

Cape Verde

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Cabo Verde is a group of ten volcanic islands in the Atlantic Ocean, about 600 km west of Senegal. Nine of the islands are inhabited. The islands were empty until Portuguese settlers arrived in the 15th century, and the country became independent in 1975. Today it is a stable democracy, and locals describe their easy-going hospitality with one word: *morabeza*.

Each island is different. Sal and Boa Vista are flat and sandy, with long beaches, resorts and kitesurfing. Santo Antão has green valleys and the best hiking. On Fogo, you can climb an active volcano. São Vicente is home to Mindelo, the centre of *morna* music made famous by *Cesária Évora*. On Santiago, the capital Praia is close to Cidade Velha, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. The country suits beach lovers, hikers and music fans who enjoy a slow pace.

Money & payments

The escudo has a fixed rate of 110.265 escudos to one euro. Prices often use the $ sign in place of a decimal point, so *1$500* means 1,500 escudos.

- **Euros**: many hotels, restaurants and taxis in tourist areas accept euros, often at a rounded rate of 100 escudos to the euro. Paying in escudos is usually cheaper.
- **Cash**: small shops, *alugueres* (shared minibuses), village bars and many guesthouses take cash only. Cards work in resorts, larger hotels and supermarkets.
- **ATMs**: cash machines are common in towns but rare in villages and on the smaller islands, such as Brava and Maio. Withdraw enough before you travel there.
- **Tourist tax**: hotels charge a nightly tourist tax of about €2.50 per guest over 16, for up to 10 nights.
- **Leaving**: escudos are hard to exchange abroad, so spend or change them before you fly home.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel or guesthouse, double room	6,000 – 15,000 CVE €54 – €136
Dinner (mid-range restaurant) main course at a sit-down restaurant	1,200 – 2,500 CVE €11 – €23
Inexpensive meal prato do dia at a local café	500 – 1,000 CVE €5 – €9
Local beer	150 – 350 CVE €1 – €3
Coffee	100 – 250 CVE €1 – €2
Water 1.5 l bottle	100 – 250 CVE €1 – €2
Transit ticket city bus or short aluguer ride	50 – 200 CVE €0 – €2

Currency

CURRENCY
CVE

1 CVE
0.009069 EUR
1 EUR = 110.27 CVE

1 CVE
0.0101 USD
1 USD = 98.901 CVE

Cards accepted in major venues

Tipping

Tipping is not required, but it is appreciated, especially in tourist areas. In a sit-down restaurant, about 10 % is a kind gesture for good service. In a simple local café, leaving the small change is enough. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip. Hiking and boat guides do, for example after a climb on Fogo.

Restaurant about 10 % in tourist areas	Optional
Taxi round up the fare	Not customary
Tour guide at the end of a hike or tour	Expected
Hotel small tip for porters and housekeeping	Optional
Bar	Not customary

Electricity

Cabo Verde uses European two-pin plugs at 220 V, so most European chargers work without an adapter. Short power cuts can happen on the smaller islands, and a power bank is useful.

ELECTRICITY



Type C

ELECTRICITY



Type F

220 V · 50 Hz

Language

Portuguese is the official language of government, schools and signs. In daily life, almost everyone speaks Cape Verdean Creole, called *Kriolu*. It is based on Portuguese with West African influences, and each island has its own accent.

In the resorts on Sal and Boa Vista, many staff speak English, and some speak Italian, French or German. Away from the resorts, English is less common. French is often understood, and a few words of Kriolu are always welcome.

Useful phrases

KEA

Hello	Olá / Bon dia oh-LAH / bohn DEE-ah
Thank you	Obrigadu oh-bree-GAH-doo
Please	Pur favor poor fah-VOR
Yes	Sin seen
No	Nãu now
Goodbye	Txau chow
Sorry	Diskulpa dees-KOOL-pah
How much?	Kantu ki é? KAHN-too kee EH

PT

Hello	Olá oh-LAH
Thank you	Obrigado / Obrigada oh-bree-GAH-doo / oh-bree-GAH-dah
Please	Por favor poor fah-VOR
Yes	Sim seeng
No	Não nowng
Goodbye	Adeus ah-DEH-oosh
Sorry	Desculpe desh-KOOL-peh
How much?	Quanto custa? KWAHN-too KOOSH-tah

Staying connected

- **SIM cards**: the two mobile networks are Alou and Unitel T+. Both have shops in the main towns and at the international airports.
- **Coverage**: 4G works in towns and along the main roads. Signal can drop in the deep valleys of Santo Antão and Fogo, and at sea between islands.

