

Cap verde



General statistics

Population: 567,000 (2010)
Area: 4,033 km²
Independence: July 5, 1975 (Portugal)
Capital: Praia
Government: Parliamentary republic
Administrative language: Portuguese
Currency: Cape Verdean escudo (CVE)
GDP: 1.841 billion USD
GDP per capita: 3,587 USD
Calling code: + 238
Anthem: Cântico da Liberdade (song of freedom)



Minerals: Salt, limestone, pozzolana, gypsum

Cap Verde is an island country, spanning an archipelago of 10 islands located in the central Atlantic Ocean, 570 kilometres off the coast of Western Africa.

History

The previously uninhabited islands were discovered and colonized by the Portuguese in the 15th Century, and became an important location in the Atlantic slave trade due to their geographically advantageous position. The islands' prosperity often attracted pirates including Sir Francis Drake, who twice sacked the (then) capital Ribeira Grande, in the 1580s. The islands were also visited by Charles Darwin's expedition in 1832. The decline in the slave trade in the 19th century resulted in an economic crisis. With few natural resources and without strong sustainable investment from the Portuguese, the people grew increasingly discontent with the colonial masters, who nevertheless refused to provide the local authorities with more autonomy. This discontent festered and culminated in 1975, when a movement led by Amílcar Cabral achieved independence for the archipelago.

The country has an estimated population (most of it of creole ethnicity) of about 500,000, with its capital city Praia accounting for a quarter of its citizens. Nearly 38% of the population lives in rural areas according to the 2010 Cape Verdean census; about 20% lives below the poverty threshold,[6] and the literacy rate is around 85%. Politically, the country is a very stable democracy, with notable economic growth and improvements of living conditions despite its lack of natural resources, and has garnered international recognition by other countries and international organizations, which often provide development aid. Since 2007, Cape Verde has been classified as a developing nation.

Tough economic times during the last decades of its colonization and the first years of Cape Verde's independence led many to migrate to Europe, the Americas and other African countries. This migration was so significant that the number of Cape Verdeans and their descendants living abroad currently exceeds the population of Cape Verde itself. Historically, the influx of remittances from these immigrant

communities to their families has provided a substantial contribution to help strengthen the country's economy. Currently, the Cape Verdean economy is mostly service-oriented with a growing focus on tourism and foreign investment, which benefits from the islands' warm climate throughout the year, diverse landscape, welcoming people and cultural richness, especially in music.

Climate

Cape Verde's climate is milder than that of the African mainland; because the island is surrounded by the sea, temperatures are generally moderate.[10] Average daily high temperatures range from 25 °C (77 °F) in January to 29 °C (84.2 °F) in September.[9] Cape Verde is part of the Sahelian arid belt, with nothing like the rainfall levels of nearby West Africa.[10] It does rain irregularly between August and October, with frequent brief-but-heavy downpours.[10] A desert is usually defined as terrain which receives less than 250 mm (9.8 in) of annual rainfall. Cape Verde's total (261 mm/10.3 in) is slightly above this criterion, which makes the area climate semi-desert.

Hurricanes that form near the Cape Verde Islands are sometimes referred to as Cape Verde-type hurricanes. These hurricanes can become very intense as they cross warm Atlantic waters.