

São Tomé and Príncipe

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Location and area

São Tomé and Príncipe is an island republic, located about 200 km off the western coast of Africa, in the Gulf of Guinea. The archipelago comprises the islands of São Tomé, Príncipe, and several small islets, including Pedras Tinhosas and Rolas. The total area of the republic is 1,001 km², of which the island of São Tomé makes up almost 90 per cent. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Topography

The islands are volcanic in origin, with mountainous interiors and fertile soils. The highest point is Tomé Peak (2,024 m) on São Tomé. Lowlands flank the northeastern and southwestern coasts of the islands. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Climate

The climate is tropical with virtually no seasonal temperature variations; the main modifications reflect the differences in altitude. The average annual temperature is 26° C. The average annual rainfall varies greatly with elevation but is plentiful in most locations; a dry season lasts from June to October. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

The economy of São Tomé and Príncipe is based on the plantation production of coconuts, copra, bananas, and palm oil for export. Forests cover about 29 per cent of the land area. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols in nor gley soils exist in São Tomé and Príncipe.