Safety & emergencies

Crime rates are low, and most visits are trouble-free. Petty crime does happen.

- **Theft**: pickpocketing, bag snatching and muggings occur in Praia and on Sal and Boa Vista. Keep valuables in the hotel safe and avoid unlit, empty areas after dark.
- **Taxis**: use only official taxis. On Sal and Boa Vista, they are painted blue and yellow.
- **Swimming**: tides and currents around the islands are **very strong**. Swim only on beaches with lifeguards, and follow the warning flags.
- **Hiking**: trails on Santo Antão and Fogo are steep and exposed. Carry water and sun protection, and climb the Fogo volcano with a local guide.
- **Quad bikes**: helmets are required by law. Check that your travel insurance covers quad biking.

Emergency numbers

POLICE	AMBULANCE	FIRE BRIGADE
132	130	131

Health

- **Tap water**: most tap water is desalinated and is not recommended for drinking. Bottled water is sold everywhere.
- **Mosquitoes**: the World Health Organization certified Cabo Verde malaria-free in January 2024. Since then, a small number of local malaria cases have been reported, mostly in Praia. **Dengue** is also a risk, especially on Santiago, Fogo and Brava. Use insect repellent day and night.
- **Vaccinations**: check current recommendations about 8 weeks before travel. You need proof of yellow fever vaccination only if you arrive from a country with yellow fever risk.
- **Sun**: the sun is strong all year, and the cool trade winds hide it. Use strong sunscreen.
- **Medical care**: hospitals are basic, and some medicines are in short supply. Bring any regular medicines with you. Serious cases may need evacuation, so buy travel insurance that covers it.

Visas & entry

Citizens of the EU, the UK, the US, Canada and several other countries can visit **without a visa for up to 30 days**. Travellers from countries on Cabo Verde's visa list must get a visa from an embassy before they travel.

- **Pre-registration**: every visitor must register on the official EASE portal at least 5 days before arrival and pay the airport security fee (TSA) online. Since 1 July 2026, travellers who arrive without registering pay double the fee at the border.
- **Passport**: it must be valid for at least 6 months after your arrival date.
- **Longer stays**: to stay longer than 30 days, apply for a visa or an extension through the official channels before your permitted stay ends.

> Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

- **Greetings**: say *bon dia* (good morning) or *boa tarde* (good afternoon) when you enter a shop, bar or minibus. A handshake is normal, and friends kiss on both cheeks.
- **Pace**: schedules are relaxed. Patience and a smile help.
- **Dress**: swimwear is fine on the beach, but cover up in towns, shops and churches.
- **Photos**: ask before you photograph people, especially fishermen, market sellers and children.
- **Music**: music is central to local life. *Morna* is on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, and live music in bars is common.
- **Bargaining**: not usual in shops. Light bargaining is fine at craft stalls and for private tours.

Holidays & opening hours

On public holidays, government offices, banks and many shops close. Ferries and flights fill up before long weekends. Carnival in February or March is the biggest party of the year, especially in Mindelo. Each town also celebrates its own saint's day with processions and music.

Shops usually open on weekdays from about 8:00 to 12:30 and from 15:00 to 18:30. On Saturday, most open only in the morning, and many close on Sunday. Supermarkets and shops in resort areas keep longer hours.

Public holidays

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 13	Democracy Day
Jan 20	National Heroes' Day
May 1	Labour Day
Jun 1	Children's Day
Jul 5	Independence Day
Aug 15	Assumption Day
Sep 12	Nationality Day
Nov 1	All Saints' Day
Dec 25	Christmas Day
movable — Feb/Mar; Carnival Tuesday the day before is also widely observed	Ash Wednesday
movable — Mar/Apr	Good Friday

Getting around

Travel between the islands is the main challenge. Connections are limited, and delays are common, so leave a spare day before your international flight home.

