

# Cape Verde

Most people only know Cape Verde through the haunting *mornos* (mournful songs) of Cesária Évora. To visit her homeland – a series of unlikely volcanic islands some 500km off the coast of Senegal – is to understand the strange, bittersweet amalgam of West African rhythms and mournful Portuguese melodies that shape her music.

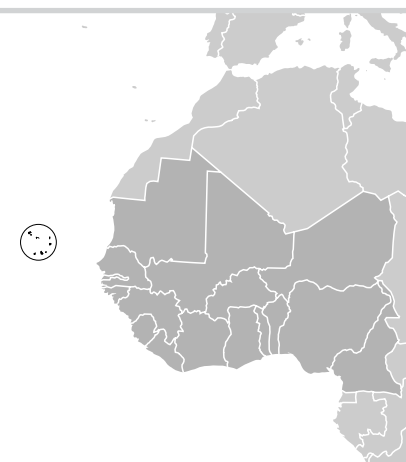
It's not just open ocean that separates Cape Verde from the rest of West Africa. Cool currents, for example, keep temperatures moderate, and a stable political and economic system help support West Africa's highest standard of living. The population, who represent varying degrees of African and Portuguese heritage, will seem exuberantly warm if you fly in straight from, say, Britain, but refreshingly low-key if you arrive from Lagos or Dakar.

Yet life has never been easy here. For centuries, isolation and cyclical drought have resulted in famine. Generations of Cape Verdeans have been forced to emigrate, leaving those at home wracked by *sodade* – the deep longing that fills Cesária Évora's music. While hunger is no longer a threat, you need only glance at the terraced hillsides baking in the sun to understand that every bean, every grain of corn, is precious.

Though tiny in area, the islands contain a remarkable profusion of landscapes, from Maio's barren flats to the verdant valleys of Santo Antão. And Fogo, a single volcanic peak whose slopes are streaked with rivers of frozen lava. The beaches of Sal and Boa Vista increasingly attract package-tour crowds, but Cape Verde remains a destination for the connoisseur – the intrepid hiker, the die-hard windsurfer, the deep-sea angler, the *morno* devotee.

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 4035 sq km
- **Capital** Praia
- **Country code** ☎ 238
- **Famous for** Cesária Évora
- **Languages** Portuguese, Crioulo
- **Money** Cabo Verde escudo (CVE); US\$1 = CVE91, €1 = CVE112.16
- **Population** 450,000
- **Visa** All non-Cabo Verdean citizens require a visa.





became the island's new commercial and cultural centre. When the airplane replaced the ocean liner, Cape Verde responded in kind, opening an international airport on Sal in 1948. Designed to service long, transatlantic flights, it remains a mainstay of the country's economy.

### Independence

Because much of Cape Verde's population was mixed race, they tended to fare better than fellow Africans in other Portuguese colonies. Beginning in the mid-19th century, a privileged few even received an education, many going on to help administrate mainland colonies. By independence, 25% of the population could read (compared with 5% in Guinea-Bissau).

However, to the chagrin of the Portuguese, literate Cape Verdeans were gradually becoming aware of the nationalism simmering on the mainland. Soon, together with leaders of Guinea-Bissau, they had established a joint independence movement. In 1956 Cape Verdean intellectual Amílcar Cabral (born in Guinea-Bissau) founded the Marxist-inspired Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), later renamed the Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde (PAICV).

As other European powers were relinquishing their colonies, Portugal's right-wing dictator, António de Salazar, propped

up his regime with dreams of colonial greatness. From the early 1960s, one of Africa's longest wars of independence ensued. However, most of the fighting took place in Guinea-Bissau, and indeed many middle-class Cape Verdeans remained lukewarm toward independence.

Eventually, Portugal's war became an international scandal and led to the non-violent demise of its dictatorship in 1974, with Cape Verde finally gaining full independence a year later. Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau seriously considered uniting the two countries, but a 1980 coup in Guinea-Bissau ended talks.

### Cape Verde Since Independence

Although the PAICV nationalised most industries and instituted a one-party state, it managed to limit corruption, instituting remarkably successful health and education programs. Unfortunately, independence did not solve the problem of drought, and in 1985 disaster struck again. However, this time the USA and Portugal contributed 85% of the food deficit; their aid continues in a country that produces only about 20% of its food supply.

By the late 1980s there were increasing calls for a multiparty democracy, and in 1990 the PAICV acquiesced, allowing lawyer Carlos Veigo to found the Movimento para a Democracia (MPD). With a centre-

right policy of political and economic liberalisation, the MPD swept to power in the 1991 elections. Privatisation and foreign investment – especially in tourism – brought only slow results however, and in 2001, the PAICV reclaimed power. This time it promised to adhere to more a centrist policy of prudent fiscal and economic management – largely the result of International Monetary Fund (IMF) mandates.

### Cape Verde Today

With elections set for early 2006, the choice is very much between shades of grey, especially under the IMF's watchful eye. Tourism is the nation's main growth industry, and the country remains prosperous by West African standards. Famine is certainly no longer an imminent threat, yet improvements in the lives of the average Cape Verdean remain incremental, and for those without family abroad, conditions remain difficult.

### THE CULTURE The National Psyche

If you arrive from mainland Africa, the lack of hustle among Cape Verdeans will likely come as a welcome relief. While they are gregarious, you may catch whiff of a certain distance, even clannishness – partly a result of the islands' isolation (from the mainland as well as each other) and perhaps partly because of a history of Sicilian-style vendettas among Portuguese landlords. However, patience and a well-timed smile can smooth most paths.

The European legacy is more marked here than in most parts of Portuguese-speaking Africa, yet Cape Verdeans will tell you their Crioulo culture is, at its core, African, citing especially their food and music. More recently, the huge expatriate community in the USA has also had its affect on attitudes, including a growing evangelical community.

One thing is certain: the people possess a great love of their native soil, despite, and perhaps in part because of, the hardships that it entails.

### Daily Life

Except for a small class of business owners and professionals who live like their Western counterparts, life in Cape Verde is not easy. Terraced farms require enor-

mous effort and arid weather keeps yields small. While the infrastructure, from roads to water, is rapidly modernising, you regularly see women toting water from common wells. A high percentage of households consist of single mothers with children, a legacy of slavery and male-only emigration patterns that dates to the 18th century.

Cape Verdeans love their *grogue* and alcoholism is a major social problem. At the same time, the islands have eradicated other health problems that are a constant drain on their mainland neighbours, from malaria and cholera to high levels of infant mortality.

Based on the UN's quality-of-life index, Cape Verde comes out on top in West Africa. From 1975 to 2005, life expectancy leapt from 46 years to 70 years, far higher than the sub-Saharan African average. Cape Verde also boasts by far the highest GNP per capita (US\$1400). Cape Verde's literacy rate of 76% is also the highest in West Africa. Virtually all children of primary school age attend school, though attendance at secondary schools is considerably less.

### Population

Cape Verde's population of 445,000 enjoys the longest life expectancy in West Africa, as well as one of the lowest growth rates. It's also the only country in West Africa with a population of primarily mixed European and African descent. About 40% of the population lives on Santiago, with about half again in or around Praia, the nation's capital. Mindelo, on the island of São Vicente, is the second-largest city, with a population of about 75,000. The rest of the population lives largely in small towns, most of which are clustered in the agriculturally productive valleys of São Antão, São Nicolau, Santiago and Brava. As tourism grows, so do the once-tiny populations of arid Sal, Boa Vista and Maio.

### RELIGION

The vast majority of Cape Verdeans are Roman Catholic, though the roots of the religion have never penetrated as deep in the culture as, for example, in Latin America. Evangelical Protestantism is making inroads, accounting for some 10% of the population. Traces of African animism remain in the beliefs of even devout Christians.

### THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

Since its inception, Cape Verde has made a living out of its very isolation. Almost as soon as the first settlers arrived at Cidade Velha, they realised that they would never make their fortune growing sugar cane – the dry season proved too punishing. Having imported slaves from the African mainland to work their unprofitable lands, they looked around and realised where the real money lay – the slaves themselves. Close to Africa but safely isolated, Cidade Velha was an ideal launching point for raids on the mainland, as well as a staging point for European markets.

By the 17th century, the English, French and Dutch had broken the Portuguese stranglehold on the slave trade, but the islands of Cape Verde continued to play their part. Their position in the middle of the Atlantic made them an ideal victualling station for transatlantic ships.

With the slow demise of the slave trade, Cape Verde became an afterthought even for the Portuguese. Still, the islands got another chance – the advent of ocean liners turned Mindelo into one of the world's largest coal and victualling stations. The airplane put ocean liners up on blocks, but once again, Cape Verde's isolation proved profitable. The international airport, which opened in 1948, was a key stop for flights between Africa, Europe and the Americas, and one of the few African airports that would service South African airlines – for a pretty profit, of course.

These days, there is increasing talk that the islands serve as a fine stopping point for yet another unpalatable trading partner: small planes loaded with New World drugs headed for Old World markets.

## ARTS Craftwork

Traditional crafts include weaving, ceramics (mainly from Boa Vista, Maio, Santiago and Santo Antão), baskets (mainly from Santiago), mat making (from Brava, Fogo, Santiago and Santo Antão) and batik (mainly from São Vicente). Be aware that most craft shops sell objects from the African mainland rather than Cape Verde itself.

## Literature

While Cape Verde has the smallest population of any country in West Africa, its literary tradition is one of the richest. Prior to independence, a major theme in Cape Verdean writing was the longing for liberation. Poet, musician and national hero Eugénio Tavares (1867–1930) composed lyrical *mornos* in Crioulo rather than Portuguese. In 1936, a small clique of intellectuals founded a literary journal, *Claridade*, whose goal was to express a growing sense of Cape Verdean identity. Themes of contemporary literature, best expressed by poet Jorge Barbosa's *Arquipélago*, remain constant: *sodade* (longing and/or homesickness), mysteries of the sea and an attempt to come to terms with a history of oppression.

## Music

Much of Cape Verdean music evolved as a form of protest against slavery and other types of oppression. Today, two kinds of song dominate traditional Cape Verdean music: *mornos* and *coladeiras*, both built on the sounds of stringed instruments like the fiddle and guitar.

As the name suggests, *mornos* are mournful expressions of *sodade* – an unquenchable longing, often for home. With faster, more upbeat rhythms, *coladeiras*, in contrast, tend to be romantic love songs or else more active expressions of protest. Cesária Évora (p240) is hands down the most famous practitioner of both these forms. The ensemble group Simentera are the self-appointed guardians of traditional music, though they work to make it appealing to contemporary ears.

A newer style of music called *funaná* is built on fast-paced, Latin-influenced rhythms and underpinned by the accordion – great for dancing. Current practitioners include Ildo Lobo, Exitos de Oro and Ferro Gaita.

