

## **ABOUT CAPE VERDE**

### **Location**

Cape Verde is located approximately 500 km off the coast of Senegal (West coast of Africa) and due south of the Canary islands.

### **Cape Verde History**

Cape Verde was discovered in 1462 by the Portuguese when they landed on Sao Tiago, subsequently founding there the oldest European city in the tropics — Cidade Velha (the old city). Sugar was planted in an attempt to emulate the success of the earlier settlement of Madeira. Cape Verde's dry climate was less favourable for growing sugar but, with the development of the transatlantic slave trade, the importance and the wealth of the islands did increase. In 1532 the first bishop was consecrated. Pirates attacked the city from the 1540's and the English later attacked it twice—in 1585 and 1592—the first time under the command of Sir Francis Drake. Portugal then consummated its control over the region and increased trade across the African Coast via Cape Verde.

With the decline of the slave trade (which was finally abolished in 1876) and with increasing drought, the prosperity of the islands slowly vanished. In the early 1800s, they experienced recurrent drought and famine as well as government corruption and maladministration. Conditions improved toward the end of the 1800s with the establishment at Mindelo (Capital of Sao Vicente). A coaling station and a submarine cable station was formed. After World War I, prosperity again declined as fewer ships visited Mindelo.

During the war for independence from Portugal (1961–75) fought by its colonies in Africa, Cape Verde was used as a garrison by the Portuguese army. Some Cape Verdeans fled to Guinea-Bissau to join the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC), under the leadership of Amílcar Cabral.

On July 5, 1975, Cape Verde was granted independence from Portugal. In 1990 a multiparty system was established, and Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro of the Movement for Democracy (MpD) became president in 1991 elections. Cape Verde affirmed its nonaligned status and was able to seek foreign aid from several sources to salvage its economy and to fund development; the country also focused on economic expansion. To that end, the government enacted policies to privatize state-owned companies and attract foreign investors in the early 1990s.

In the 21st century, the country continued to successfully pursue political and economic relationships around the globe, courting foreign investors and creating and maintaining diplomatic ties in the international community.

In recent years, many foreign investors have now been attracting into Cape Verde, mainly on the islands of Sao Vicente, Sal and Boa Vista where a growing infrastructure is being successfully achieved.

## **Currency**

The currency used in Cape Verde is Cape Verde Escudo (CVE).  
£1 = 162.750 Cape Verde Escudo  
1 Cape Verde Escudo (CVE) = 0.009069 Euro (EUR).

The currency of Cape Verde is Cape Verdean escudos. It has a fixed exchange rate with the euro at 1€ = 110.265 escudos. This means that 1 CVE is equal to 0.009 euros (90 cents)

In Sal, euros are accepted everywhere and the islanders usually work an exchange rate of € 1 to 100 esc.

Santiago and Sao Vicente continue to use Cape Verdean escudos, however euros are being more widely accepted in hotels and restaurants as tourism increases.

## **Health**

The standard of health care is very close to European standards. There are a number of hospitals as well as state of the art private clinics (which would rival most European health clinics) and European trained medical doctors and physicians which can take care of visitors to the islands. Most Cape Verdeans enjoy a good standard of health care and most of the general ailments can be catered for within Cape Verde. It is only certain ailments that may require the patient to visit Portugal for specialised health care (e.g. cancer).

## **Culture**

Cultural identity is important to the Cape Verdeans with their own distinct style of music, dance, language, lifestyle and food. There is an incredible choice of fish and seafood as well as local dishes made from a wide choice of home grown fruit (coconut, mango, papaya, dates and sugar cane) and vegetables (maize, beans, cassava and sweet potato). The local rum is called “grogue” and it is worth trying – just beware of its potent strength!

## **Sport and Leisure**

There are plenty of activities to do in Cape Verde. Surrounded by water it comes as no surprise that the Cape Verdeans are sea loving people. Swimming, surfing, windsurfing, snorkling, diving and fishing are an integral part of sports. Sal is world renowned for its windsurfing and the current world champion, Josh Angulo, lives on the island. Sao Vicente island has some of the best marlin fishing in the world. In recent years, some of the largest blue marlin have been caught in the waters of Cape Verde.

Cape Verdeans are also football mad. Football fields are strewn across the islands and most of the local people have a passion for Portuguese and English football.

