



Sao Tome and Principe



Background Portugal discovered and colonized the uninhabited São Tomé and Príncipe islands in the late 15th century, setting up a sugar-based economy that gave way to coffee and cocoa in the 19th century -- all grown with African 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 among the various political parties precipitated repeated changes in leadership and failed, non-violent coup attempts in 1995, 1998, 2003, and 2009. In 2012, three opposition parties combined in a no-confidence vote to bring down the majority government of former Prime Minister Patrice TROVOADA, but legislative elections returned him to the office two years later. President Evaristo CARVALHO, of the same political party as TROVOADA, was elected in 2016, marking a rare instance in which the same party held the positions of president and prime minister. TROVOADA resigned in 2018 and was replaced by Jorge BOM JESUS. Carlos Vila NOVA was elected president in 2021. TROVOADA began his fourth stint as prime minister in 2022, after his party's victory in legislative elections.

Capital name: São Tomé

Government type semi-presidential republic

Area
total : 964 sq km
land: 964 sq km
water: 0 sq km

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

Natural resources fish, hydropower

Population total: 223,561 (2024 est.)

Population growth rate 1.42% (2024 est.)

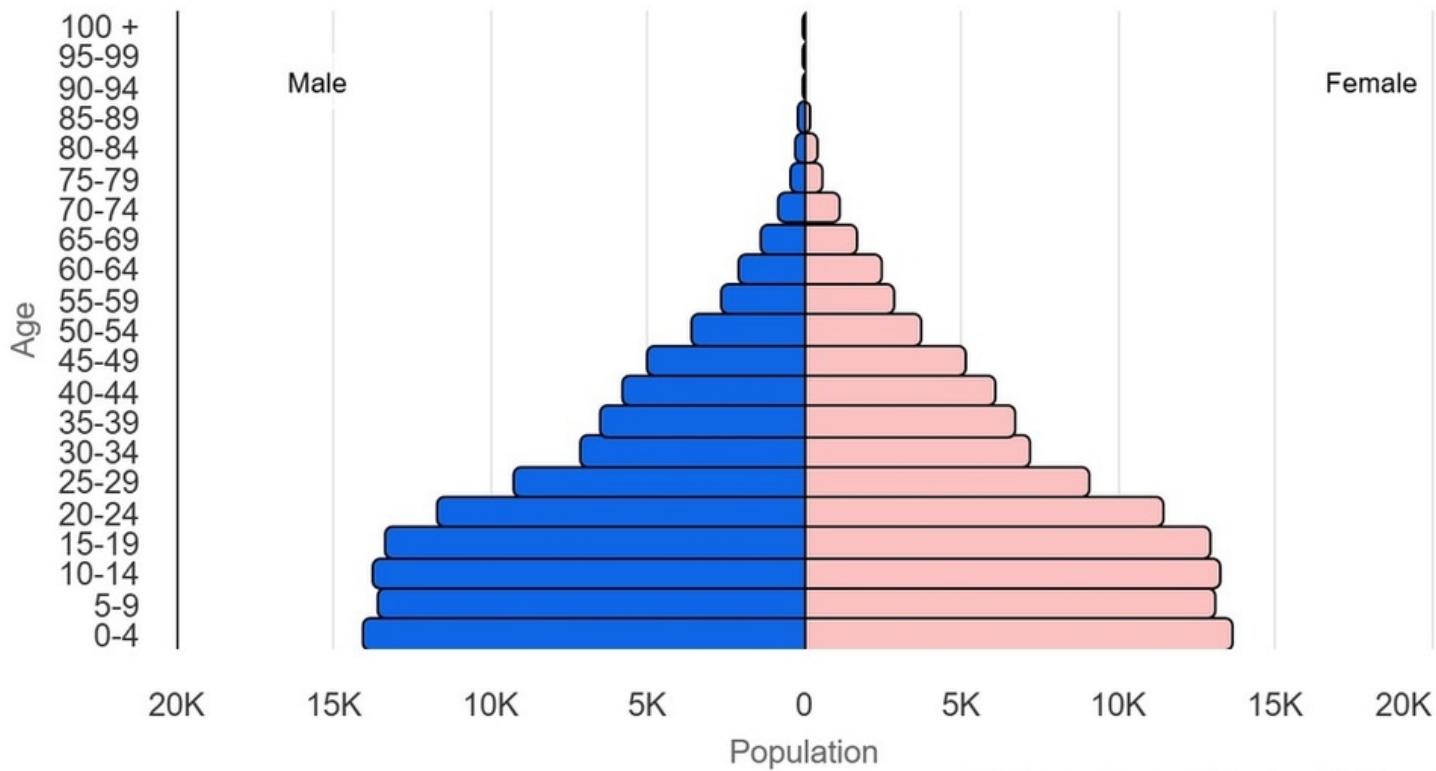
Ethnic groups Mestico, Angolares (descendants of Angolan slaves), Forros (descendants of freed slaves), Servicais (contract laborers from Angola, Mozambique, and Cabo Verde), Tongas (children of servicais born on the islands), Europeans (primarily Portuguese), Asians (mostly Chinese)

Religions Catholic 55.7%, Adventist 4.1%, Assembly of God 3.4%, New Apostolic 2.9%, Mana 2.3%, Universal Kingdom of God 2%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, other 6.2%, none 21.2%, unspecified 1% (2012 est.)

Languages Portuguese 98.4% (official), Forro 36.2%, Cabo Verdian 8.5%, French 6.8%, Angolar 6.6%, English 4.9%, Lunguie 1%, other (including sign language) 2.4%; other Portuguese-based Creoles are also spoken (2012 est.)

Executive branch	chief of state: President Carlos Manuel VILA NOVA (since 2 October 2021) head of government: Prime Minister Américo d'Oliveira DOS RAMOS (since 12 January 2025)
Legislative branch	legislature name: National Assembly (Assembleia Nacional)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant)
Diplomatic representation from the US	embassy: the US does not have an embassy in Sao Tome and Principe; the US Ambassador to Angola is accredited to Sao Tome and Principe
Economic overview	lower middle-income Central African island economy; falling cocoa production due to drought and mismanagement; joint oil venture with Nigeria; government owns 90% of land; high debt, partly from fuel subsidies; tourism gutted by COVID-19
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$1.291 billion (2024 est.) \$1.279 billion (2023 est.) \$1.275 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$5,500 (2024 est.) \$5,500 (2023 est.) \$5,600 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$96.977 million (2022 est.) \$75.256 million (2021 est.) \$49.337 million (2020 est.)
Exports - partners	Pakistan 54%, Germany 11%, Netherlands 7%, France 5%, UAE 3% (2023)
Exports - commodities	crude petroleum, cocoa beans, vehicle parts/accessories, palm oil, aircraft parts (2023)
Imports	\$219.322 million (2022 est.) \$201.145 million (2021 est.) \$160.097 million (2020 est.)
Imports - partners	Portugal 35%, Angola 13%, Gabon 11%, Japan 8%, China 6% (2023)
Imports - commodities	ships, refined petroleum, rice, electric generating sets, cars (2023)

Population Pyramid

Sao Tome and Principe (2024)

U.S. Census Bureau, International Database