

The most crowded island on Earth: Tiny Caribbean islet measures just over two acres... but is home to a staggering 1,200 people

- Santa Cruz del Islote lies off the coast of Colombia, with 90 houses, two stores, a restaurant and a school
- Its size - 0.012 sq km - and number of inhabitants makes it four times more densely populated than Manhattan
- First discovered 150 years ago, the island was initially favoured because it had no mosquitoes - a rarity in the area
- Life on the island is a peaceful one with crime almost non-existent and many locals earning a living through tourism

By KATIE AMEY FOR MAILONLINE

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It's a tight squeeze on the island of Santa Cruz del Islote in the Caribbean, with 1,200 people inhabiting a lump of rock that's just 0.012 square kilometres. The island, a two-hour boat trip from Cartagena, Colombia, is four times more densely populated than Manhattan. Discovered just 150 years ago by a group of passing fisherman, the 2.4 acre islet is situated in the archipelago of San Bernardo.

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Despite measuring just 0.012 square kilometres, 1200 people have somehow managed to squeeze on to Santa Cruz del Islote



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Cosy: The Caribbean islet two hours from Cartagena, Colombia, is four times more densely populated than Manhattan



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Discovered by fishermen 150 years ago, its lack of mosquitoes has made the island incredibly popular




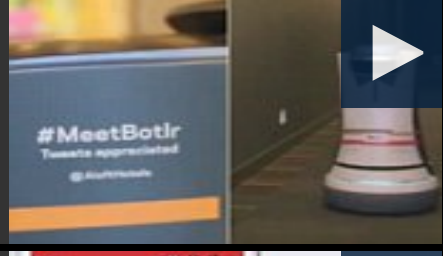

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Since the islet lacks basic amenities except for a school most of the locals work on nearby Caribbean islands

The most crowded island on Earth: Santa Cruz del Islote



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The fishermen, who were travelling from the coastal town of Baru, some 50 kilometres away, made a stunning realisation when they first stumbled upon the island: it had no mosquitoes.

A relative rarity in the area, the explorers immediately set up camp.

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Today, the population has sky-rocketed, topping 1200 inhabitants. It's also home to 90 houses, two stores, a restaurant and a school. However, space is so limited that many structures extend out over the water. Since there are no high-rise structures, the isle has built itself outwards instead of upwards, ensuring everyone lives and works on the ground floor.

The only empty space on the island is a small courtyard.



© Luca Zanetti/laif

Today the of population of Santa Cruz del Islote has sky-rocketed, to 1200 inhabitants including families and young children



One resident said 'we don't have violence, we don't need police, we all know each other and we enjoy our days. It's a glorious life'

Though many residents describe the island as paradise, Santa Cruz del Islote has no doctors, no cemetery - the dead are buried on a nearby island - and one sole generator that runs for just five hours per day.

There's no running water, with the Colombian Navy delivering supplies to the island every three weeks.

The only service that the state provides is a lone security guard, who is stationed at the island's school, which is attended by 80 children.

Law states that there must be a guard for every school in the country.



Since there are no high-rise structures, the isle has built itself outwards instead of upwards, ensuring everyone lives and works on the ground floor

Lacking basic amenities, it's unsurprising that most work on nearby islands with tourism being the backbone of the local economies.

They offer tourists boat tours along with snorkeling, fishing and diving experiences. Others use their knowledge of the local marine life to supply nearby restaurants with fish.

The life they lead is one that they treasure, with islanders reportedly never having to worry about theft and often gathering in each other's doorways to watch soap operas, according to [Colombia Reports](#).

It's an existence that contrasts starkly with the violence that courses through the mainland, which has experienced a decades-long drug war between the government and paramilitary groups.

'Life here is calm and delightful,' 66-year-old Juvenal Julio, a descendant of the Islote's founders, told the [Toronto Star](#).

The diving instructor is the great-grandson of one of the fishermen who founded the community around 150 years ago.

He added: 'We don't have violence, we don't need police, we all know each other and we enjoy our days. It's a glorious life.'

For information on visiting the island go to www.aventurecolombia.com.

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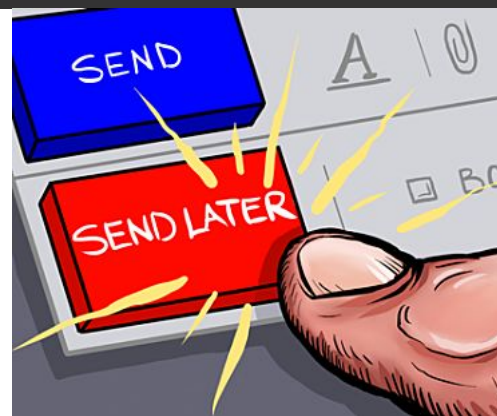
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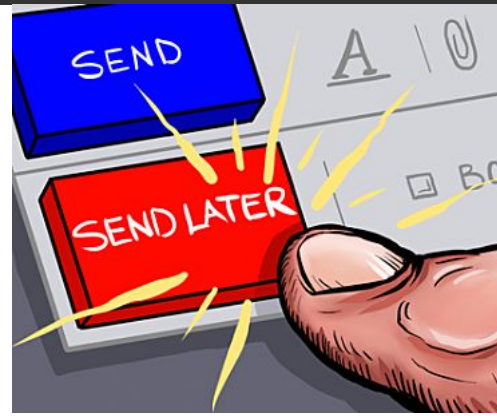
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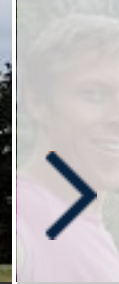
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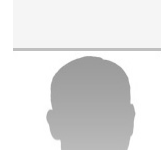
Alison B, Maitland, Australia, 2 weeks ago

No wonder it's so populated- there's nothing else to do!

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Tomdotcom, Watford, United Kingdom, 2 weeks ago

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