



Travel Guide

São Tomé and Príncipe

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Introduction and overview

Disclaimer

Travel guide disclaimer

This document has been carefully prepared to give you the most accurate information available at the time of writing. While we do our best to keep everything up to date, details may change, and this document should not be considered a binding part of your contract with LevarTravel.

Important note: For the most reliable information, we recommend printing a final version of this document a few days before your departure, in case there have been updates that affect your travel plans.

Itinerary disclaimer

Our itineraries are carefully planned, but travel often comes with an element of unpredictability. While we aim to follow the route described, a degree of flexibility is built in, and adjustments may be



necessary, or even desirable, along the way. We review and refine our itineraries throughout the year, taking into account traveller feedback, local conditions, and ongoing local research. As a result, the details you receive at the time of booking may differ slightly from the final version before departure.

Because of weather, transport schedules, public holidays, political events, or other unforeseen factors, further changes may occur during your journey. Your group leader will keep you updated and has the authority to modify or cancel parts of the itinerary if safety or local circumstances require it.

Please keep in mind that this Travel Guide document serves as a guide to the overall experience rather than a guarantee of specific stops, wildlife sightings, or activities. In some cases, such as expedition travel, visits to research stations or restricted areas are subject to final approval by local authorities. Any travel times provided are approximate and may vary depending on conditions.

Ultimately, our commitment is always to enhancing your experience and to give you the most rewarding, safe, and memorable travel experience possible.

Optional activities and museums' opening times disclaimer

If you'd like to explore popular attractions not included in this trip itinerary, we strongly recommend booking tickets in advance, especially during the peak season. In some cases, your group leader may be able to assist with ticket arrangements on Day 1, but availability at such short notice is not guaranteed.

Group leader description

All our trips are accompanied by one of our experienced group leaders, whose role is to manage the group and ensure your trip runs smoothly. Their goal is to take the hassle out of travel so you can focus on enjoying your experience.

Group leaders bring a broad knowledge of São Tomé and Príncipe, including the historical, cultural, religious, and social aspects of each destination. They can offer suggestions for activities, recommend excellent local restaurants, and introduce you to our trusted local contacts.



In addition, we often include certified local city guides where specialised expertise enhances the experience, giving you the best of both worlds: the support and insight of your group leader combined with in-depth local knowledge.

Feedback

We'd love to hear about your adventure! Your feedback helps us improve and create even better experiences for future travellers. Around 24 hours after your trip ends, you'll receive an email with a short tour evaluation. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts, and know that we read every response with care.

Travel guide essentials

Passport and visa requirements

While we strive to keep this information as current as possible, rules about entry requirements can change unexpectedly. The details provided here are for guidance only, and you must verify your own visa obligation.

For most cases, you'll need a valid passport with a minimum of 6 months' validity. To prepare everything for your trip, we'll need your passport information, so please ensure that the details in your booking match your passport exactly and remember to check the expiry date.

Citizens from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and other non-Schengen European countries require a visa to enter São Tomé and Príncipe. The visa allows for a stay of up to 30 days and can be obtained in advance or upon arrival at the airport.

Nationals from other Schengen Area countries do not require a visa for stays of less than 15 days in São Tomé and Príncipe. This exemption provides a great opportunity for short visits to experience the island's breathtaking landscapes and rich culture.



Medical and health information

The most relevant medical risks on this trip include mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue, Zika, and Chikungunya. The risk of Malaria is significant. Use effective mosquito repellent (with DEET, icaridin, or equivalent), wear light-colored, long-sleeved clothing at the end of the day, and sleep under an insecticide-treated mosquito net whenever possible. Stay well hydrated by drinking water regularly, and always opt for bottled (sealed) or purified water. Finally, pay special attention to your diet: prioritise meals at recommended establishments and avoid raw foods or foods of dubious origin to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal problems.

To fully participate in the trip, all travellers must be in good physical health. For the safety and well-being of yourself and others, please do not travel if you are unwell before departure. Instead, contact us to discuss alternative arrangements. Please note that, in the reasonable opinion of our group leader, if a traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without posing undue risk to themselves or others, we reserve the right to exclude them from all or part of the trip without refund.