## ENVIRONMENT The Land

Cape Verde consists of 10 major islands (nine of them inhabited) and five islets, all of volcanic origin. Though none is more than about 50km from its closest neighbour, they represent a wide array of climates and landscapes. All are arid or semiarid, but the mountainous islands of Brava, Santiago, Fogo, Santo Antão and São Nicolau – all with peaks over 1000m – catch enough moisture to support grasslands, as well as fairly intensive agriculture, particularly in windward-facing valleys. Still, only 20% of the land is arable. Maio, Boa Vista and Sal are flatter and almost entirely arid, with long, sandy beaches and desertlike interiors.

## Wildlife

Cape Verde has less fauna than just about anywhere in Africa. Birdlife is a little richer (around 75 species), and includes a good number of endemics (38 species). The frigate bird and the extremely rare raso lark are much sought after by twitchers. The grey-headed kingfisher is more common though with its strident call.

Divers can see a good range of fish, including tropical species such as parrot fish and angelfish, groupers, barracudas, moray eels and, with luck, manta rays, sharks (including the nurse, tiger and lemon) and marine turtles. Five species of turtles visit the islands on their way across the Atlantic. Nesting takes place throughout the year, but in particular from May to October.

## Environmental Issues

The greatest threats to the environment remain cyclical drought and soil erosion, exacerbated by deforestation and overgrazing – mostly by goats. To combat these problems, the country has constructed more than 15,000 contour ditches and 2500km of dams, and since the 1970s has been implementing a major reforestation program.

## FOOD & DRINK

While Cape Verdean cuisine may include Portuguese niceties such as imported olives and Alentejo wines, it's built on a firm African base, with *milho* (corn) and *feijão* (beans) the ubiquitous staples. To these they add relative luxuries such as *arroz* (rice), *batatas fritas* (fried potatoes) and

*mandioca* (cassava). From the sea come excellent *atum* (tuna), *garoupa* (grouper), *serra* (sawfish) and, most famously, *lagosta* (lobster). Other protein sources include *ovos* (eggs) and, in increasing rarity, *cabrito* (goat), *frango* (chicken), *porco* (grilled pork) and *carne de vaca* (beef). Vegetables – often *cenoura* (carrots), *couve* (kale) and *abóbora* (squash) – come in *caldeirada* (meat or fish stews), or simply steamed.

Meals tend to be very simple wherever you go: a piece of grilled or fried meat or fish, accompanied by rice or *xerém* (cornmeal) and your choice of steamed vegetables or French fries. Practically nowhere will you pay less than CVE500, yet even the fanciest place will rarely charge more than CVE800 (except for beef and shellfish, which cost significantly more). The classic dish is the ubiquitous *cachupa*, which consists of beans and corn mixed with whatever scraps of fish or meat that might be around. In the evening, it's served as *cachupa fresca* (stew), while in the morning it's often sautéed and typically served with a fried egg and sausage (*cachupa guisada*). For sweet teeth, there are concoctions of *cóco* (coconut), *papaia* (papaya) and banana, as well as flanlike *pudivim* of either *leite* (milk) or *queijo* (soft goat cheese).

For drinks, there's *grogue*, the local sugarcane spirit; *ponch* (rum, lemonade and honey); *Ceris*, a decent bottled local beer; and of course, Portuguese beers and wines.

## SANTIAGO

The largest member of the archipelago and the first to be settled, Santiago is a recapitulation of all the other islands, with sandy beaches, desertlike plains, verdant, windward valleys and a mountainous interior. It's also home to nearly half of the country's population, most of whom live in or near Praia, its capital.

## Getting There & Away

**AIR**  
Praia's airport is, together with Sal's, the main air hub for the islands. It has international flights to Dakar via both TACV and Air Sénégal, as well as to Amsterdam and Lisbon. There are daily flights to Boa Vista, two daily to Fogo, three weekly to

Maio, one flight weekly to Santo Antão, daily flights to São Nicolau and up to 10 flights daily to Mindelo and Sal. No domestic flight lasts longer than 45 minutes. For more information see p253.

## BOAT

**Polar** (☎ 2-615223; Av Unidade Guiné-Cabo Verde) offers regular service to Fogo and Brava, Sal and Boa Vista. **STM** (☎ 2-321179; Av Unidade Guiné-Cabo Verde) heads twice weekly to Mindelo via São Nicolau. For more ferry information, see p253.

## Getting Around

### CAR

**Alucar** (☎ 2-614520; fax 2-614900), near the Hotel Marisol has reasonable cars at good prices (see p254).

### MINIBUS

Private *aluguer* (for hire) minibuses to most towns leave from Sucupira Market, just down the northwest side of Platô, Praia's town centre. Those headed to Tarrafal depart daily starting at around 9.30am and cost CVE350.

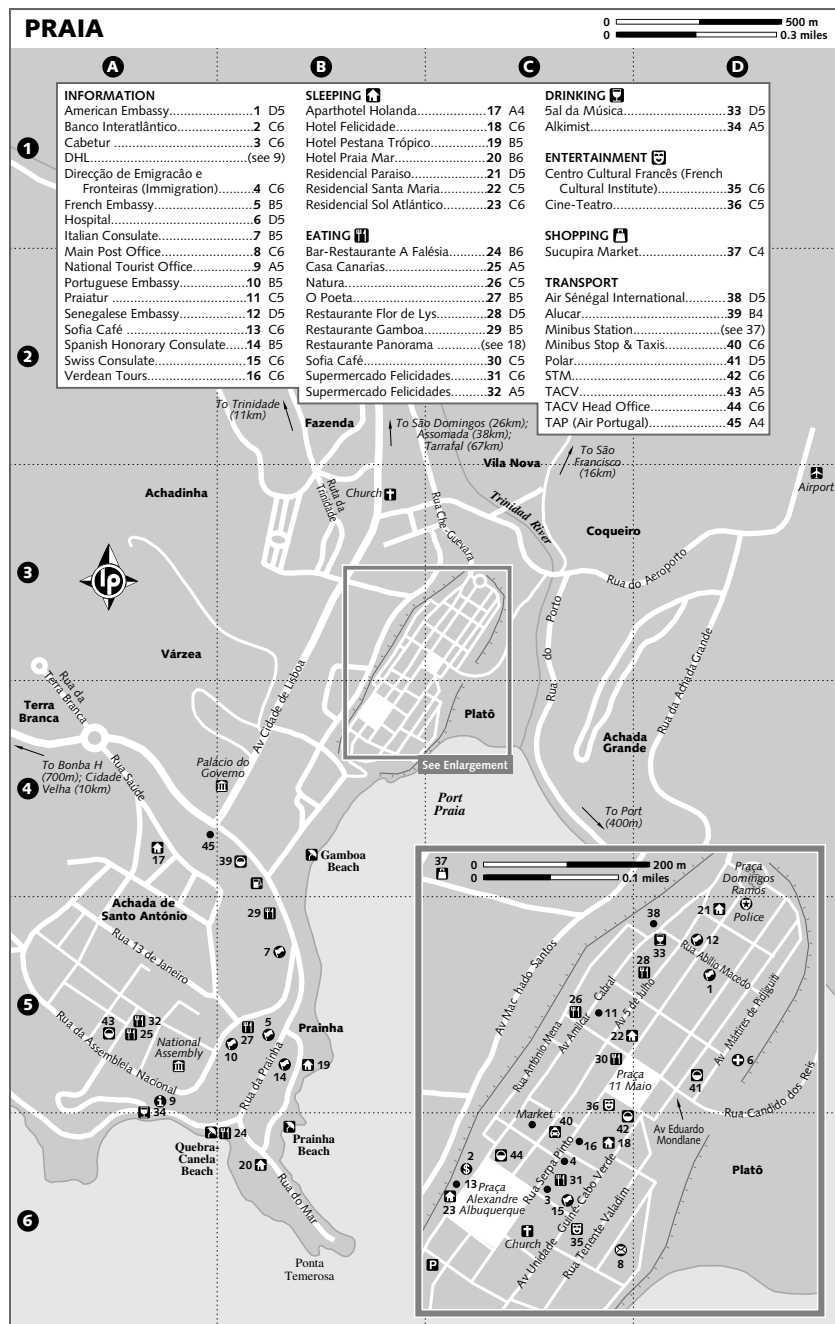
## PRAIA

pop 78,000

Cape Verde's capital and largest city, Praia, is a good place to finish your business quickly and then move on. Neither attractive nor particularly clean, it does have a few saving graces. The town's centre, on a large fortresslike plateau (hence the name Platô) overlooking the ocean, has a number of colonial buildings in various states of restoration. There are also two decent town beaches, around which most of the city's upscale restaurants and hotels are clustered.

## History

Praia became the Portuguese military and administrative headquarters in the 18th century after Cidade Velha, the island's first settlement, proved vulnerable to pirates. Praia's Platô, by contrast, was protected by steep cliffs on all sides, yet stood next to a serviceable port. The city has undergone considerable growth since independence, with an infrastructure that has not always kept pace. Today the city is the economic as well as the political centre and home to more than a quarter of the nation's population.



## Orientation

Around Platô, the town tumbles onto the land below: to the north is the commercial district of Fazenda; to the east Achada Grande and the port; and to the southwest, the more affluent, residential area of Achada de Santo António, where the parliament building and some embassies are also found. Due south of Platô is the beachfront area known as Prainha, with pricier hotels and restaurants, as well as a number of embassies.

## Information BOOKSHOPS

**Sofia Café** (Praça Alexandre Albuquerque) Has a small but good Portuguese-language bookstore on the ground floor.

## EMERGENCY

**Fire** (☎ 131)

**Medical assistance** (☎ 130)

**Police** (☎ 132)

## INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés are springing up around the city, and cost CVE150 to CVE200 per hour. **Sofia Cafés** (Praça 11 Maio & Praça Alexandre Albuquerque) The two most pleasant Internet cafés are these two in Platô.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

**Hospital** (☎ 2-612462; Av Mártires de Pidjiguiti) The city's main hospital is located in Platô, east of Praça 11 Maio.

## MONEY

There are ATMs throughout the city, especially around Praça Alexandre Albuquerque. You can change travellers cheques at the following banks, both in Platô:

**Banco Interatlântico** (☎ 2-618430; Av Amílcar Cabral)

**Caixa Económica do Cabo Verde** (☎ 2-603560; Av Amílcar Cabral)

## POST

The post office is situated three blocks east of the main praça (park or square).

**DHL** (☎ 2-623124; Av Oua) Across from the National Assembly.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

The national tourist office (☎ 2-624110; cvinvestment@cvtelecom.cv; Rua da Assembleia Nacional) may be able to answer some questions, though for practical information and reservations, your best bet is a travel agency.

**Cabetur** (☎ 26 1 55 51; Rua Serpa Pinto)

**Praiatour** (☎ 2 61 57 46; Av Amílcar Cabral)

**Verdean Tours** (☎ 2 60 82 80; Rua Serpa Pinto)

## Sleeping

Accommodation in Praia is expensive – expect to pay up to 50% more than similar digs in the rest of the country.

