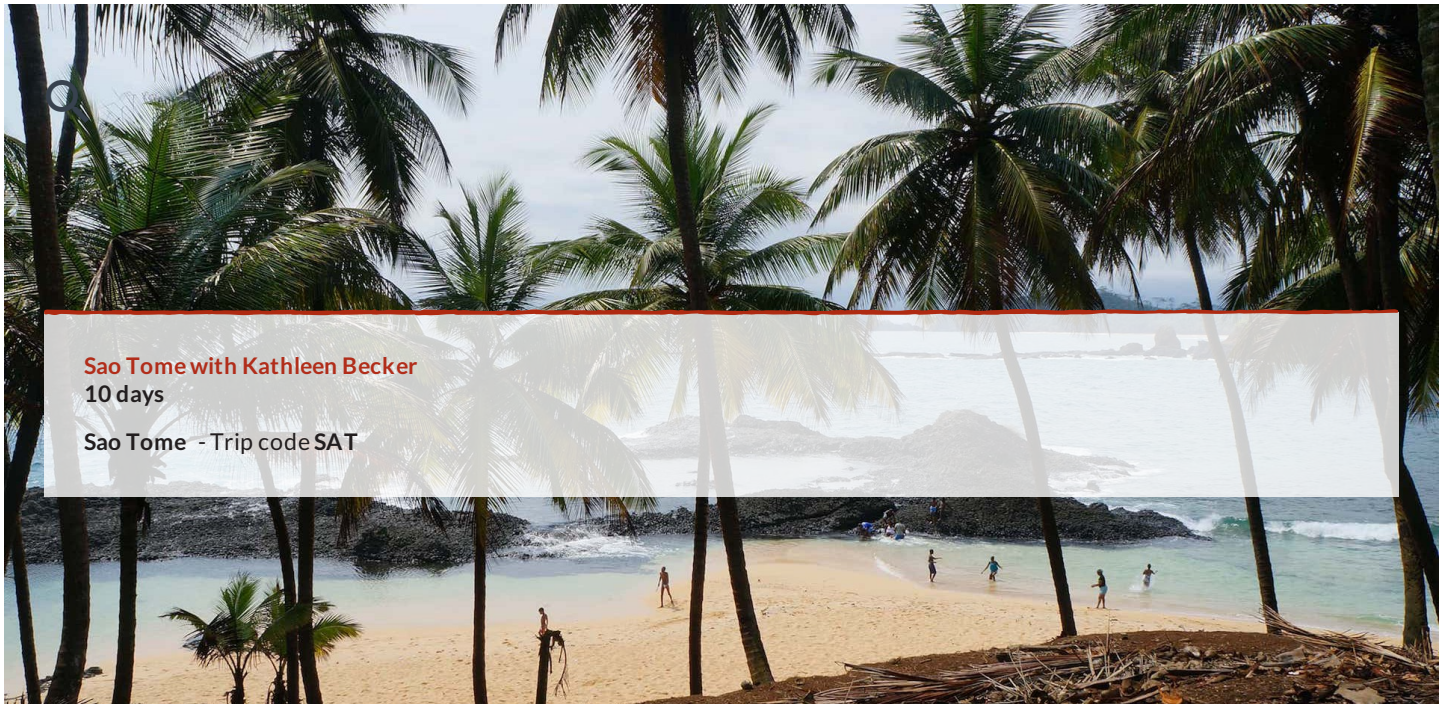


EXPLORE!



Sao Tome with Kathleen Becker

10 days

Sao Tome - Trip code SAT

Sao Tome with Kathleen Becker

This trip will be led by Kathleen Becker, author of the Bradt Travel Guide for Sao Tome and Principe. Kathleen will take us into the heart of the country to provide a unique insight into this small and enchanting destination. Described in the Bradt Travel Guide as a 'largely undiscovered, uniquely rewarding and safe destination with an exciting blend of African, Portuguese and Caribbean cultures', our discovery of this island will include visiting secluded beaches, swimming in its pristine waters and hiking in its rainforest while on the lookout for an abundant array of wildlife, specifically birds and plants. A boat trip along the wild west coast of the island will lead to hidden waterfalls and rock formations while there are opportunities to visit colonial plantation houses and sample some of the best coffee and chocolate in the world. Combine this with gaining an insight into its turbulent history and the only thing left to do will be to get into the laid-back Santomean way of life and enjoy this paradise island

Trip highlights

- ★ **Kathleen Becker** - this trip is lead by Sao Tome enthusiast and author of the Bradt guide
- ★ **Rainforest** - walk in the rainforest in search of hidden waterfalls and endemic birds
- ★ **Food** - try Santomean food, including some of the best chocolate in the world; have a drink with the chilled out locals
- ★ **Beaches** - swim from, and relax on empty beaches
- ★ **Abandoned plantation buildings** - explore relics of the colonial past

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**8 - 12**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Sao Tome

The trip starts in the town of Sao Tome, upon arrival we will be transferred to our hotel in the centre of town, our base for the next two nights.



