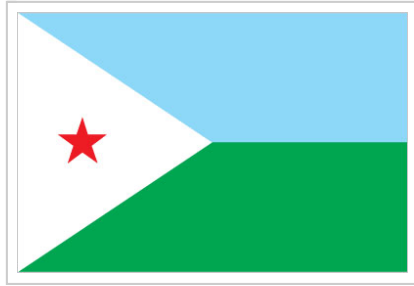


CAPSTONE 20-2 Africa Field Study Trip Book Part II

Subject	Page
Djibouti	
CIA World Fact Book	2
BBC Country Profile	21
Culture Gram	26
Kenya	
CIA World Fact Book	35
BBC Country Profile	56
Culture Gram	60
Niger	
CIA World Fact Book	70
BBC Country Profile	90
Culture Gram	94
Senegal	
CIA World Fact Book	103
BBC Country Profile	123
Culture Gram	128



AFRICA :: DJIBOUTI

Introduction :: DJIBOUTI

Background:

The French Territory of the Afars and the Issas became Djibouti in 1977. Hassan Gouled APTIDON installed an authoritarian one-party state and proceeded to serve as president until 1999. Unrest among the Afar minority during the 1990s led to a civil war that ended in 2001 with a peace accord between Afar rebels and the Somali Issa-dominated government. In 1999, Djibouti's first multiparty presidential election resulted in the election of Ismail Omar GUELLEH as president; he was reelected to a second term in 2005 and extended his tenure in office via a constitutional amendment, which allowed him to serve a third term in 2011 and begin a fourth term in 2016. Djibouti occupies a strategic geographic location at the intersection of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Its ports handle 95% of Ethiopia's trade. Djibouti's ports also service transshipments between Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The government holds longstanding ties to France, which maintains a military presence in the country, as does the US, Japan, Italy, Germany, Spain, and China.

Geography :: DJIBOUTI

Location:

Eastern Africa, bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, between Eritrea and Somalia

Geographic coordinates:

11 30 N, 43 00 E

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 23,200 sq km

land: 23,180 sq km

water: 20 sq km

country comparison to the world: 151

Area - comparative:

slightly smaller than New Jersey

Area comparison map:



Land boundaries:

total: 528 km

border countries (3): Eritrea 125 km, Ethiopia 342 km, Somalia 61 km

Coastline:

314 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

Climate:

desert; torrid, dry

Terrain:

coastal plain and plateau separated by central mountains

Elevation:

mean elevation: 430 m

lowest point: Lac Assal -155 m

highest point: Moussa Ali 2,021 m

Natural resources:

potential geothermal power, gold, clay, granite, limestone, marble, salt, diatomite, gypsum, pumice, petroleum

Land use:

agricultural land: 73.4% (2011 est.)

arable land: 0.1% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 0% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 73.3% (2011 est.)

forest: 0.2% (2011 est.)

other: 26.4% (2011 est.)

Irrigated land:

10 sq km (2012)

Population distribution:

most densely populated areas are in the east; the largest city is Djibouti, with a population over 600,000; no other city in the country has a total population over 50,000

Natural hazards:

earthquakes; droughts; occasional cyclonic disturbances from the Indian Ocean bring heavy rains and flash floods

volcanism: experiences limited volcanic activity; Ardoukoba (298 m) last erupted in 1978; Manda-Inakir, located along the Ethiopian border, is also historically active

Environment - current issues:

inadequate supplies of potable water; water pollution; limited arable land; deforestation (forests threatened by agriculture and the use of wood for fuel); desertification; endangered species

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

strategic location near world's busiest shipping lanes and close to Arabian oilfields; terminus of rail traffic into Ethiopia; mostly wasteland; Lac Assal (Lake Assal) is the lowest point in Africa and the saltiest lake in the world

People and Society :: DJIBOUTI**Population:**

884,017 (July 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

Nationality:

noun: Djiboutian(s)

adjective: Djiboutian

Ethnic groups:

Somali 60%, Afar 35%, other 5% (mostly Yemeni Arab, also French, Ethiopian, and Italian)

Languages:

French (official), Arabic (official), Somali, Afar

Religions:

Sunni Muslim 94% (nearly all Djiboutians), Christian 6% (mainly foreign-born residents)

Demographic profile:

Djibouti is a poor, predominantly urban country, characterized by high rates of illiteracy, unemployment, and childhood malnutrition. More than 75% of the population lives in cities and towns (predominantly in the capital, Djibouti). The rural population subsists primarily on nomadic herding. Prone to droughts and floods, the country has few natural resources and must import more than 80% of its food from neighboring countries or Europe. Health care, particularly outside the capital, is limited by poor infrastructure, shortages of equipment and supplies, and a lack of qualified personnel. More than a third of health care recipients are migrants because the services are still better than those available in their neighboring home countries. The nearly universal practice of female genital cutting reflects Djibouti's lack of gender equality and is a major contributor to obstetrical complications and its high rates of maternal and infant mortality. A 1995 law prohibiting the practice has never been enforced.

Because of its political stability and its strategic location at the confluence of East Africa and the Gulf States along the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, Djibouti is a key transit point for migrants and asylum seekers heading for the Gulf States and beyond. Each year some hundred thousand people, mainly Ethiopians and some Somalis, journey through Djibouti, usually to the port of Obock, to attempt a dangerous sea crossing to Yemen. However, with the escalation of the ongoing Yemen conflict, Yemenis began fleeing to Djibouti in March 2015, with almost 20,000 arriving by August 2017. Most Yemenis remain unregistered and head for Djibouti City rather than seeking asylum at one of Djibouti's three spartan refugee camps. Djibouti has been hosting refugees and asylum seekers, predominantly Somalis and lesser numbers of Ethiopians and Eritreans, at camps for 20 years, despite lacking potable water, food shortages, and unemployment.

Age structure:

0-14 years: 30.71% (male 136,191 /female 135,263)

15-24 years: 21.01% (male 87,520 /female 98,239)

25-54 years: 39.63% (male 145,427 /female 204,927)

55-64 years: 4.82% (male 18,967 /female 23,639)

65 years and over: 3.83% (male 15,136 /female 18,708) (2018 est.)

population pyramid:



Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 56.5 (2015 est.)

youth dependency ratio: 50.1 (2015 est.)

elderly dependency ratio: 6.4 (2015 est.)

potential support ratio: 15.6 (2015 est.)

Median age:

total: 24.2 years (2018 est.)

male: 22.4 years

female: 25.7 years

country comparison to the world: 165

Population growth rate:

2.13% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 42

Birth rate:

23.3 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 59

Death rate:

7.5 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

Net migration rate:

5.5 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 21

Population distribution:

most densely populated areas are in the east; the largest city is Djibouti, with a population over 600,000; no other city in the country has a total population over 50,000

Urbanization:

urban population: 77.9% of total population (2019)

rate of urbanization: 1.67% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

569,000 DJIBOUTI (capital) (2019)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.89 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.71 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.8 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.81 male(s)/female

total population: 0.84 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

248 deaths/100,000 live births (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

Infant mortality rate:

total: 44.3 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

male: 50.9 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 37.5 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 39

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 64 years (2018 est.)

male: 61.4 years

female: 66.6 years

country comparison to the world: 191

Total fertility rate:

2.27 children born/woman (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

19% (2012)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 97.4% of population

rural: 64.7% of population

total: 90% of population

unimproved:

urban: 2.6% of population

rural: 35.3% of population

total: 10% of population (2015 est.)

Current Health Expenditure:

3.5% (2016)

Physicians density:

0.22 physicians/1,000 population (2014)

Hospital bed density:

1.4 beds/1,000 population (2014)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 59.8% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 5.1% of population (2015 est.)

total: 47.4% of population (2015 est.)

unimproved:

urban: 40.2% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 94.9% of population (2015 est.)

total: 52.6% of population (2015 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

1.2% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 41

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

8,800 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 105

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

<500 (2018 est.)

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: high (2016)

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever (2016)

vectorborne diseases: dengue fever (2016)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

13.5% (2016)

country comparison to the world: 131

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

29.9% (2012)

country comparison to the world: 10

Education expenditures:

4.5% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 87

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 6 years

male: 7 years

female: 6 years (2011)

Government :: DJIBOUTI

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Djibouti

conventional short form: Djibouti

local long form: Republique de Djibouti/Jumhuriyat Jibuti

local short form: Djibouti/Jibuti

former: French Somaliland, French Territory of the Afars and Issas

etymology: the country name derives from the capital city of Djibouti

Government type:

presidential republic

Capital:

name: Djibouti

geographic coordinates: 11 35 N, 43 09 E

time difference: UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

6 districts (cercles, singular - cercle); Ali Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil, Djibouti, Obock, Tadjourah

Independence:

27 June 1977 (from France)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 27 June (1977)

Constitution:

history: approved by referendum 4 September 1992

amendments: proposed by the president of the republic or by the National Assembly; Assembly consideration of proposals requires assent at least one third of the membership; passage requires a simple majority vote by

the Assembly and approval by simple majority vote in a referendum; the president can opt to bypass a referendum if adopted by at least two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly; constitutional articles on the sovereignty of Djibouti, its republican form of government, and its pluralist form of democracy cannot be amended; amended 2006, 2008, 2010 (2017)

Legal system:

mixed legal system based primarily on the French civil code (as it existed in 1997), Islamic religious law (in matters of family law and successions), and customary law

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

Citizenship:

citizenship by birth: no

citizenship by descent only: the mother must be a citizen of Djibouti

dual citizenship recognized: no

residency requirement for naturalization: 10 years

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Ismail Omar GUELLEH (since 8 May 1999)

head of government: Prime Minister Abdoukader Kamil MOHAMED (since 1 April 2013)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the prime minister

elections/appointments: president directly elected by absolute majority popular vote in 2 rounds if needed for a 5-year term; election last held on 8 April 2016 (next to be held by 2021); prime minister appointed by the president

election results: Ismail Omar GUELLEH reelected president for a fourth term; percent of vote - Ismail Omar GUELLEH (RPP) 87%, Omar Elmi KHAIREH (CDU) 7.3%, other 5.6%

Legislative branch:

description: unicameral National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale, formerly the Chamber of Deputies (65 seats; members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by party-list proportional representation vote; members serve 5-year terms)

elections: last held on 23 February 2018 (next to be held in February 2023)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - UMP 57, UDJ-PDD 7, CDU 1; composition - men 47, women 18, percent of women 26.7%

Judicial branch:

highest courts: Supreme Court or Cour Supreme (consists of NA magistrates); Constitutional Council (consists of 6 magistrates)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court magistrates appointed by the president with the advice of the Superior Council of the Magistracy CSM, a 10-member body consisting of 4 judges, 3 members (non parliamentarians and judges) appointed by the president, and 3 appointed by the National Assembly president or speaker; magistrates appointed for life with retirement at age 65; Constitutional Council magistrate appointments - 2 by the president of the republic, 2 by the president of the National Assembly, and 2 by the CSM; magistrates appointed for 8-year, non-renewable terms

subordinate courts: High Court of Appeal; 5 Courts of First Instance; customary courts; State Court (replaced sharia courts in 2003)

Political parties and leaders:

Center for United Democrats or CDU [Ahmed Mohamed YOUSOUF, chairman]
Democratic Renewal Party or PRD [Abdillahi HAMARITEH]
Djibouti Development Party or PDD [Mohamed Daoud CHEHEM]
Front for Restoration of Unity and Democracy (Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité Democratique) or FRUD [Ali Mohamed DAOUD]
Movement for Democratic Renewal and Development [Daher Ahmed FARAH]
Movement for Development and Liberty or MoDel [Ismail Ahmed WABERI]
National Democratic Party or PND [Aden Robleh AWALEH]
People's Rally for Progress or RPP [Ismail Omar GUELLEH] (governing party)
Peoples Social Democratic Party or PPSD [Hasna Moumin BAHDON]
Republican Alliance for Democracy or ARD [Aden Mohamed ABDOU, interim president]
Union for a Presidential Majority or UMP (coalition includes RPP, FRUD, PND, PPSD)
Union for Democracy and Justice or UDJ [Ilya Ismail GUEDI Hared]

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AU, CAEU (candidates), COMESA, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IGAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAS, MIGA, MINURSO, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Ambassador Mohamed Said DOUALEH (28 December 2016)

chancery: 1156 15th Street NW, Suite 515, Washington, DC 20005

telephone: [1] (202) 331-0270

FAX: [1] (202) 331-0302

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Larry Edward ANDRE, Jr. (since 20 November 2017)

telephone: [253] 21 45 30 00

embassy: Lot 350-B, Haramouss B. P. 185

mailing address: B.P. 185, Djibouti

FAX: [253] 21 45 31 29

Flag description:

two equal horizontal bands of light blue (top) and light green with a white isosceles triangle based on the hoist side bearing a red five-pointed star in the center; blue stands for sea and sky and the Issa Somali people; green symbolizes earth and the Afar people; white represents peace; the red star recalls the struggle for independence and stands for unity

National symbol(s):

red star; national colors: light blue, green, white, red

National anthem:

name: "Jabuuti" (Djibouti)

lyrics/music: Aden ELMI/Abdi ROBLEH

note: adopted 1977

Economy :: DJIBOUTI

Economy - overview:

Djibouti's economy is based on service activities connected with the country's strategic location as a deepwater port on the Red Sea. Three-fourths of Djibouti's inhabitants live in the capital city; the remainder are mostly nomadic herders. Scant rainfall and less than 4% arable land limits crop production to small quantities of fruits and vegetables, and most food must be imported.

Djibouti provides services as both a transit port for the region and an international transshipment and refueling center. Imports, exports, and reexports represent 70% of port activity at Djibouti's container terminal. Reexports consist primarily of coffee from landlocked neighbor Ethiopia. Djibouti has few natural resources and little industry. The nation is, therefore, heavily dependent on foreign assistance to support its balance of payments and to finance development projects. An official unemployment rate of nearly 40% - with youth unemployment near 80% - continues to be a major problem. Inflation was a modest 3% in 2014-2017, due to low international food prices and a decline in electricity tariffs.

Djibouti's reliance on diesel-generated electricity and imported food and water leave average consumers vulnerable to global price shocks, though in mid-2015 Djibouti passed new legislation to liberalize the energy sector. The government has emphasized infrastructure development for transportation and energy and Djibouti - with the help of foreign partners, particularly China - has begun to increase and modernize its port capacity. In 2017, Djibouti opened two of the largest projects in its history, the Doraleh Port and Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railway, funded by China as part of the "Belt and Road Initiative," which will increase the country's ability to capitalize on its strategic location.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$3.64 billion (2017 est.)

\$3.411 billion (2016 est.)

\$3.203 billion (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 183

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$2.029 billion (2017 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

6.7% (2017 est.)

6.5% (2016 est.)

6.5% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 26

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$3,600 (2017 est.)

\$3,400 (2016 est.)

\$3,300 (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 185

Gross national saving:

22.3% of GDP (2017 est.)

38.1% of GDP (2016 est.)

