



SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE
ATLANTIC ISLANDS ON THE
AFRICAN EQUATOR

SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE
True tranquility

———— YOUR PERSONAL PRESS KIT ————





00 INDEX

01. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

02. DESTINATION OVERVIEW

03. NATURE

04. CULTURE

01 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

São Tomé e Príncipe
TRUE TRANQUILITY

TRUE TRANQUILITY

THE SECOND SMALLEST COUNTRY IN AFRICA



São Tomé é Príncipe lies just off the coast of Central Africa and is composed of two beautiful islands, located directly on the Equator's line, south of Nigeria, East of Gabon.

The country is made of **tropical rainforests**, ancient agricultural castles, the so-called "Roças", **unspoiled beaches**, large rivers and dry bushlands.

The islands were uninhabited until their discovery by Portuguese explorers in the **15th century**. Colonized and settled by Portugal throughout the 16th century, São Tomé e Príncipe served as an important commercial center for the Atlantic slave trade. The rich volcanic soil made **São Tomé and Príncipe** ideal for sugar cultivation. It was here, where agricultural mass labour farms (later found all over The Americas) were first built. Agricultural crops included three cycles: sugar cane, coffee and cocoa, with this plantation economy heavily dependent upon African slave or forced labour. Economic and social instability during the 19th and 20th centuries culminated in peaceful **independence in from Portugal in 1975**.

São Tomé and Príncipe has since remained one of Africa's most tranquil countries. On Freedom House's **press freedom index, São Tomé e Príncipe has one of the top positions in Africa**.

With **aprox 200.000 inhabitants, São Tomé and Príncipe** is the second-smallest African country after Seychelle and has less population than the London Borough of Greenwich. It is also the smallest Portuguese-speaking country. Its friendly and calm people are predominantly of African and Portuguese descent, with most adher-



01 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

ing to Roman Catholicism. The Portuguese legacy is visible in the country's culture and music, which **fuse European and African influences.**

The islands were probably uninhabited when the **Portuguese arrived** around **1470** with the discoverers **João de Santarém and Pedro Escobar**. The dates of discovery are usually given as 21 December (St Thomas's Day), 1471 for São Tomé, and 17 January (St Anthony's Day), 1472 for Príncipe. **The first successful settlement of São Tomé was established in 1493.** Príncipe was settled in 1500 under a similar arrangement. The ruins of the first settlement, set on a lovely beach, within a tranquil bay, next to a small river, can still be visited.

With the volcanic soil suitable for agriculture, the islands had become Africa's top sugar exporter by the middle of the 16th century. Competition from other sugar-producing colonies began to hurt and the slave population was difficult to control.

The National Hero **Rei Amador** (King Amador) became famous for his fight for independence in slavery times. He took over control on large areas of the

main island, named ministers and was stopped only after mainland Portugal sent armed reinforcement.

After sugar cultivation had declined, São Tomé became a transit point for ships in the slave trade. In the early 19th century, coffee and cocoa were introduced to the extensive plantations (known as **"Roças"**), owned by overseas companies, mainly from Portugal. These occupied almost all farmland and had a completely self-sustaining structure, with own railways, harbours, hospitals. **By 1908, São Tomé was the world's largest producer of cocoa.** Since the "Roças" managers had a high degree of authority, abuses against farm workers were common. Although Portugal officially abolished slavery in 1876, forced labour continued. An international fight, led by **Great Britain**, against the de-facto slavery system, put São Tomé e Príncipe into the global news during the beginning of the 20th century.

The **National Holiday** reminds of the Batepá Massacre, orchestrated by one of the last Portuguese Governors already in the time before independence.

02 DESTINATION OVERVIEW



São Tomé e Príncipe
TRUE TRANQUILITY

A GEM OF THE ATLANTIC

ONE OF THE TOP 10 HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS



The islands of **São Tomé and Príncipe** are situated in warm Equatorial Atlantic waters of the Gulf of Guinea, about **300** and **250 kilometres** off the northwest coast of Gabon. Both islands are part of the Cameroon volcanic line, which also includes the islands

of Annobón and Bioko (part of Equatorial Guinea), as well as Mount Cameroon in Cameroon itself.

