

Cape Verde

Country name	Cape Verde ¹
State title	Republic of Cabo Verde ²
Name of citizen	Cape Verdean
Official language	Portuguese (<i>por</i>) ³
Country name in official language	Cabo Verde (<i>por</i>)
State title in official language	República de Cabo Verde (<i>por</i>)
Script	Roman script
Romanization System	Not required
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	CV/CPV
Capital in official language	Praia
Area / Population	4,033km ² / 603,901 (2023 est.) ⁴

Introduction

Cape Verde is an island group in the Atlantic Ocean, the closest island of which lies approximately 600km from the westernmost point of Africa (in Senegal). This point, Cap-Vert, is the derivation for the country name ‘Cabo Verde’, lit. green cape in French and Portuguese respectively.

Cape Verde gained independence from Portugal in 1975, initially envisioning a union with Guinea-Bissau (a plan which was abandoned after a coup in Guinea-Bissau in 1980). The archipelago comprises ten islands, of which nine are inhabited, and eight islets. These lie in two groups: Ilhas de Barlavento (lit. windward islands) and Ilhas de Sotavento (leeward islands), the latter being less dry and supporting higher populations. Approximately half the country’s population lives on Santiago, the location of the capital, Praia.

¹ PCGN feels Cape Verde to be the most commonly used name for the country in British English and consequently recommends the use of this form for informal HMG purposes.

² The country itself prefers the use of Cabo Verde (i.e. the Portuguese-language form) in English language contexts, so this is the form used by the UN in English as the country name. PCGN’s approach for formal state titles is to use the form as used by the country itself and translated where appropriate, so in this case translating only ‘republic’.

³ ISO 639 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.

⁴ [Cabo Verde - The World Factbook \(cia.gov\)](https://www.cia.gov/cia_wfb/countries/af/cabo_verde.html)

Geographical names policy

For HMG use, geographical names should be taken from official sources, which will be written in Roman script in a Portuguese style. All diacritical marks, apostrophes and hyphens should be retained. It is likely that official sources will be available in Portuguese only, but if official information includes Cape Verdean Creole names (see more in *Languages*, below), these may also be used. Part of the Cape Verdean toponymic authorities' task is to standardise Creole geographical names, so it is probable that over time official sources will start to include more Creole names.

Official Cape Verde mapping should be the primary source of names and online government sources may also be used. Cape Verde's *Instituto Nacional de Gestão do Território* maintains the [Infra-estrutura de Dados Espaciais de Cabo Verde](#) platform, which includes geo-referenced official data for the country. This institute also has a National Commission of Toponymy, established in 2012, which functions as a government advisory body. National toponomy is available on this platform: [Toponímia Nacional \(arcgis.com\)](#).

The US Board on Geographic Names (BGN) [Geographic Names Server](#) can also be used as a source for names in Cape Verde. Additionally, the [Africa Geoportal](#) may be used as a helpful source of geospatial data and names⁵.

Languages

Though Portuguese is the only official language, Cape Verdean Creole (*kea*), or *kabuverdianu* in Creole (*por*: Crioulo), is a 'recognised national language' and is the mother tongue of almost all Cape Verdeans. It has a standardised alphabet *Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita da Língua Cabo-verdiana* which prescribes the writing of each sound (this does not equate to standardised spelling) although this is used with some variation and there are dialectal differences.

Inventory of Characters (and their Unicode encodings)⁶

Portuguese contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
À	00C0	à	00E0
Á	00C1	á	00E1
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ã	00C3	ã	00E3
Ҫ	00C7	ҫ	00E7
É	00C9	é	00E9

⁵ This is a source collated from multiple sources, including Esri, organisations working in Africa and crowdsourced information. It should be used as a supplementary source.

⁶ See www.unicode.org .