Accommodation: Residencial Avenida (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Explore the colonial heritage and sights of Sao Tome town

Today we explore the sights and sounds of the town of Sao Tome. Originally established in 1493, the town gained prominence off the back of sugarcane and the slave trade; it was over the next 50 years that work started on the cathedral and the Fort of Saint Sebastian, the first sight we will visit on the island. The fort houses the National Museum, detailing the history of Sao Tome and the legacy of labour-intensive crops: cocoa and coffee predominately feature too, a reminder of the key part both have played in the story of this beautiful island. We will walk along the seafront to Independence Square, enjoying the hustle and bustle of the town, filled with colourful buildings, street vendors selling jackfruit, and motorbikes buzzing around. After visiting the Mercado and our lunch on a peaceful terrace restaurant overlooking the bay, the afternoon is free for you to rest and visit Claudio Corrallo chocolate factory (reputedly home to the best chocolate in the world).



Accommodation: Residencial Avenida (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 3 - Journey down the east coast stopping at fishing villages and beaches

Today we'll take the ocean road, driving through small fishing villages and past beautiful beaches, including a few swimming stops, to Roça \c1gua Izé, a beautiful old plantation where cocoa production first started. Not far down the road, we'll make a stop at the natural blowhole of Boca do Inferno. A leisurely lunch will be had at the Roça Sao Joao Angolares which, according to our very own Kathleen Becker serves some of the best food in Sao Tome, in the heart of the Angolares community - a fishing people said to be descendants of runaway slaves. After lunch we have a tour of the working plantation before continuing down to Praia Inhame, our coastal home for the next two nights.



Accommodation: Praia Inhame (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 4 - Fishing boat trip through mangroves, swim in pristine waters

This morning we board local fishing boats and are peacefully steered through mangroves from the town of Malanza. The mangroves are a great place to spot birds including Striated heron, malachite kingfisher and the reed cormorant; we will be out on the boat for around 90 minutes. After elevenses, we will explore the Southern Beaches, including Praia Piscina, an idyllic place for swimming and one of the best beaches on the island. We'll enjoy a traditional Sao Tomean lunch and beachcombing at Praia Jalé, a turtle beach (as are many of the beaches in the area) and a great place to stop for a refreshing Nacional beer brewed on the island.



Accommodation: Praia Inhame (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 5 - Stand on the equator, boat trip up the rugged west coast

Today, we board our boat to the Isle of Rolas to boldly stride between two hemispheres as we reach the equator! There will be swimming and snorkelling opportunities available this morning to cool off and enjoy the waters. Depending on the weather we will either have lunch at the beach or in the village. Later this afternoon, we'll experience a boat journey along the east coast of Sao Tome, on the lookout for endemic birds and marine life. We'll stay close to the coast as we slowly cruise past forest, waterfalls and small villages. The coast boasts stunning scenery and is well sheltered.



Accommodation: Hotel Miramar (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 6 - Rainforest walk to plantation and waterfalls

This morning we head out of town and into the heart of the island for a varied forest walk around satellite plantations of the iconic coffee plantation of Monte Café, with a chance to take a dip at a waterfall at the end. We can expect to see many of the endemic birds of Sao Tome. After driving back to the mother plantation of Monte Café we will enjoy a late lunch at a family-run coffee producer's restaurant, and there will be opportunity to buy some coffee if you wish to take a little bit of Sao Tome home with you. Tonight there will be the opportunity to visit a dance club with Kathleen, where you can experience the African rhythms of kizomba dancing.



Accommodation: Hotel Miramar (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 7 - Travel to Mucumbli; Afternoon free on the beach

This morning we'll make a one hour transfer north to Mucumbli. After a fairly busy few days, today there is time to relax and take things at your leisure. We have no organised activities, but our chalets are located above a beach for a spot of swimming, the grounds are a botanical garden, and the panoramic terrace overlooking the sea is perfect for lounging and catching up with a book. For those that want to explore the local area, an optional 25km cycle will be available with Kathleen and a local guide along the coastal road to Santa Catarina, a bustling fishing village where it is sometimes possible to see a canoe being made by hand. Optional hikes are available with Mucumbli guides. The food served at our accommodation is the perfect combination of local produce and innovative Italian flair.