- **By air**: domestic flights link the islands with airports, mostly through Praia and Sal. The airline and routes have changed several times in recent years, so check current schedules before you book. Santo Antão and Brava have no working airport and are reached by ferry.
- **By ferry**: CV Interilhas runs the national ferries. The busiest route links Mindelo on São Vicente with Porto Novo on Santo Antão, in about one hour. Ferries also link Praia with Fogo and Brava. Long crossings can take many hours in rough seas.
- **By aluguer**: shared minibuses and pick-up trucks called *alugueres* are the main public transport on every island. They leave when full and take cash.
- **By taxi**: taxis wait in towns and at airports. Most have no meter, so agree the price before you get in.

Driving

Hiring a car is easy on Sal, Boa Vista, Santiago and São Vicente. On steep islands such as Santo Antão and Fogo, many visitors hire a local driver instead.

- **Licence**: a UK photocard licence is valid for up to 6 months. Other visitors should carry an International Driving Permit with their national licence.
- **Road conditions**: many roads are **cobblestone**, which is bumpy and slippery when wet. On Boa Vista and Maio, you need a 4x4 to reach remote beaches.
- **Hazards**: watch for goats, dogs, pedestrians and *alugueres* that stop suddenly. Mountain roads are narrow, with steep drops. Avoid driving after dark.
- **Alcohol**: drink-driving can bring severe penalties, including prison.
- **Fuel**: stations are in the main towns only. Fill up before you drive into rural areas.
- **Electric vehicles**: public charging is very limited, so an electric car is not practical for touring.

URBAN	RURAL	PETROL	DIESEL
50 km/h	80 km/h	Gasolina	Gasóleo

Drive on the right

No motorway vignette needed

There are no road tolls in Cabo Verde.

Food & drink

Cape Verdean food mixes Portuguese and West African traditions, with plenty of fresh fish. The national dish is *cachupa*, a slow-cooked stew of corn and beans with fish or meat. Leftover cachupa is fried the next morning and served with an egg for breakfast. Lunch is the main meal, and many local cafés serve a cheap *prato do dia* (dish of the day).

On the coast, try grilled tuna or wahoo, and *lapas* (limpets) with garlic and lemon. Fresh goat's cheese with papaya jam is a popular snack. The local spirit is *grogue*, made from sugarcane, especially on Santo Antão. *Ponche* is a sweeter version with honey. Fogo also produces wine from vines grown in volcanic soil.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Cachupa refogada · katxupa guisadu
Leftover cachupa fried until crisp and served with a fried egg and sausage.

DINNER

Grilled fish
Fresh tuna, wahoo or grouper grilled and served with rice, potatoes or plantain.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Pastel com diabo dentro · pastel
Fried pastry made with corn and sweet potato dough, filled with spicy tuna.

Queijo de cabra
Fresh goat's cheese, often eaten with papaya jam or bread.

DRINKS

Grogue · grogu
Strong sugarcane spirit distilled mainly on Santo Antão and Santiago.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Cachupa · katxupa
The national dish: a slow-cooked stew of hominy corn and beans with fish or meat and vegetables.

Lapas · lapas
Limpets cooked with garlic and lemon, a seaside favourite.

Cape Verde – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
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Where to explore

Sal and Boa Vista

- Sal is the main entry point and the busiest resort island. Life centres on the town of Santa Maria and Praia de Santa Maria. Float in the salt pools of Pedra de Lume, watch lemon sharks in the shallows at Shark Bay, and see the light in the Blue Eye rock pool at midday.
- Boa Vista has long, empty beaches and the dunes of the Deserto de Viana. It is a major nesting site for loggerhead turtles in summer. The small town of Sal Rei faces the Ilhéu de Sal Rei.

Santiago

- Praia is the capital and the largest city. Its old centre, the *Platô*, has colonial buildings, markets and the Presidential Palace.
- Ribeira Grande de Santiago is home to Cidade Velha, the first European colonial town in the tropics. The hilltop Fort Real de São Filipe looks over the old town.
- Tarrafal in the north has a sheltered beach and the Tarrafal Concentration Camp Museum. On the way, Serra Malagueta Natural Park offers good mountain hiking.

São Vicente and Santo Antão

- São Vicente is home to Mindelo, the cultural capital, known for music, bars and Carnival.
- Santo Antão is the hiking island, with deep green valleys, terraced fields and cliffside villages. It is one hour by ferry from Mindelo. Pico da Cruz is a popular hiking goal.