19% of GDP (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 81

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 56.5% (2017 est.)

government consumption: 29.2% (2017 est.)

investment in fixed capital: 41.8% (2017 est.)

investment in inventories: 0.3% (2017 est.)

exports of goods and services: 38.6% (2017 est.)

imports of goods and services: -66.4% (2017 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 2.4% (2017 est.)

industry: 17.3% (2017 est.)

services: 80.2% (2017 est.)

Agriculture - products:

fruits, vegetables; goats, sheep, camels, animal hides

Industries:

construction, agricultural processing, shipping

Industrial production growth rate:

2.7% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 112

Labor force:

294,600 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 163

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: NA

industry: NA

services: NA

Unemployment rate:

40% (2017 est.)

60% (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 213

Population below poverty line:

23% (2015 est.)

note: percent of population below \$1.25 per day at purchasing power parity

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 2.4%

highest 10%: 30.9% (2002)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

40.9 (2002)

country comparison to the world: 60

Budget:

revenues: 717 million (2017 est.)

expenditures: 899.2 million (2017 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

35.3% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 62

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-9% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Public debt:

31.8% of GDP (2017 est.)

33.7% of GDP (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

0.7% (2017 est.)

2.7% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 36

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

11.3% (31 December 2017 est.)

11.45% (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 72

Stock of narrow money:

\$1.475 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.361 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

Stock of broad money:

\$1.475 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.361 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Stock of domestic credit:

\$673.1 million (31 December 2017 est.)

\$659.4 million (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 172

Current account balance:

-\$280 million (2017 est.)

-\$178 million (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 102

Exports:

(2017 est.)

\$139.9 million (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Exports - partners:

Ethiopia 38.8%, Somalia 17.1%, Qatar 9.1%, Brazil 8.9%, Yemen 4.9%, US 4.6% (2017)

Exports - commodities:

reexports, hides and skins, scrap metal

Imports:

\$726.4 million (2017 est.)

\$705.2 million (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Imports - commodities:

foods, beverages, transport equipment, chemicals, petroleum products, clothing

Imports - partners:

UAE 25%, France 15.2%, Saudi Arabia 11%, China 9.6%, Ethiopia 6.8%, Yemen 4.6% (2017)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$547.7 million (31 December 2017 est.)

\$398.5 million (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 148

Debt - external:

\$1.954 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.519 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 153

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$1.47 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.483 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 121

Exchange rates:

Djiboutian francs (DJF) per US dollar -

177.7 (2017 est.)

177.72 (2016 est.)

177.72 (2015 est.)

177.72 (2014 est.)

177.72 (2013 est.)

Energy :: DJIBOUTI

Electricity access:

population without electricity: 400,000 (2016)

electrification - total population: 51.8% (2016)

electrification - urban areas: 67.4% (2016)

electrification - rural areas: 2% (2016)

Electricity - production:

405.5 million kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

Electricity - consumption:

377.1 million kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

130,300 kW (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 175

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

100% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 7

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 78

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 185

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 114

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 117

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

6,360 bbl/day (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

Refined petroleum products - exports:

403 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 112

Refined petroleum products - imports:

6,692 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 94

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 116

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

950,200 Mt (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 171

Communications :: DJIBOUTI

Telephones - fixed lines:

total subscriptions: 36,582

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 4 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 163

Telephones - mobile cellular:

total subscriptions: 373,052

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 43 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 176

Telephone system:

general assessment: telephone facilities in the city of Djibouti are adequate, as are the microwave radio relay connections to outlying areas of the country; Djibouti is one of the few remaining countries in which the national telco, Djibouti Telecom (DT), has a monopoly on all telecom services, including fixed lines, mobile, Internet and broadband; the lack of competition has meant that the market has not lived up to its potential (2018)

domestic: Djibouti Telecom (DT) is the sole provider of telecommunications services and utilizes mostly a microwave radio relay network; fiber-optic cable is installed in the capital; rural areas connected via wireless local loop radio systems; mobile cellular coverage is primarily limited to the area in and around Djibouti city; 4 per 100 fixed-line, 43 per 100 mobile-cellular (2019)

international: country code - 253; landing point for the SEA-ME-WE-3 & 5, EASSy, Aden-Djibouti, Africa-1, DARE-1, EIG, MENA, Bridge International, PEACE Cable, and SEACOM fiber-optic submarine cable systems providing links to Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Southeast Asia, Australia and Africa; satellite earth stations - 2 (1 Intelsat - Indian Ocean and 1 Arabsat) (2019)

Broadcast media:

state-owned Radiodiffusion-Television de Djibouti operates the sole terrestrial TV station, as well as the only 2 domestic radio networks; no private TV or radio stations; transmissions of several international broadcasters are available (2019)

Internet country code:

.dj

Internet users:

total: 111,212

percent of population: 13.1% (July 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 175

Broadband - fixed subscriptions:

total: 24,389

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 3 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 147

Military and Security :: DJIBOUTI**Military and security forces:**

Djibouti Armed Forces (FAD): Djibouti National Army (includes Navy, Djiboutian Air Force, National Gendarmerie); Djibouti Coast Guard (2019)

Military service age and obligation:

18 years of age for voluntary military service; 16-25 years of age for voluntary military training; no conscription (2012)

Maritime threats:

the International Maritime Bureau reports offshore waters in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden remain a high risk for piracy; the presence of several naval task forces in the Gulf of Aden and additional anti-piracy measures on the part of ship operators, including the use of on-board armed security teams, contributed to the drop in incidents; there was one incident in the Gulf of Aden and none in the Red Sea in 2018; Operation Ocean Shield, the NATO/EUNAVFOR naval task force established in 2009 to combat Somali piracy, concluded its operations in December 2016 as a result of the drop in reported incidents over the last few years; the EU naval mission, Operation ATALANTA, continues its operations in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean through 2020; naval units from Japan, India, and China also operate in conjunction with EU forces; China has established a logistical base in Djibouti to support its deployed naval units in the Horn of Africa

Transportation :: DJIBOUTI**National air transport system:**

number of registered air carriers: 2 (2015)

inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 4 (2015)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:

J2 (2016)

Airports:

13 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 151

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 3 (2017)

over 3,047 m: 1 (2017)

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1 (2017)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2017)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 10 (2013)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2013)

914 to 1,523 m: 7 (2013)

under 914 m: 2 (2013)

Railways:

total: 97 km (Djibouti segment of the 756 km Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway) (2017)

standard gauge: 97 km 1.435-m gauge (2017)

country comparison to the world: 127

Roadways:

total: 2,893 km (2013)

country comparison to the world: 159

Merchant marine:

total: 15

by type: other 15 (2018)

country comparison to the world: 144

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Djibouti

Terrorism :: DJIBOUTI

Terrorist groups - foreign based:

al-Shabaab: aim(s): punish Djibouti for participating in the African Union Mission in Somalia; compel Djibouti to withdraw troops from Somalia

area(s) of operation: maintains minimal operational presence; last conducted an attack in Djibouti in 2014 (2019)

Transnational Issues :: DJIBOUTI

Disputes - international:

Djibouti maintains economic ties and border accords with "Somaliland" leadership while maintaining some political ties to various factions in Somalia; Kuwait is chief investor in the 2008 restoration and upgrade of the Ethiopian-Djibouti rail link; in 2008, Eritrean troops moved across the border on Ras Doumera peninsula and occupied Doumera Island with undefined sovereignty in the Red Sea

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 13,242 (Somalia) (2019)

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: Djibouti is a transit, source, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking; economic migrants from East Africa en route to Yemen and other Middle East locations are vulnerable to exploitation in Djibouti; some women and girls may be forced into domestic servitude or prostitution after reaching Djibouti City, the Ethiopia-Djibouti trucking corridor, or Obock – the main crossing point into Yemen; Djiboutian and foreign children may be forced to beg, to work as domestic servants, or to commit theft and other petty crimes

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List – Djibouti does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so; in 2014, Djibouti was granted a waiver from an otherwise required downgrade to Tier 3 because its government has a written plan that, if implemented would constitute making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; one forced labor trafficker was convicted in 2014 but received a suspended sentence inadequate to deter trafficking; authorities did not investigate or prosecute any other forced labor crimes, any sex trafficking offenses, or any officials complicit in human trafficking, and remained limited in their ability to recognize or protect trafficking victims; official round-ups, detentions, and deportations of non-Djiboutian residents, including children without screening for trafficking victims remained routine; the government did not provide care to victims but supported local NGOs operating centers that assisted victims (2015)

Djibouti country profile

8 May 2018



Lying on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the tiny African nation of Djibouti serves as a gateway to the Suez Canal, one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

Its port is the lifeblood of its economy, providing the biggest source of income and employment in this otherwise barren country.

Djibouti's proximity to restive areas in Africa and the Middle East and its relative stability have made it a prized location for foreign military bases and ensured a steady flow of foreign assistance.

Former colonial power France maintains a significant military presence. The country also hosts America's largest military base in Africa, China's first overseas military base and Japan's first military base since the Second World War.

Djibouti serves as the main gateway for trade for its giant neighbour, landlocked Ethiopia.

- Read more [country profiles](#) - Profiles by **BBC Monitoring**

FACTS

The Republic of Djibouti

Capital: Djibouti

Population 942,000

Area 23,200 sq km (8,950 sq miles)

Languages French, Arabic, Somali, Afar

Religion Islam

Life expectancy 61 years (men), 64 years (women)

Currency Djiboutian franc

UN, World Bank

Getty Images

LEADER

President: Ismail Omar Guelleh



GETTY IMAGES

Ismail Omar Guelleh came to power in elections in 1999, succeeding Hassan Gouled Aptidon, who led the country for two decades since independence.

His re-election as president in 2005 was seen as somewhat of a formality given the opposition's boycott of the election.

He further consolidated his power when a change to the constitution in 2010 allowed him to stand for a third term. The 2011 presidential election was again boycotted by the opposition.

With no strong challenger, Mr Guelleh won a fourth term of office in the April 2016 presidential election.

Born in Ethiopia in 1947, Mr Guelleh, like his predecessor, belongs to the Mamassans, a sub-clan of the Issa. His family moved to Djibouti in 1960 and eight years later he joined the intelligence services, rising through the ranks to become head of state security in 1977.

MEDIA



GETTY IMAGES

Djibouti's media environment is dominated by the state. There are no private TV or radio stations and the government owns the main newspaper and the national broadcaster Radiodiffusion-Télévision de Djibouti (RTD).

Reporters Without Borders says local journalists "live in fear". The few opposition media outlets are based outside the country.

- [Read full media profile](#)

TIMELINE

Some key dates in Djibouti's history:



GETTY IMAGES

825 - Somali and Afar ethnic groups become first Africans to embrace Islam in the region.

1862 - France gains a foothold in the region, acquiring the trading port of Obock.

1888 - French colony of Somaliland established.

1894 - Djibouti becomes the capital of French Somaliland.

1946 - Djibouti becomes a French overseas territory.

1967 - Referendum - French Somaliland votes to remain a French Overseas Territory, renamed the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas.

1977 - Independence from France, renamed Republic of Djibouti.

1991-2000 - Civil war: Ends with a power-sharing agreement between Afar rebels and the Somali Issa-dominated government.

2003 - First free multi-party presidential election.

2010 - Constitution amended enabling President Omar Guelleh to run for a third term.



Because of its location Djibouti has been touched by the region's troubles. It hosts foreign military bases and during the Yemen conflict in 2014 took in thousands of refugees

GETTY IMAGES

- [Read full timeline](#)



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Djibouti is a small nation on the horn of Africa that borders the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The country is slightly larger than Israel, or roughly the size of the U.S. state of New Jersey. The country has a harsh, barren landscape with little vegetation or groundwater and no arable land. Only a fraction of its territory is suitable for pasture. Plains along the coast give way to mountains in the north and plateaus in central and southern Djibouti. The nation boasts the lowest point in Africa and the second lowest in the world: Lake Assal, which lies 509 feet (155 meters) below sea level and is surrounded by vast salt flats. Another salt lake, Lake Abbe, lies on the western border. In the north, the Day Forest National Park, at an altitude of 5,000 feet (1,500 meters), is home to leopards, cheetahs, and hundreds of bird species. Elsewhere, Djibouti's wildlife includes gazelles, hyenas, and ostriches.

The climate is extremely hot and dry. May to September is the hot season, when humidity is high and daytime temperatures regularly reach 120°F (49°C). The climate is more temperate at higher elevations. Warm, dust-laden winds known as *khamisin* are typical during this time of year. The cool season, from October to April, offers lower humidity and more comfortable daytime temperatures between 80 and 89°F (27–32°C). The average annual rainfall is a meager 5 to 10 inches (127–254 millimeters), and in Djibouti City, the capital, some years are almost without precipitation.

History

Early History

Nomadic herdspeople have inhabited the territory that now constitutes Djibouti for millennia. The Issas and the Afars, the nation's two major ethnic groups today, lived there when Arab traders introduced Islam to the area in the ninth century AD. Arabs at the port of Adal at Zeila (in modern-day Somalia) controlled the region until Adal's collapse in 1543. Small Afar sultanates at Obock, Tadjoura, and elsewhere then emerged as the dominant powers.

French Somaliland

Frenchman Rochet d'Hericourt's 1839 to 1842 exploration into Shoa marked the beginning of French interest in the region. Hoping to counter British influence on the other side of the Gulf of Aden, the French signed a treaty with the Afar sultan of Obock to establish a port in 1862. This led to the formation of French Somaliland in 1888. The construction of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway from Djibouti City to Ethiopia began in 1897 and finally reached Addis Ababa in 1917. The railroad opened up the interior of French Somaliland, which in 1946 was given the status of an overseas French territory.

By the 1950s, the Issas began to support the movement for the independence and unification of the region's three Somali-populated colonies: French, British, and Italian Somaliland. In 1960, British and Italian Somaliland were granted independence and united to form the nation of Somalia, but France retained its hold on French Somaliland. When French president Charles de Gaulle visited French Somaliland in August 1966, he was met with two days of protests. The French announced that a referendum on independence would be held but also arrested independence leaders and expelled their supporters. In the March 1967 vote,

60 percent of the population chose to remain under France. French Somaliland was renamed the French Territory of the Afars and Issas. Most support for the French was among the Afars, and Afar leader Ali Aref became the local head of the territorial government.

Independence and Conflict

As opposition to French rule continued to grow, demonstrations forced Ali Aref to resign in 1976. France then agreed to grant independence. Hassan Gouled Aptidon and his party, the People's Progress Assembly (RPP), won elections in May 1977, allowing him to become president when Djibouti became an independent country on 27 June 1977. Hassan Gouled Aptidon led an Issa-dominated government with one-party rule. In 1991, civil war broke out between government forces and Afar rebels. A peace treaty was signed in 1994, but one rebel faction refused to recognize the treaty and continued fighting. A final peace treaty was agreed to in 2000.

Elections

One year before the peace treaty, Issa leader Ismaïl Omar Guelleh won the presidential election and, in 2005, was elected to a second term, running unopposed. In 2010, amendments to the constitution allowed the president to run for a third term, shortened presidential terms, and created a second legislative body. Guelleh was reelected in 2011 for a third term and again in 2016 for a fourth term despite promising beforehand not to run.