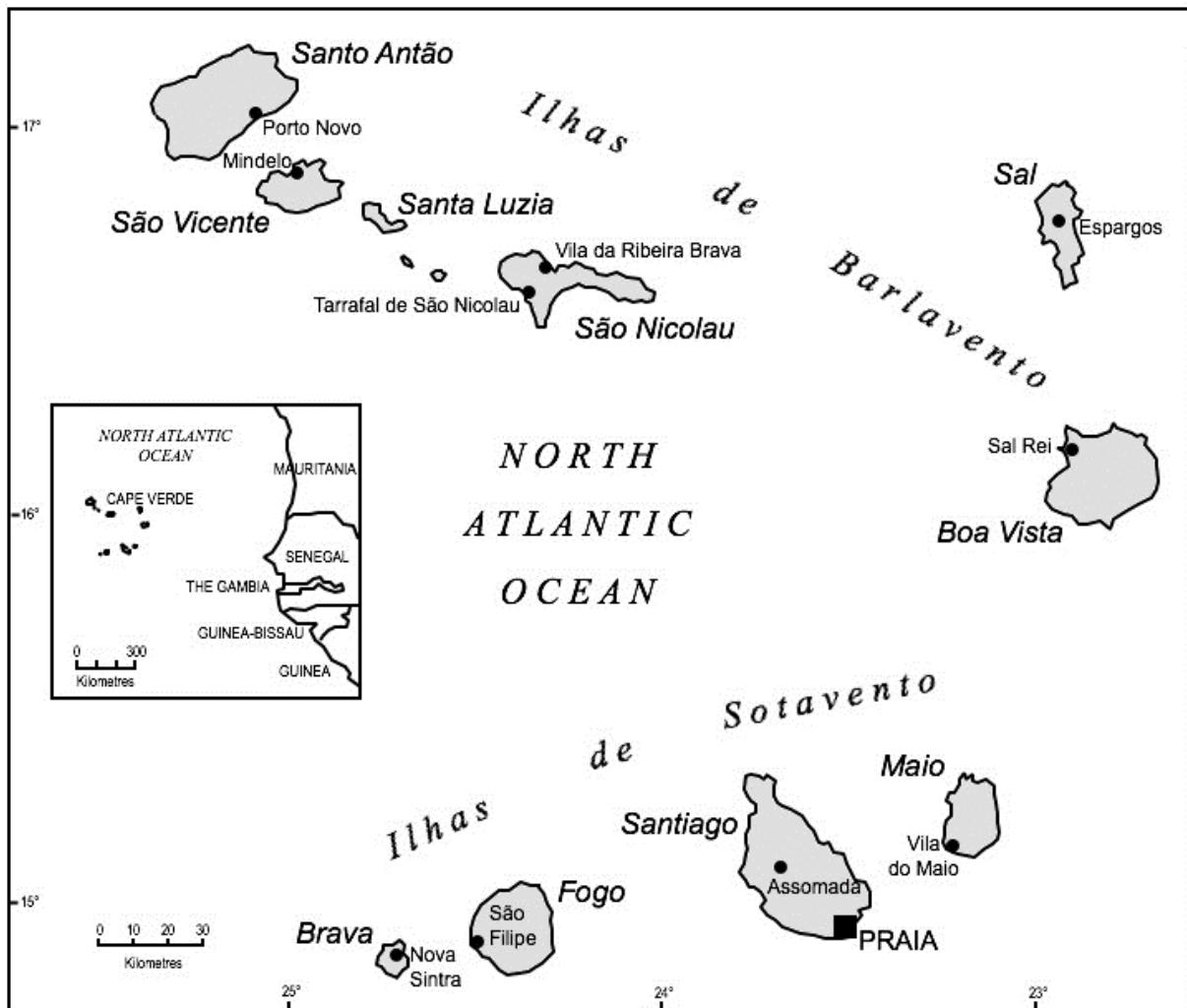
Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Í	00CD	í	00ED
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Õ	00D5	õ	00F5
Ú	00DA	ú	00FA

Cape Verdean Creole contains the following letter-diacritic combinations in addition to the unmodified letters of the basic Roman script:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Á	00C1	á	00E1
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Í	00CD	í	00ED
Ñ*	004E+0308	ñ*	006E+0308
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Ú	00DA	ú	00FA

*There is no single Unicode code point for this character (which represents a velar nasal [ŋ]).