The larger island São Tomé is **50 km** (30 mi) long and **30 km** (20 mi) wide. Its highest peak, the Pico de São Tomé reaches **2,024 m**. Príncipe is about **30 km** (20 mi) long and only **6 km** (4 mi) wide. The Pico do Príncipe reaches **948 m** (3,110 ft) height.

The **Equator** lies immediately south of São Tomé Island, passing through the Ilhéu das Rolas islet.

Pico Cão Grande (Great Dog) is a unique volcanic plug peak, in panoramic southern São Tomé. It rises over **300 m** (1,000 ft) above the palms, reaching 663 m (2,175 ft) height.

Climate | At sea level, the climate is tropical—hot and humid with average yearly temperatures of about **28 °C** (80.6 °F) and little daily variation. The temperature rarely rises beyond **32 °C** (89.6 °F). At the higher elevations, the average yearly temperature is **20 °C** (68 °F). There are **two dry seasons**, “Gravana” from early June to early September and “Gravanita” from the end of December to the beginning of March.

02 DESTINATION OVERVIEW

Wildlife | São Tomé and Príncipe does not have a many native mammals, but the islands are home to many endemic **birds and plants**, including the world's smallest **Ibis** and the world's largest **sunbird**, the rare São Tomé Fiscal, the Príncipe Grey Parrot and several giant species of Begonia. Most of the endemic species differentiate from one island to another. Still in 2016 a new species was found. São Tomé and Príncipe is an important **turtle nesting site**.

Ethnic groups | Distinct ethnic groups on São Tomé and Príncipe include:

Mestiços, descendants of Portuguese colonists and African slaves brought to the islands during the early years of settlement from Benin, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola.

Angolares, reputedly descendants of Angolan slaves who survived a 16th century shipwreck close to São João dos Angolares.

Forros, descendants of freed slaves when slavery was abolished.

Asians, mostly Chinese minority, including Macanese people of mixed Portuguese and Chinese descent from Macau.

Languages | Portuguese is the official language of **São Tomé and Príncipe**, that has been spoken in the islands since the end of the 15th century. Variants of Portuguese creoles are also spoken: **Forro**, a creole language (aprox 33%), **Cape Verdean Creole** (aprox 10%), **Angolar** (aprox 6%) and **Principense** (aprox 1%). **French** and **English** are foreign languages taught in schools. The country tries to reinforce knowledge of local languages through radio and media campaigns.

Visas | Nationals of **all European Union member states**, Angola, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Rwanda and the United States, in addition to those holding of a visa issued by the United States or a Schengen Area member state may **enter São Tomé and Príncipe visa-free for up to 15 days**.

For longer stays, you can apply for visa online (www.smf.st/virtualvisa).

Yellow fever vaccination is needed if you arrive from or transited through a risk country.



São Tomé e Príncipe

TRUE TRANQUILITY

Flight connections | São Tomé Island (TMS). Currently served 5 times a week from Lisbon (Portugal), plus additionally from Accra (Ghana), Praia (Cape Verde), Luanda (Angola) and Libreville (Gabun).

A departure tax of €18/person is collected at the airport in cash only.

Telephone/internet services | São Tomé e Príncipe international dialing code is **+239**. Local phone operators CST and Unitel offer mobile phone starter packs and reliable fast internet connections throughout the country. One of the fastest over-sea internet connections of the world is working between the two islands. Free WiFi is offered on some of the main town squares.



