



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ The Cabo Verde Escudo (CVE) is the official currency.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid national license, International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle documents and proof of insurance.
- ❑ The Cabo Verde archipelago includes nine inhabited islands. Car rental agencies are available on Santiago, Sal, Boa Vista and São Vicente islands. Most intra-island transport is via ferry.
- ❑ Many rental vehicles are in poor condition, and may lack standard safety features including seat belts, good tires, functional brakes, windshield wipers, headlights, taillights and turn signals. Check vehicle carefully before agreeing to rent.
- ❑ Drive with windows up and doors locked, and remain alert to groups of two or more young men between the general ages of 14 and 25.
- ❑ Road travel at night is hazardous. Lighting is poor or non-existent.
- ❑ Do not walk alone, particularly after dark or in isolated areas. Violent muggings occur.
- ❑ Pedestrians should avoid deserted areas including beaches; and hillside stairways that connect neighborhoods in Praia and other towns, even during the day. Stairs are generally isolated. Assaults occur.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is below 0.08 g/dl for all drivers. Despite legal limits, drink driving is a major factor in road crashes; particularly at night, on Sundays and during holidays including Christmas, New Year's and Carnival celebrations.
- ❑ Pedestrians under the influence of alcohol may step into roads, especially at night, on weekends and during holidays.
- ❑ There are 31.5 road deaths per 100,000 people in Cape Verde, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Driving** standards are poor.
- **Speeding** and aggressive driving are common.
- **Rains often** cause slippery and unsafe road surfaces. Many motorists frequently fail to maintain safe speeds even during these dangerous road conditions.
- **Drivers may** pass on blind corners, and on inclines and declines.
- **Drivers** and passengers often fail to wear seat belts.
- **Many children** walk to and from school along busy roadways.
- **Interactions** between motorists and pedestrians are often antagonistic. Drivers may disregard those on foot, and pedestrians may deliberately step into roads with traffic.
- **Bus drivers** often engage in risky road behavior, speed and disregard traffic laws.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **Of the** 1,350 km (839 miles) of roads, 932 km (579 miles) are paved and 418 km (260 miles) are unpaved. An estimated 5,000 km (3,106 miles) of roads have cobblestone surfaces.
- **Road conditions** vary widely. Roads on the islands of Santiago, Sal and São Vicente generally have asphalt surfaces and are reasonably well maintained.
- **On other** islands, many roads are cobblestone. Rain causes cobblestone surfaces to become slippery.
- **Outside** of major urban centers, a four-wheel drive vehicle is generally necessary.
- **Roads** on many islands are narrow and winding.
- **Road lighting** is inadequate or non-existent.
- **Traffic** on main roads of major islands is usually light.
- **Satellite** navigation/GPS systems may be unreliable or inaccessible.
- **Public demonstrations** are rare, but may occur. Avoid public gatherings, which may become confrontational and disrupt road travel and public transportation.
- **On many** islands, homes are close to roads. Motorists should be alert at all times to children playing near or in streets, or loose animals running into traffic.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is underdeveloped. Pedestrians are at high risk from motorists, who often disregard their presence.
- **Fuel stations** are generally located at the entrance of towns and villages. Attendants pump fuel.
- **Road construction** and repairs are ongoing in many areas, including the EN3-BR-02 road on Brava,

Road Conditions, continued

especially on the 5.25-km (3.2-mile) section linking Nova Sintra to Nossa Senhora do Monte; and sites where road drainage and slope improvements are being made.

