# Hundreds of UK holidaymakers sue TUI over Cape Verde food poisoning claims



David and Julia Lofts embarked on what was meant to be a celebratory 10-day getaway in January at a five-star resort in Cape Verde for David’s 65th birthday. However, their experience quickly soured when they fell gravely ill after dining at the hotel. Just three hours after their meal—comprising salmon, salads, and cocktails—they began suffering from severe symptoms that left them incapacitated throughout the night. Julia Lofts, recounting their ordeal, described the harrowing experience of knocking on doors for help when their room phone failed, highlighting the desperation that comes with severe illness in foreign surroundings.

Their condition necessitated an ambulance trip to a local medical facility, where they received urgent treatment including intravenous fluids, which amounted to a staggering £713 in medical bills. Upon their return home, the couple sought accountability from TUI, the travel operator through which they booked their holiday. The response they received was disheartening; TUI reportedly dismissed their claims due to the absence of concrete evidence like stool samples or photographic proof of their suffering, despite Julia’s insistence on the difficulty of acquiring such evidence in their distressed state.

Julia expressed her frustrations regarding TUI's response, which included suggestions that their symptoms could have been attributed to stress or overindulgence rather than food poisoning from the hotel. After conducting research, Julia discovered numerous reports from other travellers who had experienced similar illnesses, leading them to question the safety and hygiene standards upheld by the resort.

This incident did not occur in isolation. Over 800 holidaymakers have initiated legal proceedings against TUI in the UK, alleging that poor food safety practices at various establishments in Cape Verde resulted in illnesses ranging from E. coli to salmonella. These legal actions underscore a broader concern over hygiene standards at tourist accommodations. Irwin Mitchell, the law firm representing many of the affected parties, disclosed that more than 1,400 individuals have reached out due to health complications sustained during their holidays.

Cape Verde’s own authorities also responded to accusations of widespread foodborne illnesses impacting tourists. They maintain that health and safety standards are a priority and have reportedly conducted investigations into claims of Shigella infections, finding no evidence linked to recent outbreaks. They assert that while there have indeed been isolated reports of illness, these do not indicate a systemic issue pertaining to food safety at the hotels involved. Multiple reviews from guests, however, tell a different story. Some have recounted seeing flies and unclean cutlery in dining areas, raising serious concerns about the hygiene protocols in place.

Despite management assertions of adherence to strict food safety standards, including regular audits and inspections, the recurrence of illnesses among guests poses a significant challenge to their claims. Many holidaymakers, like the Lofts, feel disappointed and betrayed, as their dream vacations have turned into medical nightmares. The ongoing legal actions and media coverage continue to shine a light on a troubling trend within the tourism industry that must be addressed to safeguard future holidaymakers.