Accommodation: Mucumbli (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 8 - Morning walk through forested valley

We start the day with a visit to the nearby CECAB organic cocoa cooperative, a dynamic initiative that is helping farmers to gain a fair living and access new markets. From here, a 2-hour hike to Roça Ponta Figo takes us through secondary forest and savannah landscape teeming with birds and past the small community of Generosa, a satellite plantation of the historic Roça Monteforte, which we will rejoin after a short transfer back from Ponta Figo for a local lunch on the plantation terrace. The late afternoon is free to make the most of being so close to the sea or simply enjoy the peace and quiet of our accommodation.



Accommodation: Mucumbli (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Visit botanical gardens and iconic walk to crater rim

Today we drive up to the botanical gardens of Bom Sucesso. At over 3500 feet, the garden is home to over 400 local plants and endemic orchids, but before visiting we will first hike up to the ancient dried-up crater lake of Lagoa Amelia. This classic walk takes us up some 1200 ft through agricultural land to the primary forest of the Obo National Park. During our 4 hour guided walk, our guide will help us spot some of the local birds, including the Paradise Flycatcher, endemic weavers and sunbirds, and the Sao Tome oriole. From the overgrown crater rim, there is the option to make a short steep descent into the swampy crater, rimmed by the world's biggest begonias. Back down at the Botanical Gardens, we will enjoy a picnic lunch followed by a guided tour of the Gardens, learning more about the diversity and many medicinal uses of San Tomean trees and plants. This evening we'll have time to enjoy our final group meal.



Accommodation: Mucumbli (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 10 - Relax in the morning, trip finishes at airport

There is ample time this morning to relax and have a leisurely lunch before we head back to Sao Tome town for last minute souvenir shopping and an exotic ice-cream. We will then transfer back to the airport where the trip ends.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 9
Lunch: 7
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus
Boat



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

5 nights standard cabins
4 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Sao Tome

Climate

With a tropical weather system, Sao Tome and Principe can be visited at any time of the year. Sao Tome's equatorial climate keeps fairly constant temperatures throughout the year. The average high is between 28 to 31 C, while the average low is between 21 to 23C, along the coast and lower lands. The months between June and September feature the cooler end of these temperatures which is also during the dry season. The rainy season from October to May which is humid between the rain showers, also features a sub-season between December and February which has less rain but a high degree of heat and humidity. In land the mountain areas are a couple of degrees cooler at around 20C with the nights being generally cool.

Time difference to GMT

0

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Portuguese, Portuguese Creole

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Sao Tome - Visit Claudio Corrilho chocolate factory, approx €4

Mucumbli bike hire €5 per person, plus Local guide €15 (to be shared amongst cyclist)

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight and ideally cotton all year round. Shorts and T-shirts are acceptable everywhere, although take long trousers/skirts for evening wear. Don't forget your swimming costume.

Footwear

Lightweight ankle-high walking boots are recommended for the walks, whilst shoes or trainers are ideal for exploring the islands. Sandals for relaxing and beachwear. Sea urchins can give a nasty sting, and so closed sea-shoes or plastic sandals are recommended for when you take a dip in the sea

Luggage

20kg

Equipment

Take a small torch, water bottle, sunglasses, sunhat, suncream, insect repellent, binoculars if planning to birdwatch and a beach towel. Bring a lightweight rainjacket just in case. You may find walking poles useful on the uneven terrain during the walks.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you may consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

You should allow €30 for tipping local staff.

International Departure Taxes

Airport departure tax is approximately US\$24 or €20. This is now incorporated into flight tickets issued after 21 Nov 2016.

Country Information

Sao Tome

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£3.00 - £5.00

Dinner price
£5.00 - £8.00

Beer price
£1.00 - £3.00

Water price
£0.60 - £1.50

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Santomean Dobra

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Major hard currencies are accepted in Sao Tome, we therefore advise taking all of your spending money in Euros. Once you arrive on Sao Tome island there will be limited methods to get extra money so please make sure you bring enough with you so that you do not run out.

Where To Exchange

Main banks in Sao Tome capital city

ATM Availability

None for international cards

Credit Card Acceptance

Accepted only at Miramar Hotel. Money transfers can be arranged for Visa/Mastercard credit cards at the main bank in Sao Tome with your passport.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Sao Tome: Visas are not required by UK, Canadian and US citizens for stays of upto 15 Days. For stays of 15 days and over a visa must be obtained prior to arrival in the country. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. Please note that your passport needs to be valid for at least a minimum of 3 months after the expiry date of your visa.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions

relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Sao Tome

Vaccinations

Please note you will be required to supply a yellow fever certificate prior to arrival in Sao Tome if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, tetanus and typhoid. Consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on different antimalarials. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