Recent Events and Trends

- **Chinese investment:** In August 2017, China opened its first military base in Djibouti. The base gives China a military presence in the Horn of Africa and allows it to supply its naval ships in the region. Earlier that year, the Addis Ababa–Djibouti Railway, engineered and financed by China, completed its first transnational journey between the Ethiopian and Djiboutian capitals. China has invested roughly US\$14 billion in infrastructure projects in Djibouti in recent years, including three ports, two airports, and a water pipeline from Ethiopia.
- **Capsized boats:** In January 2019, two boats capsized off the coast of Djibouti, resulting in over 100 missing migrants and over 25 deaths. Both of the boats exceeded their carrying capacity and capsized within 30 minutes of leaving shore. Each year, thousands of migrants depart from the Horn of Africa region in hopes of employment in Gulf countries.
- **Drought:** As of 2019, Djibouti continued to experience significant water shortages. Djibouti's long-term drought, which began several years ago, has left much of the population, particularly rural inhabitants, without adequate water. Farmers and nomadic groups have lost most of their livestock during this period. Because of the drought, many rural Djiboutians have moved to the capital, which is struggling to handle the increased disease and malnutrition there.

THE PEOPLE

Population

More than half of all Djiboutians live in Djibouti City. Many

people migrate to cities each year in search of better economic opportunities. The nation's largest ethnic group is the Issa, who are of Somali origin. Together with other Somali groups, they comprise 60 percent of the population. Issa culture dominates the south. The Afar comprise 35 percent and are spread across the north and east. The remainder is made up of French, Arabs, Ethiopians, and Italians. Djibouti hosts tens of thousands of Yemeni, Ethiopian, and Somali refugees. U.S. military personnel also reside in the country.

Language

Djibouti's official languages are French and Arabic, but the most commonly spoken languages are Somali (in the Issa-dominated south) and Afar (in the Afar-dominated north and east). The Somali spoken in Djibouti is the same as that spoken in northern Somalia (a region called Somaliland) but differs slightly in vocabulary from the Somali spoken in Somalia's south. Because Djibouti City is located in southern Djibouti, the main language there is Somali. However, people in the capital tend to live in neighborhoods that are ethnically and linguistically homogenous, so there are also enclaves of Afar speakers.

Many Arabic words are present in religious vocabulary. Most Djiboutians have at least some knowledge of French, which is the language of schooling, business, government, and most media. As the former colonial language, it carries with it the implications of education and affluence. Until 2006, all higher education took place outside of Djibouti, and graduates often returned to the country accustomed to speaking French or Arabic. While higher education is now available in Djibouti, many educated people still speak French and Arabic.

Religion

The vast majority of Djiboutians (94 percent) are Muslim, mostly Sunni. On Fridays, the streets are empty while men go to the mosques to pray; women pray at home and then prepare the midday meal. On other days, the call to prayer emanates from the mosques five times a day. Dress and other outward signs of belief are deemed important for social acceptance, though Djibouti is somewhat less conservative than other Muslim countries. For example, women generally cover their heads but wear colorful clothing. Alcohol (forbidden by Islam) is sold in supermarkets, and nightclubs and bars cater to Djiboutians, visiting sailors, and military personnel. About 6 percent of the population is Christian. Three government-sanctioned churches—Ethiopian Orthodox, French Catholic, and French Protestant—largely serve the foreign population.

General Attitudes

Djiboutians are generally kind, fun-loving, and hospitable. Guests are usually received warmly, served first, and given special treatment. Djiboutians generally have a strong sense of national pride and love for their country. Life can be difficult in Djibouti's hot and often inhospitable environment, so people tend to take care of one another. Hungry street children are often given food. People in the same clan or

subclan are especially quick to help each other, whether they know one another or not. By the same token, people outside the clan may be viewed with suspicion. Family ties tend to be strong. Living together in extended families is a form of support and survival.

Personal Appearance

A typical Djiboutian woman wears a *dira* (a long, flowing robe) and a *shalmat* (headscarf). A *gorgorat* (a long slip with embroidery at the bottom) is worn under the *dira*. The *dira* is pulled up on the sides to show off the embroidery on the *gorgorat*, though it is important for the legs to be covered. Clothing is generally colorful. For everyday wear in the home, women typically wear a cotton *dira*, called a *sheet*. For more festive or formal occasions, they often wear a *dira* and matching *shalmat* with colorful splashes of sequins and metallic thread. Afar women traditionally have their noses pierced with small gold studs, and many Issa women living in Djibouti City follow this fashion. Jewelry is an indication of wealth and is worn proudly.

Men tend to wear Western attire for work. Button-down shirts and trousers are most common. Adults rarely wear shorts in everyday life; they are generally regarded as clothes for children or for playing sports. While relaxing at home or while chewing *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed), men frequently wear a skirt-like wraparound cloth called a *ma'aweess* or a *futa*. This is also everyday attire for herdsman in the countryside. A T-shirt or short-sleeved, button-down shirt is generally worn on top.

Male students typically wear well-pressed shirts and pants with sandals. Female students often wear jeans or pants. Once young women finish their schooling or marry, they usually start to wear more conservative traditional dress.

Many women use the dye of the henna plant to draw elaborate decorations on the feet and hands, especially for weddings and holidays. Women may also use henna to color their hair. Parents put henna in their children's hair to prevent lice. Older men often use henna to tint their hair or beards red.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings

Greetings are an essential beginning to any conversation. Because so many Djiboutians are Muslim, it is common to greet someone with the Arabic phrase *Assalaam 'alaikum* (May peace be upon you), to which the reply is *Wa 'alaikum assalaam* (And peace be upon you). This exchange is usually followed by Somali greetings, such as *Iska waran?* (How are you?) or *Ma fi'an tahay?* (Is everything okay?). One may also say simply *Nabad* (Peace), to which the response is *Haah, waa nabad* (Yes, there is peace) or the repetition of *Nabad*. People then inquire about the health of each other's family members.

Normally, men do not shake hands with women. Men use two hands to clasp the hands of other men. As a sign of respect, men may touch their hearts after shaking hands. They may occasionally embrace good friends, and some women

use the French greeting of a kiss on both cheeks. Except for the small number of Djiboutians educated overseas, people of the opposite sex do not exchange the two-cheek kiss.

Gestures

To beckon someone, one draws the fingers toward the body with the back of the hand facing up. Pointing at people and objects with one's chin is commonplace. The use of the left hand is often avoided, as it is reserved for personal hygiene. A person who is called may communicate "Just a moment" by putting the thumb against the index finger in an upward pointing motion. Raising one's eyebrows is a common way of gesturing "yes"; raised eyebrows with a little shake of the head indicates "no." A closed fist with the pad of the thumb touching the bottom of one's chin denotes "full" (for example, when requesting a full tank of gas). In rugged rural areas, people may request water with a closed fist with the thumb pointing toward the mouth.

Visiting

Gender segregation is the norm in family socializing; men and women usually gather in separate groups or in different areas of the house. Women rarely socialize in public. Instead, they generally invite other women to their homes. Women often make a sweet, milky tea called *shaah*. Some women smoke fruit-flavored Arabic tobacco in a water pipe (*shisha*, or *hookah*).

Most visits among men revolve around the chewing of *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed). Every day between 1 and 2 p.m., men typically gather at street stalls in the markets to buy *khat* just flown in from Ethiopia. Although chewing *khat* takes place every day, the most popular time is Thursday afternoons, which marks the end of the work week. Men come together in a sitting area, called a *mebraz*, to talk and chew until the late evening. Some women also chew *khat*, though much less frequently and separate from men. These women are generally met with disapproval.

Among young Djiboutians, friends are not usually invited to the family home, as the house is generally crowded. It is more common to meet in a café or in a neighborhood *mebraz*. In the evenings in Djibouti City, a favorite pastime is strolling on Avenue du Venice, a road that runs along the port with water on both sides, to enjoy the lights reflecting on the water and meet friends along the way.

Eating

In most families, men and women eat separately, usually on the floor, with each group gathered around a common bowl. The wealthy may eat at a table. Food is eaten with the right hand or sometimes a spoon. Many wealthy Djiboutians have adopted Western dining practices, eating with utensils at a table. Three meals a day are standard, with lunch being the largest meal. Schools and businesses close for two to four hours for a midday lunch break. Family members usually return home to eat lunch together. Men often skip meals for a day or more while chewing *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed), as it suppresses the appetite. Many women avoid eating in public and only eat at

home. In Djibouti City, eating out at restaurants is common and fairly inexpensive.

LIFESTYLE

Family

Structure

Djibouti is a patrilineal society. Lineage is traced through the father's side of the family and determines one's clan (a division of an ethnic group), subclan (a division within the larger clan), and kin group (an extended family). For example, the Samaron clan is made up of multiple sub clans, such as the Mahad Asse and the Bahabar. Each of these subclans is composed of extended family groups. The clan, subclan, and kin group play important roles in the average person's life. Such connections are often the basis for employment opportunities, marriages, friendships, and even choice of neighborhood.

Tradition and economic constraints dictate that most Djiboutians live together with members of their extended family. Younger Djiboutians often hope to establish their own homes after they marry, but economic realities make this difficult, if not impossible, for most. Some married couples live with the husband's family while they save for a house of their own. Other couples live apart, each with his or her own extended family, until they can afford their own place. Children remain in their parents' home at least until marriage, regardless of their age or financial status.

Members of the family are expected to help one another whenever possible. Every employed member of a household contributes to the costs of running the home. Due to an extremely high rate of unemployment, an extended family of 20 to 30 people may be supported entirely by one or two family members who have jobs. Those with access to a car provide transportation for family members—for example, to doctor visits or family celebrations. Many families take in relatives from Somalia or remote regions of Djibouti. In exchange for a place to live and schooling for their children, the relatives may work as domestic helpers for the family.

Parents and Children

Children are highly valued, especially sons. Children are expected to be respectful and obedient, even after they are grown and independent from their parents. Daughters are given more responsibilities at home than sons. The distinction between women's work and men's work is emphasized from an early age, and boys are discouraged from participating in any chores that are designated as women's work. Girls help with cooking, cleaning, and child care. Boys generally work outside the home with their fathers or attend school.

Gender Roles

Men are primarily responsible for providing for the family financially. The husband is considered the protector of his family. He expects to defend against physical threats, such as thieves, but also against dishonorable behavior, such as that related to religious beliefs. Women are generally responsible for tasks related to the home, such as cooking, cleaning, and child care. It is considered shameful for a man to participate in household chores. Women also usually take the lead in

maintaining ties with extended family by visiting, supporting, and economically assisting family members.

A growing number of women seek higher education, and economic necessity has prompted many women to seek work outside the home. As a result, the role of women in society is expanding. Wives often feed their children with the proceeds from their work, as men may spend much of their income on *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed). Women are usually employed as secretaries, university professors, and teachers, though rarely in managerial or decision-making positions. Women may also take positions as domestic helpers. Many women operate their own businesses. For example, *khat* sellers today are nearly all women. Women also serve as members of parliament and political parties.

Traditionally, matters of domestic violence or divorce were mediated by the clan, and women had few rights. The Family Code Law, which broadened the rights of women when it was enacted in 2002, has made little difference in the lives of average women, as many women remain unaware of their rights.

Housing

Urban

About three-quarters of the population lives in urban areas. The average urban home has a single level and is constructed from mud brick, cement, plywood, or corrugated tin. Roofs are generally metal. These homes usually have two to three rooms, a small kitchen, a bathroom, and a central open-air courtyard, where women wash and hang laundry. Floors are generally bare cement or cement covered with thin linoleum. Most homes have few windows, if any. Those families with windows usually cover them with thick curtains to keep out dust and insects. Houses are built close together with no yard space.

Upper-class homes are often built from cinder blocks and include a flat roof that residents use as a sitting area. The wealthy live in large, Western-style homes with gardens and covered garages. Because Djibouti City has a port, its residents have greater access to imported materials. They often build homes with plywood walls and tin roofs. There are also apartment buildings downtown and in middle-class sections of the city.

Rural

Many rural dwellers are nomads who migrate between northern Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. These families carry saplings, which are tied together and covered with bark mats for shelter. These round, brown huts blend into the landscape and are hard to spot from a distance. Closer to Djibouti City, the frames of these huts are covered with sheets, tarps, or other material. These mobile dwellings are generally used only for sleeping and are made up of a single room that is divided with a cloth. One side is reserved for men and the other for women.

It is also common for nomads to make temporary shelters by piling up rocks to create low walls, which are then covered with a tarp. Women are generally in charge of assembling and disassembling the home when the family moves. Because they move often, nomadic families have few belongings and

no modern appliances, running water, or electricity. Families cook outside the home either in the open air or in a small structure with open sides to let smoke escape.

Permanent rural homes generally incorporate more natural materials than those in urban areas and may resemble either urban homes or nomadic dwellings.

Interiors

Rooms in Djiboutian homes are often used as bedrooms at night and living rooms during the day. People may sleep on mats, which are then used as seating or rolled up and stored in the corner of the room during the day. Often the men in the family sleep in one room and women sleep in another. In some families, the mother and father have their own room. If the family can afford it, one room may have a couch and a table for hosting guests.

Rural homes are rarely decorated. In urban homes, walls may be decorated with plastic flowers, local handicrafts, paintings, and religious plaques. Few houses have closets, so most families use wardrobes or suitcases to store their belongings.

A little over half of Djiboutian homes have electricity. Most people in urban areas have access to running water, but fewer rural dwellers do. Many families store water in large barrels, which are filled by water trucks or by a neighborhood hose attached to a central water source. Less than half of the population has access to improved sanitation facilities. Some families have refrigerators. Most homes have a single gas burner for cooking, but ovens are rare. Many homes are cooled by ceiling fans; middle-class homes often have at least one air conditioner.

Ownership

People in rural areas have access to land through their family and clan. Most people build their own homes, often with help from friends and family. In urban areas, affordable housing is difficult to find, and many people rent. Mortgages are available but difficult to obtain.

Dating and Marriage

Dating and Courtship

Young Djiboutians generally socialize in gender-segregated groups, and dating is officially discouraged. However, young people often date without informing their families, and parents usually turn a blind eye to such behavior. The growing use of cell phones makes it much easier for young people to interact and arrange meetings without their parents' knowledge. Couples may meet at school, at sporting events, around their neighborhoods, at wedding parties, or through mutual acquaintances.

Engagement

When a couple decides to get engaged, the man approaches his father, who sets up a meeting with the woman's father. At the meeting, the man asks permission to marry the woman. The woman is consulted and, if she accepts, her father generally agrees to the engagement. The wedding typically takes place within a few weeks of this meeting.

Marriage in Society

Arranged marriages are not unheard of but are rare, and most Djiboutians choose their own spouses. Lineage and financial status—as well as love—are important elements in selecting a

partner. Men often wait until they obtain employment before marrying. Couples are advised to wait to marry until at least one of them has a sufficient income. Because of this, Djiboutians usually marry in their mid-twenties and early thirties. The groom, usually with assistance from his family, pays the bride's family a bride-price, which is negotiated by the couple's fathers.

Though polygamy is permitted under Islam, the practice is uncommon in Djibouti today. Few men can support more than one family, and a growing number of women expect their husbands to be monogamous.

