



Africa :: Sao Tome and Principe

Introduction :: Sao Tome and Principe

Background:

Discovered and claimed by Portugal in the late 15th century, the islands' sugar-based economy gave way to coffee and cocoa in the 19th century - all grown with African plantation slave labor, a form of which lingered into the 20th century. While independence was achieved in 1975, democratic reforms were not instituted until the late 1980s. The country held its first free elections in 1991, but frequent internal wrangling between the various political parties precipitated repeated changes in leadership and two failed coup attempts in 1995 and 2003. In 2012, three opposition parties combined in a no confidence vote to bring down the majority government of former Prime Minister Patrice TROVOADA. The new government of Prime Minister Gabriel Arcanjo Ferreira DA COSTA is entirely composed of opposition party members with limited experience in governance. The recent discovery of oil in the Gulf of Guinea promises to attract increased attention to the small island nation.

Geography :: Sao Tome and Principe

Location:

Central Africa, islands in the Gulf of Guinea, just north of the Equator, west of Gabon

Geographic coordinates:

1 00 N, 7 00 E

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 964 sq km  
country comparison to the world: 185  
land: 964 sq km  
water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

more than five times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

209 km

Maritime claims:

measured from claimed archipelagic baselines  
territorial sea: 12 nm  
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical; hot, humid; one rainy season (October to May)

Terrain:

volcanic, mountainous

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m  
highest point: Pico de Sao Tome 2,024 m

Natural resources:

fish, hydropower

**Land use:**

**arable land:** 9.06%

**permanent crops:** 40.62%

**other:** 50.31% (2011)

**Irrigated land:**

97 sq km (2003)

**Natural hazards:**

NA

**Environment - current issues:**

deforestation; soil erosion and exhaustion

**Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands

**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

**Geography - note:**

the smallest country in Africa; the two main islands form part of a chain of extinct volcanoes and both are mountainous

**People and Society :: Sao Tome and Principe**

**Nationality:**

**noun:** Sao Tomean(s)

**adjective:** Sao Tomean

**Ethnic groups:**

mestizo, angolares (descendants of Angolan slaves), forros (descendants of freed slaves), servicais (contract laborers from Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde), tongas (children of servicais born on the islands), Europeans (primarily Portuguese)

**Languages:**

Portuguese (official)

**Religions:**

Catholic 70.3%, Evangelical 3.4%, New Apostolic 2%, Adventist 1.8%, other 3.1%, none 19.4% (2001 census)

**Population:**

186,817 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 186

**Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 44% (male 41,791/female 40,381)

**15-24 years:** 19.6% (male 18,552/female 18,054)

**25-54 years:** 30% (male 27,448/female 28,667)

**55-64 years:** 3.4% (male 2,863/female 3,452)

**65 years and over:** 3% (male 2,550/female 3,059) (2013 est.)

**Dependency ratios:**

**total dependency ratio:** 81.8 %

**youth dependency ratio:** 75.6 %

**elderly dependency ratio:** 6.1 %

**potential support ratio:** 16.3 (2013)

**Median age:**

**total:** 17.6 years

**male:** 17.2 years

**female:** 18.1 years (2013 est.)

**Population growth rate:**

1.94% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 59

**Birth rate:**

36.05 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 22

**Death rate:**

7.68 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 111

**Net migration rate:**

-8.96 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 209

Urbanization:

urban population: 62.7% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 3.01% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

SAO TOME (capital) 60,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.96 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.83 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.84 male(s)/female

total population: 1 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

19.4

note: Median age at first birth among women 25-29 (2009 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

70 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 89

Infant mortality rate:

total: 50.48 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 42

male: 52.51 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 48.39 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 63.86 years

country comparison to the world: 177

male: 62.61 years

female: 65.14 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

4.81 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 23

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

38.4% (2008/09)

Health expenditures:

7.2% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 76

Physicians density:

0.49 physicians/1,000 population (2004)

Hospital bed density:

2.9 beds/1,000 population (2011)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 89% of population

rural: 88% of population

total: 89% of population

unimproved:

urban: 11% of population

rural: 12% of population

total: 11% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 30% of population

rural: 19% of population

total: 26% of population

unimproved:

urban: 70% of population

rural: 81% of population  
total: 74% of population (2010 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