San Antao island receives a high number of tourists who like to do outdoor pursuits with its large mountainous region and lush tropical vegetation giving a perfect backdrop for exercise. More recently extreme sports have also been introduced to the island.

## **Language**

Portuguese is the main language of administration and law. Creole is the native language of the Cape Verdeans - a blend of Portuguese and West African words. Creole differs between the islands and often those in the north speak a different dialect to those in the south. Today there is a large drive towards learning English and a large number of English language night school classes are being attended by the Cape Verdean people.

## **The Economy of Cape Verde**

Cape Verde's natural resources (other than an abundance of fish from the surrounding ocean) include volcanic rock (used in cement production) and limestone. Cape Verde also has an abundance of wind and sunshine which may prove extremely important for providing renewable energy to the country in the future.

The economy is service-oriented, with commerce, transport and public services accounting for more than 70% of GDP. Although nearly 70% of the population lives in rural areas, agriculture and fishing contribute only about 10% of the GDP. About 20% of the GDP comes from expatriate Cape Verdeans.

From 1994 to 2000 foreign investment amounted to US\$407 million, of which 58% was tourism, 17% was industry, 4% was infrastructure and 21% was fisheries and services.

## **Cape Verde Weather and Climate**

Due to the fantastic weather and climate, Cape Verde is destined to become the leading alternative to the Caribbean as a winter sun holiday destination for Europeans, being only five and a half hours flying time away from the UK, and with no jet-lag. 800 miles south of the Canaries, the ten islands enjoy a tropical climate with average day time temperatures only varying from 23° to 28° C winter to summer, with sea temperatures to match.

## **Cape Verde Temperatures**

The climate in Cape Verde is tropical and temperatures average around 25°C all year round with the sea temperature ranging between 21°C and 25°F year round. The rainy season is in the months of August, September and October.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Temperature</b>		<b>Rainfall</b>
January	75°F	24°C	5.3mm
February	75°F	24°C	3.8mm
March	77°F	25°C	1.3mm
April	77°F	25°C	0.0mm

May	78°F	25°C	0.0mm
June	79°F	26°C	0.0mm
July	81°F	27°C	0.8mm
August	84°F	29°C	14.1mm
September	85°F	29°C	33.6mm
October	83°F	29°C	6.5mm
November	81°F	27°C	2.5mm
December	77°F	25°C	1.6mm

## **The Islands**

The four main islands are Sal, Boa Vista, Sao Vicente and Santiago

### **Sal**

Sal is a small flat island with approximately 17,000 population. The majority live in its Capital Espargos which is 2 minutes north of the airport. Santa Maria is the touristic area and is situated some 15 minutes drive from the airport.

Santa Maria has some wonderful white sandy beaches and turquoise coloured seas. Santa Maria is a quaint fishing village and the small pier by the Morabeza hotel is surrounded by multicoloured small fishing boats. It looks similar to the Caribbean. The pier offers a chance to see all the fishermen bring ashore their catches. Large yellow-fin tuna are in abundance and you may also be lucky to see the occasional Marlin.

Santa Maria has lots to do with watersports and is great if you like diving, snorkeling, surfing, Kite surfing and windsurfing. For those who like to enjoy the sea, but do not want to jump in it, there are a number of boat and yacht chartering companies in Sal which do some excellent excursions.

Santa Maria has undergone a property boom and while parts of it resemble a building site, it is still a charming village. Sal has 5 approved golf courses and three new marinas projects, which are destined to be finished in the coming years.

For tourists who want the beach, Santa Maria offers one of the most glamorous beaches in the world with an arching 2 km white sandy beach lined with low rise hotels and resorts. Santa Maria also has some flourishing new bars, cafés and restaurants such as Blu Bar, May O'Leary's and Tam Tam's. Also a must do in Sal is the Morabeza hotel beach club for lunch and the Odjo D'Água hotel restaurant on the sea front. For a complete chill out – try Grijinha bar – a fabulous beach front bar /Grill on the sea front. The Turtle shack also offers a good night out on a Thursday night with a fabulous buffet.

15 minutes north of Santa Maria is Pedra De Lume where you can find the famous Salt mines of Sal. Located within a volcanic crater, the salt mines are a mix of water and salt beds. Due to the high salt content, people can enter the water beds and experience the feeling of being unable to sink in the water.