- **Road work zones** may not be adequately signed or illuminated, creating hazardous driving conditions.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **The road connecting Vila do Porto Novo and Ribeira Grande** on the island of Santo Antão is regarded as dangerous. The road is steep and narrow, with more than 50 hairpin turns, and grades that reach 14%. The high-altitude road is 34.8 km (21.62 miles) long and 1,447 meters (4,747 feet) above sea level. Surfaces vary between asphalt and cobblestones, and are poorly maintained.
 - » **The mountain road** leading to the peak of Monte Verde in the northern area of São Vicente island is paved with cobblestones and is in poor condition. The narrow road is 6.1 km (3.8 miles) long, and has steep sections reaching up to a 12% grade. The road is located within Monte Verde Natural Park, and is popular with visiting drivers. Road conditions become more dangerous during the rainy season.
 - » **The road linking Achada Fuma** to the peak of Pico do Fogo in Fogo National Park is heavily traveled by visiting drivers. The steep road is paved, and 1,815 meters (5,954 feet) above sea level. There are many dangerous hairpin turns. The route traverses a volcanic area. Avoid this road, particularly during rainy conditions.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **There are** many mountainous areas. Be alert to symptoms of altitude sickness. Dizziness, lack of coordination, headache, fatigue, shortness of breath and nausea can impair driver judgment and increase road risks.
- **Cabo Verde** is subject to torrential rains, floods, landslides, mudslides, earthquakes, seismic activity, droughts and sand storms.
- **Rainy season** generally occurs from mid-August to mid-October. Hurricanes may develop.
- **Heavy rains** are often followed by floods and landslides.
- **Rockslides** and mudslides occur frequently after rains in mountainous areas.
- **The entire** island of Fogo is an active volcano.
- **Tremors** are an ongoing threat on the islands of Fogo, Brava and Santo Antão, and affect ocean channels separating these islands.
- **Sand storms** (known locally as “bruma seca”) occur from December to February on some islands, especially Boa Vista. Blowing sand may create treacherous road conditions and limit visibility.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation options** include cars, taxis, shared taxi vans (also called “commuter vans”), “Hiaces” (Toyate Hiace vans), buses, minibuses (“Alugueres” or “yasi”), motor scooters, motorized four-wheel “quad” bikes, pick-up truck taxis (“Hiluxes”) and boats.
- **Public transportation** is limited or unavailable, and regarded as unsafe except for city buses in the capital city of Praia.
- **Alugueres** are the main form of transportation, and substitute for bus service on most islands. City buses are limited to a few main cities.
- **Buses**, alugueres and shared taxis follow fixed routes.
- **Alugueres** can be flagged anywhere along their route.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	50 kph (31 mph)
Rural roads	90 kph (55 mph)
Highways	120 kph (74 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

				
Example of street sign	Example of city limit sign	Example of street sign	Example of directional sign	Example of road sign



Transportation, continued

- **Alugueres** and shared taxis frequently exceed safe numbers of passengers.
- **Most** Alugueres operate from morning to early evening. Destinations are written on cards in front windcreens.
- **Alugueres** follow set routes.
- **Alugueres** drivers may refuse to depart until all seats are filled.
- **Official**, licensed taxis are generally regarded as safe and reliable.
- **The color** of registered taxis varies by island.
- **Book taxis** through reputable hotels and avoid sharing taxis with strangers.
- **Many** taxi drivers in cities speak some English.
- **Avoid** unlicensed “clandestine” taxis (called “clans”), many are Toyota Corolla hatchback cars.
- **Pick-up trucks/Hiluxes** offering taxi services are licensed by intermunicipality transport services but may not be properly insured. Drivers freelance, and there is no collective regulatory system.
- **Hilux passengers** sit on make-shift benches in truck beds without seat belts.
- **Some shops** on the islands of Santiago and Santo Antao have pedal bicycles and e-bikes for rent.
- **Cycling** infrastructure is largely undeveloped. There are few dedicated cycling lanes. Bicyclists share narrow roads with motorized vehicles. Drivers may be inattentive and ignore safe road margins for cyclists.
- **Tire punctures** are common on bicycles because of thorny undergrowth, which is often present between cobblestones or on dirt paths.
- **Motor scooters** and quads are available on the islands of Sal and Boavista.
- **Rideshares** are available in some cities, and are usually operated through local taxi companies. Use only

services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.