NA

**Major infectious diseases:**

**degree of risk:** high  
**food or waterborne diseases:** bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever  
**vectorborne diseases:** malaria and dengue fever  
**water contact disease:** schistosomiasis (2013)

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

9.5% (2008)

**country comparison to the world:** 132

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

14.4% (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 53

**Education expenditures:**

NA

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write  
**total population:** 69.5%  
**male:** 80.3%  
**female:** 60.1% (2008 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 11 years  
**male:** 11 years  
**female:** 11 years (2010)

**Child labor - children ages 5-14:**

**total number:** 3,235  
**percentage:** 8 % (2006 est.)

**Government :: Sao Tome and Principe**

**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe  
**conventional short form:** Sao Tome and Principe  
**local long form:** Republica Democratica de Sao Tome e Principe  
**local short form:** Sao Tome e Principe

**Government type:**

republic

**Capital:**

**name:** Sao Tome  
**geographic coordinates:** 0 20 N, 6 44 E  
**time difference:** UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:**

2 provinces; Principe, Sao Tome  
***note:*** Principe has had self government since 29 April 1995

**Independence:**

12 July 1975 (from Portugal)

**National holiday:**

Independence Day, 12 July (1975)

**Constitution:**

approved March 1990, effective 10 September 1990

**Legal system:**

mixed legal system of civil law base on the Portuguese model and customary law

**International law organization participation:**

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

**Suffrage:**

18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** President Manuel Pinto DA COSTA (since 3 September 2011)

**head of government:** Prime Minister Gabriel Arcanjo Ferreira DA COSTA (since 12 December 2012)

**cabinet:** Council of Ministers appointed by the president on the proposal of the prime minister  
(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** <sup>en</sup>)

**elections:** president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 17 July and 7 August 2011 (next to be held in 2016); prime minister chosen by the National Assembly and approved by the president

**election results:** Manuel Pinto DA COSTA elected president in a run-off election; percent of vote - Manuel Pinto DA COSTA 52.9%, Evaristo CARVALHO 47.1%

**Legislative branch:**

unicameral National Assembly or Assembleia Nacional (55 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

**elections:** last held on 1 August 2010 (next to be held in 2014)

**election results:** percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - ADI 26, MLSTP-PSD 21, PCD 7, MDFM 1

**Judicial branch:**

**highest court(s):** Supreme Court (consists of NA judges); Constitutional Court (consists of 5 judges, 3 of which are from the Supreme Court)

**judge selection and term of office:** Supreme Court judges appointed by the National Assembly; judge tenure NA; Constitutional Court judges nominated by the president of the republic and elected by the National Assembly for 5-year terms

**subordinate courts:** Court of First Instance; Audit Court

**Political parties and leaders:**

Force for Change Democratic Movement or MDFM [Tome Soares da VERA CRUZ]

Independent Democratic Action or ADI [Patrice TROVOADA]

Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe-Social Democratic Party or MLSTP-PSD [Rafael BRANCO]

New Way Movement or NR

Party for Democratic Convergence or PCD [Delfim NEVES]

Ue-Kedadji coalition

other small parties

**Political pressure groups and leaders:**

Association of Sao Tome and Principe NGOs or FONG

**other:** the media

**International organization participation:**

ACP, AfDB, AOSIS, AU, CD, CPLP, EITI (candidate country), FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), IPU, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), NAM, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, Union Latina, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO (observer)

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Ovidio Manuel Barbosa PEQUENO

**chancery:** 1211 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036

**telephone:** [1] (202) 775-2075, 2076

**FAX:** [1] (202) 775-2077

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

the US does not have an embassy in Sao Tome and Principe; the Ambassador to Gabon is accredited to Sao Tome and Principe on a nonresident basis and makes periodic visits to the islands

**Flag description:**

three horizontal bands of green (top), yellow (double width), and green with two black five-pointed stars placed side by side in the center of the yellow band and a red isosceles triangle based on the hoist side; green stands for the country's rich vegetation, red recalls the struggle for independence, and yellow represents cocoa, one of the country's main agricultural products; the two stars symbolize the two main islands

