Why you should travel to Cape Verde

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Cape Verde is an archipelago situated off the coast of Africa that offers an exceptional blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, and year-round sunny weather, making it an outstanding destination for travelers seeking a blend of adventure and relaxation. These 10 volcanic islands in the Atlantic Ocean are renowned for their diverse landscapes that range from pristine beaches with crystal-clear waters to rugged mountains and serene desert flats.

Each island has its own unique charm, from the vibrant music scene and colorful architecture of São Vicente to the tranquil beauty of Sal with its world-class water sports opportunities. Cape Verde's rich Creole culture, a harmonious blend of African and Portuguese influences, is evident in its music, dance, and culinary delights, offering travelers a culturally immersive experience. Moreover, the warm hospitality of the Cape Verdean people makes travelers feel right at home.

Here's why you should travel to Cape Verde:

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Where is Cape Verde, and is it safe?

Cape Verde (you don't pronounce the "e" in Verde), or Cabo Verde, is an archipelago of ten islands that is located approximately 350 miles (570km) off the mainland of Africa. Given the distance and independence from Africa, there is currently no danger of politics from Africa making the distance. Cape Verde is a democracy that presently shows no civil unrest. Cape Verdeans believe their personal reputation is important enough to keep them honest; therefore, the crime rate is low. The low level of danger requires the exercise of only standard precautions. As always, situational awareness should be in use when traveling in cities.

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What makes Cape Verde different?

"Cabo Verdeans" are known for their hospitality and genuine friendliness. They are from little means yet want to share what they have and make sure you get to take in all the islands have to offer, from vibrant culture to striking cliffs, active volcanoes, and beaches. The culinary fusion of African, Portuguese, and Brazilian flavors will have your taste buds asking for more. All this with no mass tourism and a year-round

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climate to welcome your toes into the water. You will want to hop on the interisland ferry to see the archipelago's diversity. From flat islands with beaches to the volcanic peak of Pico do Fogo.

Loggerhead turtle nesting phenomenon

Between July and September, the female loggerhead turtles return at a rate that makes Cape Verde the third most important nesting site for loggerhead turtles. August is the best month to see the little hatchlings scurry down the sand and jump right into the ocean. Loggerhead turtles have been around for over 50 million years, making them one of the oldest surviving species. Females can weigh as much as 400 lbs and males up to 250 lbs, making them among the largest turtles. They will travel thousands of miles between their feeding and nesting grounds. Females will return to the beach they were born on to lay their eggs. Boa Vista and Sal Islands allow the nesting organically without human interruption or coastal development. Pack your binoculars because you will want to see the egg hatch at close range.

Humpback Whale sighting

Humpback whales find the waters off Boa Vista island, Cape Verde, the ideal location for breeding. You will find them breeding between late February to early May. You can hear the mating songs from the males. Yes, it's that loud. If you are lucky enough to catch one breech at 30 – 40 tons, these gentle giants will leave you breathless. You will be completely astonished by the size and how far they can breech. The splash's sound will make you question your proximity, but the tour operators are trained to stay at a safe distance for you and the whale. Have your camera ready. After mating, the females will head north and return in a year to give birth. I have not seen a birth, so be sure to share your pictures if you do. A four-hour motor yacht excursion through boavistaofficial.com is a great way to get the experience. Excursion tips: bring water shoes to wear on the yacht, wear something you are ok with getting wet if you are splashed, and protect your camera equipment from salt air and water.

Nightlife with the stars

You may find some loud music and drinks flowing in the hotels, but that's not the nightlife I'm referring to. I am referring to stargazing with Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and the canopy of stars – some with your naked eye. The show is amazingly clear when the weather is good, and there is almost no light pollution. Be sure you know the moon phase, which will create light pollution. On Boa Vista Island, you can book an excursion with a peaceful dinner under the stars in the desert. Check the celestial events before you go so you don't miss an event. Excursion tips: Bring a light jacket as the desert cools with the sea breeze. No flash photography is allowed and be prepared if the breeze isn't enough to keep the mosquitos away in the summer months.

Float like you are in the Dead Sea

On the island of Sal, Cape Verde, is Pedra Lume Salt Crater. It has a salt content that is 27 times saltier than normal seawater. That means you can float on the surface without much work. Relax on the surface while your biggest organ (your skin) gets a detox. This is a great spot to sit and rub off the dead skin with the sand and salty water. It really works. Look around while you are there, and you will see the Verdeans scrubbing away. If the sun is high, you may see some of the colors from the salt crystals shining. You know you will want to taste just how salty it is, so stay hydrated.

Hike to the peak of Pico do Fogo

Pico do Fogo, meaning “peak of fire” in Portuguese, is an active volcano on the island of Fogo, Cape Verde. The peak is an impressive 9,281 ft. Don’t worry; some of that is driving to the trailhead. The lunar-like terrain with rocky formations and ash makes Pico do Fogo different from other volcanos. Hiking to the peak is like crawling up a dune if you don’t take it easy. When you reach the peak and look inside the caldera, you will see hardened lava and the village of Chã das Caldeiras. That’s right, a village in and around the hardened lava.

The indigenous people lost their village in the 2014 eruption and are still rebuilding on top of the hardened lava. You can ride into the caldera to find buildings made of volcanic rock, cement, and whatever they can salvage for a roof. Yet, they can grow plants in this environment. They harvest grapes and coffee. End your hike with a good glass of wine or java, then take some home to enjoy. Book an excursion with getyourguide.com. This is a strenuous 7-hour hike. You will want to wear shoes that stabilize your ankle, hydrate often, and bring energy snacks and cash for the wine and coffee shop.

Take a dive

Underwater exploration in Cape Verde: You can do any type of dive you prefer, or all of them. Whether you prefer the shallow snorkel, the drift dive, or strap-on tanks, you will not be disappointed. The coral is a visual treat, and the life in the waters around Sao Vicente will surely put them on the dive map before you know it. Before Cape Verde makes the top dive list, you will want to dive in with sharks, rays, and turtles.

An entire town that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Ribeiro Grande was renamed Cidade Velha (ci-dade ve-lha) in the late 18th century and is located on the island of Santiago. The city is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A walk through the cobblestone streets will confirm its history, with the remains of two churches and a royal fortress, Forte Real de São Felipe. Don’t miss the museum in Forte Real de São Felipe. Pillory Square is a reminder of the past, as the islands’ location made them essential in the transatlantic slave trade. This UNESCO site will leave a lasting impression with a deeper appreciation for the shared histories that shape our history.

Why you should Travel to Cape Verde now

Cape Verde is a captivating destination that offers a perfect blend of culture, nature, and adventure. Whether you seek a relaxing beach getaway, stargazing, eco-diving, history, or water sports, this archipelago has it. Pack light, get ready to holiday to the rhythm of Cape Verde, and embark on an unforgettable journey to this hidden paradise!

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About The Author

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I am a digital nomad and travel writer with a passion for exploring the world. As a seasoned traveler, I have embarked on a remarkable journey of living a location-independent lifestyle while documenting my experiences through captivating narratives. Capturing the essence of each destination and sharing to inspire others to embark on their own adventures and cherish the beauty of our diverse planet.

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