It is your responsibility to consult a travel doctor well before departure to obtain up-to-date medical advice and any required inoculations or vaccinations. Even if no mandatory health requirements apply, we strongly recommend seeking medical guidance before travel.

You should carry a personal first aid kit, hand sanitisers or antibacterial wipes, and any prescribed medications in their original packaging, as these may not be easily available while travelling. Please also check your government's foreign travel advice regarding any restrictions on carrying medication. Be aware that some parts of this journey take place in remote areas, where access to medical facilities may be limited. For legal reasons, our group leaders are not permitted to administer any form of medication, including common painkillers or antibiotics.



Accommodation

General accommodation information

The accommodation listed in the day-to-day itinerary serves as a guideline and may be subject to change. Occasionally, alternative arrangements may be necessary if our preferred properties are fully booked. In such cases, we ensure that any substitute accommodation meets a comparable standard.

We kindly request that our accommodations have rooms ready upon our arrival, particularly if we reach the property before the standard check-in time. However, this may not always be possible. On these occasions, luggage storage will be provided so you can begin exploring your destination.

Solo travellers

On our group trips, accommodation is arranged on a twin-share basis. Solo travellers are paired with another traveller of the same gender, as indicated on their passport, ensuring a comfortable and compatible stay.

LGBTQIA+ travellers

We are committed to fostering a safe and welcoming environment for all travellers. If your gender identity does not match the information on your passport, please reach out to us so we can discuss suitable rooming arrangements that meet your needs.

Single supplement

We offer an optional single supplement on most trips for travellers who prefer the privacy of their own room during the tour. If you choose the Single Supplement option, you will be provided with a single room for all overnight stays on the trip. However, please keep in mind that the single supplement is subject to availability. Pre-trip and post-trip accommodation booked through us, however, is always arranged on a single-room basis.

Please note that single rooms in São Tomé and Príncipe hotels are often smaller and may differ in layout or amenities compared to standard double-occupancy rooms.



Hotels in São Tomé and Príncipe

In São Tomé and Príncipe, hotel rooms often feature two single beds that can be joined or separated, rather than a traditional double bed. Rooms may be smaller than what you might be used to in the U.S. or Australia, and not all accommodations offer air-conditioning. Kettles and fridges are also not commonly provided. Please note that São Tomé and Príncipe is a developing country, and as such, the infrastructure is not as reliable as you would see at home. Despite these differences, you can expect clean, safe, and comfortable accommodations in excellent central locations, giving you plenty of time to explore the sights and make the most of your trip.

Transport

In this trip, the transportation is as follows:

- Private 4x4 jeep, with air-conditioning and a licensed driver

Food and drinks

Meals included

Food is an essential part of any travel experience, and we recognise the importance of starting your day right. Wherever possible, we include breakfast, which may typically consist of items like toast, coffee, and tea, though offerings can vary depending on the city.

In this trip, the included meals are as follows:

- 7 breakfasts
- 3 dinners

Other meals

Travelling with us gives you the opportunity to experience the incredible variety of food the world has to offer. To provide maximum flexibility in deciding where, what, and with whom to eat, most meals are not included in the trip price. This approach also allows for greater control over your budget, though in many destinations, eating out is affordable.



While there is no obligation to dine together, our groups often enjoy meals as a group, giving you the chance to sample a wider range of dishes and share the experience with fellow travellers. Your group leader will be on hand to recommend their favourite local restaurants throughout the trip.

Vegetarians, food allergies, and dietary restrictions

Vegetarians can be accommodated, though options may be limited, especially in traditional or rural restaurants, where the menu might offer only one vegetarian choice, when available.

If you have any special dietary requirements or food allergies, please inform us before the trip so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Managing money

Budget

Every traveller's spending habits are different, so the amount of money you'll need on the trip can vary. Consider your personal preferences when budgeting for things like optional meals, drinks, shopping, tipping, optional activities, and laundry. Be sure to review the itinerary and inclusions carefully so you know what is already covered in the trip price and what expenses you may need to cover while travelling.