Homophobia is widespread in Djiboutian society, and nearly all LGBT individuals live in secrecy. Same-sex marriage is not legally recognized.

Weddings

In urban families, the bride-price is usually paid in *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed); in rural areas, it may also include livestock. The bride-price can be a financial burden, and weddings are often delayed while the groom and his family save up. The groom and his male relatives come to the bride's house to deliver the bride-price. Family members may give speeches or listen to a message from a religious leader, and then the group spends a few hours sitting, chatting, and chewing *khat*. The groom presents the bride-price to the male members of the bride's family in the presence of a *sheikh* (tribal leader). This may take place before the wedding ceremony or it may be part of the ceremony.

Most weddings follow Muslim traditions. The bride does not attend the wedding ceremony (*meher*). After the *meher*, the couple is considered married, but they do not move in together until after the *arros* (wedding party), which is held between one week and one month after the wedding ceremony. The bride wears a wedding gown, and guests come to celebrate with food and dancing. If the couple moves into their own home, whether immediately after their wedding or after living with one set of parents for a time, a *hooyis* (moving-in party) may be held to celebrate. Festivities are similar to those for the *arros* but on a smaller scale. Another celebration (called a *diiqo*) is held any time after the *arros*, usually once the couple can afford it. The bride's female friends and relatives gather to congratulate the bride, give her gifts, and dance. Sometimes the groom makes a short appearance.

Parties celebrating engagements and marriages are important social events and allow women to wear their nicest clothes, jewelry, and makeup and to visit and dance with other women. Men visit separately from the women, in another room or building. Marriages also call for a procession around the city or neighborhood. If the family and friends have cars, they drive through the streets honking their horns and blinking their lights in honor of the occasion.

Divorce

Divorce is fairly common. After a divorce, people often return to their parents' home, where they stay until they remarry. The husband usually takes custody of any children over five years old, though among the upper class and the more educated, custody rights may be divided between both parents.

Life Cycle

Birth

Traditionally, pregnancy was greeted with both excitement and trepidation. A common proverb describes pregnant women as being “at the door of their grave.” In recent years, both maternal and infant mortality rates have steadily decreased as more births are attended by doctors, nurses, or midwives. In urban areas, many women give birth in hospitals. In rural areas and among the poor, women usually give birth at home with the assistance of a midwife and female relatives. Fathers are not usually present at the birth of their children.

It is customary for mothers and their newborn babies to stay in the home for 40 days after the birth, though today an exception can be made to take the baby to be immunized. At the end of the 40-day period, the family throws an *afartan bax* (coming-out party), after which the mother and baby are allowed to leave the home. The occasion is celebrated with singing, dancing, food, and gifts. Traditionally, the baby is placed on the shoulders of an older child of the same gender, symbolizing the parents' hope that the baby will emulate the child's character.

Milestones

Djiboutians are not considered adults until they marry; they remain under the roof and authority of their parents. An unmarried woman under thirty is referred to as a *gabadh* (girl). Fathers and uncles play important roles in the lives of most Djiboutians, regardless of age, often interceding on their behalf in conflicts. When a disagreement arises, it is not uncommon for one person to ask to speak to the father or uncle of the other person.

Death

Funerals may last as long as three days and generally take place as soon after the time of death as possible, in keeping with Muslim tradition. The body is taken to the family home, where it is wrapped in a white cloth and kept until the funeral. Mourners come to the home to grieve. Most Muslims believe that religious recitations dedicated to the deceased will accrue rewards for the person in heaven. They may recite the 99 names for *Allah* (God) while holding a *tusba* (a necklace containing either 33 or 99 beads).

The body is slowly carried to the mosque and then to the cemetery on a crib-like bed in the back of a pick-up truck. No cars are allowed to pass the truck as a show of respect for the deceased. At the mosque, mourners say special prayers (called *salaat al-janazah*) for the soul of the deceased. Only men and boys accompany the body to the cemetery. The body is interred in a grave, without a casket, and covered with dirt and a layer of rocks. Traditionally, graves were unmarked, but in recent years a growing number of families have placed headstones with the deceased's name and birth and death dates.

After the burial, if the family can afford to do so, they set up funeral tents and prepare food for the mourners and anyone else in need of a meal. Family members say prayers, read the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book), and sit together. A year after the death, some families sacrifice a goat or sheep and hold a *hasuus* (remembrance feast) in honor of the deceased.

Among older Djiboutians, a yearly feast is held to remember the deceased.

Diet

In the past, people relied primarily on their animals for their diet. Meat and dairy products all came from the herds of camels, goats, and sheep. Today, rice (*bariis*) is the main staple and is typically served with lamb (*nef*) and goat (*ri*). People on the coast eat fish and seafood as well as meat.

Fool (a fava bean dish), eggs, and instant coffee are typical breakfast fare, as is goat liver cooked with potatoes, onions, tomatoes, and sometimes green chilies. Afars eat flatbread with honey for breakfast. *Looho* (a thin pancake-like food made of finger millet) may be eaten at all three meals. For breakfast, *shaah* (a sweet, milky tea) is poured over *looho*, which is torn and eaten with the fingers. At lunch, *looho* is torn and used to scoop up stews.

French baguettes with jelly and butter are frequently eaten in the evenings. Three times a day, freshly baked baguettes are sold from push carts throughout Djibouti City. Spaghetti is a favorite dish and may be topped with any combination of tomatoes, meat, onions, and potatoes. It is often eaten with the hands. A whole roasted goat is standard for any feast, with large servings of rice cooked with cloves, cinnamon, and cardamom.

Recreation

Sports

The most popular sport in Djibouti is soccer. Many people attend soccer matches in the stadium in Djibouti City. Children, teenagers, and young adults frequently play in the afternoon or evening, when temperatures are slightly cooler. Any open space may serve as an informal playing field, and goals are often marked with stones or other objects. Other popular sports include tennis and handball. A growing number of men enjoy jogging. Few women jog or play sports because of a belief that running can affect a woman's ability to have children. However, many women enjoy walking. Runners from throughout East Africa and sometimes the Middle East and Europe come to Djibouti each March for a half marathon. Many Djiboutians take part in the race, and spectators line the streets along the route.

Leisure

Men and women do not usually participate in leisure activities together but rather among gender segregated groups. Adults typically spend their leisure time chatting, drinking tea or cola at home or at cafés, and chewing *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed). Playing games is usually considered an activity for children, though in the afternoons, men sometimes play dominos or cards in the shade and many people play *pétanque* (a bowling game). Many people enjoy watching television and rented movies. Young people in the capital often enjoy attending nightclubs.

Children often play games like hide-and-seek and *bon* (also called *bob*, a game similar to jacks, using small stones). Children often build their own toys and sports equipment. They may play soccer using empty plastic water bottles instead of balls or make cars out of pieces of metal and the tops of tin cans. Teenagers most often watch television or

play sports.

Among nomadic groups, recreation comes only with work. Women may sing or recite poetry while working. Men may compose oral poetry or pass along folk tales while herding their animals.

Vacation

Many people go to beaches on weekends and holidays. Women swim fully clothed, as do some men. In the hot season, many families prefer to leave the larger cities in favor of higher altitudes and cooler weather. Many travel to Djibouti's interior, Ethiopia, or Somaliland. Wealthy Djiboutians may travel abroad, often to France, for vacations.

The Arts

Both Somali and Afar histories were passed down through an oral tradition that encompassed song and poetry. Somalis have been called the “bards of Africa” because of the quality of their poetry. Helping to unify Somali culture (in Djibouti, Somalia, and elsewhere) are poetic metaphors and proverbs, called *maahmah*, known throughout the society—for example, *Gacan qudhata sacab ma tunto* (One hand cannot applaud alone). Many in the older generation lament that young people of Djibouti City generally no longer value the culture's oral tradition.

Traditional dancing is a usual part of Afar weddings and other celebrations; dancing is less common at Somali events. The most common handicrafts in Djibouti include handwoven baskets and mats, which are sold at local markets.

Holidays

Djibouti's secular holidays include New Year's Day (1 January), Labor Day (1 May), and Independence Day (27 June). Islamic religious holidays follow the lunar calendar and include *Eid al-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha*, Islamic New Year, *al-Mawlid al-Nabawi* (birthday of the prophet Muhammad), and *Al-Isra' wa al-M'iraj* (Ascension of Muhammad). The government also recognizes most Catholic holidays as official holidays (a remnant of French influence).

Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha

The two most widely celebrated holidays are *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*. These holidays share many similar traditions. The day usually begins with a breakfast of *ambabuur* (similar to pancakes, fried in oil, sprinkled with sugar, and dipped into sour yogurt). Families slaughter a goat or sheep and prepare a feast, which they share with relatives and friends who visit throughout the day. Families who cannot afford a whole goat or sheep may pool their money to purchase one together. People generally wear new clothing and visit friends and relatives. Family members and friends wish one another *Eid mubarak* (Blessed holiday).

Muslims celebrate *Eid al-Fitr* at the end of *Ramadan*. In the morning, hundreds of Djiboutians gather in a specific field in Djibouti City to pray. During the day, people visit one another and hand out coins, candy, and small gifts to children. In the afternoon, families visit one another.

Eid al-Adha marks the end of the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and Djiboutians join Muslims around the world in sacrificing a sheep. In the days preceding *Eid al-Adha*, the streets are lined with sheep for sale. If a family

slaughters a sheep but cannot cook or eat all the meat, they deliver it to poorer neighborhoods. Many employers give gifts or monetary bonuses to their employees on these holidays.

Independence Day

Independence Day is the most important patriotic holiday. Djiboutians celebrate with fireworks and a parade through Djibouti City. People sing patriotic songs and tell stories about the history of Djibouti, particularly focusing on how the country gained independence from France.

SOCIETY

Government

Structure

Djibouti is a presidential republic with a president elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms with no term limits. The president is the head of state and appoints the prime minister as head of government. The legislature consists of the National Assembly, with 65 members directly elected to five-year terms. Though changes to the constitution allowed for the creation of a second legislative body in 2010, no such body has been established.

Political Landscape

The president's People's Rally for Progress (RPP), along with the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), formed the Union for a Presidential Majority (UMP) coalition. The president's political bloc has held the majority of seats in the National Assembly since 1977. Opposition parties exist but face harassment, and some have been forcefully dissolved. The Union for National Salvation (USN) coalition, a group of opposition parties, has held large rallies and gained more public support in the last few years. Opposition parties often boycott elections, claiming that the media is biased toward the president's party and that the government abuses administrative resources.

Djibouti attempts to maintain a balance of power between the Issa and Afar ethnic groups by having equal government representation. The president is always an Issa, and the prime minister is always an Afar. Cabinet positions are also distributed equally between Issa and Afar leaders. The Somali clans Issaqa and Gadabuusi are also represented in the cabinet.

The government allows the presence of French and U.S. military bases, and Djibouti maintains a small military force of its own.

Government and the People

Though many freedoms are guaranteed by the constitution, freedoms of speech, assembly, and association are not respected in practice. The government continues to repress journalists, activists, opposition leaders, and others. Elections are generally considered uncompetitive; the government has a poor record of holding free and fair elections. Voter turnout, however, has generally improved in recent elections, as opposition parties are gaining more popularity. The average voter turnout is 66 percent. The voting age is 18.

Economy

Djibouti's economy is almost entirely dependent on its sea port. Goods are brought through the port for sale in Djibouti

or for continued shipment overland to Ethiopia and other nations. Ethiopia relies heavily on the port, as poor relations with Eritrea deprive it of any other access to the Red Sea. In turn, Djibouti depends upon Ethiopia for its daily supply of *khat* (a leafy plant that produces a mildly stimulating effect when chewed). Djibouti produces only a small percentage of its food and imports most fruits and vegetables via train from Ethiopia. Natural resources are in short supply and are for the most part not exploited. More than half of Djiboutians are unemployed. A considerable part of the national income is derived from foreign aid and the leasing of military bases to France and the United States, which take advantage of Djibouti's strategic position between Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The currency is the Djibouti *franc* (DJF).

Transportation and Communications

The average Djiboutian does not own a car. Public transport in the capital is by minivan or private taxi. In rural areas, people generally travel on foot. Paved roads link Djibouti City to the provincial capitals of Tadjoura, Ali Sabieh, and Dikhil. Boats travel daily across the Gulf of Tadjoura from Djibouti City to Obock and Tadjoura. A modern railway connects the capital to Ethiopia via Dire Dawa and is the first electrical transnational railway in all of Africa. The international airport services regional destinations and Paris.

The government runs the nation's only television and radio stations. The government also owns the nation's principal newspaper, *La Nation*. The cellular telephone network provides broader coverage than the landline system does, and cellular phones now outnumber landlines. The internet is available at the capital's internet cafés and at the university, and over half of Djiboutian people regularly use the internet.

Education

Structure and Access

Primary school begins at age six and lasts five years. Ten years of schooling is mandatory, but attendance is not enforced. Secondary school begins at about age twelve and lasts six years. The best secondary schools are available only to students who have high enough grades or connections to gain entrance. Although schooling is technically free, students must provide their own supplies, which may be too expensive for poor families. At all levels of education, boys outnumber girls, and the gap widens as time goes on. Girls are often kept out of school to help with household chores. Some nomadic families leave their children with relatives near a school so that they can receive an education. A little less than 60 percent of children attend primary school; attendance drops even lower in secondary school.

School Life

Most schools follow a French-style curriculum and examination schedule. Textbooks, including history books, usually come from France. Instruction is in French, with the exception of a few Arabic schools. In recent years, there has been a push to include instruction in Somali and Afar (the two most widely spoken languages) in primary school. Arab children often attend Arabic classes on the weekends. English is increasingly emphasized in schools because as Djibouti develops, a growing number of jobs require English skills.

Teaching methods are generally authoritarian and focus on memorization. Beginning in sixth grade, exams are held at the end of each year and determine if students can advance to the next year. Often schools are overcrowded and understaffed, so students may attend in shifts, one group in the morning and another in the afternoon. Many schools lack necessary supplies.

Higher Education

Until recently, Djiboutians wishing to pursue higher education had to apply for government sponsorships and go abroad. The University of Djibouti, which opened in 2006, offers programs in business, the sciences, technology, and liberal arts. Students at the top of their class and children of the wealthy still attend universities abroad, usually in French-speaking countries. Students graduating with university degrees often struggle to find employment in the country. Those jobs that are available often go to relatives of existing employees regardless of qualifications.

Health

Djibouti's healthcare facilities include a government hospital and a French military hospital, as well as many health clinics. The government subsidizes costs for some medical care, but hospitals and clinics lack supplies, beds, and trained personnel. Few people can afford care at private clinics. Health care outside the capital is even more limited. Djibouti's maternal mortality and infant mortality rates have steadily decreased as the number of births attended by doctors, nurses, or midwives has increased. Malaria and typhoid are common. Djibouti has a high rate of tuberculosis. HIV/AIDS is a growing health threat. In Djibouti's harsh climate, food insecurity is an endemic problem in rural areas. The nation relies heavily on foreign aid to feed its population.