Fogo and Brava

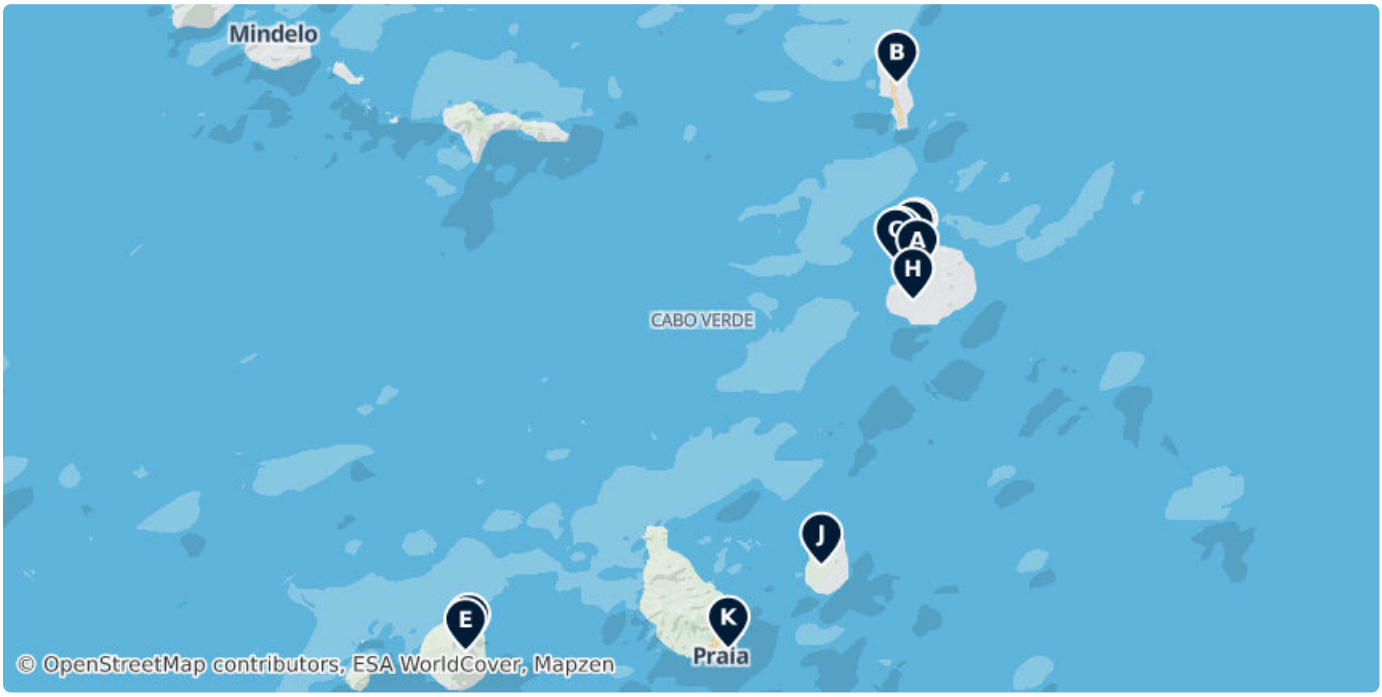
- Fogo is dominated by Pico do Fogo, at 2,829 metres the highest point in Cabo Verde. Villages and vineyards sit inside the crater. São Filipe is the island's colourful colonial town.
- Brava is the smallest inhabited island, green and quiet, and reached by ferry from Fogo.

Other islands

- São Nicolau is rugged and little visited, with hikes in Monte Gordo Natural Park and the old town of Ribeira Brava.
- Maio is flat and very quiet, with long beaches and few visitors.
- Santa Luzia Nature Reserve protects the uninhabited island of Santa Luzia and its islets, important for seabirds.

Cabo Verde's Absolute Essentials

Cabo Verde’s diverse geography is defined by the active stratovolcano of Pico do Fogo, rising 2,829 meters, and the shifting sand dunes of the Viana Desert. This selection spans the white sandy beaches of Sal and Boa Vista to the quieter, eastern shores of Maio Island. Key landmarks include the historic ruins of the Cabo Santa Maria shipwreck and the colonial-style Igreja de Santa Isabel in Sal Rei, offering a glimpse into the archipelago's Portuguese and African heritage.