## BUDGET

**Aparthotel Holanda** (☎ 2-623973; fax 2-623710; Rua Saúde; s/d with bathroom CVE2700/3500; ☎) Though located in an unpleasant section of Achada de Santo António, this Dutch-run hotel has the most pleasant rooms in this price range. Breakfast extra.

**Residencial Paraiso** (☎ 2-613539; Rua Serpa Pinto; s/d with bathroom CVE2300/3500) At the leafy north end of Platô, this place is clean, pleasant, and surprisingly removed from the bustle.

**Residencial Sol Atlântico** (☎ 2-612872; Praça Alexandre Albuquerque; s/d without bathroom CVE1400/2200, with bathroom CVE2000/2700; ☎) Well located and as cheap as Praia gets, but rooms are cramped and not well maintained. No breakfast available.

## MIDRANGE

**Residencial Santa Maria** (☎ 2-614337; Rua Serpa Pinto; r CVE4200; ☎) Good value by Praia standards, this '60s-style place is clean and well maintained; some rooms have verandas and sea views.

**Hotel Felicidade** (☎ 2-600246; hotelfelicidade@hotmail.com; Av Unidade Guiné-Cabo Verde; r CVE6000) Rooms are small and expensive, but newly renovated – including new bathrooms. Some rooms have sea views.

## TOP END

**Hotel Praia Mar** (☎ 2-613777; praiamar@cvtelecom.cv; Rua do Mar; s/d CVE10,800/13,500; ☎) Set right on the water, this is the city's top address, with large, luxurious rooms, almost all with large balconies and ocean views.

**Hotel Pestana Trópico** (☎ 2-614200; www.pestana.com; Rua do Mar; s/d from CVE9800/12,100; ☎) Another luxury option just above Prainha Beach with all amenities, including a courtyard with a large pool and ocean views.

## Eating

The food scene in Praia is limited, and prices tend to be higher than the national norm of around CVE600 per dish. For a

cheap quickie, try kiosks on Praça Alexandre Albuquerque, which sell toasted sandwiches and hamburgers for CVE100 to CVE200.

**Restaurante Gamboa** (Rua 19 de Maio; mains from CVE800; ☎ noon-3pm, 7-11pm) Excellent service (a rarity in Praia) and the freshest, best ingredients make this the city's top choice.

**Casa Canarias** (Achada de Santo António; mains from CVE750) Simple but delicious cuisine from the Canary Islands.

**Sofia Café** (Praça 11 Maio; mains from CVE750) The menu here is quite limited and rather expensive, but this café has pleasant outdoor seating, good espresso, and you can always get a heaping plate of *cachupa guisada*, the classic Cape Verdean dish of sautéed maize with eggs and sausage, for around CVE300.

**Restaurante Flor de Lys** (Av 5 de Julho; mains from CVE600) Good pastries, decent meals, attractive enough décor, and good value by Praia standards.

**O Poeta** (Rua da Assembleia Nacional; mains from CVE850) With renowned seafood and a cliff-side terrace overlooking the sea, O Poeta is the place to see and be seen. Beware that service can be indifferent.

**Restaurante Panorama** (Rua da Assembleia Nacional; mains from CVE850) On the top floor of Hotel Felicidade, this place serves good if pricey Cape Verdean and international dishes. The terrace overlooking Praia Gamboa and the ocean makes a fine spot for an evening beer.

**Bar-Restaurante A Falésia** (mains CVE800-1200) Attractive, upmarket restaurant with a seaside terrace – another good spot for an evening beer.

**Natura** (Platô; ☎ Mon-Sat 9am-6pm) A pleasant café attached to a natural food store. No lunch or dinner, but *cachupa* (CVE250) is served most mornings.

For self-catering, go to Supermercado Felicidade in Achada de Santo António and Platô (Rua Serpa Pinto) – it's the best supermarket in town.

## Drinking

The terraces of Restaurante Panorama, O Poeta and Bar-Restaurante A Falésia are excellent places for an evening beer, as is the outdoor patio of Sofia Café. **Alkimist** (Rua da Prainha), just up from Quebra-Canela Beach, is a low-key but popular hangout.

## SÃO FRANCISCO BEACHES

The best beaches on the southern side of the island of Santiago are at São Francisco, 16km northeast of Praia. You reach them by bus from Sucupira Market (CVE200), though the return trip can involve long waits. You can also hitch (easiest on weekends) or take a taxi (CVE3000 return, with at least two hours on the beach). At writing, a large, British-run hotel is in the works, but at present you'll still need to bring your own refreshments.

## Entertainment

### LIVE MUSIC

**Sal da Música** (☎ 2-617282; Av Amílcar Cabral) For the best local music, head here most nights for live music from around 10.30pm.

### CINEMAS

**Cine-Teatro** (Praça 11 de Maio) Usually shows Hollywood films (with Portuguese subtitles). Tickets cost CVE250/400 for normal/balcony seats.

**Centro Cultural Francês** (☎ 2-611196; Av Unidade Guiné-Cabo Verde) Hosts French-language film series as well as live performances. Check current schedules.

## Getting There & Away

For more information, see p235.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

A taxi from the airport to Platô (5km) costs around CVE400. There is no regular bus service.

### BUS

Small Transcor buses connect Platô with all sections of the city; short journeys cost from CVE70. Destinations are marked on the windshields.

### TAXI

Taxis are plentiful and inexpensive – you can go from Platô to Achada de Santo António, for example, for about CVE200.

## CIDADE VELHA

Dramatically situated on the sea, 15km from Praia, Cidade Velha (literally 'Old City') has won Unesco World Heritage sta-

tus as the first European settlement in the tropics. Founded in 1462, the city became wealthy as a clearinghouse and key victualing station for the transatlantic slave trade. Raids by pirates – including a particularly destructive visit from Sir Francis Drake in 1585 – eventually forced the Portuguese to move shop to Praia.

Remains from its heyday include the ruins of the **cathedral**, constructed in 1693, and the **pillory** on the old town square where enslaved captives were chained up and displayed. Perhaps more impressive is the town's position between the sea and the mouth of a canyon that, thanks to irrigation, remains green even in the driest months. For sweeping views, take the trail up to the dramatic, cliffside fort, **Fortaleza Real de São Filipe**.

Buses from Praia (CVE80, 20 minutes) leave from Sucupira Market. However, service is not regular, and the return trip can involve a long wait. Taxis charge about CVE3000 for a return trip, including an hour or two to visit the sites.

## ASSOMADA

Heading inland from Praia, the desertlike plains gradually give way to the mountainous interior, home to fertile valleys and the sharp, volcanic peaks of the Serra do Pico de Santo António. The town of Assomada, though not particularly beautiful, occupies a narrow plain with fine views onto Pico de Santo António (1394m), making a good base to hike through the surrounding mountains.

Picos, the town just south of Assomada, is home to the **Jardim Botânico Nacional** (botanical gardens). Situated about 2.3km off the main road, it is a good place to learn about the plant and bird life of the islands. Just north of town is a monstrously large silk cotton tree thought to be some 500 years old. Head for Boa Entrada, a short walk north from town, then turn right and head down into the valley.

**Asa Branca** (☎ 2-651195; r CVE1500) has clean, basic rooms and a downstairs restaurant that serves the usual fare (mains from CVE700). **Hotel Avenida** (☎ 2-653468; s/d CVE3000/3200) is a new hotel with comfortable rooms (some with mountain views) and a rooftop terrace with vistas onto Pico de Santo António.

In Praia, minibuses for Assomada (CVE250) leave from Sucupira Market

starting around 9.30am. For buses heading back to Praia, wave down a minibus on the main highway. Note that return service is most frequent before 8.30am.

## TARRAFAL

With a small but fine white-sand beach and cooling breezes, Tarrafal is a favourite getaway from Praia, some 70km to the southeast. The town itself has a pleasant, hibiscus-lined main square, whose south side serves as an open market; you'll also find ATMs and a few Internet cafés here. The beach is short but lovely, and a cliff-side trail to the north makes for a fine stroll. In town, packs of boys are likely to hit you up for a few escudos; be ready with a litany of firm noes. For watersports, including boat and snorkel rental, head to the Italian-run **Hotel Sol Marina** (☎ 2-661219).

About 2km before the town centre is the former **prison**, where Portuguese authorities used to hold and interrogate political prisoners during the 1940s; business was especially brisk during the independence struggles in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. It's now a **museum** (admission CVE100; ☎ 9am-6pm), and although not well maintained, it remains a haunting reminder of colonial abuses.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Baía Verde** (☎ 2-661128; fax 2-661414; r incl breakfast CVE3200) Simple but attractive bungalows, each with bathroom and small porch, are clustered under a grove of palms just back from the main beach. A hearty breakfast is included.

**Hotel Sol Marina** (☎ 2-661219; r CVE2200) Rooms are basic but large, clean and good value, particularly if you get one with a balcony and views onto the beach.

**Hotel Tarrafal** (☎ 2-661785; fax 2-661787; r CVE5000; ☎ ☎) Tarrafal's high-end option has a pleasant courtyard with bar and pool, plus comfortable rooms with TV, telephone and minibar; some have balconies and/or sea views.

Dining options are limited. **Hotel Baía Verde** (mains from CVE800) serves up generous quantities of simple but delicious local cuisine, as well as pleasant views onto the beach. However, prices are high. **Hotel Sol Marina** (mains from CVE450) serves up similar grub at significantly lower prices.

## Getting There & Away

Minibuses from Praia (CVE350; around two hours) depart from Sucupira Market; service is most frequent from about 10am to noon – otherwise waits can be long. From Tarrafal, minibuses leave from the western end of the central park. Again, after about 8am, you may be in for a long wait.

## SÃO VICENTE

Small, stark and mountainous, São Vicente is the unlikely home to Mindelo, Cape Verde's prettiest city. Looming over Mindelo is Monte Verde (750m), the island's highest peak and only touch of green. Its summit affords sweeping views over the entire island, from the lunar interior to the fine beaches of Baía das Gatas and Calhau, as well as across to the peaks of neighbouring island, Santo Antão.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

**TACV** (☎ 2-321524) has six to 10 flights daily to and from Praia and two to three flights daily to Sal. Taxis to and from the airport cost CVE800.

### BOAT

Ferries connect Mindelo with most islands, including daily boats to Santo Antão. **STM** (Av 5 de Julho) also offers regular, twice-weekly boats to/from Praia via São Nicolau. For service to other islands, check at the ferry port, a short walk from downtown. See also p253.

## Getting Around

The most convenient way around the island is by taxi, including trips to Monte Verde (CVE1200 return) and Calhau (CVE 1500 each way). Alternatively, there are *aluguers*

to Baía das Gatas that leave from the roundabout at the eastern end of Av 12 Setembro, and to Calhau that leave from near the Praça Estrela. Both cost around CVE250. Note that service is irregular and can involve long waits.

