

Client: River Cruise Line
Source: Metro (London)
Date: 13/06/2019
Page: 39
Reach: 873412
Value: 15909.12



A TRIP TO CHOCOLATE HEAVEN

RICHARD MELLOR
ON THE ULTIMATE
AND EXCLUSIVE
ISLAND TOUR FOR
PEOPLE WITH THE
SWEETEST TEETH

ONCE upon a time - in 1900, to be precise - São Tomé and Príncipe, then under Portuguese rule, was the world's largest producer of cacao. Most plantations on the two equatorial African islands closed after independence in 1975 but now makers are resurfacing in league with sustainable luxury resorts.

Surfing this chocolate wave is Reef & Rainforest Tours, which is offering a new Tropical Chocolate Safari to Príncipe, the smaller member of this tiny, two-island nation. São Tomé and Príncipe is found 140 miles west of the African mainland and is just above the equator.

Available for a group of 24 and departing on

September 3, the holiday will be led by Joanne Harris, renowned author of the novel *Chocolat*, and accompanied by award-winning chocolatier David

Greenwood-Haigh. Talk about mouthwatering.

Guests are promised insights into Príncipe's sometimes dark history, a visit to the cacao plantation on São Tomé owned by Claudio Corallo - whose bitter, luscious 'bean to bar' chocolate has been voted best in the

world - and a chocolate-making workshop at a newly opened factory.

Other highlights of the six-night trip include a visit to a 19th-century cacao plantation and advice on how to write more effectively about food. There's also loads of free time and plenty of ways to use it.

'Visitors can ride boats along the west coast, which is very wild with basalt formations reminiscent of Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland, or hike into the rainforest,' says tour creator Alan Godwin.

Among many Castaway-type shores is the deliciously named Banana Beach, where a Bacardi advert was filmed. Off shore, humpback whales will still be migrating by September.

You'll be based in a luxurious tented villa at the Sundry Praia Lodge resort, which includes a pool, direct access on to a sandy, palm-flanked beach and local guides. Also included is a chocolate massage ritual and dinner at Oca, a restaurant run by Angelo Rosso, once of Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck. As well as much local produce, many dishes include, yep, chocolate.

From £3,495pp half board, including all transport from São Tomé and back, and activities. reefandrainforest.co.uk

TOTAL ECLIPSE

In 1919, Sir Arthur Eddington led a Royal Astronomical Society expedition to Príncipe to observe a total solar eclipse

Client: River Cruise Line
Source: Metro (London)
Date: 13/06/2019
Page: 39
Reach: 873412
Value: 15909.12

and thus prove Albert Einstein's