**note:** uses the popular Pan-African colors of Ethiopia

**National anthem:**

**name:** "Independencia total" (Total Independence)

► [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

**lyrics/music:** Alda Neves DA GRACA do Espirito Santo/Manuel dos Santos Barreto de Sousa e ALMEIDA

**note:** adopted 1975

**Economy:: Sao Tome and Principe**

**Economy - overview:**

This small, poor island economy has become increasingly dependent on cocoa since independence in 1975. Cocoa production has substantially declined in recent years because of drought and mismanagement. Sao Tome and Principe has to import fuels, most manufactured goods, consumer goods, and a substantial amount of food, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices. Over the years, it has had difficulty servicing its external debt and has relied heavily on concessional aid and debt rescheduling. Sao Tome and Principe benefited from \$200 million in debt relief in December 2000 under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program, which helped bring down the country's \$300 million debt burden. In August 2005, the government signed on to a new 3-year IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) program worth \$4.3 million. In April 2011 the country completed a Threshold Country Program with The Millennium Challenge Corporation to help increase tax revenues, reform customs, and improve the business environment. Considerable potential exists for development of a tourist industry, and the government has taken steps to expand facilities in recent years. The government also has attempted to reduce price controls and subsidies. Potential exists for the development of petroleum resources in Sao Tome and Principe's territorial waters in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea, which are being jointly developed in a 60-40 split with Nigeria, but any actual production is at least several years off. The first production licenses were sold in 2004, though a dispute over licensing with Nigeria delayed the country's receipt of more than \$20 million in signing bonuses for almost a year. Maintaining control of inflation, fiscal discipline, and increasing flows of foreign direct investment into the oil sector are the major economic problems facing the country.

#### **GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$408.6 million (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 217

\$392.1 million (2011 est.)

\$374.1 million (2010 est.)

***note:*** data are in 2012 US dollars

#### **GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$264 million (2012 est.)

#### **GDP - real growth rate:**

4% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 81

4.9% (2011 est.)

4.5% (2010 est.)

#### **GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$2,400 (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 184

\$2,300 (2011 est.)

\$2,300 (2010 est.)

***note:*** data are in 2012 US dollars

#### **Gross national saving:**

20.4% of GDP (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 75

15.2% of GDP (2011 est.)

-12.3% of GDP (2010 est.)

#### **GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 126.3%

**government consumption:** 13.9%

**investment in fixed capital:** 48.7%

**investment in inventories:** -1.6%

**exports of goods and services:** 15.5%

**imports of goods and services:** -64.9%  
(2012 est.)

#### **GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 13.9%

**industry:** 19.5%

**services:** 66.5% (2012 est.)

#### **Agriculture - products:**

cocoa, coconuts, palm kernels, copra, cinnamon, pepper, coffee, bananas, papayas, beans; poultry; fish

#### **Industries:**

light construction, textiles, soap, beer, fish processing, timber

#### **Industrial production growth rate:**

5.5% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 49

#### **Labor force:**

52,490 (2007)

**country comparison to the world:** 189

#### **Labor force - by occupation:**

**note:** population mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture and fishing; shortages of skilled workers

<b>Unemployment rate:</b>
NA%
<b>Population below poverty line:</b>
66.2% (2009 est.)
<b>Household income or consumption by percentage share:</b>
<b>lowest 10%:</b> NA%
<b>highest 10%:</b> NA%
<b>Budget:</b>
<b>revenues:</b> \$105.5 million
<b>expenditures:</b> \$131.8 million (2012 est.)
<b>Taxes and other revenues:</b>
39.9% of GDP (2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 44
<b>Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):</b>
-10% of GDP (2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 203
<b>Public debt:</b>
83.5% of GDP (2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 26
80.9% of GDP (2011 est.)
<b>Fiscal year:</b>
calendar year
<b>Inflation rate (consumer prices):</b>
10.6% (2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 203
14.3% (2011 est.)
<b>Central bank discount rate:</b>
16% (31 December 2009)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 4
28% (31 December 2008)
<b>Commercial bank prime lending rate:</b>
26% (31 December 2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 9
26.75% (31 December 2011 est.)
<b>Stock of narrow money:</b>
\$38.63 million (31 December 2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 186
\$34.42 million (31 December 2011 est.)
<b>Stock of broad money:</b>
\$80.55 million (31 December 2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 190
\$82.39 million (31 December 2011 est.)
<b>Stock of domestic credit:</b>
\$94.9 million (31 December 2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 186
\$90.89 million (31 December 2011 est.)
<b>Market value of publicly traded shares:</b>
\$NA
<b>Current account balance:</b>
-\$85.1 million (2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 68
-\$77.6 million (2011 est.)
<b>Exports:</b>
\$11.7 million (2012 est.)
<b>country comparison to the world:</b> 210
\$12.1 million (2011 est.)
<b>Exports - commodities:</b>

cocoa 80%, copra, coffee, palm oil

**Exports - partners:**

Netherlands 32.7%, Belgium 21.4%, Spain 10.8%, Nigeria 5.7%, US 5% (2012)

