

Elida Almeida
Teacher Resource Guide
Lotus Blossoms 2021



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About Elida Almeida

Known for her warm and powerful voice, Cape Verdean singer-songwriter Elida Almeida has garnered acclaim throughout Africa, Europe, and North America. Almeida pairs honest lyrics about her life experiences with the Cape Verdean rhythms of batuque, coladera, and tabanka to create a poetic and highly-danceable experience.

Born in 1993 in the town of Pedra Badejo, Santa Cruz, on the largest Cape Verdean island of Santiago, Elida used music to overcome what she has called a difficult childhood. According to a Vancouver Folk Music Festival biography, Elida wrote her first song, which spoke of sorrow but also reflected her soaring hopes and dreams, while still in high school. Elida's first album, *Ora docí Ora margos* (Sweet Times Bitter Times), is based on the singer's early life and the sweet and bitter experiences that shaped who she is as an artist today.



Elida Almeida's Music

Elida Almeida's unique sound is created by fusing several different styles of Cape Verdean music. One of those styles is Batuque.

Batuque or Batuko (creole spelling)

Considered the oldest musical style in Cape Verde, **batuque** is a dance, a musical genre, and a symbol of Cape Verdean cultural identity. Batuque music began to take shape in 1462, when enslaved Africans were brought to Cape Verde for the first time. These people carried with them the rhythms and music that would become batuque.¹

As a musical genre, batuque has a call and response structure and is polyrhythmic (music which makes use of two or more different rhythms simultaneously). Batuque performers play drums and cloth balls/platforms and clap to create the rhythms.² Look at the photo below to see the cloth balls/platforms.



Image: deltacultura.org

¹ Nogueira, Gláucia (2012). "Percurso do batuku: do menosprezo a patrimônio imaterial". *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Canção* (in Portuguese). School of Sciences and Technology, UFRN, Brazilian Review of Song Studies (RBEC, Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Canção). ISSN 2238-1198.

² <https://web.archive.org/web/20110102210606/http://www.reisetraeume.de/kapverden/viadoso/mus1/en00.html>

As a dance, batuque is historically performed by women only. For the dance, women gather in a circle and clap rhythmically and sing while one or several women dance in the center of the circle. **The women in the center of the circle may tie a scarf around their waists and swing their hips during the song.**³ You will see Elida do this during her **Lotus Blossoms Performance**. After one song is over, the women in the center will switch places with other women from the circle. The dance may last for many hours at a time.⁴

Batuque is considered a symbol of Cape Verdean cultural identity because the batuque dance was outlawed during the Colonial era in Cape Verde. When it is danced today, it is a testament to the history and culture of the Cape Verdean people.⁵



Image: deltacultura.org

³ <https://web.archive.org/web/20110102210606/http://www.reisetaeume.de/kapverden/viadoso/mus1/en00.html>

⁴ Nogueira, Gláucia (2012). "Percurso do batuku: do menosprezo a patrimônio imaterial". *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Canção* (in Portuguese). School of Sciences and Technology, UFRN, Brazilian Review of Song Studies (RBEC, Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Canção). ISSN 2238-1198.

⁵ Nogueira, Gláucia (2012). "Percurso do batuku: do menosprezo a patrimônio imaterial". *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Canção* (in Portuguese). School of Sciences and Technology, UFRN, Brazilian Review of Song Studies (RBEC, Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Canção). ISSN 2238-1198.

Cape Verde

The country Cape Verde, also known as Cabo Verde, is an archipelago (a group of islands) that lies 385 miles (620 km) off the west coast of Africa. ⁶

- Capital: Praia
- Population: 549,935
- Major languages: Portuguese is the official language and is used in formal situations. **Crioulo**, one of the oldest of the Portuguese **creole** languages, is by far the most widely spoken.
- Currency: Escudo⁷



The islands of the Cape Verde archipelago are made up of two groups: the islands of Barlavento (meaning “from where the wind blows”) and the islands of Sotavento (“where the wind blows away”). Their names reflect the positions of the islands relative to the dominant winds (trade winds) that blow from the northeast. ⁸



⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cabo-Verde>

⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cabo-Verde>

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Cabo-Verde>

For more information about Cape Verde, visit:

- [Cape Verdean Culture](#)
- [Cape Verdean History](#)
- [Cape Verdean Geography](#)

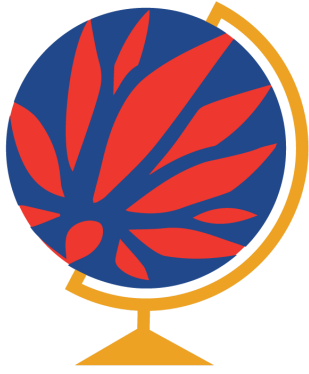
Helpful Links and References

- elidaalmeida.com
- lusafrica.com/en/our-artists/elida-almeida/
- [Encyclopedia Britannica - Cape Verde](#)
- [Elida Almeida on YouTube](#)
- [Elida Almeida on Facebook](#)
- [Elida Almeida on Instagram](#)
- [Elida Almeida on Spotify](#)

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