A Boa Vista Island

Boa Vista, sometimes incorrectly spelled Boavista, is a desert-like island that belongs to the Cape Verde Islands.

Cape Verde (16.13884, -22.86128)



B Sal Island

Sal is an island in Cape Verde. Sal is a tourist destination with white sandy beaches and over 350 days of sunshine a year.

Cape Verde (16.73288, -22.92788)



C Ilhéu de Sal Rei

Ilhéu de Sal Rei is an uninhabited islet near the coast of Boa Vista Island, Cape Verde.

Cape Verde (16.17256, -22.93206)



D Viana Desert

The Deserto de Viana is a sand desert in the northwestern part of the island of Boa Vista, Cape Verde.

Cape Verde (16.19951, -22.87496)



E Mount Fogo

Pico do Fogo is an active stratovolcano located on the island of Fogo, Cape Verde, rising to 2,829 metres above sea level.

Cape Verde (14.93384, -24.35090)



F Pico do Fogo

Pico do Fogo is an active stratovolcano located on the island of Fogo, Cape Verde, rising to 2,829 metres above sea level.

Cape Verde (14.94940, -24.34031)

G Cabo Santa Maria Shipwreck

The rusting remains of the Spanish cargo ship Cabo Santa Maria, which ran aground in 1968, sit on the northern coast of Boa Vista Island.

Cape Verde (16.20361, -22.86513)

H Capela Santo António

A small, traditional chapel located in Povoação Velha, the oldest settlement on Boa Vista Island.

Cape Verde (16.04802, -22.87586)



I Santa Isabel

A 19th-century Catholic church in Sal Rei featuring a sand-colored facade and symmetrical architecture typical of the Portuguese colonial period.

(Unnamed Road), Sal Rei, Cape Verde (16.17675, -22.91756)



K Nelson Mandela International Airport

Nelson Mandela International Airport, also known as Praia International Airport, is the airport of Santiago Island in Cape Verde.

Praia, Cape Verde (14.94152, -23.48456)