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information

Embassy of the Republic of Djibouti, 1156 15th Street NW, Suite 515, Washington, DC 20005; phone (202) 331-0270; web site www.djiboutiembassyus.org.

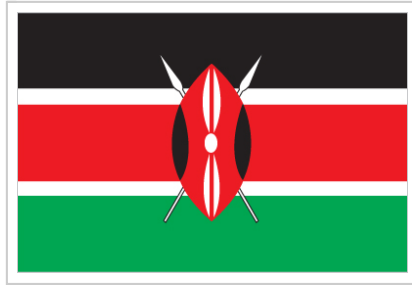
Country and Development Data

Capital	Djibouti City
Population	884,017 (rank=157)
Area (sq. mi.)	8,958 (rank=146)
Area (sq. km.)	23,200
Human Development Index	171 of 189 countries
Gender Inequality Index	NA
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$3,600
Adult Literacy	NA
Infant Mortality	44 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	64 (male); 68 (female)
Currency	Djibouti Franc

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AFRICA :: KENYA

Introduction :: KENYA

Background:

Founding president and liberation struggle icon Jomo KENYATTA led Kenya from independence in 1963 until his death in 1978, when Vice President Daniel Arap MOI took power in a constitutional succession. The country was a de facto one-party state from 1969 until 1982, after which time the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) changed the constitution to make itself the sole legal party in Kenya. MOI acceded to internal and external pressure for political liberalization in late 1991. The ethnically fractured opposition failed to dislodge KANU from power in elections in 1992 and 1997, which were marred by violence and fraud. President MOI stepped down in December 2002 following fair and peaceful elections. Mwai KIBAKI, running as the candidate of the multiethnic, united opposition group, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), defeated KANU candidate Uhuru KENYATTA, the son of founding president Jomo KENYATTA, and assumed the presidency following a campaign centered on an anticorruption platform.

KIBAKI's reelection in December 2007 brought charges of vote rigging from Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) candidate Raila ODINGA and unleashed two months of violence in which approximately 1,100 people died. African Union-sponsored mediation led by former UN Secretary General Kofi ANNAN in late February 2008 resulted in a power-sharing accord bringing ODINGA into the government in the restored position of prime minister. The power sharing accord included a broad reform agenda, the centerpiece of which was constitutional reform. In August 2010, Kenyans overwhelmingly adopted a new constitution in a national referendum. The new constitution introduced additional checks and balances to executive power and devolved power and resources to 47 newly created counties. It also eliminated the position of prime minister. Uhuru KENYATTA won the first presidential election under the new constitution in March 2013, and was sworn into office the following month; he began a second term in November 2017 following a contentious, repeat election.

Geography :: KENYA

Location:

Eastern Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean, between Somalia and Tanzania

Geographic coordinates:

1 00 N, 38 00 E

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 580,367 sq km

land: 569,140 sq km

water: 11,227 sq km

country comparison to the world: 50

Area - comparative:

five times the size of Ohio; slightly more than twice the size of Nevada

Area comparison map:**Land boundaries:**

total: 3,457 km

border countries (5): Ethiopia 867 km, Somalia 684 km, South Sudan 317 km, Tanzania 775 km, Uganda 814 km

Coastline:

536 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

Climate:

varies from tropical along coast to arid in interior

Terrain:

low plains rise to central highlands bisected by Great Rift Valley; fertile plateau in west

Elevation:

mean elevation: 762 m

lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m

highest point: Mount Kenya 5,199 m

Natural resources:

limestone, soda ash, salt, gemstones, fluorspar, zinc, diatomite, gypsum, wildlife, hydropower

Land use:

agricultural land: 48.1% (2011 est.)

arable land: 9.8% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 0.9% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 37.4% (2011 est.)

forest: 6.1% (2011 est.)

other: 45.8% (2011 est.)

Irrigated land:

1,030 sq km (2012)

Population distribution:

population heavily concentrated in the west along the shore of Lake Victoria; other areas of high density include the capital of Nairobi, and in the southeast along the Indian Ocean coast

Natural hazards:

recurring drought; flooding during rainy seasons

volcanism: limited volcanic activity; the Barrier (1,032 m) last erupted in 1921; South Island is the only other historically active volcano

Environment - current issues:

water pollution from urban and industrial wastes; water shortage and degraded water quality from increased use of pesticides and fertilizers; flooding; water hyacinth infestation in Lake Victoria; deforestation; soil erosion; desertification; poaching

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

the Kenyan Highlands comprise one of the most successful agricultural production regions in Africa; glaciers are found on Mount Kenya, Africa's second highest peak; unique physiography supports abundant and varied wildlife of scientific and economic value; Lake Victoria, the world's largest tropical lake and the second largest fresh water lake, is shared among three countries: Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

People and Society :: KENYA

Population:

48,397,527 (July 2018 est.)

note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, higher death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected

country comparison to the world: 29

Nationality:

noun: Kenyan(s)

adjective: Kenyan

Ethnic groups:

Kikuyu 17.2%, Luhya 13.8%, Kalejin 12.9%, Luo 10.5%, Kamba 10.1%, Somali 6.2%, Kisii 5.7%, Mijikenda 5.1%, Meru 4.3%, Turkana 2.6%, Masai 2.2%, other 9.4% (2014 est.)

Languages:

English (official), Kiswahili (official), numerous indigenous languages

Religions:

Christian 83% (Protestant 47.7%, Catholic 23.4%, other Christian 11.9%), Muslim 11.2%, Traditionalists 1.7%, other 1.6%, none 2.4%, unspecified 0.2% (2009 est.)

Demographic profile:

Kenya has experienced dramatic population growth since the mid-20th century as a result of its high birth rate and its declining mortality rate. More than 40% of Kenyans are under the age of 15 because of sustained high fertility, early marriage and childbearing, and an unmet need for family planning. Kenya's persistent rapid population growth strains the labor market, social services, arable land, and natural resources. Although Kenya in 1967 was the first Sub-Saharan country to launch a nationwide family planning program, progress in reducing the birth rate has largely stalled since the late 1990s, when the government decreased its support for family planning to focus on the HIV epidemic. Government commitment and international technical support spurred Kenyan contraceptive use, decreasing the fertility rate (children per woman) from about 8 in the late 1970s to less than 5 children twenty years later, but it has plateaued at just over 3 children today.

Kenya is a source of emigrants and a host country for refugees. In the 1960s and 1970s, Kenyans pursued higher education in the UK because of colonial ties, but as British immigration rules tightened, the US, the then Soviet Union, and Canada became attractive study destinations. Kenya's stagnant economy and political problems during the 1980s and 1990s led to an outpouring of Kenyan students and professionals seeking permanent opportunities in the West and southern Africa. Nevertheless, Kenya's relative stability since its independence in 1963 has attracted hundreds of thousands of refugees escaping violent conflicts in neighboring countries; Kenya shelters more than 300,000 Somali refugees as of April 2017.

Age structure:

0-14 years: 39.03% (male 9,474,968 /female 9,416,609)

15-24 years: 19.61% (male 4,737,647 /female 4,752,896)

25-54 years: 34.27% (male 8,393,673 /female 8,193,800)

55-64 years: 4% (male 894,371 /female 1,040,883)

65 years and over: 3.08% (male 640,005 /female 852,675) (2018 est.)

population pyramid:**Dependency ratios:**

total dependency ratio: 78.3 (2015 est.)

youth dependency ratio: 73.7 (2015 est.)

elderly dependency ratio: 4.6 (2015 est.)

potential support ratio: 21.7 (2015 est.)

Median age:

total: 20 years (2018 est.)

male: 19.9 years

female: 20.2 years

country comparison to the world: 191

Population growth rate:

1.57% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 67

Birth rate:

22.6 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 66

Death rate:

6.7 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 137

Net migration rate:

-0.2 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

Population distribution:

population heavily concentrated in the west along the shore of Lake Victoria; other areas of high density include the capital of Nairobi, and in the southeast along the Indian Ocean coast

Urbanization:

urban population: 27.5% of total population (2019)

rate of urbanization: 4.23% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

4.556 million NAIROBI (capital), 1.254 million Mombassa (2019)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.02 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.86 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.75 male(s)/female

total population: 1 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

20.3 years (2014 est.)

note: median age at first birth among women 25-29

Maternal mortality rate:

342 deaths/100,000 live births (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 32

Infant mortality rate:

total: 36.1 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

male: 40.3 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 31.7 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 48

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 64.6 years (2018 est.)

male: 63.1 years

female: 66.1 years

country comparison to the world: 187

Total fertility rate:

2.81 children born/woman (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 59

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

60.5% (2017)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 81.6% of population

rural: 56.8% of population

total: 63.2% of population

unimproved:

urban: 18.4% of population

rural: 43.2% of population

total: 36.8% of population (2015 est.)

Current Health Expenditure:

4.5% (2016)

Physicians density:

0.2 physicians/1,000 population (2014)

Hospital bed density:

1.4 beds/1,000 population (2010)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 31.2% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 29.7% of population (2015 est.)

total: 30.1% of population (2015 est.)

unimproved:

urban: 68.8% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 70.3% of population (2015 est.)

total: 69.9% of population (2015 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

4.7% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 12

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

1.6 million (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 5

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

25,000 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 6

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high (2016)

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever (2016)

vectorborne diseases: malaria, dengue fever, and Rift Valley fever (2016)

water contact diseases: schistosomiasis (2016)

animal contact diseases: rabies (2016)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

7.1% (2016)

country comparison to the world: 161

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

11.2% (2014)

country comparison to the world: 58

Education expenditures:

5.2% of GDP (2017)

country comparison to the world: 55

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 78%

male: 81.1%

female: 74.9% (2015)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 11 years

male: 11 years

female: 11 years (2009)

Government :: KENYA

Country name:**conventional long form:** Republic of Kenya**conventional short form:** Kenya**local long form:** Republic of Kenya/Jamhuri ya Kenya**local short form:** Kenya**former:** British East Africa**etymology:** named for Mount Kenya; the meaning of the name is unclear but may derive from the Kikuyu, Embu, and Kamba words "kirinyaga," "kirenyaa," and "kiinyaa" - all of which mean "God's resting place"**Government type:**

presidential republic

Capital:**name:** Nairobi**geographic coordinates:** 1 17 S, 36 49 E**time difference:** UTC+3 (8 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)**etymology:** the name derives from the Maasai expression meaning "cool waters" and refers to a cold water stream that flowed through the area in the late 19th century**Administrative divisions:**

47 counties; Baringo, Bomet, Bungoma, Busia, Elgeyo/Marakwet, Embu, Garissa, Homa Bay, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kericho, Kiambu, Kilifi, Kirinyaga, Kisii, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Laikipia, Lamu, Machakos, Makueni, Mandera, Marsabit, Meru, Migori, Mombasa, Murang'a, Nairobi City, Nakuru, Nandi, Narok, Nyamira, Nyandarua, Nyeri, Samburu, Siaya, Taita/Taveta, Tana River, Tharaka-Nithi, Trans Nzoia, Turkana, Uasin Gishu, Vihiga, Wajir, West Pokot

Independence:

12 December 1963 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Jamhuri Day (Independence Day), 12 December (1963); note - Madaraka Day, 1 June (1963) marks the day Kenya attained internal self-rule

Constitution:**history:** previous 1963, 1969; latest drafted 6 May 2010, passed by referendum 4 August 2010, promulgated 27 August 2010**amendments:** proposed by either house of Parliament or by petition of at least one million eligible voters; passage of amendments by Parliament requires approval by at least two-thirds majority vote of both houses in each of two readings, approval in a referendum by majority of votes cast by at least 20% of eligible voters in at least one half of Kenya's counties, and approval by the president; passage of amendments introduced by petition requires approval by a majority of county assemblies, approval by majority vote of both houses, and approval by the president (2017)**Legal system:**

mixed legal system of English common law, Islamic law, and customary law; judicial review in the new Supreme Court established by the new constitution

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

Citizenship:

citizenship by birth: no

citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of Kenya

dual citizenship recognized: yes

residency requirement for naturalization: 4 out of the previous 7 years

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Uhuru KENYATTA (since 9 April 2013); Deputy President William RUTO (since 9 April 2013); note - the president is both chief of state and head of government

head of government: President Uhuru KENYATTA (since 9 April 2013); Deputy President William RUTO (since 9 April 2013); note - position of the prime minister was abolished after the March 2013 elections

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president, subject to confirmation by the National Assembly

elections/appointments: president and deputy president directly elected on the same ballot by qualified majority popular vote for a 5-year term (eligible for a second term); in addition to receiving an absolute majority popular vote, the presidential candidate must also win at least 25% of the votes cast in at least 24 of the 47 counties to avoid a runoff; election last held on 26 October 2017 (next to be held in 2022)

election results: Uhuru KENYATTA reelected president; percent of vote - Uhuru KENYATTA (Jubilee Party) 98.3%, Raila ODINGA (ODM) 1%, other 0.7%; note - Kenya held a previous presidential election on 8 August 2017, but Kenya's Supreme Court on 1 September 2017 nullified the results, citing irregularities; the political opposition boycotted the October vote

Legislative branch:

description: bicameral Parliament consists of:

Senate (67 seats; 47 members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 20 directly elected by proportional representation vote - 16 women, 2 representing youth, and 2 representing the disabled; members serve 5-year terms)

National Assembly (349 seats; 290 members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, 47 women in single-seat constituencies elected by simple majority vote, and 12 members nominated by the National Assembly - 6 representing youth and 6 representing the disabled; members serve 5-year terms)

elections: Senate - last held on 8 August 2017 (next to be held in August 2022)

National Assembly - last held on 8 August 2017 (next to be held in August 2022)

election results: Senate - percent of vote by party/coalition - NA; seats by party/coalition - Jubilee Party 24; National Super Alliance 28, other 14, independent 1; composition - men 46, women 41, percent of women is 31.3%

National Assembly - percent of vote by party/coalition - NA; seats by party/coalition - Jubilee Party 165, National Super Alliance 119, other 51, independent 13; composition - men 273, women 76, percent of women 21.8%; note - total Parliament percent of women is 23%

Judicial branch:

highest courts: Supreme Court (consists of chief and deputy chief justices and 5 judges)

judge selection and term of office: chief and deputy chief justices nominated by Judicial Service Commission (JSC) and appointed by the president with approval of the National Assembly; other judges nominated by the JSC and appointed by president; chief justice serves a nonrenewable 10-year term or until age 70, whichever comes first; other judges serve until age 70

subordinate courts: High Court; Court of Appeal; military courts; magistrates' courts; religious courts

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance Party of Kenya or APK [Kiraitu MURUNGI]

Amani National Congress or ANC [Musalia MUDAVIDI]

Federal Party of Kenya or FPK [Cyrus JIRONGA]

Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya or FORD-K [Moses WETANGULA]

Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-People or FORD-P [Henry OBWOCHA]

Jubilee Party [Uhuru KENYATTA]

Kenya African National Union or KANU [Gideon MOI]

National Rainbow Coalition or NARC [Charity NGILU]

Orange Democratic Movement Party of Kenya or ODM [Raila ODINGA]

Wiper Democratic Movement-K or WDM-K (formerly Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya or ODM-K) [Kalonzo MUSYOKA]

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, C, CD, COMESA, EAC, EADB, FAO, G-15, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICt, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IGAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, NAM, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNMIL, UNMISS, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Ambassador Robinson Njeru GITHAE (since 18 November 2014)

chancery: 2249 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 387-6101

FAX: [1] (202) 462-3829

consulate(s) general: Los Angeles

consulate(s): New York

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Kyle MCCARTER (since 12 March 2019)

telephone: [254] (20) 363-6000

embassy: United Nations Avenue, Nairobi; P.O. Box 606 Village Market, Nairobi 00621

mailing address: American Embassy Nairobi, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20521-8900

FAX: [254] (20) 363-6157

Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of black (top), red, and green; the red band is edged in white; a large Maasai warrior's shield covering crossed spears is superimposed at the center; black symbolizes the majority population, red the blood shed in the struggle for freedom, green stands for natural wealth, and white for peace; the shield and crossed spears symbolize the defense of freedom

National symbol(s):

lion; national colors: black, red, green, white

National anthem:

name: "Ee Mungu Nguvu Yetu" (Oh God of All Creation)

lyrics/music: Graham HYSLOP, Thomas KALUME, Peter KIBUKOSYA, Washington OMONDI, and George W. SENOGA-ZAKE/traditional, adapted by Graham HYSLOP, Thomas KALUME, Peter KIBUKOSYA, Washington OMONDI, and George W. SENOGA-ZAKE

note: adopted 1963; based on a traditional Kenyan folk song

Economy :: KENYA

Economy - overview:

Kenya is the economic, financial, and transport hub of East Africa. Kenya's real GDP growth has averaged over 5% for the last decade. Since 2014, Kenya has been ranked as a lower middle income country because its per capita GDP crossed a World Bank threshold. While Kenya has a growing entrepreneurial middle class and steady growth, its economic development has been impaired by weak governance and corruption. Although reliable numbers are hard to find, unemployment and under-employment are extremely high, and could be near 40% of the population. In 2013, the country adopted a devolved system of government with the creation of 47 counties, and is in the process of devolving state revenues and responsibilities to the counties.

