



Ribeira Kumba

The Grand Monkey Canyon of Santa Cruz.

A hike through this canyon in volcanic rock is certainly the most exciting tour you can make in the surroundings of Pedra Badejo. It takes about 4 hours and gives you the chance to see the rare makak-monkeys.

Ask your guide to organise a taxi. About 5 km from Pedra Badejo towards Praia you can get a first view down into the canyon if you leave the car and walk over a field to look down.

About 10 km from Pedra Badejo, 1 km after the village of Remque, the road winds down into the canyon. Ask the driver to drop you at the bottom and pick you up again in Achada Ponta 4 hours later. This will give you ample time to enjoy the staggering beauty of the 200m high cliffs, the cultivated vegetable plots and the interesting plants and animals.

Follow the rough track. The canyon winds roughly northwards, sometimes only 100 m wide, up to 200 m high. For the local people this is a haunted place, inhabited by all kinds of evil ghosts and spirits. There is an old story, that once two bulls started to fight in this canyon, near a rocky waterfall, and fell down into the waterhole at its bottom. When people tried to recover the animals they discovered with dismay, that the animals had vanished as if they had been swallowed by the earth. You will see this place. Most of the year it will be dry, like the rest of the valley, but there always is this waterhole there.

The green curtains of the leafless *Sarcostemma daltonii* drape the cliffs and the shrill calls of the Kestrel add to the haunted atmosphere.

This first stretch of the canyon was recently used as a quarry. Both sides are scarred by places where the basalts and phonoliths were obviously broken with the help of dynamite. High up in the left wall there is a big cave. Watch for monkeys and Rock Pigeon there!

After about half an hour you reach the first of several cultivated and irrigated "gardens". Stone walls and terraces, water tanks and a system of "levadas" (little canals which take the water to the fields) are well kept. Farmers plant tomatoes, peppers, papaya, bananas, sugar cane, cabbage, coconut palms, maniok, big mango and fig trees offer shade. Nice places for a rest in a green tropical paradise surrounded by bizarre cliffs.

Blank rocks on the valley bottom indicate the places of waterfalls. In the rainy season the valley might be filled with torrents of brown, muddy water, but only for few hours. A few waterholes survive into the dry winter. Enough water for a number of colourful dragonflies.

When the valley is too narrow for a track you must follow the levadas on the right-hand side but try to climb down when you see a track down on the valley bottom again.

When the canyon takes a sharp turn right (east) you are about halfway. Some shady spots there and a trail climbing up left, back to the road. From now on you mostly follow a tractor track. Monkeys can appear on both sides, mostly high up in the cliffs. When you pass an old sugar cane press you are getting close to Achada Ponta which lies on the rim to your left. Don't climb straight up, but stay in the middle of the valley where you can follow the river-bed out to the beach.

There is a beautiful little natural harbour there, a dozen of wooden fishing-boats are lined up on the black sand. There is a little lagoon there. The broken shells of the Buzio-snail are an indication of one major fishing activity.

Turn round and walk back up to the village on your right (northern side) in 10 minutes. The car will be waiting at the village entrance.