Capital and largest city:		São Tomé
Official languages:		Portuguese
Independence (from Portugal):		12 July 1975
Area:		964 km ²
Population:	2014 estimate	190,428
	2013 census	192,993
	Density	187.17/km ²
Currency:		Dobra (STD)
Time zone:		GMT (UTC+0)
Drives on the		right
Calling code		+239

02 DESTINATION OVERVIEW



A GEM OF THE ATLANTIC

SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE HOTELS AND RESORTS

OMALI LODGE

Luxury hotel at the tranquile beach bay, half way between city centre and airport
www.omalilodge.com

PESTANA SÃO TOMÉ

5 star business and meetings hotel, at city centre, next to the sea.
www.pestana.com

MIRAMAR BY PESTANA

São Tomé's classic upmarket hotel with pool and large private garden.
www.pestana.com

HOTEL ÂGOSTO NETO

Friendly middle class well maintained and clean business and family hotel.
www.hotelagostoneto.com

RESIDENCIAL AVENIDA

Garden surrounded flat houses, with vivid bamboo bar and curio shop. E-Mail: ravenida@cstome.net

SWEET GUEST HOUSE

The Basic stay, right in the city of sao tome, ideal for adventure travellers. Check contacts on facebook.

PRAIA INHAME

Eco resort at the southern tip of São Tomé, with beautiful beach and view to Rolas Island.
www.hotelpraiainhame.com

CLUB SANTANA

Upmarket bungalow lodge inside extense park, private beach, pool and french inspired cuisine.
www.clubsantana.com



São Tomé e Príncipe TRUE TRANQUILITY

MUCUMBLI LODGE

Eco bungalow resort above the Northern coast of São Tomé, community integrated.
mucumbli.wordpress.com

MONTE FORTE

Rustic rooms in plantation house of agricultural outpost, overlooking valleys and Ocean.
via [Booking.com](#)

ROÇA SÃO JOÃO

Former plantation house, with focus on arts and local cuisine, run by TV cook at São João dos Angolares. Contact on [Facebook](#)

ROÇA BOMBAÍM

Basic farm stay, right in the middle of the rain forest mountains, ideal for rustic hiking travellers. Check contacts locally.

PESTANA EQUADOR

Luxury bungalow complex on Rolas Island, next to the Equator, with lovely beaches and superb pool. www.pestana.com

BOM BOM RESORT

Luxury lodge next to private island Bom Bom (which host the restaurant), at northern top of Príncipe Island. www.bombomprincipe.com

BELO MONTE

Luxury resort, well decorated colonial style in renovated Manor houses, above the famous Banana Beach. www.belomontehotel.com

ABADE PRÍNCIPE

Rustic farmstay overlooking the Atlantic and "Basecap Island", above peaceful Abade Village, Príncipe. www.abadeprincipe.com



PROTECTED NATURE

THE NATURE OF SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE SO MUCH TO SEE!

São Tomé e Príncipe is the perfect African holiday destination for nature lovers. Find yourself in lonesome valleys and climb majestic volcano mountains. Observe **dozens of endemic bird species** such as Príncipe Grey Parrot, Tomé Gágá, Truqui, Merlo and Tchin-Tchin-Xolo. Swim with Dolphins, watch the whales, take a rest at **truly lonesome beaches**. Observe the turtles and dive to unique Atlantic submarine landscapes. Discover ruins of ancient agricultural outposts, villages and railroads overgrown by São Tomé e Príncipe's dense rain forest vegetation. Discover mystical lakes and waterfalls, learn about jungle spices and breath the fresh air of the Ocean and the forests. Although our landscape is rough and wild, our country is very secure, making São Tomé e Príncipe the perfect place for everybody who wants to get to know Africa – easy, yet real. Enjoy truly unique nature in **truly tranquil holidays**.

Approximately one third of São Tomé e Príncipe is the **“Ôbo” Natural Reserve Park** (indicated approximately in the map). Implemented with help of the European Union, this park is part of the regional protection of Equatorial forests, flora, fauna and maritime life. The park includes an easily reachable botanical garden in the foggy mountains, showing our endemic, herbal- and medical plants as well as orchids, flowers and decorative plants from both islands. Guides assist travelers with hiking, cycling and diving.

