HAWAII IN EUROPE

Equivalent to the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific are the Azores in the European Atlantic. You're looking at *Lagoa das Sete Cidades* (Lagoon of the Seven Cities), an example of the Azores' astounding beauty. As Hawaii is a part of the US, the Azores are a part of Portugal – since the 1430s first discovered uninhabited.

Everything grows here, cedar forest to giant tropical tree ferns, fruit from citrus to tropical, plants from corn to taro. Flowers are riotously everywhere. The sea swarms with fish being on the main Atlantic migration route for whales and dolphins. The islands are immaculately cared for by Azoreans, no pollution, air sparkling clear, weather in the 60s in winter, 70s in summer, so peaceful they are virtually crime-free.

Azoreans love drinking parties, cheerful festivals, and bright colors – with their charming homes painted the color of key lime pie, raspberry mousse, or oceanic blue. They love liberty so much they've had this motto emblazoned on their coat of arms for centuries: *"Antes morrer livres que em paz sujeitos"—"* Rather die free than live in peaceful subjugation."

This is one of our planet's truly magical places. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #11* photo

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