asa.cv/aeroportos/aeroporto-da-praia/

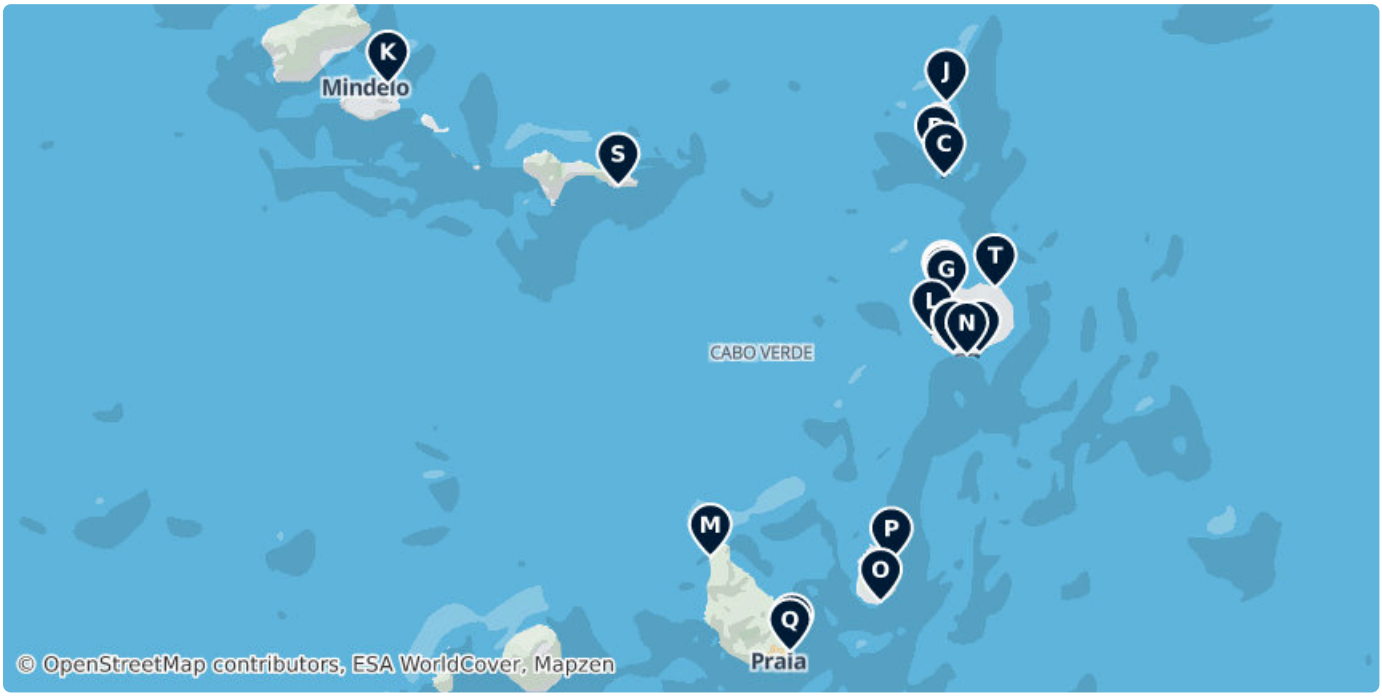
J Maio Island

Maio is the easternmost of the Sotavento islands of Cape Verde. Maio is located south of the island of Boa Vista and east of Santiago.

Cape Verde (15.20668, -23.17713)

Best Beaches

Cabo Verde's coastline spans diverse landscapes, from the 22-kilometer stretch of undeveloped white sand at Santa Mónica on Boa Vista to the palm-fringed, sheltered bay of Tarrafal on Santiago. Sal Island features the turquoise waters of Santa Maria, a hub for windsurfing and kitesurfing, alongside the secluded rocky coves of Calheta Funda. São Vicente offers the shallow natural lagoon of Baía das Gatas, while Boa Vista's Varandinha is characterized by limestone sea caves and dramatic rock formations.



A Praia de Santa Mónica

A 22-kilometer stretch of white sand on the southern coast of Boa Vista, known for its undeveloped landscape and strong Atlantic currents.

(Unnamed Road), Cape Verde (15.98309, -22.88558)

B Praia de Santa Mónica

Extensive white sand beach on the southern tip of Boa Vista, offering a remote environment with no permanent infrastructure.

(Unnamed Road), Cape Verde (15.98588, -22.88811)



C Santa Maria Beach

Wide sandy beach on Sal Island featuring a wooden pier where local fishermen land their catch. It is a primary location for windsurfing and kitesurfing.

Santa Maria, Cape Verde (16.59060, -22.91726)

D Calheta Funda

Secluded cove on the western coast of Sal, characterized by rocky surroundings and clear water suitable for snorkeling.

(16.65002, -22.94560)

E Praia d´Diante

Small beach located in Sal Rei, Boa Vista, primarily used by local fishing boats and offering views of the Ilhéu de Sal Rei.

Sal Rei, Cape Verde (16.17523, -22.91884)



F Praia de Estoril

Protected beach south of Sal Rei on Boa Vista, featuring calm waters and several windsurfing and kitesurfing schools.

Sal Rei, Cape Verde (16.17067, -22.91501)

G Praia de Carlota

Sandy stretch on the western coast of Boa Vista, frequently used for kiteboarding due to consistent side-shore winds.

Cape Verde (16.15987, -22.90888)

H Praia de Curral Velho

Remote southern beach on Boa Vista located near a salt marsh and the ruins of an 18th-century village.

Cape Verde (15.98230, -22.79104)



I Praia de Atlanta

Also known as Praia de Chaves, this beach on Boa Vista is the site of the Cabo Santa Maria shipwreck, visible from the shore.

Cape Verde (16.18418, -22.91898)

J Praia de Fiura

The northernmost beach on Sal Island, featuring wilder sea conditions and views of the nearby lighthouse.

Cape Verde (16.84085, -22.90873)

K Baía das Gatas

Natural lagoon on São Vicente with shallow, calm waters, hosting a major international music festival every August.

Cape Verde (16.90390, -24.90611)

L Praia da Varandinha

Sandy beach on Boa Vista notable for its natural limestone caves and rock formations carved by the sea.

Cape Verde (16.05142, -22.96111)

M Praia do Tarrafal

Palm-lined bay on the northern tip of Santiago, featuring golden sand and calm waters sheltered from the prevailing winds.