The protected park areas include **primary forests**, the highest peaks of the country, breathtaking views from ancient volcano craters in an extremely diverse nature. Colourful birds, lizards and shy monkeys are the main animals. Coffee and cacao plantations cover a large part of the unprotected rest of São Tomé e Príncipe. The northern parts of both main islands come in dry climate with extense grasslands, with baobab trees and cactus, whilst the southern parts boost a tropical wet climate, and at all higher mountains the air can get chilly fresh. This diverse climate makes our country a truly healthy destination.

Lagoa Amélia: Mystic lake inside ancient volcano crater, overgrown by thick layers of grass. Cascata **São Nicolau:** Famous waterfall in the dense mountain forests, easily reachable by street.



Roça Bombaím: Ancient agricultural outpost on a plateau valley inside the rain forest, with its own little botanical garden.

Monte Café: Once one of the largest coffee plantations, still with wide fields of coffee, cacao and some vanilla around.

Boca do Inferno: "The Mouth to Hell" – Tunnel made by the Atlantic Ocean, impressively spraying spin-drift.

Lagoa Azul: Clear water bay, with surreally turquoise waters before noon (due to sun direction).

Praia Inhamé and Praia Piscina: Two of the superb beaches at the south tip of São Tomé e Príncipe.

Ilhéu Santana: Small rocky islet, overgrown by palmtrees, cut by a tunnel at the Ocean's surface.

Malanza Mangroves Lagoon: Spot bird species on a canoa tour.

Sete Pedras: The Seven Stones – superb diving spot with rocks raising straight from the Atlantic Ocean's ground. Spot sharks, Tuna, Marlin and a unique underwater life.

Sete Ondas: The Seven Waves Beach – Yes, these are really seven waves in front of this sandy beach breaking.

Pico de São Tomé: Our highest peak, 2014 meters above the Ocean, approximately 8 to 12 hours hike one way, with overnight sleep, for those you like it tough.

Pico Papagaio: the highest peak of Príncipe Island. Not easy to climb either.

Zampalma Waterfall: Well hidden in the São Tomé rainforest, with a small pool to take a chilling bath.

Praia Tamarinas: get some sweet-sour refreshment directly from the Tamarind trees at this beach.

Plus: Many, many other beaches and truly wild nature.

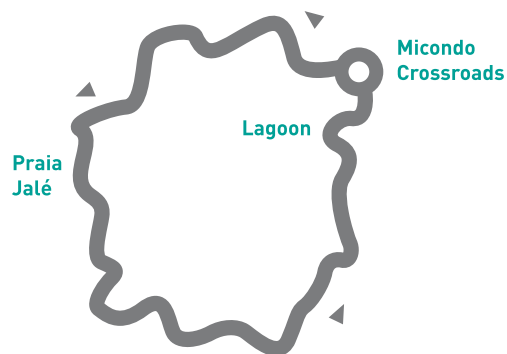
Some of São Tomé e Príncipe's nature and festive seasons: **January:** New years Bath in the Ocean, King Amador Day, Santo Izidoro at Ribeira Afonso, bread fruit, turtle oviposition, turtle eclosion, short dry season. wale spotting. **February:** short dry season, Batepá National Memory's Day at Fernão Dias. **March:** Orchids blossom. **April:** Orchids blossom, bread fruits. **June:** Mangostane fruits, World Music Day at São Tomé City. **July:** Mangostane fruits, Independence Day, Nossa Senhora Perpetuá at Conde, Santa Maria at Madalena. **August:** Orchids blossom, Palm wine event at Otótó, Floripes Dance and Traditional Event at Santo António. **September:** Orchids blossom, Nossa Senhora de Nazaré at Trindade. **October:** Orchids blossom, Mango fruits, Nossa Senhora at Guadalupe. **November:** Mango fruits. **December:** Wale spotting, Christmas, turtle oviposition, turtle eclosion. All year round: palm wine, cocoa (each 3 months), coconuts.