Burancona is an interesting place to visit. Watch the waves enter a natural cove and send jets of water high into the air. There are daily excursions run by holiday companies and can be booked from your hotel.

The capital of Sal is Espargos and lies some 20 minutes north of Santa Maria. It is a small town and it has many shops.

## **Boa Vista**

Boa Vista is a fabulous island surrounded by magnificent white sandy beaches and turquoise blue seas. While undeveloped at the moment, Boa Vista has been earmarked by the Government of Cape Verde for high quality tourism. The first RIU hotel has just been completed and another is earmarked for the south of the island shortly.

Boa Vista has seen some new construction occurring, but it still remains a long way behind Sal for development.

Boa Vista has a friendly atmosphere and the local Cape Verdean people are very laid back. Its capital, Sal Rei, is a small quaint fishing village with a mix of colonial and modern buildings. Sal Rei sits on the west coast and has a lovely natural fishing harbour.

Boa Vista is the perfect island if you like walking along deserted beaches and / or participating in watersports. A great place to get away from the stresses of everyday life.

For things to see and do in Boa Vista, visit the desert dunes which sits in the middle of the island an unique and interesting feature. Also visit the south of the island such as Currel Velho and Praia Santa Monica. A 5km stretch of white powdery sandy beach.

One of the drawbacks of Boa Vista is that it does not have good infrastructure at the moment. While this will develop in time, the tourist must expect a relatively limited island with very little to do or see.

The potential for the future of Boa Vista is enormous as a touristic holiday destination.

## **Sao Vicente**

Sao Vicente is the cultural heartland of Cape Verde. It is famed for its music, poetry, literature and dance throughout the archipelago. Sao Vicente is the island of festivals and carnivals. February sees a colourful carnival parading through the streets of Mindelo – almost like a mini Rio De Janeiro – and August sees the music festival of Baia Das Gatas. Sao Vicente does not miss an opportunity to celebrate.

Littering the old streets of Mindelo are wonderful old colonial buildings along with modern shopping areas. In the outer bays of Sao Vicente are some magnificent unspoilt

white sandy beaches, turquoise coloured seas and rugged mountainous scenery.

Sao Vicente is seeing the entrance of the 'ultra chic' hotel chain Nikki Beach is sure to bring in the celebrity and wealthy clientele to the island. The Fortim Mindelo development, a five star resort and casino is seen as the catalyst for attracting the affluent market into Sao Vicente.

A 10 minute drive away from Mindelo is the magnificent area of Baia Das Gatas. The touristic area will see the advent of two exclusive golf resorts along with PGA managed golf courses. It aims to bring in major golfing tournaments in the future and has already captured the signatures of Jack Nicholas and Ernie Els for the golf courses.

Sao Vicente is also home to one of the best Blue Marlin fishing in the world and many marlins that have been caught here have previously held the record as some of the largest caught.

With 4 golf resorts and 4 marinas planned and with enormous property investment from Ireland, UK, Portugal, Spain and Dubai, Sao Vicente is one to watch.

The international airport in Sao Vicente is set to open in September 2009 which will give direct flight access to this charming island.

## **Santiago**

Santiago is often seen as the most African of the Cape Verde islands. It is a diverse island consisting of a mix of white and dark sandy beaches. Santiago is a mountainous island which becomes lush and green during the slight rainfall between August and September.

Being the Capital island Cape Verde, it is no surprise that it is the centre of politics, business and finance in the archipelago. Business and politics drive the island and, as a result, is one of the wealthiest native populations in Cape Verde. You only have to take a look in the historical city centre of Praia to see the number of brand new 4x4 Jeeps on the roads to realise that this is an island of emerging wealth. While many projects are in planning stage, Praia has some exciting business and commercial developments to come.

There are some fabulous places to visit in Santiago such as the old city - 'Cidade Velha' the birth place of Cape Verde. Take some time to visit the old fort and view the tropical ribeira beneath – if you have the time, the ribeira is well worth walking up to see the vegetation and small houses dotted throughout. Also worth seeing is the original slave trading pole in the little village of Cidade Velha.

IF you want a day out, try visiting Tarrafal in the north of the island. This area has some wonderful tranquil white sandy beaches and is a nice break from the hustle and bustle of the capital.

Santiago is undergoing rapid transformation with new roads and other infrastructures being developed at an alarming rate.

