Cape Verde

Location

Cape Verde is only slightly larger than Rhode Island and made up of 10 islands located in the mid-Atlantic ocean, about three hundred miles off the coast of West Africa and just West of Senegal. The latitude and longitude of Cape Verde is about 16 degrees North and 24 degrees West, which puts it in the Northern Hemisphere. The Capital city of Cape Verde is named Praia and is located 14 degrees North and 23 degrees West. The country of Cape Verde as a whole, occupies about 4,033 square kilometers of land.

Geography

The islands of Cape Verde tend to be divided into two groups: the Barlavento in the North and the Sotavento in the South.

The Northern Barlavento is made up of the islands of Santo Antão (291 sq mi), Boa Vista (240 sq mi), São Nicolau (132 sq mi), São Vicente (88 sq mi; 246), Sal (83 sq mi), and Santa Luzia (13 sq mi). The Southern Sotavento consists of São Tiago (383 sq mi), Fogo (184 sq mi), Maio (103 sq mi), and Brava (25 sq mi.).

All of Cape Verde’s islands were made from volcanoes with three of the islands, Sal, Boa Vista, and Maio, being very mountainous. The highest point of Cape Verde is located at Pico do Cano on the island of Fogo which is 9,281 feet and the group’s only active volcano. Cape Verde’s is known for being rocky, rugged, steep, and sometimes bleak from the past volcanic activity.

Cape Verde lacks any renewable source of fresh water which often leaves the country subject to bad droughts.
Climate

Cape Verde has a tropical climate, although the weather can be very unpredictable. It is known for being very windy and having a rainy season August through October. The amount of rain at this time can vary greatly.

History

The Cape Verde Islands were not discovered until 1465. At this time, the islands became part of the Portuguese empire, where a majority of it’s inhabitants today are of a mixed Portuguese and African descent.

Cape Verde thrived early on as a center for slave trade up until the slave trade was abolished in 1876. After that time, Cape Verde went through some hard times and served as a shipping port.

The citizens of Cape Verde became west from a Portuguese colony to an overseas province in 1951, and then to a full Portuguese Citizenship ten years later.

In 1991, Cape Verde held its first multiparty presidential election. The Democrats won this race.

Important Dates

Cape Verde's important dates include January 1= new years day, 5 July 1975 =Independence day from Portugal, 25 September = Celebrates the signing of the constitution.

Population

Cape Verdes Population size totals around 499,796 people. They also have an annual population growth rate of 1.14%. About seventy one percent of this population is
Creole with a mix of African and Portuguese descent. The rest of the population is mostly Africans and some white people.

**Currency**

The currency in Cape Verde is the Cape Verdean escudo (CVE). The current exchange rate is 1 $ = .88 CVE. Cape Verde currency is denoted in notes. Notes come in denominations of CVEsc5,000, 2,000, 1,000 and 500. Coins are in denominations of CVEsc200, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1.

**Education**

Cape Verde has a very traditional education program with goals of declining illiteracy rate. The educational program they use stresses universal literacy and primary skills, with the advanced education focusing on agricultural and technical skills for production. In 1998, primary schools had 91,177 students and 3,219 teachers, which yielded a student to teacher ratio of 29 to 1. Secondary schools had 31,602 students and 1,372 teachers in the same year.

**Language**

Cape Verde’s official language is Portuguese. This is the language the government uses. The language of Cape Verden Creole is also used very frequently and is known by virtually all of the Cape Verde inhabitants.

**Religion**
More than 85 percent of the population is nominally Roman Catholic. Although their Roman Catholic religion is mixed and synchronized with traditional African Religions.

Agriculture

Cape Verde does not have a very strong agriculture background due to their few natural resources with little rainfall and limited fresh water. Only four of the islands normally support much agricultural production, and over 90% of all food consumed in Cape Verde is imported. Cape Verde does have some mineral resources such as salt, limestone, and pozzolana which is a volcanic rock used in cement production.

Trade

The economy of Cape Verde is very service-oriented, with the majority of its money coming from commerce, transport, and public services. Although nearly 70% of the population lives in rural areas, agriculture and fishing contribute only about 9% of Cape Verde’s money. Cape Verde has a lot of fish and shellfish that they eat themselves and small quantities are exported.

Food

Cape Verde has a very tropical cuisine. They eat a lot of fresh fruit such as melons, guavas, coconuts, and fish. They also eat a lot of goat meat and make their
own goat cheese. If traveling to Cape Verde it is advised to boil any of the water. All of the milk is also unpasteurized.

**Landmarks**

Cape Verde is home to many famous Landmarks. It is covered in beaches that are known around the world for being a large tourist attraction such as Sao Pedro Beach. It also has an active volcano called Pico do Cano.