Agriculture remains the backbone of the Kenyan economy, contributing one-third of GDP. About 75% of Kenya's population of roughly 48.5 million work at least part-time in the agricultural sector, including livestock and pastoral activities. Over 75% of agricultural output is from small-scale, rain-fed farming or livestock production. Tourism also holds a significant place in Kenya's economy. In spite of political turmoil throughout the second half of 2017, tourism was up 20%, showcasing the strength of this sector. Kenya has long been a target of terrorist activity and has struggled with instability along its northeastern borders. Some high visibility terrorist attacks during 2013-2015 (e.g., at Nairobi's Westgate Mall and Garissa University) affected the tourism industry severely, but the sector rebounded strongly in 2016-2017 and appears poised to continue growing.

Inadequate infrastructure continues to hamper Kenya's efforts to improve its annual growth so that it can meaningfully address poverty and unemployment. The KENYATTA administration has been successful in courting external investment for infrastructure development. International financial institutions and donors remain important to Kenya's growth and development, but Kenya has also successfully raised capital in the global bond market issuing its first sovereign bond offering in mid-2014, with a second occurring in February 2018. The first phase of a Chinese-financed and constructed standard gauge railway connecting Mombasa and Nairobi opened in May 2017.

In 2016 the government was forced to take over three small and undercapitalized banks when underlying weaknesses were exposed. The government also enacted legislation that limits interest rates banks can charge on loans and set a rate that banks must pay their depositors. This measure led to a sharp shrinkage of credit in the economy. A prolonged election cycle in 2017 hurt the economy, drained government resources, and slowed GDP growth. Drought-like conditions in parts of the country pushed 2017 inflation above 8%, but the rate had fallen to 4.5% in February 2018.

The economy, however, is well placed to resume its decade-long 5%-6% growth rate. While fiscal deficits continue to pose risks in the medium term, other economic indicators, including foreign exchange reserves, interest rates, current account deficits, remittances and FDI are positive. The credit and drought-related impediments were temporary. Now In his second term, President KENYATTA has pledged to make economic growth and development a centerpiece of his second administration, focusing on his "Big Four" initiatives of universal healthcare, food security, affordable housing, and expansion of manufacturing.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$163.7 billion (2017 est.)

\$156 billion (2016 est.)

\$147.4 billion (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 74

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$79.22 billion (2017 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

4.9% (2017 est.)

5.9% (2016 est.)

5.7% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 53

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$3,500 (2017 est.)

\$3,400 (2016 est.)

\$3,300 (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 187

Gross national saving:

10.4% of GDP (2017 est.)

11% of GDP (2016 est.)

11.4% of GDP (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 79.5% (2017 est.)

government consumption: 14.3% (2017 est.)

investment in fixed capital: 18.9% (2017 est.)

investment in inventories: -1% (2017 est.)

exports of goods and services: 13.9% (2017 est.)

imports of goods and services: -25.5% (2017 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 34.5% (2017 est.)

industry: 17.8% (2017 est.)

services: 47.5% (2017 est.)

Agriculture - products:

tea, coffee, corn, wheat, sugarcane, fruit, vegetables; dairy products, beef, fish, pork, poultry, eggs

Industries:

small-scale consumer goods (plastic, furniture, batteries, textiles, clothing, soap, cigarettes, flour), agricultural products, horticulture, oil refining; aluminum, steel, lead; cement, commercial ship repair, tourism, information technology

Industrial production growth rate:

3.6% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 82

Labor force:

19.6 million (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 30

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 61.1%

industry: 6.7%

services: 32.2% (2005 est.)

Unemployment rate:

40% (2013 est.)

40% (2001 est.)

country comparison to the world: 214

Population below poverty line:

36.1% (2016 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 1.8%

highest 10%: 37.8% (2005)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

48.5 (2016 est.)

42.5 (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 23

Budget:

revenues: 13.95 billion (2017 est.)

expenditures: 19.24 billion (2017 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

17.6% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-6.7% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 190

Public debt:

54.2% of GDP (2017 est.)

53.2% of GDP (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 84

Fiscal year:

1 July - 30 June

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

8% (2017 est.)

6.3% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Central bank discount rate:

10% (1 January 2017)

11.5% (1 January 2016)

country comparison to the world: 21

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

13.67% (31 December 2017 est.)

16.56% (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 53

Stock of narrow money:

\$14.07 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$12.77 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 76

Stock of broad money:

\$14.07 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$12.77 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 77

Stock of domestic credit:

\$32 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$29.88 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 79

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$19.33 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

\$26.48 billion (31 December 2015 est.)

\$26.16 billion (31 December 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 63

Current account balance:

-\$5.021 billion (2017 est.)

-\$3.697 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 183

Exports:

\$5.792 billion (2017 est.)

\$5.695 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 104

Exports - partners:

Uganda 10.8%, Pakistan 10.6%, US 8.1%, Netherlands 7.3%, UK 6.4%, Tanzania 4.8%, UAE 4.4% (2017)

Exports - commodities:

tea, horticultural products, coffee, petroleum products, fish, cement, apparel

Imports:

\$15.99 billion (2017 est.)

\$13.41 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 85

Imports - commodities:

machinery and transportation equipment, oil, petroleum products, motor vehicles, iron and steel, resins and plastics

Imports - partners:

China 22.5%, India 9.9%, UAE 8.7%, Saudi Arabia 5.1%, Japan 4.5% (2017)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$7.354 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$7.256 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 83

Debt - external:

\$27.59 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$37.7 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 85

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

\$8.738 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$5.317 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:

\$1.545 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$335.5 million (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 86

Exchange rates:

Kenyan shillings (KES) per US dollar -

102.1 (2017 est.)

101.5 (2016 est.)

101.504 (2015 est.)

98.179 (2014 est.)

87.921 (2013 est.)

Energy :: KENYA

Electricity access:

population without electricity: 13 million (2017)

electrification - total population: 56% (2016)

electrification - urban areas: 77.6% (2016)

electrification - rural areas: 39.3% (2016)

Electricity - production:

9.634 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 105

Electricity - consumption:

7.863 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 104

Electricity - exports:

39.1 million kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 89

Electricity - imports:

184 million kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 95

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

2.401 million kW (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

33% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 183

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 118

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

34% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 62

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

33% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 13

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Crude oil - imports:

12,550 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 71

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Refined petroleum products - production:

13,960 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 96

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

109,000 bbl/day (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 76

Refined petroleum products - exports:

173 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 118

Refined petroleum products - imports:

90,620 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 57

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 128

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 142

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

17.98 million Mt (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 88

Communications :: KENYA**Telephones - fixed lines:**

total subscriptions: 69,861

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: less than 1 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 149

Telephones - mobile cellular:

total subscriptions: 42,815,109

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 90 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 33

Telephone system:**general assessment:**

the mobile-cellular system is generally good, especially in urban areas; fixed-line telephone system is small and inefficient; trunks are primarily microwave radio relay; to encourage advancement of the LTE services the govt. has fostered an open-access approach; govt. progresses with national broadband strategy; more licensing being awarded has led to competition which is good for growth

(2018)

domestic: multiple providers in the mobile-cellular segment of the market fostering a boom in mobile-cellular telephone usage with teledensity reaching 90 per 100 persons; fixed-line subscriptions stand at less than 1 per 100 persons (2018)

international: country code - 254; landing point for the EASSy, TEAMS, LION2, DARE1, PEACE Cable, and SEACOM fiber-optic submarine cable systems covering East, North and South Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia; satellite earth stations - 4 Intelsat; launched first micro satellites (2019)

Broadcast media:

about a half-dozen large-scale privately owned media companies with TV and radio stations, as well as a state-owned TV broadcaster, provide service nationwide; satellite and cable TV subscription services available; state-owned radio broadcaster operates 2 national radio channels and provides regional and local radio services in multiple languages; many private radio stations broadcast on a national level along with over 100 private and non-profit regional stations broadcasting in local languages; TV transmissions of all major international broadcasters available, mostly via paid subscriptions; direct radio frequency modulation transmissions available for several foreign government-owned broadcasters (2019)

Internet country code:

.ke

Internet users:

total: 12,165,597

percent of population: 26% (July 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 45

Broadband - fixed subscriptions:

total: 288,303

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: less than 1 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Military and Security :: KENYA

Military expenditures:

1.3% of GDP (2019)

1.22% of GDP (2018)

1.32% of GDP (2017)

1.32% of GDP (2016)

1.32% of GDP (2015)

country comparison to the world: 94

Military and security forces:

Kenya Defence Forces: Kenya Army, Kenya Navy, Kenya Air Force (2019)

note: the National Police Service includes a paramilitary General Service Unit

Military service age and obligation:

18-26 years of age for male and female voluntary service (under 18 with parental consent), with a 9-year obligation (7 years for Kenyan Navy) and subsequent 3-year reenlistments; applicants must be Kenyan citizens and provide a national identity card (obtained at age 18) and a school-leaving certificate, and undergo a series of mental and physical examinations; women serve under the same terms and conditions as men; mandatory retirement at age 55 but personnel leaving before this age remain in a reserve status until they reach age 55 unless they were removed for disciplinary reasons; there is no active military reserve, although the Ministry of Defence has stated its desire to create one as recently as 2017 (2019)

Maritime threats:

The International Maritime Bureau reports that shipping in territorial and offshore waters in the Indian Ocean remain at risk for piracy and armed robbery against ships, especially as Somali-based pirates extend their activities south; numerous commercial vessels have been attacked and hijacked both at anchor and while underway; crews have been robbed and stores or cargoes stolen.

Military - note:

The Kenya Coast Guard Service (established 2018) is separate from the Defence Forces, but led by a military officer and comprised of personnel from the military, as well as the National Police Service, intelligence services, and other government agencies. (2019)

Transportation :: KENYA

National air transport system:

number of registered air carriers: 16 (2015)

inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 106 (2015)

annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 4,874,590 (2015)

annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 286,414,683 mt-km (2015)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:

5Y (2016)

Airports:

197 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 28

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 16 (2017)

over 3,047 m: 5 (2017)

2,438 to 3,047 m: 2 (2017)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 2 (2017)

914 to 1,523 m: 6 (2017)

under 914 m: 1 (2017)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 181 (2013)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 14 (2013)

914 to 1,523 m: 107 (2013)

under 914 m: 60 (2013)

Pipelines:

4 km oil, 1,432 km refined products (2018)

Railways:

total: 3,819 km (2018)

standard gauge: 485 km 1.435-m gauge (2018)

narrow gauge: 3,334 km 1.000-m gauge (2018)

country comparison to the world: 52

Roadways:

total: 177,800 km (2018)

paved: 14,420 km (8,500 km highways, 1,872 urban roads, and 4,048 rural roads) (2017)

unpaved: 147,032 km (2017)

country comparison to the world: 31

Waterways:

none specifically; the only significant inland waterway is the part of Lake Victoria within the boundaries of Kenya; Kisumu is the main port and has ferry connections to Uganda and Tanzania (2011)

Merchant marine:

total: 22

by type: general cargo 1, oil tanker 2, other 19 (2018)

country comparison to the world: 137

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Kisumu, Mombasa

LNG terminal(s) (import): Mombasa

Terrorism :: KENYA

Terrorist groups - foreign based:

al-Shabaab: aim(s): establish Islamic rule in Kenya's northeastern border region and coast; avenge Kenya's past intervention in Somalia against al-Shabaab and its ongoing participation in the African Union mission; compel Kenya to withdraw troops from Somalia; attract Kenyan recruits to support operations in Somalia

area(s) of operation: maintains an operational and recruitment presence, mostly along the coast and the northeastern border region (2018)

Transnational Issues :: KENYA

Disputes - international:

Kenya served as an important mediator in brokering Sudan's north-south separation in February 2005; as of March 2019, Kenya provides shelter to nearly 475,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including Ugandans who flee across the border periodically to seek protection from Lord's Resistance Army rebels; Kenya works hard to prevent the clan and militia fighting in Somalia from spreading across the border, which has long been open to nomadic pastoralists; the boundary that separates Kenya's and Sudan's sovereignty is unclear in the "Ilemi Triangle," which Kenya has administered since colonial times

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 256,168 (Somalia) (refugees and asylum seekers), 119,799 (South Sudan) (refugees and asylum seekers), 43,890 (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (refugees and asylum seekers), 27,989 (Ethiopia) (refugees and asylum seekers), 14,674 (Burundi) (refugees and asylum seekers), 10,011 (Sudan) (refugees and asylum seekers) (2019)

IDPs: 162,000 (election-related violence, intercommunal violence, resource conflicts, al-Shabaab attacks in 2017 and 2018) (2018)

stateless persons: 18,500 (2018); note - the stateless population consists of Nubians, Kenyan Somalis, and coastal Arabs; the Nubians are descendants of Sudanese soldiers recruited by the British to fight for them in East Africa more than a century ago; Nubians did not receive Kenyan citizenship when the country became independent in 1963; only recently have Nubians become a formally recognized tribe and had less trouble obtaining national IDs; Galjeel and other Somalis who have lived in Kenya for decades are included with more recent Somali refugees and denied ID cards

Illicit drugs:

widespread harvesting of small plots of marijuana; transit country for South Asian heroin destined for Europe and North America; Indian methaqualone also transits on way to South Africa; significant potential for money-laundering activity given the country's status as a regional financial center; massive corruption, and relatively high levels of narcotics-associated activities

Kenya country profile

- 31 January 2018



Situated on the equator on Africa's east coast, Kenya has been described as "the cradle of humanity".