As these issues unfold, affected families remain in limbo, grappling with the serious health implications of their holidays gone wrong. The hope for many lies in a resolution that holds TUI accountable and reinforces the necessity for stringent food safety standards across the hospitality industry, particularly in destinations reliant on tourism like Cape Verde.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2058790/tui-refuse-food-poisoning-refund)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2058790/tui-refuse-food-poisoning-refund)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2058790/tui-refuse-food-poisoning-refund)
* Paragraph 4: [[2]](https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/newsandmedia/2025/march/more-than-800-uk-holidaymakers-launch-high-court-legal-action-after-illness-linked-to-cape-verde), [[4]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/cape-verde-luxury-resorts-horror-as-hundreds-of-uk-holidaymakers-struck-by-severe-illness-sue-tui-after-dream-vacations-turn-into-medical-nightmares/)
* Paragraph 5: [[3]](https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2024/10/cape-verde-officials-respond-to-food-poisoning-claims/)
* Paragraph 6: [[4]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/cape-verde-luxury-resorts-horror-as-hundreds-of-uk-holidaymakers-struck-by-severe-illness-sue-tui-after-dream-vacations-turn-into-medical-nightmares/), [[7]](https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/newsandmedia/2024/december/lawyers-reveal-cape-verde-hotels-at-centre-of-holiday-illness-outbreak)
* Paragraph 7: [[5]](https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g482848-d11698377-r968494272-Tui_Blue_Cabo_Verde-Santa_Maria_Ilha_do_Sal.html), [[6]](https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g482848-d11698377-r559386746-Tui_Blue_Cabo_Verde-Santa_Maria_Ilha_do_Sal.html)
* Paragraph 8: [[3]](https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2024/10/cape-verde-officials-respond-to-food-poisoning-claims/), [[4]](https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/cape-verde-luxury-resorts-horror-as-hundreds-of-uk-holidaymakers-struck-by-severe-illness-sue-tui-after-dream-vacations-turn-into-medical-nightmares/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2058790/tui-refuse-food-poisoning-refund> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/newsandmedia/2025/march/more-than-800-uk-holidaymakers-launch-high-court-legal-action-after-illness-linked-to-cape-verde> - Over 800 UK tourists have initiated High Court legal action against TUI UK Limited after contracting severe illnesses, including E. coli, salmonella, and shigella, during stays at four and five-star resorts in Cape Verde between 2022 and 2025. Many victims, including children as young as six months old, were hospitalized and continue to experience long-term health complications. The legal proceedings allege that TUI failed to uphold basic hygiene and food safety standards, leading to these illnesses. The affected hotels include Riu Palace Boavista, Riu Palace Santa Maria, Riu Funana, Riu Cabo Verde, Riu Touareg, Melia Dunas, Sol Dunas (now TUI Suneo Dunas), TUI Blue Cabo Verde, and others. The law firm representing the claimants, Irwin Mitchell, has been instructed by over 1,400 individuals who suffered illnesses linked to Cape Verde between 2022 and 2025. The firm emphasizes the serious and life-changing nature of these illnesses and calls for TUI to engage in resolving these cases promptly. The article highlights the ongoing legal actions and the health impacts on the affected holidaymakers.
3. <https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2024/10/cape-verde-officials-respond-to-food-poisoning-claims/> - Cape Verde authorities, including the General Inspectorate of Economic Activities (IGAE), the Independent Health Regulatory Authority (ERIS), the National Institute of Public Health (INSP), and the Cape Verde Tourism Institute (ITCV), have responded to food poisoning claims by stating that health and safety are their 'absolute priority.' They emphasized that any allegations of food poisoning must be based on concrete and verified evidence, which they claim has not been presented. This response follows reports from law firm Irwin Mitchell about hundreds of British holidaymakers falling ill at various hotels in Cape Verde in recent years. The authorities conducted investigations into alleged cases of Shigella infection reported in 2022 and found no evidence of an outbreak or abnormal increase in cases. They also noted that while there have been reports of Shigella infections among tourists, there is no direct evidence linking these cases to conditions in Cape Verde. The authorities maintain that the country upholds strict standards of hygiene and food safety, with regular audits and inspections of tourist establishments to ensure compliance with international standards.
4. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/cape-verde-luxury-resorts-horror-as-hundreds-of-uk-holidaymakers-struck-by-severe-illness-sue-tui-after-dream-vacations-turn-into-medical-nightmares/> - Hundreds of UK holidaymakers have taken legal action against TUI after suffering severe illnesses at luxury hotels in Cape Verde. Between 2022 and 2025, guests at eight high-end resorts contracted serious infections, including E. coli, salmonella, and shigella. Some victims, including children as young as six months old, continue to experience long-term health complications. The legal proceedings allege that TUI failed to uphold basic hygiene and food safety standards, leading to these illnesses. The affected hotels include Riu Palace Santa Maria, Riu Cabo Verde, Riu Funana, Riu Palace Boavista, TUI Blue Cabo Verde, TUI Suneo Dunas, Riu Touareg, Riu Karamboa, Melia Dunas, and Melia Llana. The article highlights the ongoing legal actions and the health impacts on the affected holidaymakers.
5. <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g482848-d11698377-r968494272-Tui_Blue_Cabo_Verde-Santa_Maria_Ilha_do_Sal.html> - A TripAdvisor review from September 2024 describes serious hygiene issues at the TUI Blue Cabo Verde resort in Santa Maria, Cape Verde. The reviewer mentions flies crawling over food in the dining hall and reports of sickness and diarrhea among guests. The reviewer advises caution when eating food from the dining hall and expresses stress over the situation. The hotel management responded, expressing sadness over the illness and advising guests to contact Guest Experience for assistance. They emphasized that food is prepared from fresh products following HACCP standards and is under the surveillance of the Health and Safety department. The management also mentioned that the well-being of guests is a priority and that the hotel is subject to periodic external audits with excellent results.
6. <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g482848-d11698377-r559386746-Tui_Blue_Cabo_Verde-Santa_Maria_Ilha_do_Sal.html> - A TripAdvisor review from June 2018 describes concerns about food hygiene at the TUI Blue Cabo Verde resort in Santa Maria, Cape Verde. The reviewer mentions seeing flies and birds around the buffet area and unclean cutlery. The hotel management responded, stating that great care is taken in food preparation and serving, with a HACCP system in place and a team consisting of a Hygienist, a Food Safety Manager, and a Director of Sustainability. They mentioned that the hotel is subject to periodic external audits with excellent results. The management also noted that gastro-intestinal illnesses can take days to progress into symptoms and may not have occurred at the resort, making it difficult to assume that the food caused the sickness.
7. <https://www.irwinmitchell.com/news-and-insights/newsandmedia/2024/december/lawyers-reveal-cape-verde-hotels-at-centre-of-holiday-illness-outbreak> - Lawyers at Irwin Mitchell have revealed the Cape Verde hotels at the center of repeated illness outbreaks after more than 1,400 holidaymakers have instructed the law firm following their disastrous holidays to the West African islands. A number of cases of E. coli, salmonella, and bacterial infection shigella have been confirmed since 2022, with children as young as three among those diagnosed. Hundreds of those affected, who all booked their holidays through tour operator TUI, were also hospitalized as a result of their illness, and some continue to experience significant complications such as renal failure. The affected hotels include Riu Palace Santa Maria, Riu Cabo Verde, Riu Funana, Riu Palace Boavista, TUI Blue Cabo Verde, TUI Suneo Dunas, Riu Touareg, Riu Karamboa, Melia Dunas, and Melia Llana. The article highlights the ongoing legal actions and the health impacts on the affected holidaymakers.