03 NATURE



SELECTED HIKING TRAILS

DISCOVER SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE BY FOOT
(LOCAL GUIDE RECOMENDED):



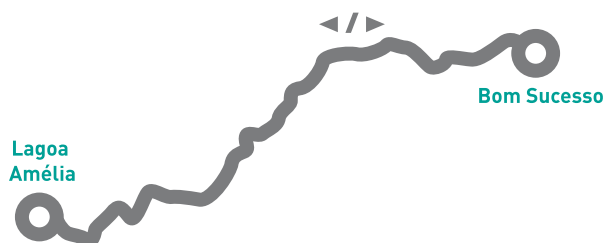
South Beaches and Mangroves Tour

Starts at crossroads before Porto Alegre:
0°02'56.1"N 6°32'06.1"E
Minimum Elevation: 0m
Maximum Elevation: 262m
Average Climbing Gradient: 40%
Approx. Distance: 8.9km
Approx. Duration: 3h



Angolares Circle Hike

Starts São João dos Angolares:
0°08'16.3"N 6°38'55.5"E
Minimum Elevation: 0m
Maximum Elevation: 291m
Average Climbing Gradient: 49%
Approx Distance: 17.5km
Approx. Duration: 6h

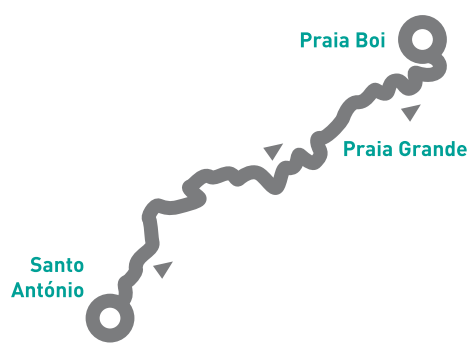


Lagoa Amelia Primary Forest Tour

Starts Bom Sucesso:
0°17'18.9"N 6°36'44.0"E
Minimum Elevation: 470m
Maximum Elevation: 1473m
Average Climbing Gradient: 56%
Approx Distance: 7.3km
Approx. Duration: 4h

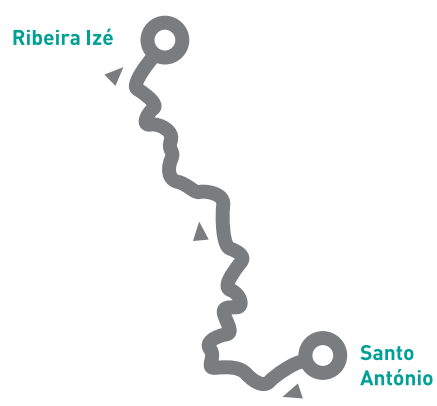


São Tomé e Príncipe
TRUE TRANQUILITY



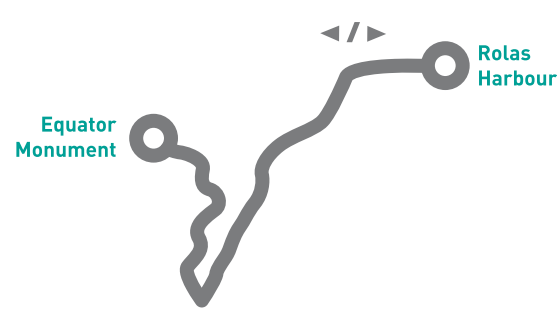
Praia Boi Turtle Hike

Starts out of Santo Antonio:
 1°38'44,8"N 7°25'11,6"E
 Minimum Elevation: 0m
 Maximum Elevation: 160m
 Average Climbing Gradient: 51%
 Approx. Distance: 12,5km
 Approx. Duration: 3,5h



Ribeira Ize Ancient Settlement Hike

Starts Santo Antonio:
 1°38'30,8"N 7°25'09,8"E
 Minimum Elevation: 3m
 Maximum Elevation: 121m
 Average Climbing Gradient: 51%
 Approx. Distance: 11,8km
 Approx. Duration: 3,5h



Equator Stroll

Starts at Ilhéu das Rolas Harbour:
 0°00'00,3"S 6°31'16,9"E
 Minimum Elevation: 1m
 Maximum Elevation: 95m
 Average Climbing Gradient: 75%
 Approx. Distance: 2,6km
 Approx. Duration: 1h