## MINDELO

pop 50,000

Set around a moon-shaped port and ringed by barren mountains, Mindelo is Cape Verde's answer to the Riviera, complete with cobblestone streets, candy-coloured colonial buildings and yachts bobbing in a peaceful harbour. Safely around a bend is the country's deepest industrial port, which in the late 19th century was a key coaling station for British ships and remains the source of the city's relative prosperity.

Mindelo has long been the country's cultural centre, producing more than its share of poets and musicians, and it's still a fine place to hear *morno* while downing an espresso. Savvy locals, plus a steady flow of travellers (many sailing down from Europe on their way to the Caribbean), support a number of sophisticated bistros and watering holes.

## Information

### INTERNET ACCESS

**GlobalNet** (Rua de Tejo; per hr CVE150; ☎ 8am-midnight)

### MONEY

**Banco Comercial do Atlântico** (Rua de Libertad d'Africa) Has an ATM.

**Caixa Económica** (Av 5 de Julho) Has an ATM.

### POST & TELEPHONE

The phone and post offices are combined in a single site on Praça Amílcar Cabral.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

There is a small tourist kiosk near the harbour, just off Av Marginal.

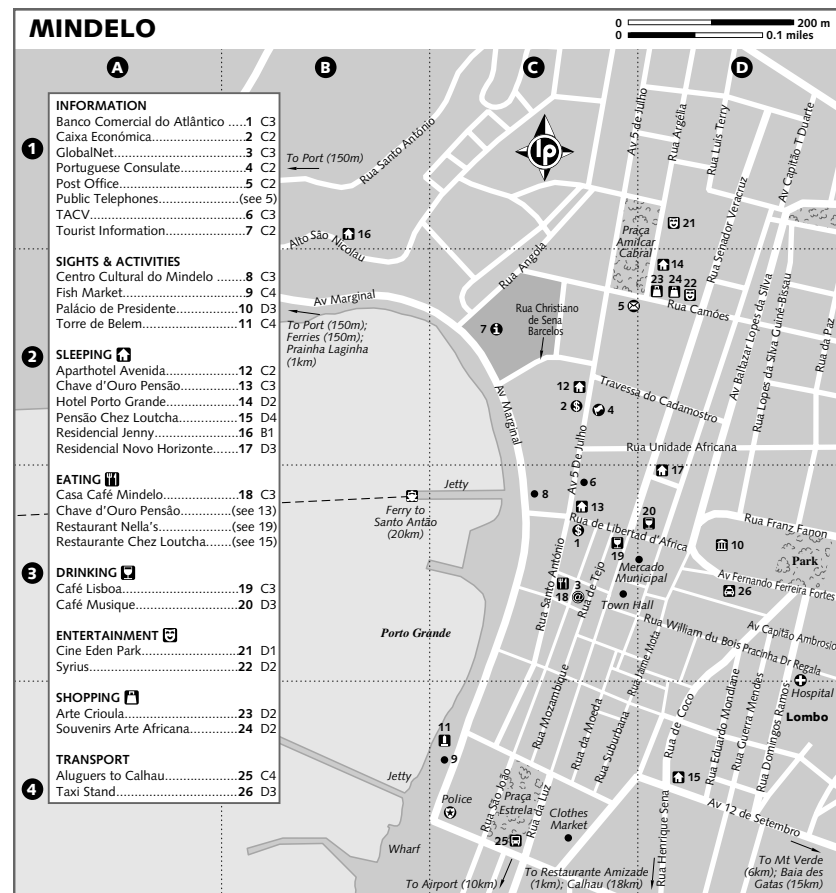
## Sights & Activities

The colonial heart of the city is centred around Rua da Libertad d'Africa, which runs from the harbour to the **Palácio de Presidente**, a pink colonial confection that now serves as the island's governing council. Nearby is the recently restored **mercado municipal**, a great place to see the produce that Cape Verdeans manage to bring forth from seemingly barren lands. At the harbour is the **Centro Cultural do Mindelo** (☎ 2-325840; admission free), which houses changing exhibitions of local arts and culture, a café,

a craft shop and a good book and music store. Jutting out into the harbour is the fortresslike **Torre de Belem** – a kitschy, 1920s version of the 15th-century tower that guards Lisbon's port. Just past the tower is the city's photogenic **fish market**. Heading about 1km north via the coastal road, you reach **Praíha Laginha**, the very pleasant town beach. It may be ringed by industrial-looking silos, but its waters are clean and crystal clear.

## Festivals & Events

In February and March, Mindelo puts on Cape Verde's most extravagant **Mardi Gras** (see p242). Every August, the **Festival de Música** attracts musicians of all styles from



## CESÁRIA ÉVORA

Undisputed queen of the *morno* (mournful songs) and Cape Verde's most famous citizen, Cesária Évora continues to wow the world with a voice that is at once densely textured and disarmingly direct. She began to gain an international audience in the mid-1990s, but vaulted to stardom in 1997 when, at the second annual all-African music awards, she ran away with three of the top awards, including top female vocalist. Suddenly people around the world were swaying to the rhythms of Cape Verde's music, even if they couldn't point it out on a map. She has left her native Mindelo in favour of Paris, but the 'bare-foot diva' refuses to put on airs, and has been known to appear onstage accompanied by a bottle of booze and a pack of ciggies.

around the islands, offering a heady mixture of dancing, singing and grog.

## Sleeping

**Pensão Chez Loutcha** (☎ 2-321636; fax 2-321635; Rua de Coco; s/d CVE2400/3000; 🍷) With a good restaurant and attractive, well-appointed rooms, this place makes a great base camp in Mindelo. On Sunday, the hotel arranges half-day excursions (including transport, buffet lunch and traditional music) to the beach at Calhau (18km from Mindelo) for around CVE1500 per person.

**Aparthotel Avenida** (☎ 2-323435; aparthtlavenida@cvtelcom.cv; Av 5 de Julho; s/d CVE3200/4300) Offers small but comfortable rooms with verandas and harbour views. Self-catering apartments are also available from CVE5500.

**Chave d'Ouro Pensão** (☎ 2-327050; Av 5 de Julho; attic rooms s/d CVE1000/1300, s/d CVE1700/2000) A slightly decrepit Mindelo classic, this old-fashioned pension offers large if basic rooms with high ceilings on the first floor, and tiny basic rooms under the attic eaves on the second floor. All have shared bathrooms.

**Hotel Porto Grande** (☎ 2-323190; pgrande@cvtelecom.cv; Praça Amílcar Cabral; s/d CVE11,600/14,500; 🍷 🍷) The city's top option offers well-appointed rooms with balconies and views of the town and harbour.

**Residencial Jenny** (☎ 2 32 8969; hstaubyn@cvtelecom.cv; Alto São Nicolau; s/d CVE3100/3700, with air-con & harbour views CVE4200/4900) Set on a hill above the ferry dock, this new pension is comfortable, if characterless, but some rooms do offer fine views of the harbour.

**Residencial Novo Horizonte** (☎ 2 32 3915; Rua Senador Vera Cruz; s/d incl breakfast CVE1600/2000) Basic clean, if stuffy, rooms, but the price is right.

## Eating

**Casa Café Mindelo** (Rua Santo António; mains from CVE500; ☎ 8am-midnight) Set in a lovely colonial building across from the harbour, this stylish, Afro-European-style café serves coffee and sweets, *grogue* and *cerveja* (beer), and Cape Verdean classics with a European touch – a place equally good for eating or idling.

**Chave d'Ouro Pensão** (Av 5 de Julho; mains from CVE500) Occupying a once-grand dining room, this standby serves a good *cachupa fresca* (CVE500) among other local favourites.

**Restaurante Chez Loutcha** (Rua de Coco; mains CVE350-400) Very good food served in the dining room of the hotel of the same name.

## MINDELO'S MARDI GRAS

Mardi Gras (usually in February) is a great time to be in Cape Verde (though it's also when the islands are most crowded). While celebrations and parades are held all over the islands, those at Mindelo are the best. Preparations begin several months in advance and on Sundays you can see the various groups practising for the procession. The fanciful costumes, however, are worn only on the celebration days.

**Restaurant Nella's** (Rua Libertad d'África; mains from CVE750) Set upstairs in a charming colonial building, the restaurant serves up excellent, if pricey, French-infected Cape Verdean dishes. Well worth the surcharge when there's live music.

## Entertainment

Evening breezes bring people out into the streets, and they inevitably head for Praça Amílcar Cabral, where they sit, stroll, show off and flirt under the spreading acacia trees. On one side of the square is **Cine Eden Park** (☎ 2-325354; admission from CVE200), with at least one screening nightly. Just around the corner is **Syrius** (Rua Patrice Lumumba; admission from CVE300), the city's perennially fashionable disco. In the evenings, Casa Café Mindelo (left) has a chilled-out lounge feel, and sometimes live music on weekend nights. Restaurant Nella's (above) also serves up live music on some nights. Try the tiny **Café Lisboa** (Rua Libertad d'África) for an espresso or beer, or go across the street and up a flight of stairs to **Café Musique** (Rua Libertad d'África), a perennial favourite for its live music and bonhomie.

## Shopping

**Arte Crioula** (Rua Camóes) This has quite a good selection of batiks, rugs and tapestries, clay pots and figurines, as well as postcards and fruit liquors from San Antão.

**Souvenirs Arte Africana** (Rua Camóes) Next door to Syrius nightclub, it probably has the best selection of batiks, jewellery, clothes and baskets.

## AROUND SÃO VICENTE

For panoramic views of Mindelo and all of São Vicente as well as the neighbouring islands Santo Antão and Santa Luzia, head to

**Mt Verde** (750m). São Vicente's highest peak, it earns its name (literally 'green mountain') because of the cloud-fed lichen that cling to its rocky sides. There are no buses; a taxi from Mindelo is your best bet (around CVE1200 return).

The island's best beaches are at **Calhau**, a weekend getaway 18km southeast of Mindelo. Irregular *aluguer*s leave from Praça Estrela (CVE200, ask around for exact stop). Or you can arrange a taxi (around CVE1200 each way); consider arranging a time with the same driver for your return.

## SANTO ANTÃO

Cape Verde's greenest island, and arguably its most spectacular, Santo Antão, encompasses a dizzying array of landscapes, from barren, volcanic flats to cedar- and pine-covered peaks to lush, tropical canyons. Many hills have been turned into gravity-defying farms that, thanks to varying altitudes and moisture levels, yield everything from apples to sugar cane.

Many visitors come on day trips from Mindelo, though it's perennially popular with hikers (see below) who spend a week or more on the well-developed network of trails. Just the spectacular 36km car ride

from the ferry landing at Porto Novo over the island's central ridge to Ribeira Grande is worth the trip.

## Getting There & Away

**TACV** (☎ 2-211184) has weekly flights to/from Praia and weekly flights to São Vicente.

There are ferries daily between Mindelo and Santo Antão. While subject to change, the comfortable *Mar Novo* leaves Mindelo at 8am, returning 10.30am. Then it leaves Mindelo again at 3pm, returning 5pm. The trip costs CVE600 and lasts one hour. You must buy tickets 30 minutes before departure at the offices at the ferry docks on both islands. Note that services may be more limited on Wednesday and Sunday. Crossings are short, but can be rough during December and January.

