



PRÍNCIPE ISLAND

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainability
Team work
Authenticity
Respect
Safety



ROÇA

SUNDY · PRÍNCIPE ISLAND

LOVINGLY RESTORED COCOA PLANTATION HOUSE OPENS ON AFRICA'S PRÍNCIPE ISLAND

June 2017: A beautifully restored cocoa plantation house on the tiny tropical island of Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea will be opening its doors this month, offering an affordable and beautifully styled guest house comprising just twelve en-suite rooms for lovers of nature, sustainability and escape.

The opening of the guest house, called Roça Sundry, is just part of a sustainable tourism plan developed in partnership with the Regional Government of Ilha do Príncipe. In keeping with this strong commitment to sustainability, all of the restoration work has been carried out by local builders, especially trained for the job, using mainly recycled materials. Over 90% of the staff have been recruited from the local community, following an intense 12 month training by the Azores Tourism School. The restaurant, which has incredible views over lush rainforest to the Atlantic Ocean, will feature a menu created from locally sourced, organic produce grown within the property's own plantation garden or fairly negotiated with local producers. And as you would expect, the chef will make good use of the high quality, organic chocolate that is still made by a handful of producers across the islands.

Back at the start of the 20th Century, Roça Sundry was a splendid estate house at the heart of one of the largest cocoa plantations on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, which together make up Africa's second smallest nation. For much of the 1900s, the islands were one of the world's largest producers of chocolate. Following independence from Portugal in 1975, cocoa production diminished significantly and today, the plantation houses (Roças) more often provide a focal point for local communities to meet and live.

All the rooms have been furnished with traditional colonial style pieces – many from the original house - and several have spacious balconies overlooking the square or the lush rainforest. The villagers of Sundry use the Roça's square for gathering and games and guests will be encouraged to mingle, join in with a game of football or just share what's on their mind from the comfort of the 'gripping bench' (banco da má língua) that sits under the shade of a plane tree. There will also be opportunities to spend a day with a local family, taking part in daily chores, games and rituals.

Beyond the house, guests will be able to enjoy activities including hikes through the UNESCO biosphere reserve; seasonal whale and dolphin watching tours, birdwatching, snorkelling, kayaking, cookery courses, massage and yoga. Guests are encouraged both to support and to participate in the local community through activities including jewellery making, matting, canoe-making, traditional dance and fishing with local fishermen. Roça Sundry will also offer a Cacau &



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Coffee Route showing the complete process of chocolate making, from the harvest until the final tasting.

The new property even offers a little known link to Albert Einstein, whose theory of relativity was confirmed for the very first time here by an experiment carried out by British scientist, Arthur Eddington during a solar eclipse in 1919.

São Tomé and Príncipe are easily accessible with regular direct flights from Lisbon with TAP Air Portugal. They are little visited and little known, yet could hardly be more beautiful – deserted sandy beaches; lush pristine rainforest, criss-crossed with hiking trails; marine life that includes turtles, whales and dolphins. Naturalists have called the island of Principe the Galapagos of Africa and five years ago, the largest part of the island was designated a UNESCO biosphere reserve, aimed at preserving the many endemic species that exist there.

A one night stay at Roça Sundry will cost from 185 euros on half board basis.

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