In the Great Rift Valley paleontologists have discovered some of the earliest evidence of man's ancestors.

In the present day, Kenya's ethnic diversity has produced a vibrant culture but is also a source of conflict.

The Islamist militant Al-Shabab movement, active in Somalia, has also been launching a growing number of attacks in Kenya, including the 2013 Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi and the 2015 attack on Garissa University College in northwest Kenya.

Other pressing challenges include high unemployment, crime and poverty. Droughts frequently put millions of people at risk.

FACTS

The Republic of Kenya

Capital: Nairobi

- **Population** 48.5 million
 - **Area** 582,646 sq km (224,961 sq miles)
 - **Major languages** Swahili, English
 - **Major religion** Christianity
 - **Life expectancy** 63 years (men), 69 years (women)
 - **Currency** Kenya shilling
- UN, World Bank

LEADER

President: Uhuru Kenyatta



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The son of Kenya's founding president, Uhuru Kenyatta took up his father's mantle to become head of state in April 2013, despite facing charges of crimes against humanity over election violence five years earlier.

Mr Kenyatta, ranked by Forbes as the richest man in Kenya, was born in 1961 shortly after the release of his father Jomo Kenyatta from nearly 10 years' imprisonment by British colonial forces, and two years before Kenya's independence.

Educated in the United States at the elite Amherst College, where he studied political science and economics, he is viewed as the top political leader of Kenya's largest tribe, the Kikuyu, who make up some 17% of the population.

However, he also appeals to Kenyans from different ethnic backgrounds, able to mingle not only with the elite he was born into but also with the average Kenyan, cracking jokes using local street slang.

He was declared winner of the presidential election in August 2017, but the Supreme Court declared the election null and void because of irregularities. He was also declared winner of the October re-run, which was boycotted by the opposition.

MEDIA



Image copyright GETTY IMAGES

A handful of major commercial companies dominates the media industry, operating alongside state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC).

TV is the main news source in urban areas. Internet use is high by regional standards, driven by the use of mobile devices.

The competitive press scene is the most sophisticated in the region. Newspapers are free to criticise politicians and the government.

TIMELINE

Some key dates in Kenya's history:



Image copyrightGETTY IMAGESImage caption

Jomo Kenyatta was inaugurated as president after a bitter struggle for independence from Britain

c 3.3 million BC - Evidence of some of the earliest human tools have been found in Kenya, suggesting that it was the cradle of humanity from which descendants moved out to populate the world.

1895 - Formation of British East African Protectorate, which becomes crown colony of Kenya - administered by a British governor - in 1920.

1944 - Kenyan African Union (KAU) formed to campaign for African independence. First African appointment to legislative council.

1963 - Kenya gains independence. Opposition groups are stifled and the country survives ethnic tensions and a coup attempt. Multiparty elections are allowed in 1991.

1998 - Al-Qaeda operatives bomb the US embassy in Nairobi, killing 224 people and injuring thousands.

2007 - Disputed general elections are followed by deadly violence.

2009 - Kenya says that at least 10 million people, or one third of the population, are in need of food aid. The government mobilises the military to distribute food, water and medicines to areas hit hardest by drought.

2011 - Kenya intervenes in conflict in Somalia and subsequently suffers several apparent reprisal attacks, including the 2013 massacre at Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi and the 2015 attack on Garissa University College in the northwest.



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Kenya lies on the east coast of Africa and is bisected by the equator. It covers an area slightly smaller than France or the U.S. state of Texas. Kenya features two of Africa's Great Lakes: Lake Turkana (Lake Rudolf) lies near the Chalbi Desert, and Lake Victoria overlaps the southwestern border. Mount Kenya, the second-highest point in Africa, rises in the center of the country to an elevation of 17,058 feet (5,199 meters).

Kenya is famous for its abundant and diverse wildlife. Species include lion, hyena, leopard, cheetah, elephant, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, buffalo, and impala. National reserves cover several million acres.

The nation's semidesert northern plains are hot and arid. The population in that part of the country usually practices nomadic pastoralism, moving from one area to another to take advantage of seasonal grazing patterns. The climate is moderate in the rich agricultural highlands of western Kenya, a region bisected by the fertile Great Rift Valley. In the southeast, near the coast, the tropical climate is hot and humid.

Kenya has two wet seasons. "Long rains" from April to June are usually reliable and heavy. They are followed by "short rains" from October to November. Climate change has affected weather patterns, however, sometimes extending rainy seasons by a month or two. The country is generally dry and windy from December to March. Droughts are a frequent problem.

History

Tribes and Foreign Influence

Kenya's first inhabitants were various hunting groups (collectively called Dorobo) who lived on the area's vast plains. They mixed with Bantu peoples who had migrated from the south. By the 15th century, the Bantu covered much of eastern Africa. More than half of Kenya's current ethnic groups have Bantu origins. Nilotic groups migrated from North Africa. Today's descendants of the Nilotic people include the Luo, Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana. These mixed peoples eventually developed the Swahili language.

In 1498, Portuguese explorers established trading posts on the coast. Arabs drove out the Portuguese in 1729 and established their own trading posts. After 1740, Arabs ruled the Kenyan coast from the island of Zanzibar. In 1887, the British East Africa Company leased the coast from the sultan of Zanzibar. Kenya became a British protectorate in 1895 and a colony in 1920. The British introduced Christianity and brought people from India and other parts of its empire to work on large infrastructure projects, such as the railroad.

Independence and One-Party Rule

Following a period of violent partisan uprisings (the Mau Mau Rebellion) in the 1950s, Britain granted Kenya independence in 1963. Jomo Kenyatta, leader of the independence struggle, served as the first president until his death in 1978. He formed a strong central government under one political party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU). He was succeeded by Daniel Toroitich arap Moi. In 1982, Moi declared KANU the only legal political party, citing a need to avoid having political parties based on tribes. All political candidates had to register with KANU to be

eligible for office.

Political Reform and Conflict

Under international pressure, Moi opened the country to multiparty democracy in 1992 and adopted a two-term limit for the president. A fragmented opposition failed to wrest power from KANU in 1992 and 1997, although most observers declared the balloting unfair due to vote rigging and political harassment. Politicians also stirred ethnic conflict as a means of intimidating voters. In the western Rift Valley alone, more than 1,500 people died as a result of ethnic violence.

In 2002, divisions within KANU prompted many of its leaders to join with opposition parties to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which selected Mwai Kibaki as its candidate. In 2002, Kibaki won the presidency with 62 percent of the vote. NARC enjoyed a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, ending four decades of KANU rule.

Kibaki pledged to reverse the nation's economic decline and combat corruption, but his first term was plagued by allegations of graft among senior government officials. When Kibaki narrowly won reelection in 2007, opposition leader Raila Odinga accused him of electoral fraud. The controversy sparked violent clashes in which hundreds of people died. To end the conflict, a power-sharing agreement was signed in which Kibaki remained president and Odinga became prime minister.

Odinga lost a controversial presidential election in 2013 to Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of Jomo Kenyatta. The two faced off again in 2017, when Kenya became the first country in Africa to respect an opposition request to annul election results; however, Uhuru Kenyatta won the runoff election as well. Uhuru faced charges from the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity committed during the post-election violence in 2007 until prosecutors dropped them in 2014, accusing the Kenyan government of failing to hand over vital evidence. In 2010, voters approved a new constitution, which called for land reforms, limits on the power of the president, the elimination of the position of prime minister, and the creation of a second chamber of the legislature. Again in 2017, Odinga lost an election to Kenyatta. The election included a rerun, the first of its kind in all of Africa, that was lost by Odinga since he chose not to participate, citing that necessary changes had not been made. Though far less violent than in 2007, the 2017 election season included almost 100 deaths.

In 2011, Kenyan troops entered Somalia to suppress militants who were raiding settlements along the border. Kenya has since suffered frequent reprisal attacks attributed to al-Shabab, the Somali group affiliated with al-Qaeda, in which hundreds of people have been killed in total. The largest were the 2013 assault on Nairobi's Westgate Mall, which killed 67, and the 2015 attack on a university in Garissa, which killed 148. Human-rights groups have accused Kenyan security forces of extrajudicial killings and disappearances of people as part of their efforts against al-Shabab. Though struggling, in part because of political instability, corruption, drought, and periodic terrorist attacks, the Kenyan economy remains one of the largest in eastern Africa.

Recent Events and Trends

• **New railway:** In June 2017, a new major railway opened between Mombasa and Nairobi, marking Kenya's largest infrastructure project to be completed since the country's independence. The Chinese-funded railway is planned to eventually connect to countries neighboring Kenya and beyond. Reports of racism toward Kenyans from the Chinese who have come to live and work on the railway and other projects in Kenya are frequent.

• **Immigrant issues:** In May 2018, the government cracked down on foreign workers by threatening jail time for those failing to pass required documentation checks. The move followed previous attempts by the government to limit the presence and rights of refugees in the country. Most of these attempts have been blocked by Kenyan courts. However, the government and intelligence agencies retain wide-ranging powers under an anti-terror law that affects refugees. Kenya is home to more than half a million refugees, many of whom have fled Somalia and South Sudan. Although Kenya has taken in many refugees over the past few decades, effectively implementing refugee rights is an ongoing issue.

• **al-Shabab development:** In January 2019, al-Shabab militants claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack on the Dusit complex in Nairobi, in which 14 people were killed. The Dusit complex is in Westlands, an affluent neighborhood in Nairobi, home to both Kenyans and foreigners. This attack took place just one day after the Kenyan court ruling that three men are to stand trial for the Westgate Mall terrorist attack of 2013.

THE PEOPLE

Population

Nearly all of the population is African and is divided among at least 47 distinct ethnic groups, or tribes. The largest of these groups include the Kikuyu (22 percent), Luhya (15), Luo (11), Kalenjin (12), Kamba (12), Kisii (6), and Meru (6). Smaller groups include the Embu, Maasai, Mijikenda, Samburu, Somali, Taita, Teso, Turkana, and others. About 1 percent of the population consists of Europeans, Asians, and Arabs.

Each tribe is further divided into clans, or sub-tribes. For example, the Luhya tribe is divided into some 18 clans, which include the Maragoli, Bukusu, Tiriki, Banyala, and Bunyore.

Nairobi, the capital, is home to more than four million people, but only about 27 percent of all Kenyans live in urban areas. The population is concentrated in the southern two-thirds of the country, where most people reside in rural towns and villages.

Language

English and Swahili (also called *kiswahili*) are Kenya's official languages. English is widely used in business, education, and government. Swahili is promoted to encourage national unity and was chosen as the national language over other native tongues because of its linguistic commonality

with Kenya's other Bantu-based languages. Each ethnic group has its own native tongue, though the use of these ethnic languages is slowly decreasing among younger generations, especially among those raised in urban areas. Communication between ethnic groups usually takes place in Swahili or English. Urban young people sometimes speak Sheng, a mixture of Swahili, English, and Bantu languages.

Religion

The majority of Kenyans are Christians. About 48 percent belong to various Protestant churches and 23 percent are Roman Catholic. Approximately 11 percent are Muslim. Most Muslims live along the coast and in the northeast. A small portion of people follow indigenous belief systems or nontraditional Christian faiths.

Members of various Christian churches generally interact peacefully, and different denominations may gather for special prayer meetings during which people pray for a common cause. Some churches are closely involved with political events and sometimes influence how their members vote. Before elections, churches may hold political meetings and invite speakers to address the congregation about political topics.

Indigenous beliefs vary by ethnic group. For example, the Kikuyu pray facing Mount Kenya in the belief that this is the location of Ngai (God). Christians often mix aspects of indigenous religions with their practice of Christianity. For example, upon the death of a loved one, the funeral may include both indigenous and Christian rituals.

General Attitudes

Kenyans tend to be warm and friendly. They are generally proud of their cultural heritage and their nation's accomplishments. In particular, Kenyans take deep pride in the talent of their athletes, especially their endurance runners, who have won numerous Olympic medals and broken world records.

The family is society's most important group, followed by the tribe. Failing to maintain close ties with the extended family is considered rebellious behavior. Family needs generally take precedence over personal interests. Individuals traditionally share their wealth with poorer family members. For instance, a man with adequate finances may be expected to pay school fees for his less-fortunate brother's children. Wealthier individuals are also expected to help their community. With current economic strains and the weakening of tradition, some middle-class people resent taking care of extended family members.

While Kenya's ethnic groups generally coexist peacefully, certain qualities are associated with each group. For example, the Luo are seen by some as being proud and outspoken. Among the Kikuyu, those living in Nyeri are believed to be serious and industrious, and those in Murang'a are seen as humble and peaceful. Distinctions are made within ethnic groups as well, and members of each clan are believed to possess different characteristics. Clan and tribe distinction was very important in past generations and was often the basis for choosing spouses and sometimes friends. The younger generation pays less attention to distinctions between

tribes, focusing on national unity rather than tribal differences.

Land ownership is a valued indicator of social status. For some of Kenya's ethnic groups, the ownership of cattle, sheep, and goats is also an important indicator of wealth. Kenyans tend to take pride in their efforts to preserve African wildlife. Much of Kenya's wildlife lives on several million acres of national reserves. Kenyan preservation values come from an ancient heritage that emphasized coexistence with animals. By the mid-1990s, the once-decimated elephant population had made a strong comeback and other animal groups were thriving.

Personal Appearance

Kenyans tend to dress conservatively, particularly in rural areas. Western-style clothing, with some African variations, is the norm. Imported secondhand clothing from Europe and North America is very popular and affordable; an entire commercial industry has developed around its trade. Light fabrics and short sleeves are common because of the warm climate. Sleeveless dresses or blouses are considered immodest in rural areas but are becoming more common in urban ones.

Only children and elderly men wear shorts. Women usually wear dresses, but many young urban women wear pants. Women often wear a *kanga* (a rectangular piece of colorful cotton fabric) as a skirt, to cover their clothes, or to shield themselves from rain and wind. It is common for a mother to use a *kanga* to carry her baby on her back. Rural and some urban women wear scarves on their heads. Small groups such as the Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana retain traditional dress.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings

Each ethnic group generally uses a unique variety of salutations for different age groups and situations. However, a handshake is common and important throughout the country. Supporting the right forearm with the left hand while shaking shows special respect for a leader or elder. Maasai children greet elders with a slight bow; the elder responds by placing an open palm on the child's head.

Kenyans are friendly and greet others with warmth and politeness. They often ask about each other's family and welfare. In coastal areas, a traditional Swahili greeting is *Hujambo* (Hello). *Habari gani?* (What is the news?) or just *Habari?* is common in noncoastal areas. The usual response is *Mzuri* (Good) or *Salama* (Peaceful). English greetings are also acceptable. Upon departing, Kenyans might say *Tutaonana* (We will see each other), or in the evening, *Lala salama* (Sleep peacefully).