## Getting Around

If you want to see a lot of the island in a single day, your best bet is to hire your own *aluguer*, though expect to pay at least CVE6000 for a full day. You can usually arrange one when you land at Porto Novo. Alternatively, you can join locals on an *aluguer* headed toward Ribeira Grande (CVE300, one hour). There are also *aluguer*s that leave Ribeira Grande at around 3pm to return to Porto Novo in time for the afternoon boat.

## HIKING SANTO ANTÃO

Dramatic canyons, high central peaks and a dizzying variety of microclimates make Santo Antão a hiker's paradise. If possible, get hold of the *Glodstadt Wanderkarte* hiking map. You may also consider hiring a guide; the going rate is around CVE2000 per day. Hikes tend to begin or end on the trans-island road. From here you can hitch a ride on a passing *aluguer*, or arrange for a taxi to wait for you ahead of time (around CVE2500).

The classic hike is up the stunning **Ribeira Grande valley**, which begins several kilometres southeast of the town Ribeira Grande. Initially, the slope is gentle and takes you through cultivated fields and past traditional stone farmhouses. Soon enough it turns steep as you puff for an hour or more to reach the island's mountainous spine, which recompenses you with cooling breezes and spectacular views (if you aren't clouded in). Eventually, a dirt road will lead you to the trans-island road, where you can hitch to Ribeira Grande or Porto Novo. The hike takes at least half a day.

Behind the town of Paúl looms the narrow but spectacular **Valé do Paúl**. The road passes through verdant stands of bananas and fields of sugar cane until you reach Passagem, a pretty village where much of Cape Verde's *grogue* (spirit made from sugar cane) is distilled. Eventually you reach Cova Crater (1170m), with its fascinating patchwork of farms. Nearby is the trans-island road.

Another popular hike is along the northeast coastal road from Ribeira Grande to Paúl and Janela. The coast along here is dramatic, with sheer cliffs and crashing sea. The leg between Paúl and Janela (6km) is especially impressive.



## RIBEIRA GRANDE

Except for a small colonial heart, Ribeira Grande, the island's administrative centre, is not beautiful, though its position between steep cliffs and the roaring Atlantic is impressive. Located on a distinctly Portuguese street next to the main church, **Residencial 5 de Julho** (☎ 2-211345; d with/without bathroom CVE1500/1200) is basic but cheap. **Residencial Tropical** (☎ 2-21 1129; fax 2-212126; s/d CVE2600/3400; 🍷) has more comfortable digs with TVs and minibars, a good restaurant and an Internet café (CVE300 per hour).

## PAÚL

Located about 10km southeast of Ribeira Grande, idyllic Paúl is made up of two distinct components: a strip of pretty pastel houses along the ocean and the agricultural valley just behind it. At the top of the valley is **Cova crater**, an extinct volcanic crater whose floor is a patchwork of farms. Located on the water, **Residencial Vale do Paúl** (☎ 231319; s/d CVE800/1300) offers basic rooms with shared bathroom and hot meals (CVE700).

## PORTO NOVO

Santo Antão's port town has a few decent places to stay if you've missed a connection. Just east of the dock, **Residencial Restaurante Antilhas** (☎ 2-221193; s/d without bathroom CVE1000/1400, with bathroom CVE1500/1800) offers simple but clean, bright rooms that are good value. **Residencial Restaurante Pôr do Sol** (☎ 2-222179; fax 2-221166; s/d CVE3200/3600) has bright, spacious rooms. Both hotels have restaurants (mains from CVE700).

## FOGO

Essentially a single, giant volcano that sometimes rumbles to life (it last erupted in 1995), the island of Fogo (meaning 'fire') certainly deserves its name. Most people come to climb, or at least gawk at cinder-clad **Mt Fogo**, which at 2829m is the country's highest peak (see p246).

**São Filipe**, the attractive capital and home to both the ferry port and airport, has cobblestone streets, a well-preserved colonial centre, and sweeping views across to Ilha Brava. Consider the pretty drive around the east side of the island to the small town of **Mosteiros**, which takes you past terraced hill-

sides that yield both wonderful produce as well as winningly game red wines, muscadets and, to sober up, mild arabica coffee.

## Getting There & Away

**TACV** (☎ 2-811228) has two daily flights to/from Praia, with connections to other islands. A taxi from the airport into São Filipe (2km) costs CVE200. Boats arrive at the tiny port 3km from town, and a taxi into town costs CVE300. There are usually two to three boats weekly to Praia and Brava. For schedules and tickets, visit **Agenamar** (☎ 2-811012) in São Filipe.

To travel to Mt Fogo, a taxi there and back will cost around CVE6000. For a car (CVE3500 to CVE4000 a day), try **Discount Auto Rental** (☎ 2-811480).

## Getting Around

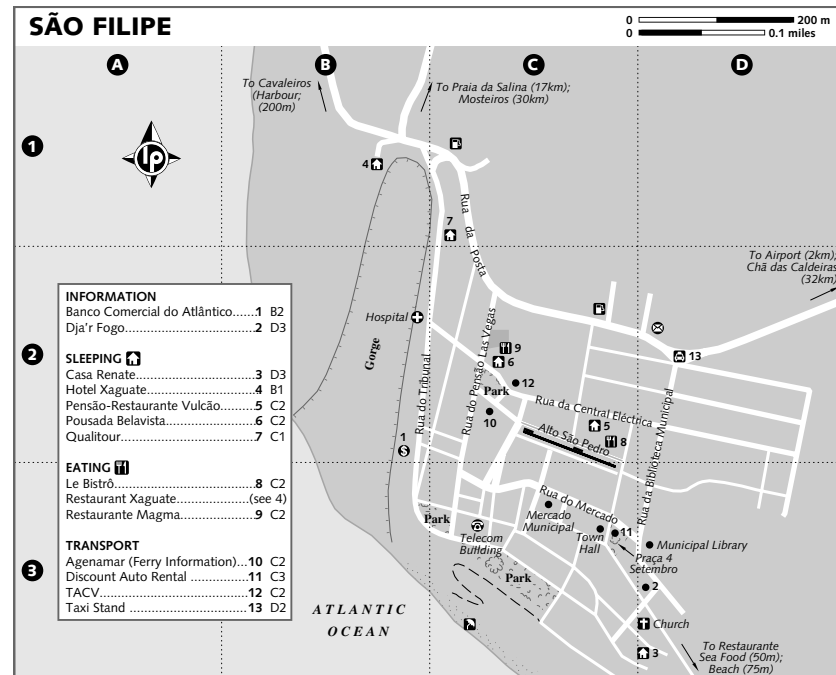
Minibuses around the island are relatively scarce. Most are based around the central market in São Filipe. That means they head to São Filipe in the early morning, and then back home later in the day; plan accordingly. Fares depend on distance but shouldn't cost more than CVE350. For a car (CVE3500 to CVE4000 a day), try **Discount Auto Rental** (☎ 2-811480), though beware that both cars and service can be dodgy. A return taxi ride to Mt Fogo costs CVE6000. See p246 for more information on getting to Chã das Caldeiras.

## SÃO FILIPE

Set commanding on cliffs above a long, black-sand beach, São Filipe is among Cape Verde's most pleasant towns, with colonial buildings, cobblestone streets and pretty squares and plazas – many with views across turbulent straits to Brava.

Strong currents make the town beach unsafe for swimming, but you can join the locals at the lovely **Praia da Salina**. Protected by strange, volcanic rock formations, the beach is located 17km to the north of town on the route to Mosteiros. On 1 May, the town celebrates **Nhò São Filipe**, its yearly city-wide festival. Its Mardi Gras celebration is also raucous.

Visitors interested in history and culture should consider visiting **Dja'r Fogo** (☎ 2-812879). Run by a local artist, it serves as an art gallery as well as a launching point for informal trips around the island.



## Sleeping

**Pousada Belavista** (☎ 2-811734; s/d CVE2000/3000; 🍷) An elegant, understated, impeccably run hotel built around an old colonial home. Rooms are well-furnished, bathrooms are new, and breakfasts are hearty. Air-conditioning is CVE500 extra.

**Casa Renate** (☎ 2-812518; renaatefogo@gmx.de; r CVE3500) In a beautiful colonial building opposite the main church, this German-run inn offers large, spotless rooms, some with ocean views. Inquire at Le Bistrô if the hotel is locked. Reservations recommended.

**Qualitour** (☎ 2-811089; www.qualitour.cv/telecom.cv; r with/without bathroom CV3200/2500) Decent rooms, pleasant common areas, and friendly staff that also organises group fishing and hiking excursions.

**Pensão-Restaurante Vulcão** (☎ 2-811896; r with/without bathroom CVE1500) A decent cheapie, though current renovations could boost prices.

**Hotel Xaguatê** (☎ 2-811222; hotelixaguatê@yahoo.com; s/d CVE7100/8600; 🍷 🍷) On the cliffs just out of town, Hotel Xaguatê is the most luxurious option, with large, well-appointed rooms, with verandas and sweeping ocean

views. There's also a pleasant cliffside pool (available to nonguests for CVE300).

## Eating & Drinking

São Filipe is one of the best (and most reasonable) places in Cape Verde to try seafood.

**Le Bistrô** (mains from CVE600) German owner Renate serves up simple but delicious fare based on local seafood and produce. The cleverly decorated terrace has sweeping views of the sea and Brava. Renate is also a great source of information about the islands. Highly recommended.

**Restaurante Magma** (mains from CVE450) Great, fresh, traditional cuisine in a pleasant dining room. Prices are reasonable, too.

**Restaurante Sea Food** (mains from CVE600) Most people come here for the pleasant, cliffside terrace seating; the food is only OK.

**Restaurant Xaguatê** (mains from CVE750) Local and international dishes served in the pleasant, white-tablecloth dining room on the ground floor of the Hotel Xaguatê.

## Getting There & Away

For more information, see opposite.

### CLIMBING MT FOGO

The conical Pico do Fogo volcano, shrouded in black cinder, rises dramatically out of the floor of an ancient crater known as Chã das Caldeiras ('Chã'). Bound by a half-circle of precipitous cliffs, Chã was born when, sometime in the last 100,000 years, some 300 cu km of the island collapsed and slid into the sea to the east. The main cone has been inactive for more than 200 years, though there've been regular eruptions in Chã. The latest, in 1995, threatened the village of Pedra Brabo, whose famously friendly residents manage to grow grapes, coffee, beans and even apples in this forbidding landscape.

There's fascinating hiking along the crater floor, but most people come to climb the peak. While not technically difficult, it requires good physical condition, a hearty pair of boots, and a guide. There are plenty in Pedra Brabo, and the going rate is around CVE2000. The taxing ascent – a climb of 1000m up a 30- to 40-degree slope – takes three to four hours, with some challenging scrambles near the top, but the views are magnificent. Afterwards, you can run down in 45 minutes!

