

# Cape Verde

## Geography

Location: Western Africa, group of Islands in the North Atlantic Ocean, west of Senegal

Area:

total area: 4,030 sq km

land area: 4,030 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 965 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic baselines

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: temperate; warm, dry, summer; precipitation very erratic

Terrain: steep, rugged, rocky, volcanic

Natural resources: salt, basalt rock, pozzolana, limestone, kaolin, fish

Land use:

arable land: 9%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 6%

forest and woodland: 0%

other: 85%

Note: strategic location 500 km from west coast of Africa near major north-south sea routes; important communications station; important sea and air refueling site

## People

Population: 435,983 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 50% (female 106,539; male 110,301)

15-64 years: 47% (female 114,931; male 88,029)

65 years and over: 3% (female 9,781; male 6,402) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.98% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 45.32 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 8.65 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -6.88 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 55.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:  
total population: 63.01 years  
male: 61.1 years  
female: 65.01 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.23 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:  
noun: Cape Verdean(s)  
adjective: Cape Verdean

Ethnic divisions: Creole (mulatto) 71%, African 28%, European 1%

Religions: Roman Catholicism fused with indigenous beliefs

Languages: Portuguese, Crioulo, a blend of Portuguese and West African words

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1990)

total population: 63%

male: 75%

female: 53%

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Cape Verde

conventional short form: Cape Verde

local long form: Republica de Cabo Verde

local short form: Cabo Verde

Capital: Praia

Administrative divisions: 14 districts (concelhos, singular - concelho); Boa Vista, Brava, Fogo, Maio, Paul, Praia, Porto Novo,

Ribeira Grande, Sal, Santa Catarina, Santa Cruz, Sao Nicolau, Sao Vicente, Tarrafal

Independence: 5 July 1975 (from Portugal)

National holiday: Independence Day, 5 July (1975)

Constitution: new constitution came into force 25 September 1992

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: three horizontal bands of light blue (top, double width), white (with a horizontal red stripe in the middle third), and light blue; a circle of 10 yellow five-pointed stars is centered on the hoist end of the red stripe and extends into the upper and lower blue bands

## Economy

Overview: Cape Verde's low per capita GDP reflects a poor natural resource base, serious water shortages exacerbated by cycles of long-term drought, and a high birthrate. The economy is service oriented, with commerce, transport, and public services accounting

for 60% of GDP. Although nearly 70% of the population lives in rural areas, agriculture's share of GDP is only 20%; the fishing sector accounts for 4%. About 90% of food must be imported. The fishing potential, mostly lobster and tuna, is not fully exploited. Cape Verde annually runs a high trade deficit, financed by remittances from emigrants and foreign aid, which form important supplements to GDP. Economic reforms, launched by the new democratic government in 1991, are aimed at developing the private sector and attracting foreign investment to diversify the economy.

Industries: fish processing, salt mining, garment industry, ship repair, construction materials, food and beverage production

Agriculture: accounts for 20% of GDP (including fishing); largely subsistence farming; bananas are the only export crop; other crops - corn, beans, sweet potatoes, coffee; growth potential of agricultural sector limited by poor soils and scanty rainfall; annual food imports required; fish catch provides for both domestic consumption and small exports

Illicit drugs: increasingly used as a transshipment point for illicit drugs moving from Latin America and Africa destined for Western Europe

## Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:  
total: 1,100 km (1992)

Ports: Mindelo, Praia, Tarrafal

Merchant marine:  
total: 7 (1,000 GRT or over)

Airports:  
total: 6

## Defence Forces

Branches: People's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARP; includes Army and Navy), Security Service