- **Ferries** operated by multiple companies provide routes connecting islands. Safety standards are below western standards. Boats may not be seaworthy, or equipped with modern navigational equipment or adequate numbers of life-saving equipment. If traveling by boat, bring your own life preserver and do not travel during inclement weather or rough seas.
- **Ferry schedules** are frequently not adhered to.
- **Boat travel** can be dangerous, particularly between the southern islands of Fogo and Brava. Seas are generally rough in these areas, which are located above active seismic areas.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Seat belt** use is mandatory for all vehicle occupants.
- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age.
- **Children under** 12 years, or 150 cm (59 inches) in height may not ride in front seats unless secured in a safety restraint appropriate to size and age.
- **Helmet use** is compulsory for motorcycle drivers and passengers. Helmets must be fastened and meet national standards.
- **Children** under 7 years of age may not be passengers on motorcycles.
- **In the event** of a crash, blood alcohol levels of all drivers are tested.
- **Parking** on a speed bump is prohibited.
- **On city streets**, motorists may park only in the direction of traffic.
- **If stopped** by traffic police, ask for a ticket that can be paid at a central police station.

Praia (Capital)

- » Located at the southern end of Santiago Island. Busiest city in the country.
- » Driving can be challenging. There are few named streets or signs.
- » Transportation options include cars, buses, taxis, shared taxis (called “yasi” or “alugueres”), pick-up trucks (called “Hiluxes”), motorized four-wheeled “quad bikes,” and boats.
- » City buses are generally reliable, clean and in good condition.
- » There are two main bus companies: Moura and Sol Atlantico. Each has its own routes and numbering system.
- » Main bus routes connect Safende, Achada Grande and Vila Nova to Achada Santo Antonio; Calbeceira and Achada Mato to Palmarejo; Pensamento to Terra Branca; and Sao Felipe and Ponta D’Agua to Plateau.
- » Official, registered taxis are beige or cream in color, and have “taxi” signs on roofs or doors.
- » Official taxis are generally metered, but drivers may not activate meter unless directed to do so by passengers.

**Praia, continued**

- » Avoid unlicensed, unofficial “clandestine” taxis (called “clans”), operated by drivers using private vehicles. Many are Toyota Corolla hatchback cars.
- » Shared Aluguers are often overcrowded. Drivers may circulate looking for passengers, and do not begin a route until all seats are filled.
- » Unregulated Hiluxes/pick-up trucks provide taxi services in many areas, including destinations outside of the city.
- » Pedestrians should exercise caution. Many footpaths and sidewalks are made of loose cobblestones.
- » The city is hilly and may be difficult to navigate.
- » Some people travel by bicycle, but there are few bike paths.
- » Bicycle infrastructure is undeveloped. Cyclists share roads with busy traffic or ride on sidewalks among pedestrians.
- » Porto de Praia is the location of ferry services connecting to Fogo and Brava islands. Boats may not be seaworthy or have adequate navigation and life-saving features. If traveling by boat or ferry, bring your own life preserver, and do not travel during inclement weather or rough seas.
- » The city port also serves large passenger ships. Motorized and foot traffic increases when boats are in port. Visiting drivers may be unfamiliar with road conditions and traffic rules.
- » Nelson Mandela International Airport is 3 km (1.8 miles) northeast of city center.
- » Official city taxis can be found in queues outside of the arrivals area. Rates increase after 6 pm.
- » There is a city bus route between the airport and downtown area. Buses run infrequently.
- » Car rental agencies are represented at the airport. Check condition of vehicle carefully, including seat belts and other standard safety features, before agreeing to rent.