Start climbing early to avoid the noon heat. Leave São Filipe by 5am by taxi (90 minutes, one way/return CVE4000/6000). There is no guaranteed transportation back down, so it's best to arrange a round trip. The driver should be able to locate a guide. Otherwise, you will have to spend two nights in Chã. Come by *aluguer* (CVE250), which leave from São Filipe around 11am. Spend the afternoon exploring the crater, and then make the ascent the next morning. Recover in the afternoon and then head back to São Filipe the next morning by *aluguer*, which leave around 7am from Pedra Brabo.

In Pedra Brabo you can stay at **Pensão Pedra Brabo** (☎ 2-618940; r CVE2000/3000), with basic rooms around an arcaded, plant-filled courtyard. There's also a cooperative that offers very basic rooms (no electricity or running water) in local homes for around CVE1000. Ask at the tourist kiosk on the main road in Pedra Brabo.

## SAL

Though flat and desolate, Sal boasts more tourists than any other island. They fall into three categories: hardcore windsurfers, the package holiday crowd and those in transit to more interesting islands. The largest town is **Espargos**, located right next to the international airport, but most people stay near the fine beach in **Santa Maria**, 18km to the south.

The island gets its name from its salt mines, which formed a link in Portuguese trade with both Africa and Brazil and supported the islanders until the mid-20th century. Don't miss the surreal lunar **Pedra da Lume**, the crater of an ancient volcano where seawater is transformed into shimmering salt beds. It's located 2km west of Espargos; walk or take a taxi (CVE700 round trip). Rehydrate on the beachfront terrace of **Cá da Mosta** (pizza CVE500-800; ☎ 9am-6pm), an Italian-run pizzeria next to the old salt refinery.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**TACV** (☎ 2-411268) has six to 10 flights daily to/from Praia, two to three daily to/from

São Vicente, and two to three flights weekly to Boa Vista.

The airport has left-luggage facilities (CVE100 per bag per 24 hours), an ATM, bureau de change (open 24 hours) and a tourist booth. Taxis to Espargos (2.3km) charge around CVE200 during the day and CVE300 at night. Taxis to Santa Maria run CVE700 and CVE1000 at night. Or, you can hail a minibus on the highway in front of the airport in either direction (CVE100).

#### SEA

Interisland ferries call at Palmeira, the port about 4km northwest of Espargos. Schedules are irregular. Inquire at both **Anau Sal** (☎ 2-411349), located near the taxi stand in Palmeira, and **Polar** (☎ 2-414245) also in Palmeira. For more details about interisland ferries, see p253. A taxi to the port from the airport or Espargos costs about CVE400

### Getting Around

Minibuses ply the road between Santa Maria and Espargos (CVE100, 25 minutes); all stop on the main road just in front of the airport. Taxis along the same route cost CVE700/1000 during the day/night.

## SANTA MARIA

Sitting at the southern tip of the island, Santa Maria is a dusty, largely graceless resort town that is growing too fast for its own good. Still, it boasts a long, lovely beach with clear, blue-green waters. The standouts here are windsurfing and kite-surfing, which is superb (from CVE20,000 weekly rental). There are also good opportunities for deep-sea fishing, surfcasting and scuba diving.

The default main square, which you hit when you first enter town, has a cinema, bank and the main minibus stop. There are several bureaux de change as well as ATMs that accept Visa and debit cards.

### Activities

**Funsystem** (☎ 49-89 20 23 21 80 in Germany; www.fun-system.com), on the beach in front of Hotel Morbeza, rents the latest equipment for surfing, windsurfing and kitesurfing (including F2/Naish boards). For more information and reservations (recommended in August, December and January), contact the head office in Germany. Lessons are also available.

**Nautic Fishing Club** (☎ /fax 2-421617) can arrange trawling (for wahoo, tuna and dorade) and deep-sea fishing (for shark and blue marlin). The travel agency at the **Hotel Morabeza** (☎ 2-421020) offers day trips to Boa Vista (from CVE13,400 per person) as well as sailing trips (half-day/full-day from CVE4620/7260 per person). You can also check into other excursions at **Barracuda** (☎ 2-422033) and **CVTS** (☎ 2-421220), both off the beach just west of the sagging pier.

There are a number of scuba schools, including the French-run Mares Dive Center (contact through the Hotel Morabeza); the Portuguese-run **Manta Diving** (☎ 2-421540), just beyond Hotel Belorizonte; the Italian-run **Blueway Diving Center** (☎ 2-421339) at Hotel Djadsal Holiday Club along the beachfront, which offers PADI courses; and the German-run **Stingray Dive Center** (☎ 2-421134) inside the Odjo d'Água Hotel complex.

### Sleeping

**Residencial Nhá Terra** (☎ 2-421109; nhattera@hotmail.com; s/d from CVE3700/4700) Around the corner from the cinema, Nhá Terra offers good value, with large, spotless rooms, some with ocean views. The restaurant is very good too. Beds could be cushier, however.

**Residencial Alternativa** (☎ 2-421216; fax 2-421165; s with/without bathroom CVE3600/3100, d with/without bathroom 3600/2600) The cheapest place in town (though not a bargain) offers clean, decent – if gloomy – rooms three blocks from the cinema.

**Les Alizés** (☎ 2-421446; lesalizes@cvtelecom.cv; s/d CVE4400/6300) Opposite Restaurante Piscador, this French-owned guesthouse is simple but classy. Rooms have verandas, and breakfast is served on a rooftop terrace with ocean views.

**Hotel Morabeza** (☎ 2-421020; www.hotelmorabeza.com; s/d from CVE9910/13,200) Right on the beach just west of the pier, this classy, stone-faced resort hotel has spacious rooms arranged around a leafy common area.

**Aqui Sal** (☎ 2-421325; www.aquisal.com) For longer stays, the friendly staff here rents studio apartments by the month for €250 to €300.

### Eating

**Restaurante Nhá Terra** (mains CVE600-1100; ☎ 8am-10pm) Classic Cape Verde dishes made with the freshest ingredients and served in the hotel's pleasant dining room.

**Restaurante Côte Jarain** (mains CVE1000-2500; ☎ 7pm-10pm Mon-Sat) The chef-owner serves up French-inflected Creole dishes in a small, palm-filled courtyard just down from the cinema.

**Tam Tam** (☎ 8am-midnight) Friendly, Irish-owned pub-restaurant serves egg breakfasts (around CVE2500) and a fine *cachupa* (CVE300), as well as beer and cocktails.

**Mateus** (mains CVE600-1000) Live music and terrace seating on a pleasant square make up for the just OK food.

**Restaurante Piscador** (mains CVE750-1250) Two blocks down from Nhá Terra, this well-established fish restaurant also has a small grocery store for self-catering.

### Entertainment

The town's main disco **Pirata Pizzeria Disco Pub** (☎ until 4am Mon-Sat) is located just outside of town on the road to the airport. Chill Out Bar, next to Residencial Nhá Terra, attracts windsurfers after the sun goes down.

### Getting There & Around

Taxis between Santa Maria and the airport cost CVE700 during the day and CVE1000 at night. Plenty of minibuses ply the

road between Espargos and Santa Maria (CVE100), and all stop on the main road in front of the airport.

## ESPARGOS

Located near both the airport and the ferry dock, Espargos – the island's capital – is a small, dusty town that proves more convenient than attractive. Still, it feels more like a real Cape Verdean town than touristy Santa Maria, and in the evenings Praça 19 de Setembro grows quite lively.

## Sleeping & Eating

Both food and accommodations are cheaper here than in Santa Maria.

**Pensão Restaurante Violão** (☎ 2-411720; Rua Abel Djassi; s/d CVE3000/3500) Large clean rooms, a rooftop terrace, and a bar-restaurant that serves up good food (mains from CVE700) and great traditional music make this the top choice in town. It's located about five blocks north of Praça 19 de Setembro.

**Casa da Angela** (☎ 2-411327; casaangela20@hotmail.com; s/d CVE1900/2800) Clean, basic rooms – some with fans. Located several blocks north of Praça 19 de Setembro.

**Residencial Central** (☎ 2-411366; ccentral@mail.cv telecom.cv; s/d incl breakfast CVE2000/3000) Basic but pleasant rooms, some with verandas, around a courtyard just off Praça 19 de Setembro.

**Esplanada Bom Dia** (☎ mains from CVE460; ☎ 7am-midnight) Café fare as well as simple meals served on an attractive terrace a few blocks behind the town hall and taxi stand.

For groceries, try Supermercado Central, located just across from Praça 19 de Setembro.

## Getting There & Away

Minibuses ply the road every 10 to 15 minutes between Espargos and Santa Maria (CVE100, 25 minutes); all stop at the airport. The main minibus and taxi stop is in front of the town hall at the southern entrance of the town.

# OTHER ISLANDS

## BRAVA

pop 5000

Except for the occasional car that braves the cobblestone, cross-island roads, Brava seems to reside firmly in the 19th century. Its terraced hillsides are farmed with the aid of

mules, and even new construction imitates the simple, Portuguese-style farmhouses that still dominate the landscape. First settled in the 17th century by Portuguese fleeing an eruption on nearby Fogo, the island became a key source of whalers for American ships. To this day, more natives live in the US than on the island itself.

**Vila de Nova Sintra** ('Vila'), the tiny capital, sits on a little plateau regularly engulfed in clouds; it's reputed to have some of the finest *morno* in Cape Verde. From Vila, there are some short but lovely hikes: eastward down to Vinagre via Santa Barbara and westward to Cova Joana and then on to Nosso Senhora do Monte or Lima Doce, both nearby. **Fajã d'Água** ('Fajã') is set dramatically between a rocky cove and impressive cliffs. Beyond Fajã lies Porteto, with its small but pleasant black-sand beach.

In Vila, there's a Banco Comercial do Atlântico with ATM. *Aluguers* ply the road between Fajã, Vila and the ferry port at Furna (CVE250). You can get one to yourself for CVE800 between Vila and both Furna and Fajã. Plan ahead if you have a morning boat, as transport can be scarce.

## Sleeping & Eating

With one exception, accommodations in Brava are basic.

In Fajã, **Pensão Sol na Baía** (☎ 2-852070; pensao\_sol\_na\_baia@hotmail.com; r from CVE3500), run by a French-Cape Verdean couple, offers tastefully appointed rooms, excellent French-inspired meals (three courses for CVE2000), and delightful gardens. Nearby, **Manuel Burgó Ocean Front Motel** (☎ /fax 2-851321; s/d CVE1500/2000) has basic rooms, though they open onto the ocean.

In Vila de Nova Sintra, **Pensão Restaurante Paul Sena** (☎ 2-851312; r per person CVE1200) offers small, basic rooms that are clean, if musty-smelling.

