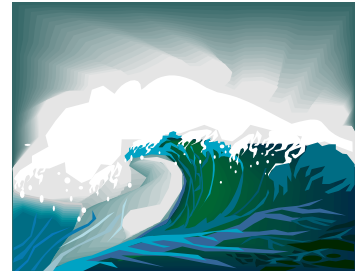


## THE AZORES

The minute we leave Falmouth, on a dark and wintry night, we hit a patch of rough weather - the ship corkscrews, and pitches, and rolls for 3 days. Most of the newly embarked passengers are ill, and the ship is like the *Marie Celeste*, with no one in the public areas, and few people in the dining room for meal times.

Fortunately for us, we are well accustomed to the ship's motion, and in fact we have never been seasick at all on this voyage, or on any other. We feel sorry for the passengers who had a long, overnight journey to Falmouth, and then a tortuous journey across the Atlantic Ocean.



Eventually the seas subside, and we arrive in Ponta Delgada, in the Azores at 11am. We have some work to do on the internet, and spend a few hours downloading mobile phone information for the voyage ahead.



When we have finished our work, we take the shuttle bus from the quayside to the town and walk around the shops. We remember the town from our last cruise, and enjoy revisiting the typically Portuguese buildings, squares and shops. A coffee shop makes a welcome break, and we order 2 Espresso coffees and a baguette. We have only been in town for 45 minutes,

when it is time to return to the ship, and we have already dealt with 3 mobile phone queries!

We now have 5 days at sea before we arrive in the Caribbean. We have 3 ports of call here, Antigua and Guadeloupe, which we have visited before, and the Dutch island of Bonaire. We have decided to take a different tour of Antigua this time, and also to take a tour in Guadeloupe. Last time we simply visited the many shops in the capital, Point-a-Pitre. There are no tours planned at all for Bonaire; it seems to be a totally unspoilt island, where tourism is still to blossom.