Currency and payments

In São Tomé and Príncipe, the local currency is the Dobra (STD). You can obtain cash before your trip through banks or currency exchange offices. ATMs are available in the capital, São Tomé, though there is no guarantee that every credit or debit card will work, so it's wise to check with your bank in advance. Mastercard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards, while American Express is often not accepted in many businesses. Also, keep in mind that using a credit card may incur additional fees.

It's best not to rely solely on credit or debit cards. A combination of cash and cards is recommended. Carrying slightly more than you expect to need can help ensure a smooth, stress-free trip without constantly worrying about funds.



Tipping

Tipping is a thoughtful way to acknowledge excellent service while travelling. Although it may not be customary in your home country, it is greatly appreciated by the people who assist you throughout your trip.

In São Tomé and Príncipe tipping is generally modest. A typical guideline is 5–10% of the restaurant bill for wait staff, and small amounts (€1–2) for other service providers.

Recommendations for everyday service range from €3-5 per day, depending on the quality and duration of service. You have flexibility in how you tip: individually, with your travelling companions, or via your group leader, who may collect contributions and distribute them as a group. If you are dissatisfied with any service, let your group leader know so tips can be adjusted accordingly.

Tipping your group leader is also appreciated if you feel they have provided outstanding service. A general guideline is €5–7 per traveller per day, though the amount is entirely personal and can reflect your experience and the leader's involvement.

Emergency fund

While we plan carefully, some situations, such as severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest, or transport disruptions, are beyond our control and may require last-minute changes to the itinerary. In these extremely rare cases, any additional costs are the traveller's responsibility. We recommend having access to at least USD \$200 (or local currency equivalent) as an emergency fund to cover unforeseen expenses. Please note that we are not responsible for incidental costs, including visas, vaccinations, or non-refundable flights, resulting from itinerary changes.

Packing

Luggage

Most travellers find that a backpack or a small- to medium-sized wheeled suitcase works best, as these fit comfortably within the packing space of our private vehicles. Whatever you choose, we recommend packing as lightly as possible. Make sure you can carry and lift your own luggage, and comfortably walk with it for short distances or up and down stairs. While assistance is usually



available, there may be occasions when you'll need to manage your own bag. A lockable suitcase or a small padlock is also a smart addition for extra security.

For daily excursions, bring a backpack to carry essentials such as water, a camera, and a light jacket. Depending on your activities, you may also need items like a swimsuit, hiking shoes, or a waterproof pouch for your phone.

Packing list

What you pack will depend on your travel style, season, and expected weather conditions. Here we provide you with a list to help you get started.

Documents:

- Flight info (printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Passport and visas (with photocopies)
- Insurance info (with photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (with photocopies)
- Vaccination certificates (with photocopies)

Essentials:

- Shirts/t-shirts
- Long pants/jeans
- Footwear
- Sleepwear
- Windproof rain jacket
- Hat and sunglasses
- Small travel towel
- Toiletries (shampoo, bodywash, soap, toothpaste, etc.)
- Camera (with extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Backpack (used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Earplugs and eye mask (if needed)
- First-aid kit



- Locks for bags
- Outlet adapter (if needed)
- Personal entertainment (reading and writing materials, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

Laundry

Some of our hotels provide laundry services for an additional fee, and your group leader can also point you toward the nearest laundromat when needed. At times, you may prefer (or need) to wash your own clothes, so we recommend packing a small amount of biodegradable, eco-friendly soap.

Weather, climate, and seasonal information**Dry season (June to September)**

During the dry season, locally known as *gravana*, the weather is generally sunny, with lower humidity and cooler temperatures averaging between 22°C and 28°C (72°F–82°F). This is considered one of the best times to visit São Tomé and Príncipe, as rainfall is minimal and the sea is usually calm. However, the sun can still be strong, so remember to use proper sun protection, stay hydrated, and bring light, breathable clothing.

Short rainy season (October to November)

The short rainy season brings occasional showers, often brief and refreshing, interspersed with sunshine. The landscape becomes even more lush and vibrant, and it's a great time for travellers who prefer fewer visitors and a more tranquil experience. While rain can be unpredictable, it rarely disrupts travel for long. A light rain jacket and waterproof footwear are useful additions to your packing list.