## Getting There & Away

TACV is not currently flying to Brava. Boats from Praia normally arrive twice a week in Brava, generally stopping in Fogo on the way. For ferry routes and details, see p253.

## SÃO NICOLAU

pop 5000

Formed by three scenic ridges that meet at **Mt Gordo** – at 1312m the island's high-

est peak – São Nicolau is a hiker's delight. While the southern slopes are dry and largely barren, northern slopes are remarkably green – in years when rains cooperate, at least; drought is a perpetual threat that deeply marks the island's culture.

Near the mouth of the fertile **Fajã valley** lies **Ribeira Brava**, the island's capital. Long Cape Verde's religious centre, it was built inland to protect its treasures from pirates. Its narrow, hillside streets and tiled roofs are still reminiscent of 17th-century Portugal. Ribeira Brava's **Carnival** celebration is second only to Mindelo's.

You can go to Ribeira Brava by minibus (CVE200) or taxi (around CVE1200) from the unbeautiful town of Tarrafal, the island's port. The 26km drive is spectacular. A great option is to get off halfway at Cachaço and hike down through the Fajã valley to Ribeira Brava. Any driver will be able to show you the way. The trail up to Mt Gordo also goes through Cachaço, passing through a protected pine forest before reaching the summit.

## Sleeping & Eating

In Tarrafal, options include **Residencial Alice** (☎ /fax 2-361187; s/d CVE1200/1400), just down the beach from the port, and **Residencial Natur** (☎ /fax 2-361178; r CVE1400), further down the beach and behind the soccer field. The former serves meals (around CVE600). Both are very basic.

In Ribeira Brava, the spotless **Pensão Jardim** (☎ 2-351117; s/d CVE2000/3000), located on a hill overlooking town, has quaint, comfortable rooms (some with views), plus a very good rooftop restaurant (meals CVE800, order ahead). **Pensão Jumbo** (☎ 2-351315; d CVE1600), just across the riverbed, is good value, with clean, decent rooms. The new **Pensão Santo António** (☎ 2-352200; fax 2-352199; r CVE3800), on the town's main square, has simple but large, comfortable and tastefully appointed rooms, some with views. **Pensão da Cruz** (☎ 2-351282; s/d without bathroom CVE1000/1200), opposite the post office, has clean if tattered rooms. Restaurant Bela Sombra Dalila, near the main square, serves good tuna steaks.

## Getting There & Away

**TACV** (☎ 351161, 351162) has daily flights to and from Praia and weekly flights to Sal. The airport is 5km southeast of Ribeira Brava

(CVE500 by taxi). While other ferries sometimes bypass the island, the *Tarrafal* reliably stops at least twice a week on its way between Praia and São Vicente. See p253 for more details.

## BOA VISTA

pop 5000

With long, sand beaches, Italian-run resorts, and breezes favourable to windsurfing, Boa Vista is another Sal in the making. And like its neighbour to the north, the island is largely flat and arid, with the exception of three mountains to the east and a hint of vegetation along the northern coast. Much of the interior undulates with shifting sand dunes.

Sal Rei, the capital and largest town, is home to most of Boa Vista's tiny population – and virtually all its accommodations. The town beach is attractive, but the longest and most beautiful, **Praia da Santa Monica**, is located about 25km away on the island's south coast. Closer in (about an hour's hike from Sal Rei) is the pretty Praia de Chaves.

There's plenty to do for water enthusiasts: snorkelling, fishing, diving, whale- and turtle-watching (mostly humpbacks) and of course windsurfing and kitesurfing. **Hotel Dunas** (☎ 2-511225) and **Boa Vista Wind Club** (☎ 2-511392; www.boavistawindclub.com) both rent boards for around CVE25,000 per week. For diving as well as windsurfing, contact **Boa Vista Watersport System** (☎ 2-511392; www.bwscv.com) on the main square in Sal Rei, or **Submarine Dive Center** (☎ 9927866 mobile; alitros@hotmail.com).

*Aluguers* (from CVE100) ply the island's roads, but they're scarce. Taxis are readily available but costly – an excursion from Sal Rei to Praia da Santa Monica runs around CVE5000 to CVE6000. There are several car rentals – expect to pay CVE5000 to CVE6000 per day. Hotel Dunas rents bikes for around CVE1500 per day – a good option on this largely flat island.

## Sleeping & Eating

Accommodations are a relatively good value in Sal Rei. Restaurants are mostly limited to hotel dining rooms, though in town, the Riba d'Olte serves up very good pasta.

**Residencia A Paz** (☎ 2-511078; www.a-paz.com; r CVE4500) While not inexpensive, a friendly Italian owner, tastefully appointed rooms

and a lovely rooftop terrace add up to a good value.

**Bed & Breakfast Criola** (☎ 2-511373; r CVE3000) This coral-pink cottage right on the water offers small but pleasant rooms. There's also a café with good espresso.

**Residencial Bom Sossego** (☎ 2-511155; s/d CVE1300/2000) Basic but well-maintained rooms make this place a good value.

**Migrante Guesthouse** (☎ 2-511143; r CVE7500) With comfortable, brightly painted rooms, this upscale, Italian-run inn is more reminiscent of Marrakesh than Cape Verde.

**Hotel Dunas** (☎ 2-511225; fax 2-511384; r CVE9000) Sunny, well-appointed rooms, many with fine views onto the water.

**Cá Nicola** (☎ 2-511793; r CVE4000) Simple but tasteful rooms with small kitchens; just 50m from the beach.

### Getting There & Away

**TACV** (☎ 2-511186) has daily flights to/from Praia (one hour) and five to six flights weekly to Sal (25 minutes). Ferries sail to Boa Vista from Praia and Sal. For ferry details and routes, see p253.

### MAIO

pop 5900

Maio's interior may be flat and forbidding, but travellers and real estate speculators alike are slowly discovering the western coastline, with its turquoise waters and long, beautiful and largely deserted beaches. Besides a strand to yourself, you can expect one of the warmest welcomes in Cape Verde – the island is reputedly the nation's friendliest.

Maio was once an important salt-collecting centre and, though hard to believe today, wealthy enough to attract a wave of high-seas pirates. The British controlled the salt trade, which is why the main city and port, Vila do Maio, is commonly called Porto Inglês. There's a good beach, **Bitche Rotche**, just outside town. There are no buses, but **Maio Car** (☎ 2-551700) rents cars for around CVE4000 per day.

**Hotel Bom Sossego** (☎ 2-551365; fax 2-551327; s/d CVE2900/3800) is pricey, but with clean and well-maintained if simple rooms. There's also a decent restaurant. Or, **Ilha do Maio Imobiliária** (☎ 2-551312; r CVE3300-4200) offers small apartments, with the office a short walk from the airport.

**TACV** (☎ 2-551256) has three flights weekly to/from Praia (15 minutes). There's a ferry service that runs at least once a week between Praia and Vila do Maio.

## CAPE VERDE DIRECTORY

### ACCOMMODATION

By West African standards, accommodation is expensive in Cape Verde, especially on Sal and the city of Praia, where prices are some 50% more than the rest of the country.

Most places, you can expect to pay under US\$16 (CVE1500) for a basic but decent double with shared bathroom. For around US\$30 to US\$40 (CVE2800 to CVE3800), you can expect a modest but quite comfortable midrange double with hot water and air conditioning. At the top end, there are mostly just resort hotels that cater to package tours, especially on Sal and Santiago. For all the amenities, from pool to gym to business centre, they charge US\$75 (CVE8000) and up. There are no camp sites, but camping on remote beaches is possible and generally safe.

### ACTIVITIES

For active types, the main draws are windsurfing and kitesurfing, scuba diving and deep-sea fishing on Sal (p246) and Boa Vista (p249), plus trekking in the mountains of São Nicolau (p248), Brava (p248), Fogo (p246) and especially Santo Antão (p243).

Prices for diving are around CVE3500 for one dive (cheaper for a series) plus CVE1000 extra per dive for full equipment rental. Courses cost from CVE35,000 to CVE65,000 (PADI Open Water Diver). Diving in Cape Verde is well known for

#### PRACTICALITIES

- *A Semana* and *Expresso das Ilhas* are the weekly newspapers.
- Radio and TV is mostly limited to Portuguese's, with Portuguese and Brazilian shows as well as Cape Verde news.
- Voltage is 220V with European-style twin-pronged plugs.
- Cape Verde uses the metric system.

its diversity of species. Dolphins, whales, sharks and rays are all occasionally seen. Because of currents, not all sites are suitable for beginners or inexperienced divers. Note that there is currently no decompression chamber in Cape Verde. The best months are from March to November.

An F2 windsurfer costs from around CVE20,000 per week. If you come in the high season, book boards in advance. Six hours of kitesurfing tuition costs around CVE15,000. The best months are between mid-November and mid-May (and particularly January to March when winds are strong and constant). Because the winds can be strong and blow off-shore, conditions are not ideal for beginners.

April to November (especially June to October) is good for fishing (rays, barracudas, marlins, wahoos, sharks), and trekking and cycling are good year-round.

### BOOKS

Publications in English about Cape Verde are scarce but include: *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cape Verde* by Richard Lobban, *Cape Verde: Politics, Economics and Society* by Colm Foy, *Atlantic Islands* by Anne Hammick and Nicholas Heath, and *The Fortunate Isles* by Basil Davidson. If you read Portuguese or Italian, or just want glossy photos for souvenirs, look out for *Cabo Verde Cruzamento do Atlântico Sul* by Federico Cerrone. If you're keen on birds, the *Aves de Cabo Verde*, a fairly basic BirdLife International brochure available at some tourism kiosks, contains around 12 pages of illustrations.

### BUSINESS HOURS

Business hours are generally 8am to noon and 3pm to 6pm, Monday to Friday, and 8am to noon or 1pm Saturday. Banking hours are from 8am to 3pm Monday to Friday. Note that on posted hours, time is usually measured with the 24-hour system, and days are often numbered according to the Portuguese system from 1° to 7° (ie 1° is Sunday; 7° Saturday).

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

While Praia (on the island of Santiago) is among the safest cities in West Africa, violent crime is not unknown here or in Mindelo. Follow the same common sense

rules you would in any city. The rest of the country is very safe, though petty crime like pick-pocketing is always a possibility.

### EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

#### Cape Verdean Embassies & Consulates

In West Africa, Cape Verde has an embassy in Senegal. For more details, see p739. Cape Verde has no diplomatic representation in the UK. Elsewhere, Cape Verdean embassies include the following:

**Belgium** (☎ 2-646 9025; fax 2-646 3385; Rue Antonie Laborre 30, 1050 Brussels)

**Canada** (☎ 416-252 1082; fax 416-252 1092; The Queensway, Suite 103, Etobicoque, Ontario M8Z 1 N5) Honorary Consulate.

