the heart of Azorean whale watching, the hotel "Whale'come ao Pico", our base.

Day 2/7 - Lajes do Pico

In Lajes do Pico, at approximately 10:00 AM, we shall leave the harbour behind for our encounter with the animal. Once in the company of dolphins, we can enjoy listening, observing and edging even closer for improved camera work.

We will be back in Lajes at around 01:00 PM.

You can organise your afternoons according to your own rhythms and your personal holiday wishes. In the Whaling Museum you will find a fantastic collection of *scrimshaw* (engraving on sperm whale teeth) as well as one of the most complete libraries in the world on the art of whale hunting. You can also visit the "vigia da Queimada".

The BOCA, our Base of Observation of the Cetaceans of the Azores, will provide you with documentation (books, audiovisual materials, access to the Internet).

We can also lend you our sea-going kayak so that you can go to the "Maré" and the "Castelete". At the BOCA, we also have mountain bikes. More energetic visitors might make it to "Calheta de Nesquim", the Azorean port where the first whaling boat was fitted out. The little harbour was also one of the most active centres during the years of prosperity (1950's). Just a bit further down the road, you can visit the old whaling factory of São Roque. Or having spent the morning at sea, you could simply be carried away by the sweetness of the Azorean summer and enjoy an afternoon of "dolce farniente" in the coolness of your hotel or at the edge of the ocean which is never far away.

Day 8 - Lajes do Pico/Airport (timing will correspond to your international flight).

This summary should give an indication of what you can expect during your stay. With regard to the weather conditions, safety, the amount of participants and of course the presence of whales, your guide may modify your trip slightly.