Long rainy season (February to May)

From February to May, São Tomé and Príncipe experiences its main rainy season, with more frequent and heavier downpours, especially in the interior and southern parts of the islands. Temperatures remain warm, generally between 24°C and 30°C (75°F–86°F), but humidity is higher. Roads in rural areas can become muddy or difficult to navigate, so some flexibility in your travel plans is advisable.

Year-round climate

São Tomé and Príncipe enjoys a warm, tropical climate all year round, with little variation in temperature. Even during the rainiest months, there are still plenty of sunny intervals. It's wise to check the forecast before travelling, and always pack light, comfortable clothing, a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and a waterproof layer.

Electricity

São Tomé and Príncipe use 220V, 50Hz and both type C and type F power sockets. Remember to bring adapters, in case you need them.

Languages

Portuguese is the official language of São Tomé and Príncipe and is spoken throughout the country. The local variety, often referred to as São Tomense Portuguese, includes unique expressions and influences from local languages. In addition to Portuguese, several Creole languages are spoken, including Forro, Angolar, and Lunguie, which reflect the islands' rich cultural and historical heritage. Many people, especially in the capital São Tomé, have some knowledge of English or French, as these languages are increasingly taught in schools and used in tourism and business.

Safety and security

Travel advisories

Before you travel, we strongly recommend checking your government's official foreign travel advisory for the most up-to-date information on your destination. Many governments provide regularly updated guidance on safety, health, and other important considerations for international travel. It's also essential to ensure your travel insurance covers all destinations and planned activities. For



added peace of mind, save the emergency contact number for your government's consulate or embassy in São Tomé and Príncipe.

Personal safety

When travelling, it's important to take precautions to keep yourself and your belongings safe. Always carry your passport, phone, credit cards, and cash securely, ideally in a money belt or neck wallet, and avoid bringing high-value items such as jewellery, which you won't need on your trip. Many hotels provide safety deposit boxes, which are the best option for storing valuables, and we recommend using locks on your luggage.

Your group leader is there to help ensure your safety and has the authority to adjust or even cancel parts of the itinerary if necessary. While they will accompany you on all included activities, you will also have free time to explore independently. During this time, please use good judgment when selecting optional activities, as they are not part of the planned itinerary and we cannot guarantee their safety standards.

LGBTQIA+ safety

At LevarTravel, the safety and well-being of every traveller is our top priority, including those who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. We understand that you may have specific concerns regarding safety and security while travelling, and we encourage you to consult reliable resources such as [Equaldex](https://www.equaldex.com/) (<https://www.equaldex.com/>) and your government's official travel advice for LGBTQIA+ travellers.

Community guidelines

Code of conduct

At LevarTravel, we have a zero-tolerance policy toward violence, harassment, whether physical, verbal, or sexual, or any form of disrespect toward fellow travellers, our staff, or local communities.

The possession or use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on all trips. Such actions not only violate local laws but also endanger the safety and well-being of the entire group. Similarly, exploiting individuals in the sex trade is completely incompatible with our philosophy of respectful and



responsible travel. Group leaders have the authority to remove any traveller found in possession of drugs or engaging with paid sex workers.

Any behaviour that disrupts the itinerary, breaks local laws, or violates these guidelines may result in refusal of booking or removal from the trip. Decisions made by your group leader are final and are intended to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants. If you have any concerns during your travels, please speak to your group leader immediately.

Travelling with a group

Travelling on a group trip offers the opportunity to share unique experiences, though it may also come with occasional challenges. Your fellow travellers will likely come from diverse backgrounds and a range of age groups, each with their own preferences and needs. We ask that you approach the trip with patience and understanding, as a little consideration can go a long way in creating a positive experience for everyone.

At the same time, you have responsibilities to the group. If you are asked to be in a certain place at a specific time, please make every effort to be punctual so as not to delay the group. Our experience shows that the most enjoyable trips are those where group dynamics flow smoothly, and this often requires just a small effort from each participant.

For privacy reasons, we cannot share personal contact details or information about fellow travellers before departure.

