

Cape Verde

📍 238 / POP 491,683

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ La Bodeguita de Mindelo (p115)
- ➔ Calheta por Sol (p118)
- ➔ Cafe Criolo (p125)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Casa Colonial (p114)
- ➔ Migrante (p127)
- ➔ Casa Cavoquinho (p119)

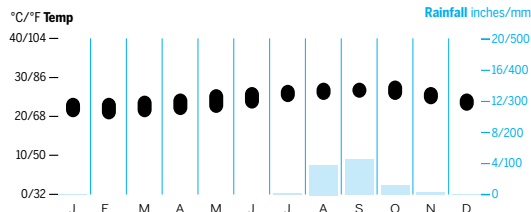
Why Go?

Set sail with the Saharan trade winds and rock and roll across stormy Atlantic seas for days. Then, just before you're halfway to Brazil, an island rises into view. You have reached Cape Verde, an arrow-shaped archipelago that is the region's most Westernised country, where the people are richer and better educated than almost anywhere on the continent.

Though it may appear as a set of flyspecks poking out of the eastern Atlantic, this 10-island archipelago packs a punch. On Santo Antão, craggy peaks hide piercing green valleys of flowers and sugar cane, ideal for epic hikes. São Vicente is home to the cultural capital of the islands, Mindelo, which throbs with bars and music clubs. On Boa Vista, Sal and Maio, wispy white dunes merge with indigo-blue seas on unspoiled beaches of soft sand. Throw in the constant beat of music that Cape Verde is famed for and the renowned *morabeza* (Creole for hospitality) of its people and you'll see why many have come – and never left.

When to Go

Praia



Aug–Oct During the so-called rainy, but very hot, season, weeks can go by without a downpour.

Dec–Apr Strong winds blow in dust all the way from the Sahara and make it the best time for surfing.

Jun–Oct Turtle-watching season (February to May is whale-watching time).

SANTIAGO

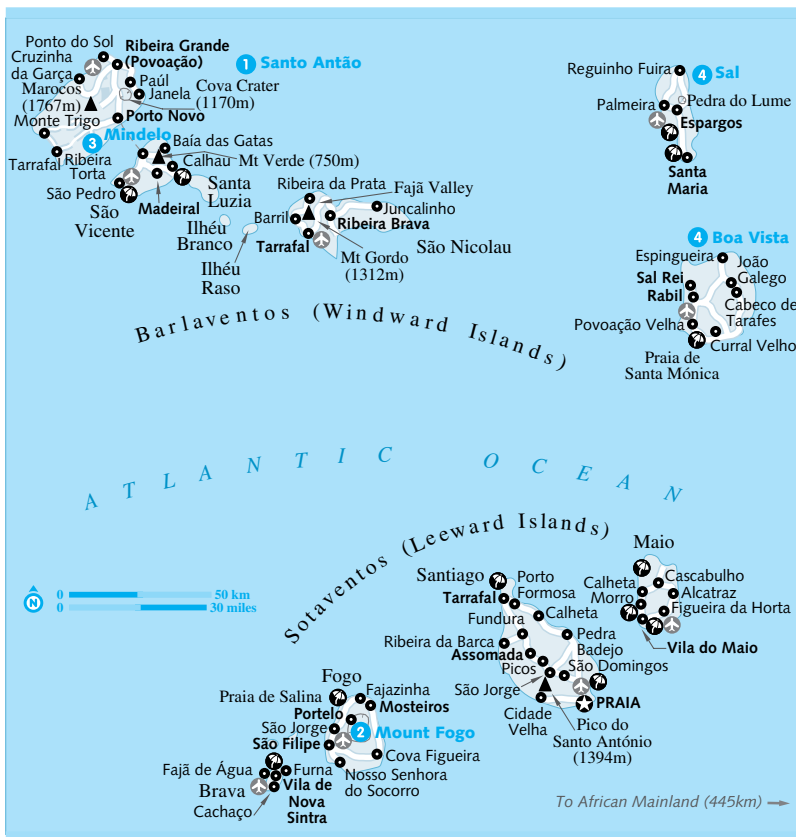
POP 249,529

Santiago, the largest member of the archipelago and the first to be settled, has a little bit of all the other islands. It has the sandy beaches, the desert plains, the verdant valleys and the mountainous interior as well as the capital, Praia. All this makes it a worthy stop on your Cape Verdean rambles.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Praia's airport is, together with Sal's, the main air hub for the islands. There are daily flights to Boa Vista, Fogo (São Filipe), Sal and São Vicente (Mindelo), two weekly to Maio and four weekly (via Sal or São Vicente) to São Nicolau.



CAPE VERDE SANTIAGO

Cape Verde Highlights

① Hiking the misty pine-clad ridges, the sheer canyons and the verdant valleys of Cape Verde's most spectacular island, **Santo Antão** (p117).

② Admiring the views from the summit of the country's only active volcano, stunning, cinder-clad,

2829m-high **Mount Fogo** (p121).

③ Swinging hips, elaborate costumes and dirty dancing; Mindelo's celebration is a sexy and colourful **Mardi Gras** (p113).

④ Riding the giant waves of **Sal** (p124) and **Boa Vista** (p126), two fine destinations for windsurfing.

⑤ Listening to musicians wave loved ones goodbye with a *morna* (mournful song) in smoky back-room bars dedicated to **traditional music**.