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## Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

## Currency

The official unit of currency is the dobra, consisting of 100 centavos.

## Government

## General

The two islands of Sao Tome and Principe are located in the Gulf of Guinea. They lie 275 miles and 125 miles, respectively, off the N coast of Gabon and combine to form one of Africa's smallest countries. These islands are part of an extinct volcanic mountain range, which also includes the island province of Equatorial Guinea, located to the N, and the towering mass of Mount Cameroon, rising on the W coast of continental Africa. The country also includes the islets of Pedras Tinhosas, lying close off Principe, and Ilheu Gago, lying close off Sao Tome.

Sao Tome, the larger and most mountainous island, is 30 miles long and 20 miles wide. It is oval-shaped, with elevations of up to 2,024m. Principe is 10 miles long and 4 miles wide. Both islands have prominent needle-shaped peaks and are covered by luxuriant vegetation and dense forests.

The climate is tropical, being very hot and humid, but is somewhat modified in the higher elevations. The rainy season normally occurs from October to May.



**Flag of Sao Tome and Principe**

Sao Tome and Principe gained independence from Portugal in 1975. In 1990, a referendum abolished the monopoly of the Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome e Principe (MLSTP).

The country is governed by an elected President, who is the head of state and may serve two 5-year terms. The President appoints a Council of Ministers. The legislature is composed

of a 55-member elected National Assembly; members of the National Assembly serve 5-year terms.

The country consists of the province of Sao Tome and the province of Principe. Since 1995, Principe has had internal self-rule, with a 5-member regional government and an elected assembly.

The legal system is based on Portuguese law and customary law.

The capital is Sao Tome.

## Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	January 1
Good Friday	Varies
Labor Day	May 1
President's Birthday	June 5
Armed Forces Day	August 3
Constitution Day	August 15
Independence Day	October 12
Immaculate Conception	December 8
Christmas Day	December 25

## Industries

The main industries are timber, livestock raising, palm oil processing, soap production, textiles, and fishing.

Crops include coconuts, cocoa, coffee, copra, cassava, yams, and bananas. After independence all large landholdings were nationalized into 15 state farms. These were partially privatized in 1985 by granting management contracts to foreign companies.

## Languages

The official language is Portuguese. Lungwa, a Portuguese creole, and Fang, a Bantu dialect, are also spoken.

## Time Zone

The Time Zone description is ZULU. Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

### World Time Zone Chart

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

## U.S. Embassy

There is no U.S. Embassy; however, the Ambassador to Gabon is accredited to the country on a nonresident basis and makes periodic visits to the islands.

### U. S. Embassy Gabon Home Page

<http://usembassy.state.gov/libreville>