Mindelo

- » Located on the island of São Vicente. Second-largest city by population.
- » Transportation options include cars, buses, “Hiaces” (Toyota Hiace vans), taxis, shared “Aluguer” taxis (also called “yasi”), motor scooters, motorized four-wheel “quad” bikes, pick-up truck taxis (“Hiluxes”) and boats.
- » Driving is not recommended. Roads are poorly lit or unlit, and there are few signs.
- » The largest cruise port within the archipelago is located in Mindelo. Foot and motorized traffic increase when ships are in port.
- » Public transportation is limited and regarded as unsafe.
- » Aluguers are used as the main form of transportation. Bus routes are limited.
- » A municipal bus service is operated by Transcor. Minibuses are operated separately by multiple companies.
- » Buses and Aluguers follow fixed routes. Destinations are displayed on cards in front windscreens.
- » Aluguers generally operate from morning to early evening, and may be flagged anywhere along their route.
- » Vehicles used as Aluguers are often overcrowded. Drivers may refuse to depart until all seats are filled.
- » Official, licensed taxis are generally regarded as safe and reliable. Book taxis through reputable hotels, and do not share vehicles with strangers.
- » Do not use unlicensed “clandestine” taxis (called “clans”). Toyota Corolla hatchback cars are usually used for clans.
- » Rideshares are operated through local taxi companies. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Pick-up truck taxis/Hiluxes are licensed but may not be insured. Drivers freelance. There is no collective regulatory system.
- » Hilux passengers sit on make-shift benches in truck beds without seat belts.
- » Cycling infrastructure is underdeveloped. Bicyclists are usually forced to share narrow roads with motorized vehicles. Drivers may be inattentive or ignore safe road margins for cyclists.
- » Bicycle tire punctures are common. Sharp thorns are often found between cobblestones and on dirt paths.



Mindelo, continued

- » Ferries are operated by multiple companies, and provide routes connecting all islands. Ferry schedules are frequently unreliable.
- » Boat travel can be dangerous. Safety practices are below western standards.
- » Vessels may not be seaworthy or equipped with modern navigational equipment or adequate numbers of life-saving equipment. If traveling by boat, bring your own life preserver and do not travel during inclement weather or rough seas.
- » Cesária Évora Airport is located approximately 5 km (3.1 miles) from city center.
- » Taxis provide transport between the airport and destinations throughout the island.
- » Car rental agencies are represented at the airport. Check condition of vehicle carefully, including seat belts and other standard safety features, before signing contract.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Laws** pertaining to persons with mobility, sensory or other challenges may not be enforced.
- **Persons with** limited mobility or sensory challenges may have difficulty getting around. Uneven terrain, cobblestone streets and irregular stone pathways are common.
- **Few buildings** have elevators. Frequent power outages affect the use of existing elevators.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
- **Medical staff** and responders to emergency numbers may not speak English.
- **Emergency numbers:**
 - » Police, ambulance and emergencies: 132
 - » Ambulance on Santiago Island: 130
 - » Fire: 131
- **Responses** to emergency situations are limited beyond major urban areas. Urgent medical care is unavailable in many areas.
- **Ambulances** are not available in many parts of the country, and are regarded as unreliable.
- **Ambulances** are not equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment, and are not staffed by trained paramedics.
- **Injured** or seriously ill persons may wish to take a taxi or private vehicle to the nearest major hospital.
- **Many medications** are in short supply or unavailable.
- **Large public hospitals** offering basic care are located in Praia and Mindelo. Elsewhere, services are extremely limited; particularly on the island of Boavista.
- **Quality of care** and facilities vary in smaller public health centers and private medical clinics. Most public medical clinics lack basic resources and supplies.
- **Cash payment** is generally required by medical providers and health facilities.
- **Travel between** islands is difficult. Inter-island medical evacuation services are limited. There are no operational airports on the islands of Brava and Santo Antão.
- **Visitors should** carry prescription medications in original packaging, along with a written prescription from a doctor. Foreigners have been arrested and detained for carrying unlabeled medications, or medicines that are illegal in Cape Verde. Verify legality of any prescription drugs through the Embassy of the Republic of Cabo Verde before entering the country.
- **Roadside assistance** is not widely available.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police and any emergency services.
 - » Notify car rental agency.
 - » Take photographs if possible, and collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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