(15.28115, -23.75285)

N Praia de Carquejinha

Long, isolated stretch of sand on the southern coast of Boa Vista, situated near the Curral Velho wetlands.

Cape Verde (15.97598, -22.83616)

O Praia de Lagoa

Wide sandy beach on the island of Maio, located near the town of Porto Inglês and the local salt pans.

Cape Verde (15.12629, -23.14454)

P Praiona

Large, undeveloped sandy beach on the eastern coast of Maio, known for its seclusion and as a nesting site for sea turtles.

Cape Verde (15.26855, -23.10582)

Q Praia São Tomé

Small beach on the southern coast of Santiago, located near the capital city of Praia.

Cape Verde (14.95427, -23.46841)

R Praia de São Francisco-Beach Katumbela

Wide, white-sand bay on Santiago Island, popular for swimming and located a short drive from the capital.

Cape Verde (14.97058, -23.46065)

S Praia de Baia Gombeza

Isolated beach on the island of São Nicolau, featuring dark volcanic sand and rocky surroundings.

EN3-SN-02, Cape Verde (16.55485, -24.08245)

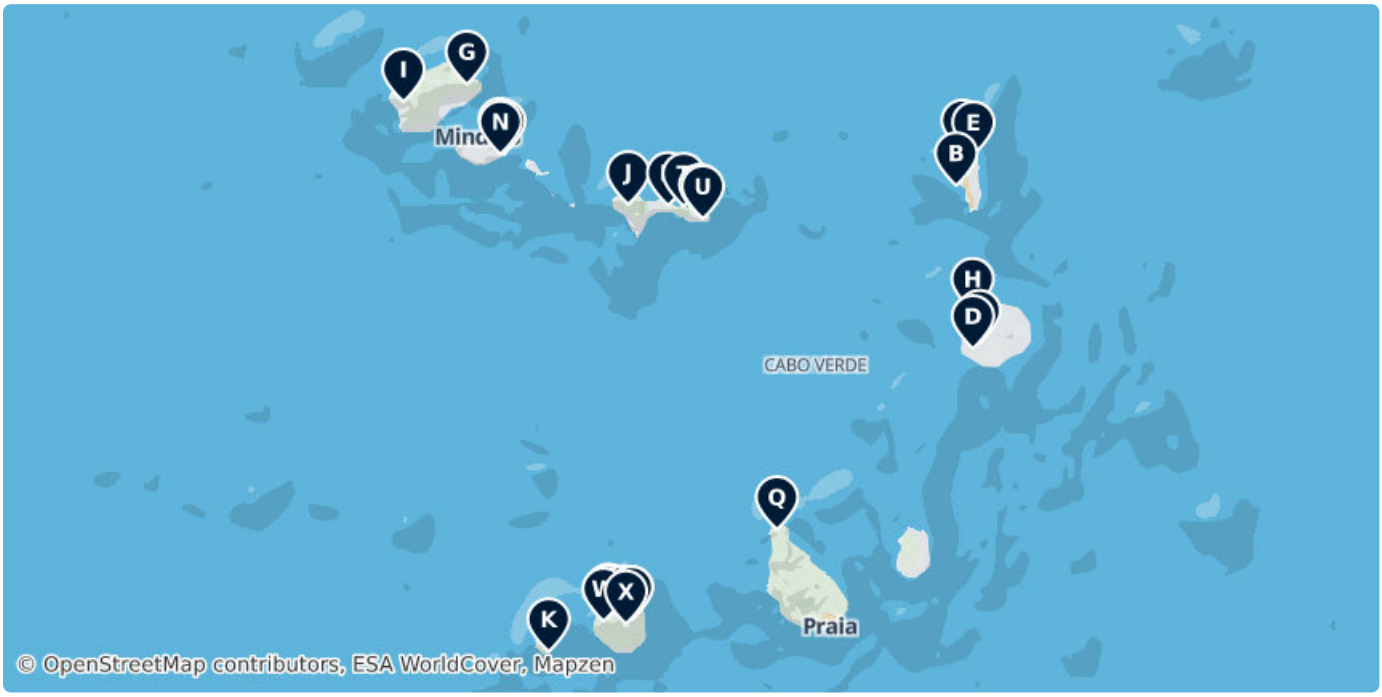
T Praia da Calheta

Small beach on the eastern coast of Boa Vista, offering a quiet alternative to the more frequented western shores.

