



ASCENSION ISLAND

EXPLORE ASCENSION ISLAND



WALKING



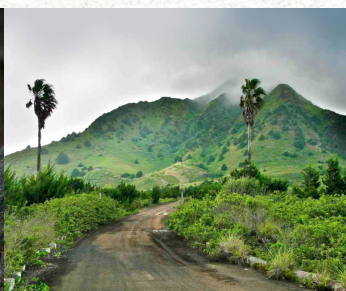
WILDLIFE



MOUNTAIN



BEACHES



Ascension Island offers a wide range of walks for varying levels of fitness, from the cool, green paths on Green Mountain to coastal paths and treks across lava flows. Many walks are detailed in the Letterbox walks book, available from the Conservation Office and the Heritage Museum.

Ascension Island has the second largest nesting population of the green turtle in the entire Atlantic Ocean and is the most important seabird breeding site in the tropical Atlantic. In addition the Island supports a wide variety of other bird life and invertebrates, including the land crab, one of Ascension's most iconic species.

From December to June, visitors have the opportunity to witness female turtles nesting; from February the baby turtles begin to hatch. The best way to see Ascension's turtles is to join a guided 'turtle tour' run by the Ascension Island Government Conservation Department.

Green Mountain is home to a wide variety of the Island's wildlife as well as to endemic plants and introduced flora; it also offers a great deal of historical interest. There are numerous walking paths around the mountain, many of which offer stunning views of the Island below.

Early visitors to Ascension Island, at the beginning of the 19th century, described it as exceptionally barren, with very few plants – including the mountain that we now know as Green Mountain. Only a handful of plant species – mostly ferns, mosses and some grasses, most of them endemic to Ascension – were found on the higher slopes of Green Mountain. It was not until Joseph Hooker, close friend of Charles Darwin and later Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, proposed a plan to increase vegetation on the mountain following a visit in 1843 that the lush, green landscape we see today began to form. There was mass planting of organised forests, shrublands and pastures, introducing over 220 plant species from diverse parts of the world. Whilst the experiment has undoubtedly resulted in a greening of the mountain and increased rainfall, most of Ascension's native and endemic plants are now being severely outcompeted by those that were introduced. The Ascension Island Government Conservation Department is working to find a balance between the native and introduced species.

The coastline of Ascension Island offers beauty and drama in abundance.

Swim or snorkel at English Bay or Comfortless Cove when sea conditions are favourable. Both of these beaches have their own draw – the wide sweep of golden sand at English Bay, along with BBQ and restroom facilities makes it a beach for locals and visitors alike, while tiny Comfortless Cove is quieter and more secluded. Both offer up crystal clear, warm water and stunning marine life just waiting to be discovered – don a mask and snorkel and you will encounter much of Ascension's smaller marine life just off-shore. Although the Island's other beaches are too dangerous to swim at, there are many that are worth a look. Hannay's Beach, near Hummock Point, features an impressive blowhole. And stunning Long Beach, an easy wander from the centre of Georgetown, begs to be discovered. Sit and watch the huge rollers crash when the surf is up; come back after dark and watch the green turtles nesting on a Conservation Department-led turtle tour.



Ascension Island Conservation Department/Tourist Office

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