**Imports:**

\$121.6 million (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 210

\$119.6 million (2011 est.)

**Imports - commodities:**

machinery and electrical equipment, food products, petroleum products

**Imports - partners:**

Portugal 63%, Gabon 6% (2012)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$51.58 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 167

\$51.3 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**Debt - external:**

\$299.5 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 182

\$230.9 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**Exchange rates:**

dobras (STD) per US dollar -

19,068 (2012 est.)

17,623 (2011 est.)

18,499 (2010 est.)

16,209 (2009)

14,900 (2008)

**Energy:: Sao Tome and Principe**

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**Electricity - production:**

32 million kWh (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 209

**Electricity - consumption:**

29.76 million kWh (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 209

**Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 138

**Electricity - imports:**

0 kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 140

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

14,000 kW (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 197

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

57.1% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 141

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 187

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

42.9% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 52

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 193

**Crude oil - production:**



0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 195

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 129

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 195

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 135

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

903.5 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 135

Refined petroleum products - imports:

889 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 198

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 199

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 191

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 198

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

150,300 Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 198

Communications:: Sao Tome and Principe

Telephones - main lines in use:

8,000 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 204

Telephones - mobile cellular:

115,000 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 189

Telephone system:

general assessment: local telephone network of adequate quality with most lines connected to digital switches

domestic: combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular teledensity roughly 65 telephones per 100 persons

international: country code - 239; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (2010)

Broadcast media:

1 government-owned TV station; 1 government-owned radio station; 3 independent local radio stations authorized in 2005 with 2 operating at the end of 2006; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters are available (2007)

Internet country code:

.st

**Internet hosts:**

1,678 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 165

**Internet users:**

26,700 (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 184

**Transportation:: Sao Tome and Principe**

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**Airports:**

2 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 206

**Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 2

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 1

**914 to 1,523 m:** 1 (2013)

**Roadways:**

**total:** 320 km

**country comparison to the world:** 204

**paved:** 218 km

**unpaved:** 102 km (2000)

**Merchant marine:**

**total:** 3

**country comparison to the world:** 139

**by type:** bulk carrier 1, cargo 2

**foreign-owned:** 2 (China 1, Greece 1) (2010)

**Ports and terminals:**

Sao Tome

**Military :: Sao Tome and Principe**

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**Military branches:**

Armed Forces of Sao Tome and Principe (Forcas Armadas de Sao Tome e Principe, FASTP): Army, Coast Guard of Sao Tome e Principe (Guarda Costeira de Sao Tome e Principe, GCSTP); also called "Navy"), Presidential Guard (2013)

**Military service age and obligation:**

18 is the legal minimum age for compulsory military service; 17 is the legal minimum age for voluntary service (2012)

**Manpower available for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 39,182

**females age 16-49:** 39,845 (2010 est.)

**Manpower fit for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 27,310

**females age 16-49:** 29,279 (2010 est.)

**Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:**

**male:** 2,076

**female:** 2,003 (2010 est.)

**Military expenditures:**

0.5% of GDP (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 161

**Military - note:**

Sao Tome and Principe's army is a tiny force with almost no resources at its disposal and would be wholly ineffective operating unilaterally; infantry equipment is considered simple to operate and maintain but may require refurbishment or replacement after 25 years in tropical climates; poor pay, working conditions, and alleged nepotism in the promotion of officers have been problems in the past, as reflected in the 1995 and 2003 coups; these issues are being addressed with foreign assistance aimed at improving the army and its focus on realistic security concerns; command is exercised from the president, through the Minister of Defense, to the Chief of the Armed Forces staff (2005)

**Transnational Issues :: Sao Tome and Principe**

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**Disputes - international:**

none