

# Handcrafted holidays to Sao Tome and Principe

Surprising and delighting experienced travellers and new visitors alike



## Find the real Sao Tome and Principe

At just 1000 km<sup>2</sup> this little-visited archipelago is Africa's second smallest country. What they lack in size, these islands, and their satellite isles, make up for with immense natural, experience-rich and deep-rooted cultural appeal. It is a destination that, once visited, will change your outlook on the world forever.

Shrouded in lush jungle canopies and swathed in cocoa plantations, Sao Tome and Principe are extraordinarily beautiful. Holidays here are about mountain trekking with a local guide, exploring centuries-old forts, browsing the bountiful markets (and sampling the world's best chocolate), discovering spectacular beaches and embarking on panoramic boat tours. Visit between October and January to observe the nesting of leatherback, olive ridley and hawksbill turtles. Whale watching is available from July to October.

## Our highlights

**Nature:** Products of a long-extinct volcano, the landscape of the islands is dramatic, beautiful and unforgiving: black basalt rocks, thundering waterfalls, glorious stretches of golden sand, warm turquoise waters, mountain peaks and dense rainforests - packed so thickly that visible pathways are hard to find. From the air they have a distinct look of deserted paradise islands; from the land, you realise this initial impression is not far from the truth.

**Birdlife:** Birdlife on Sao Tome and Principe is exceptional, boasting the highest density of endemic species in the world - more per km<sup>2</sup> than the Galapagos archipelago. Some 25, single-island species can be found here and a further 14 species are endemic to the country including Prinia, blue waxbills, kingfishers, starlings, Sao Tome green pigeons, Principe drongo and the black kite.

**Foodie delights:** Fresh fish, a vast array of locally grown herbs, spices, fruit and vegetables - jackfruit, bananas, mangoes, cocoa, breadfruit, corn - and sweet homemade pastries and cakes. Dishes are wholesome and excite the senses with their colour, aroma and taste. International chefs at our featured hotels are creating innovative cuisine, combining traditional with modern flair.

**Eco-hotels:** Some 59% of Principe is inscribed as a natural park and a UNESCO biosphere reserve. It is western Africa's 'Garden of Eden'. Sunvil's chosen hotels have sustainability at their core, with the aim to foster the conservation of biological and cultural diversity, and the promotion of economic and social development based on partnerships with those who call the island their home.

**Activities:** From snorkelling, paddle boarding, kayaking, diving and boat excursions to mountain hikes, plantation visits, cultural experiences and cooking classes there is much to enjoy.