**France** (☎ 01 42 12 73 54; fax 01 40 53 04 36; Rue Joffroy d'Abbas 80, 75017 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 30-2045 0955; fax 30-2045 0966; 43 Dorotheenstrasse, D-10117 Berlin)

**Italy** (☎ 06-474 4678; fax 06-474 4764; Viale Giosué Carduci 4, 00187 Rome)

**Netherlands** (☎ 70-346 9623; fax 70-346 7702; 44 Kninginnegracht, 2514 AD The Hague)

**Portugal** (☎ 21-301 9521; fax 21-301 5308; www .embcv.pt/index.asp; Av do Restelo 33, 1400 Lisbon)

**Spain** (☎ 91-570 2568; fax 91-570 2563; Calle Capitán Haya 51, 28020, Madrid) Consulate.

**USA** (☎ 202-965 6820; fax 202-965 1207; 3415 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20007)

### Embassies & Consulates in Cape Verde

**France** (☎ 2-615589; Rua da Prainha, Achada de Santo António, Praia, Santiago)

**Portugal** Santiago (☎ 2-623032; Rua da Assembleia Nacional, Achada de Santo António, Platô, Praia); São Vicente (☎ 2-323130; Av 5 de Julho, Mindelo)

**Senegal** (☎ 2-615621; Rua Abílio Macedo, Praia, Santiago)

**USA** (☎ 2-615616; 81 Rua Abílio Macedo, Platô, Praia, Santiago)

### FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Cape Verde's main festivals include Mardi Gras, which is held all over Cape Verde in February or March, the largest occurring in Mindelo (São Vicente); Nhô São Filipe (Fogo), held on 1 May; and the Festival de Música, held in Baía das Gatas (São Vicente) in August.

### HOLIDAYS

Public holidays include the following:  
**New Year's Day** 1 January  
**National Heroes' Day** 20 January

**Labour Day** 1 May  
**Independence Day** 5 July  
**Assumption Day** 15 August  
**All Saints' Day** 1 November  
**Immaculate Conception** 8 December  
**Christmas Day** 25 December

## INTERNET ACCESS

The main towns of each island, and even good-sized towns, have Internet cafés. In general, though, connections are rather slow.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**www.caboverde.com** Comprehensive tourism listings in English, Portuguese and Italian.  
**www.caboverdeonline.com** For news and current events in Portuguese.  
**www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/cvgeog.html** For information about history and culture.  
**www.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/cvhist.html** For a good introduction to Cape Verde's geography and plant and animal life.

## LANGUAGE

Portuguese is the official language, but most Cape Verdeans speak Crioulo, an African-inflected version of medieval Portuguese, as their first language. In rural areas and even sometimes in towns and cities, you may have trouble communicating in standard Portuguese. For some useful words and phrases in Portuguese and Crioulo, see p861.

## MAPS

A good map of the islands is the German-produced AB Karten-Verlag *Cabo Verde* (1:200,000; 2001). An excellent hiking map for Santo Antão is the (also German) *Goldstadt Wanderkarte* (1:50,000; 2001) with around 40 suggested walks.

## MONEY

The unit of currency is the Cape Verde escudo (CVE), divided into 100 centavos. It's not a hard currency, but it's stable; in January 2002, it was pegged to the euro. Most businesses also accept US dollars and euros.

Banks are found in all the main towns and even some of the smaller ones, and most have ATMs that accept bankcards and Visa. Many also change travellers cheques and cash in all the main currencies (except the West African CFA). Many also give cash advances with a Visa card.

Changing money on the black market is illegal and carries risks (US dollars and Portuguese escudos are often fakes), so avoid it unless you're desperate. Be careful not to get stuck with Cape Verdean escudos (not legal tender outside the islands). The bank at Sal's airport and Banco Interatlântico in Praia should change escudos back into other currencies, but bring moneychanging receipts, your passport and air ticket, which may be requested.

Credit cards are accepted only in very upmarket establishments.

## PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

In general, Cape Verdeans are less likely to object to their photos being taken than people elsewhere in West Africa, but you should always ask permission first. Avoid photographing military installations.

## POST

The postal service is reliable and reasonably quick. A 20g letter or postcard costs CVE60 to anywhere outside the islands. *Correios* (post offices) are open from 8am to noon and 2.30pm to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, and Saturday mornings in some towns.

## TELEPHONE

Every number for a fixed telephone line in Cape Verde has seven digits; all start with '2.' No area code is necessary. Public telephone booths are fairly plentiful but you'll need a phonecard (available in CVE50/150 cards at any post office and many small shops). Post offices often have call centres as well, which can be more convenient for expensive, international calls, which start at around CVE200 per minute. For better deals, keep an eye out for Internet-based calling centres, which are starting to appear around the country.

To buy a local GSM chip for your mobile phone, head to the post office, where there is usually also a representative of the national mobile service provider.

## VISAS

All visitors, except Cape Verdean nationals, require a visa. In the USA, mail your passport, one photo and US\$40 to the Cape Verdean embassy in Washington, DC. Visas are issued routinely for stays of up to five years. Within West Africa, Dakar, in

Senegal, is one of the few places where you can get a visa. If there's no Cape Verdean embassy, inquire at the nearest Portuguese embassy.

That said, a tourist visa can be obtained on arrival at the airports and ports of Praia and Sal, and will cost CVE4000. Your allowed stay may be short, however, so after arriving, you may need to go to a police station on any island, or the  **Direcção de Emigração e Fronteiras** (Rua Serpa Pinto, Platô, Praia, Santiago), and renew it (a maximum of 180 days). In practice, visas are usually issued on the spot (particularly if you're polite and smiling!). Note that there's a fine of CVE15,000 if you let your visa expire.

## Visa Extensions

For an extension of more than a week, you need, in theory, to fill in a form, supply a photo and lodge the application at the  **Direcção de Emigração e Fronteiras** (Rua Serpa Pinto, Platô, Praia, Santiago), which will take a few days.

## Visas for Onward Travel

Visas for Senegal can be obtained at that country's embassy in Praia. They cost around CVE500 and take up to 48 hours to process. If you need a visa upon arrival in West African countries, you may need to head to Dakar, in Senegal, first.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Cape Verde is one of the safest countries in West Africa for solo women travellers – no special precautions are required. For more general information and advice, see p828.

# TRANSPORT IN CAPE VERDE

## GETTING THERE & AWAY Entering Cape Verde

Proof of yellow fever vaccination is only required if you are coming from an infected area (see p852 for more details).

### Air

Most international flights land on Sal, though Praia is seeing an increasing amount of international activity.

TACV has flights three to four times weekly from Lisbon, and once or twice

per week from Boston, Amsterdam, Basel, Fortaleza, Madrid, Munich and Paris. TAP Air Portugal has daily flights from Lisbon. South African Airways flies to Sal from New York and Atlanta, Johannesburg, and Buenos Aires,

From West Africa, TACV flies between Praia and Dakar (Senegal) three to four times weekly. Air Sénégal International has three flights weekly to/from Dakar, with connections to most major West African cities.

Airlines servicing Cape Verde include the following:

**Air Sénégal International** (V7; ☎ 2-617529; www.air-senegal-international.com; Av Amílcar Cabral, Praia, Santiago) Hub: Dakar.

**South African Airways** (SA; ☎ 2-411358; www.flysa.com) Hub: Johannesburg.

**TACV** (VR; ☎ 2-608200; www.tacv.cv; Av Amílcar Cabral, Praia, Santiago) Hub: Praia.

**TAP Air Portugal** (TP; ☎ 2-411195; www.flytap.com) Hub: Lisbon.

## GETTING AROUND Air

TACV serves all the inhabited islands except Brava. Internal flights are slightly cheaper if you buy tickets in Cape Verde. If you're taking two or more internal flights, you may want to purchase TACV's Cabo Verde AirPass (available from travel agencies abroad but not in Cape Verde). You have to arrive by TACV to qualify. In addition, savings are small, and may not be worth the sacrifice in flexibility.

Note that if flights are full, it's well worth flying standby as no-shows are very common. Also, be prepared to purchase your ticket in cash as most travel agencies and even some TACV offices don't accept credit cards or traveller's cheques.

### Bicycle

Cycling is a good way to get around the islands, but there are few places to rent them; think about bringing your own. See p843 for general information.

### Boat

There are ferry connections to all nine inhabited islands, and prices are reasonable. However, be prepared for delays. Seas can be rough, and most boats also carry cargo, so unloading time can be unpredictable. Sometimes departures are delayed by a day

or more. There are cafés onboard, but it's always a good idea to bring a reserve of water and snacks.

The most reliable – and comfortable – service is via SMT's *Tarrafal*, which connects Mindelo and Praia via São Nicolau. Twice a week, boats leave Mindelo in the early afternoon, arrive in São Nicolau in the evening, and then head to Praia overnight, arriving the following morning. In the other direction, the *Tarrafal* leaves in the evening from Praia, arriving the following morning at São Nicolau and in Mindelo around midday.

The twice-daily service between São Vicente and Santo Antão is also very reliable. The trip lasts one hour and costs CVE600.

**Polar** (☎ 2-615223; Av Unidade Guiné-Cabo Verde, Santiago) operates a ferry that generally connects Praia, Fogo, Brava, and Maio, but also sometimes hits all the islands, including Boa Vista, Sal, São Vicente and São Nicolau. Prices vary. The short one- to two-hour trip from Fogo to Brava costs about CVE7000. The overnight trip from Praia to Sal costs CVE2100 in the second-class lounge and CVE3400 for an overnight berth.

In the town of Espargos on Sal, the Anaú agency also handles boats to São Vicente. The eight- to 12-hour trip costs around CVE2500 (CVE4200 per person for a fairly comfortable overnight berth with four beds).

### Car & Motorcycle

You can rent cars on many islands, but the only three that make the expense worth it are Santiago, Boa Vista and possibly Fogo.

Consider a four-wheel drive, as conditions are rough once you get off the few main roads. The largest company is **Alucar** (alucarst@mail.cvtelecom.cv; Praia ☎ 2-615801; Sal ☎ 2-421187; São Vicente ☎ 2-325194). Cars cost from about CVE4500 per day, including tax and insurance all-inclusive, with the first 100km free (CVE0.10 per kilometre thereafter). As tourism grows, international car rental agencies are also opening shop. Check at airports upon arrival.

### Minibus & Taxi

Ranging from comfortable vans to pick-up trucks with narrow wooden benches, the *aluguers* provide regular connections between even relatively small towns on most islands. They pick up people at unmarked points around town (ask locals for directions), set off from their initial stop when they're more or less full, and drop passengers off anywhere on the way, on request. They usually charge around CVE100 to CVE200 per passenger, and no more than CVE350 for even the longest trip.

Taxis are generally plentiful and cheap in major towns, with fares rarely topping CVE500 and often CVE100 to CVE200. However, you could be stung fairly hard for excursions. Expect to pay around CVE3000 for a few hours, and CVE6000 or more for a full day's services, depending on distances.

Hitching is easy, though payment is sometimes expected. It's usually safe but see p845 for a general warning on the possible risks of hitching.