(16.20726, -22.73487)

Cape Verdean Volcanoes

Cape Verde's archipelago is defined by its dramatic volcanic topography, ranging from the active stratovolcano Pico do Fogo, which rises to 2,829 meters, to the ancient, eroded peaks of Sal and Boa Vista. This collection highlights the diverse geological formations across the islands, including massive calderas, cinder cones, and rugged volcanic plugs. Visitors can explore the high-altitude landscapes of Santo Antão, the peaks of São Nicolau, and the stark, windswept volcanic ridges that shape the unique identity of each island in the chain.





A Pico do Fogo

Pico do Fogo is an active stratovolcano located on the island of Fogo, Cape Verde, rising to 2,829 metres above sea level.

Cape Verde (14.94940, -24.34031)



B Monte Leão

Coastal peak on the island of Sal, known for its distinctive shape resembling a reclining lion.

Cape Verde (16.69678, -22.98172)

C Santo Antonio

Extinct volcano located on the island of Boa Vista.

Cape Verde (16.06408, -22.88367)

D Rocha Estância

Extinct volcano on the island of Boa Vista, rising above the surrounding plains.

Cape Verde (16.04281, -22.91148)



E Monte Grande

The highest point on Sal island, this extinct volcano offers views across the island's flat landscape.

Cape Verde (16.82062, -22.90937)



F Morrinho do Açúcar

Extinct volcano situated on the island of Sal.

(Unnamed Road), Cape Verde
(16.82811, -22.95469)



G Pico da Cruz

Pico da Cruz is a mountain in the eastern part of the island of Santo Antão. Its elevation is 1585 m.

Cape Verde (17.10318, -25.03132)

H Rochinha

Small peak located on the island of Boa Vista.

Cape Verde (16.19235, -22.91255)

I Tope de Coroa

Tope de Coroa is a mountain on the island of Santo Antão's, Cape Verde, Africa. At 1,979 m elevation, it is the highest point of the island.

Cape Verde (17.03288, -25.29680)

J Monte Gordo

Monte Gordo is a mountain on the island of São Nicolau, Cape Verde. At 1,312 m elevation, it is the island's highest point.: 20 It is...

Cape Verde (16.62136, -24.35513)

K Monte Façanha

Extinct volcano on the island of Brava.

Cape Verde (14.81952, -24.68880)

L Monte Diogo

Extinct volcano located on the island of Fogo.

Cape Verde (14.95987, -24.43774)

M Pico de Fogo

Active stratovolcano on Fogo island and the highest peak in Cape Verde at 2,829 meters.

Cape Verde (14.94950, -24.34245)

N Curral de João

Extinct volcano located on the island of São Vicente.

Cape Verde (16.82262, -24.89047)

O Volcão Viana

Extinct volcano on the island of São Vicente.

Cape Verde (16.82553, -24.87385)

P Pico do Vento

Extinct volcano situated on the island of São Vicente.

Cape Verde (16.83419, -24.89272)

Q Monte Braga

Extinct volcano on the island of Santiago.

Cape Verde (15.31264, -23.73240)

R Monte Caçador

Extinct volcano located on the island of São Nicolau.

Cape Verde (16.61709, -24.18799)

S Monte Calderinha

Extinct volcano on the island of São Nicolau.

Cape Verde (16.57034, -24.05323)

T Caldeirinha

Extinct volcano situated on the island of São Nicolau.

(16.61425, -24.12220)

U Morro

Extinct volcano on the island of São Nicolau.

Cape Verde (16.56429, -24.04288)

V Pico de Fogo caldera

The dramatic rim of the volcanic crater surrounding the main cone on Fogo island.

(14.94932, -24.34026)

W Pico Pires

Extinct volcano located on the island of Fogo.

Cape Verde (14.94276, -24.45789)

X Monte Beco

Dormant volcano situated on the island of Fogo.

Cape Verde (14.93217, -24.36459)

Y Monte Sodelho

Extinct volcano on the island of Fogo.

Cape Verde (14.95268, -24.44164)

Z Monte Machado

Dormant volcano located on the island of Fogo.

(14.95367, -24.44565)

Bordeira

A massive cliff wall forming the western edge of the Chã das Caldeiras on Fogo.

(14.95218, -24.37421)

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