Map of Cape Verde



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

Cape Verde is divided into 22 municipalities (*concelho*) at the first-order administrative level.⁷

Concelho	ISO 3166-2 code	Administrative centre ⁸	Location of administrative centre
Brava	CV-BR	Nova Sintra	14°52'00"N 24°42'00"W
Boa Vista	CV-BV	Sal Rei	16°05'00"N 22°50'00"W
Santa Catarina	CV-CA	Assomada	15°06'00"N 23°42'00"W
Santa Catarina do Fogo	CV-CF	Cova Figueira	14°54'00"N 24°20'00"W
Santa Cruz	CV-CR	Pedra Badejo	15°06'00"N 23°34'00"W
Maio	CV-MA	Vila do Maio (also seen as Porto Inglês)	15°13'00"N 23°10'00"W
Mosteiros	CV-MO	Mosteiros (also seen as Igreja)	15°00'00"N 24°21'00"W
Paul	CV-PA	Pombas	17°07'00"N 25°01'00"W
Porto Novo	CV-PN	Porto Novo	17°01'00"N 25°12'00"W
Praia	CV-PR	Praia	14°57'00"N 23°31'00"W
Ribeira Brava	CV-RB	Ribeira Brava	16°37'00"N 24°12'00"W
Ribeira Grande	CV-RG	Ponta do Sol	17°08'00"N 25°07'00"W
Ribeira Grande de Santiago	CV-RS	Cidade Velha (also seen as Santiago de Cabo Verde)	14°59'00"N 23°39'00"W
São Domingos	CV-SD	São Domingos (also seen as Várzea da Igreja)	15°01'00"N 23°32'00"W
São Filipe	CV-SF	São Filipe	14°56'00"N 24°26'00"W
Sal	CV-SL	Espargos	16°45'00"N 22°55'00"W
São Miguel	CV-SM	Calheta de São Miguel	15°12'00"N 23°39'00"W
São Lourenço dos Órgãos	CV-SO	João Teves	15°04'00"N 23°36'00"W
São Salvador do Mundo	CV-SS	Picos (also seen as Achada Igreja)	15°05'00"N 23°38'00"W
São Vicente	CV-SV	Mindelo	16°50'00"N 25°00'00"W
Tarrafal	CV-TA	Tarrafal	15°16'00"N 23°43'00"W
Tarrafal de São Nicolau	CV-TS	Tarrafal de São Nicolau	16°36'00"N 24°21'00"W

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name	Location	Feature Type
Pico do Fogo	14°57'00"N 24°20'30"W	volcano on Fogo island [2,829 m]
Tope de Coroa	17°01'57"N 25°17'45"W	mountain

⁷ Some of the names are similar (e.g. Ribeira Grande and another one called Ribeira Grande de Santiago), so care should be taken to include the full names in order to distinguish them.

⁸ Where alternatives are shown, either the first name alone or both names can be shown.

Ilhas de Barlavento

<i>Island name</i>	<i>Location</i>
Boa Vista	16°06'00"N 22°48'00"W
Sal	16°43'00"N 22°56'00"W
Santa Luzia (uninhabited)	16°45'41"N 24°44'38"W
Santo Antão	17°04'12"N 25°10'16"W
São Nicolau	16°36'54"N 24°16'16"W
São Vicente	16°51'00"N 24°58'00"W

Ilhas de Sotavento

<i>Island name</i>	<i>Location</i>
Brava	14°52'00"N 24°42'00"W
Fogo	14°57'00"N 24°20'33"W
Maio	15°13'00"N 23°10'00"W
Santiago (Santiagu in Cape Verdean Creole)	15°04'00"N 23°38'00"W

Useful references

- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13148486>
- Cape Verde Statistical Yearbook, 2020: <https://ine.cv/publicacoes/anuario-estatistico-de-cabo-verde-2020/>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cabo-verde/>
- Ethnologue: www.ethnologue.com (for information on languages)
- FCDO Geographical Names Index (GNI):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geographical-names-and-information>
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cape-verde>
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP) : <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#home>
- Omniglot: www.omniglot.com (for information on languages and scripts)
- PCGN Country Names list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names>
- Unicode: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: [GNS Search & Download WebApp \(nga.mil\)](https://geonames.nga.mil/resource/)

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