A BLEND OF THE CONTINENTS

THE CULTURE OF SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE, CULTURES GROWN FROM NATURE

São Tomé e Príncipe has grown from colonial influences, with agricultural outposts and slave trade being the main businesses, in the first centuries after its colonization in late 15th century. Large agricultural companies, so called **Roças**, were constructed all over the islands, cultivating sugar cane, coffee and cocoa. With the exception of a two year occupation by the Netherlands, São Tomé e Príncipe was a Portuguese colony until 1975, when it gained independence peacefully. Our tradition and culture is based on the mix of trade and agriculture, seafaring and fishing, slavery and independence, cultures and influences from Portugal, Africa, Brasil and Europe. The most important places to feel the culture of **São Tomé e Príncipe are the Roças**. Dozens of these agricultural outposts are located all over the islands. Some of these **Roças** are small jungle farms, others are small cities sometimes reminding of European

castles amidst the rainforest. The larger **Roças** usually had their own port, plus most of them an own railway network. Names such as the Coffee Mountain (Monte Café) or the Golden River (Rio d'Ouro, today Agostinho Neto) give an idea of the profits earned.

Roça Monte Café: High in the mountain, still surrounded by coffee and cocoa plantations.

Roça Água Izé: Still producing and exporting tons of cocoa for superb chocolates sold all over Europe and the UK.

Roça Agostinho Neto: Famous for its castle like former hospital overlooking the roça. Formerly linked by railroad to Fernão Dias, today an independence fight heritage site.

Roça Sundry: The place where Einstein's Theory of Relativity was first scientifically proven, during a solar eclipse.

Grown from the mixed traditions of our country, local cultures, festivals and dances have emerged. The following events are famous for São Tomé e Príncipe.

Auto de Floripes theatral carnaval dance: A long lasting parade, usually in Santo Antonio, during August, dating back to Portuguese influences and dealing with cultural fights inside Europe in the Middle Ages. Tchiloli is a masked theatral performance, uniquely mixing African culture with colonial influences. The



origin of **Tchiloli** date back to a fight of Charlemagne in Germany, blended with stories of love, infidelity and tragedy. Dança do Congo is yet another unique event, to be seen for example on Neves city's party, with **masked dancers parading the streets**, some of them on dizzying stilts. Bulaué dance as well as Cape Verdian dances of farm workers add to the diversity of Santomean culture.

SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE RESTAURANTS

OMALI | On a veranda next to the Ocean, international food and drinks, served in stylish environment.

JASMIN | Right within the old town, next to Taxi square and Ministry of Culture, serving Pizza and international food.

SABOR DA ILHA | Rustic restaurant within the festival grounds, serving local dishes, grilled fish, meat and breadfruit.

CLUB SANTANA | French inspired upmarket cuisine, inside the hotel, Saturdays with live music at the beach.

DONA TÉTÉ | Hidden in a backyard, close to the Fort, serving local dishes with a premium touch.

FILOMAR | At São Tomé's airport bay, on a huge veranda high above the Ocean. Local dishes with a view.

BELO MONTE | Upmarket modern cuisine, with a touch of local spices at the hotel's colonial buildings.

ROÇA SÃO JOÃO | Modern interpreted Santomean cuisine, served on tropical veranda, decorated with local art.



SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE
True tranquility

PRESS CONTACT IN SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE:

PLEASE REFER TO DIRECÇÃO DE HOTELARIA E TURISMO, AVENIDA MARGINAL (NEXT TO THE MAIN POSTAL SERVICES), POST BOX Nº40, SÃO TOMÉ CIDADE, SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE. TEL:+239 2221542, FAX:+239 2222020.

PRESS CONTACT FOR THE UK AND IRELAND:

INQUIRIES FROM THE UK AND IRELAND - PLEASE REFER TO:
EXTRACT ASSOCIATED DESIGNERS, PAUL-ROBESON-STREET 9, 10439 BERLIN, GERMANY

E-MAIL US AT ANY TIME: CONTACT@SAOTOMEPRINCINPE.CO.UK