Gestures

Kenyans pass and accept items with the right hand or both hands. Using the left hand alone is considered improper. The verbal "tch-tch" or a "tss-tss" sound expresses displeasure.

Pointing at someone with the index finger is rude. People often point by extending the lower lip or nodding the head in the intended direction. One beckons by waving all fingers of the hand. Approval may be shown with both thumbs extended up. It is improper to touch an elder. It is often considered improper to photograph another person without permission. Public displays of affection (including holding hands) are not acceptable in most areas, although they are increasingly common in Nairobi.

Visiting

Because of strong family ties and friendships, visiting is a common activity among Kenyans. Sunday is a popular day for making visits. Most visits are unannounced; people often drop by for conversation and a cup of tea or even a meal. Guests or hosts generally make prior arrangements for long visits. Such a visit (which on the coast is referred to as a *kushinda*) extends from around 10 or 11 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. No matter how long a visit lasts, it is impolite for a host to ask guests to leave. Hosts endeavor to make guests comfortable, and they nearly always serve tea. Enjoying afternoon tea is a daily custom throughout the country. When guests are invited to dinner in the home, they usually socialize with a host while final preparations are being made. After the meal, they stay for more conversation.

Urban visitors might bring flowers and tea leaves to their hosts. Rural people bring edible gifts such as sugar, coffee, flour, or cornmeal. Such gifts are presented in a *kiondo* (Kikuyu word for a woven bag). The host returns the bag at the end of the visit, having placed in it gifts for the visitor. It is impolite to return an empty bag. It is also impolite to say good-bye at the door. Hosts commonly walk with departing visitors for some distance before returning home.

Eating

Depending on the situation and family tradition, people may eat their meal with the right hand or with utensils. Rural Kenyans more often use their right hand, but urban residents do so only for certain foods. When diners use utensils, they hold a knife in the right hand and a spoon in the left. One washes one's hands before and after eating, often in a bowl at the table. In some traditional families, children do not eat with adults. Men are often served first. Among the Samburu, warriors avoid eating in the presence of women.

LIFESTYLE

Family

Structure

Children are seen as the future of the tribe and are greatly valued. Traditionally, families were large. Among the younger generations, family size has decreased somewhat, and today families have an average of three children, though some families have as many as eight or nine. In rural areas especially, sons are highly valued, so many families continue having children until they have a boy.

Extended families are important, and people generally have close relationships with their aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Children usually call a maternal aunt *younger mother* (*mama mdogo*) or *older mother* (*mama mkubwa*) depending on the aunt's age in relation to the child's mother; a paternal aunt is called *aunt* (*shangazi*). Likewise, a paternal uncle is *younger father* (*baba mdogo*) or *older father* (*baba mkubwa*), while a maternal uncle is *uncle* (*mjomba*). Households usually contain multiple generations. A small but growing percentage of the population, mainly the wealthy elite and more Westernized Kenyans, live as nuclear families.

Members of the extended family help one another in times of need, with the understanding that help will be reciprocated in the future. Wealthy family members are obligated to help less fortunate relatives, even those distantly related. In most tribes, it is common for even distant relatives to arrive at the family home for an unannounced stay. The visitor must be fed and housed for the duration of the visit, and the family usually pays for their return trip home. Upon the death of a family's breadwinner, the extended family supports the widowed spouse and the couple's children. Among the Luo, a widow traditionally married a close relative of her husband, though this practice is becoming less common.

Parents and Children

Throughout life, mutual obligations exist between parents and children. Children help with chores from an early age and may work to support the family. In urban areas, kids are often tasked with making their beds, cleaning their rooms, and helping with cooking and laundry. In rural areas, they are often responsible for planting and harvesting crops, tending livestock, fetching water, and caring for younger siblings.

Even after children marry, they may be supported financially by their parents. The family's youngest adult son inherits the family home and cares for his aging parents. All children are obligated to support their parents by sending money to them each month. The elderly are greatly respected and hold the highest status in society. It is considered unacceptable to disrespect elders, and people rarely go against their counsel. In some parts of Kenya, it is believed that elders are capable of casting spells and curses on wayward family members.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are clearly defined. The man is primarily responsible for supporting the family financially and is considered the head of the household, particularly in rural areas. Few men do household chores or cook. Women care for the home, children, and garden. Homes located in rural areas, as most in Kenya are, usually lack modern appliances, running water, and electricity. Therefore, women must carry water and firewood over what are often long distances, making cooking a time-consuming chore.

In urban areas, some couples share household responsibilities. However, care of the home and children is still seen as primarily the woman's responsibility. Educated women often choose to avoid traditional roles in favor of marriages in which both parents work and the family hires someone, often a young female relative, to take care of the children and household.

Many women work outside the home, often running salons or market stands. Women in urban areas have more opportunities for education and employment. Rural women

are responsible for much of the family's agricultural output but own very little land themselves. Efforts are underway to raise awareness of women's rights, reserve government positions for women, and encourage families to send their girls to school. Such efforts have met with varying degrees of success.

Housing

Urban

In urban areas, people usually live as nuclear families. The style and size of homes varies greatly. At one extreme are opulent suburban mansions; at the other extreme are large slum areas, where thousands of people live in cramped dwellings without sufficient sewage facilities. Large townhouse developments are growing in popularity. Also common are gated communities containing roughly five to twenty houses. Urban planning often seems nonexistent, with high-rise apartment buildings springing up next to urban slums. Urban homes are surrounded by concrete walls for security.

Garbage collection is sporadic in most areas, and streets are often littered. While electricity is available in urban areas, it is very expensive, so many people use their electricity sparingly.

Rural

In rural areas, extended families live in small compounds, which contain several mud brick huts, either square or round, with thatched roofs. Wealthier families may build brick or stone houses with red brick or tin roofs. Huts usually have four rooms at most and contain simple wooden furniture. Traditionally, as sons marry, each is given a hut within the compound to live in with his wife.

Each nuclear family cooks its own meals, but all share a well, a shower, and an outhouse. Running water is a luxury; water is more often collected from a river or spring, sometimes located several miles from the home. Electricity reaches a growing number of rural areas, but many areas still lack access. In the poorest rural areas, very few people have electricity.

Tribes that have retained a nomadic lifestyle, such as the Samburu, live in small, dome-shaped huts made of animal skins laid over a frame of sticks. These can be dismantled and packed away when the household moves on in search of fresh pasture for the animals. Furniture is minimal in these huts; people sleep and sit on grass mats.

Interiors

Furniture is extremely expensive in Kenya, due to taxes and lack of infrastructure associated with building and transporting goods. Most families view furnishing their home as a lifetime undertaking. People may buy items piece by piece as they have the money, or they may take out a loan to buy furniture.

Ownership

Land ownership is highly prized and is closely aligned with social status and tribal identity, as most tribes are associated with a certain area of the country. In rural areas, most people have access to land on their family's property. Plots get smaller as each generation divides the land among the adult sons. Today, many men must purchase land in addition to

their inheritance because their share of the land is too small for their needs.

Purchasing a home is difficult for the average Kenyan. Mortgages are only available to the wealthy. It is somewhat easier to obtain a loan for a plot of land. However, loans for building homes are not widely available. Many in urban areas opt to rent their homes while saving up to build a house in their home village, where most people retire.

Dating and Marriage

Dating and Courtship

Dating starts in the early teenage years, and most young people choose their own partners. Dating customs have been greatly altered by the advent of technology. Because young people now do much of their socializing online and via text message, parents and tribal leaders have far less influence than they did in previous generations. Casual sexual relationships, previously rare, are increasingly common. In urban areas, couples usually go on dates to restaurants, movies, or night clubs. In rural areas, options are more limited and few people can afford to spend much money on dating, so young people usually socialize at home or while running errands.

Engagement

While dating practices no longer adhere to traditional customs, most engagements and marriages follow established patterns. Before a couple gets engaged, the woman's family invites the man's family to their home to get to know one another and discuss the bride-price, which the groom's family pays the bride's family as a way to thank them for raising her and to compensate them for losing her. This payment was traditionally made up of livestock but is now most often cash.

For this meeting, in rural areas, it is customary for the woman's family to slaughter a goat or sheep and a number of chickens in honor of the guests. In urban areas, the family purchases the meat. If this is not done, it is considered a sign that the woman's family is not in favor of the marriage, and the courtship generally ends. More determined couples may elope, but most people avoid going against their family's wishes. If the first meeting goes well, then the woman's family is invited to the man's family home to finalize wedding plans.

Marriage and Society

Because the family is a great source of pride, most Kenyans expect to marry and have children. Kenyans traditionally married someone from their tribe but generally not from within their clan, because members of the same clan are considered relatives. Tribal affiliation is decreasingly a factor in marriage decisions, especially in urban areas, although in rural areas where tribes are not geographically separated, marrying within one's tribe is still common. In Muslim communities, most marriages are arranged, and any one-on-one dating is expected to lead to marriage.

While in the past people married relatively young, today most people marry in their mid- to late twenties. Many couples wait until after they finish their education or establish themselves financially to marry. Many unmarried couples choose to live together before or instead of marrying. After a couple lives together for six months, the relationship is

considered a common-law marriage. A new constitution adopted in 2010 granted many of the rights associated with marriage to common-law relationships. While polygamy is practiced in some areas, it is slowly disappearing. Few men are able to financially support multiple wives and many children. Infidelity is widespread among men, and it is common for a man to have a mistress (and sometimes children) whom he supports in addition to his wife.

Sexual relations between same-sex partners are illegal in Kenya and are punishable with prison sentences that may extend to 14 years or longer; same-sex civil unions and marriages are not legally recognized.

Weddings

Wedding details are handled largely by the families. Many weddings are elaborate, expensive affairs. A wedding ceremony may be civil, religious, or traditional. Some weddings contain both religious and traditional elements. In order to be considered legal, a marriage must be registered with the government. Some couples choose to avoid the expenses associated with a religious or traditional wedding by marrying civilly.

Christian weddings are generally held in a church and follow Western wedding traditions. After the church ceremony, most couples hold a reception. The elaborateness of the celebration varies according to the couple's families' incomes. Many couples hold an outdoor party, setting up tents for guests to sit under. Guests arrive at the reception while the bride and groom take wedding photos at the church or at nearby locations. When the couple arrives, they are welcomed with singing and dancing. A special meal is served, and guests give speeches wishing the couple luck in their life together. The couple then cuts the wedding cake, feeding one another a small piece. Then the bride serves pieces of cake to the groom's parents while the groom serves the bride's parents. The reception ends with a prayer.

Muslim weddings contain multiple events and may last several days. Various events are attended by different groups (such as only women or only men). Before the wedding, the bride is adorned with elaborate clothing and jewelry and has designs drawn in henna on her skin. Guests are served special foods, which usually include *pilau* (spiced rice with meat or vegetables), *biriani* (rice with curry and chicken or vegetables), *mahamri* (similar to doughnuts), and a stew of beans and coconut. On the last day, the events culminate with the actual wedding ceremony, which takes place in the evening at the bride's or groom's family home.

Traditional weddings are held at the groom's family home, and celebrations may last up to two days. Elders invoke the spirits of the ancestors, perform wedding rituals (which vary from group to group), and bestow blessings on the couple. A cow is slaughtered in honor of the union; the meat is cooked and served at the wedding feast. Guests bring gifts for the couple, often food (such as grains and beans) and livestock. While traditions vary among groups, no Kenyan wedding is complete without traditional dancing and celebratory ululations (high-pitched trilling sounds).

More conservative Muslims and practitioners of traditional beliefs generally do not take honeymoons. Christian and more liberal Muslim couples leave for a honeymoon directly after

their wedding reception. Popular destinations include coastal areas, Mombasa, and neighboring countries. Honeymoons may last a few days to a few weeks.

Divorce

Divorce is fairly common. A legal divorce is expensive and can take several years to be finalized. Courts usually require that the couple take some time to attempt to resolve their disputes before granting a divorce. The 2010 constitution provides for the equal division of property in the event of divorce and requires parents to pay child support. In practice, these laws are often not enforced, and corruption affects many family court cases. In rural areas, where clan influence is strong, clan members step in to settle many family disputes, in most cases taking the place of legal action.

Some stigma is associated with divorce, and people find themselves more closely observed in the community after a divorce. However, despite this stigma, most people remarry after a divorce, though men usually remarry more quickly than women.

Life Cycle

Birth

Pregnancy is cause for great celebration, and expectant mothers are carefully watched over by their family. In some cases, the woman's mother comes to live with her during pregnancy. After the baby is born, friends and relatives give the family gifts ranging from items for the baby to livestock.

The naming of a newborn is important and can reflect many things. Names often emphasize family connections, and children are often named after their grandparents. Parents may name their children after the time or season of the birth. For example, a Luo child born at night may be named Atieno (for a girl) or Otieno (for a boy); both names come from the Luo word *otieno* (night). A Luhya child born during the rainy season may be named Nafula (for a girl) or Wafula (for a boy), as *fula* means "rain" in Bukusu. Names may also reference recent events. Many children born in the years after the 2008 U.S. presidential election bear the names Obama or Michelle, after former U.S. president Barack Obama (who has Kenyan heritage) and former first lady Michelle Obama. Christian children are usually given both a Christian name and a traditional name.

Milestones

Young people are considered adults at age 18. However, often little changes in a young person's life after this age, and people generally don't take on any additional responsibilities. Traditionally, young men spent several years living in the bush, learning survival skills like food gathering and hunting. Young men moved into adulthood in groups, usually in their mid-teens, and coming-of-age ceremonies were especially important. The ceremonies often included acts to demonstrate one's bravery, such as the killing of a wild animal. Today, these traditions are practiced mainly among nomadic tribes.

Male circumcision is a rite of passage practiced among many ethnic groups. However, a growing number of male babies are circumcised shortly after birth. Despite laws prohibiting the practice, in many areas, girls are circumcised (a practice also referred to as female genital mutilation) around age nine, which is both painful and dangerous.

Death

News of a death is met with wailing, shouting, singing, and drumming. These rituals express mourners' grief and also notify the community of the death. Traditionally, it is considered bad manners or an expression of ill will for a woman not to wail in the event of a relative's death. The family of the deceased must provide food for the mourners, an expense that can leave the family in debt. Sometimes people from the community give donations to help defray these costs.

Funerals are generally religious even if the deceased rarely attended church. It is not considered acceptable to speak ill of the dead, so the service is dominated by praise for the deceased. Family members give speeches, and more traditional families organize dances and ceremonies to honor the dead. For example, it is customary to slaughter a bull in honor of a man and a cow in honor of a woman. The meat is used to feed the mourners and is also distributed among family members and the religious leader presiding over the burial ceremony.

If a person dies away from his or her traditional tribal area, it is common for the body to be returned there for burial. Some traditional Kenyans fear that evil spirits will haunt the family if this is not done. Muslims bury their dead within 24 hours of the death whenever possible. Among other groups, burial usually takes place within three days of death, unless more time is needed to transport the body or for close family members to return to the home village. Relatives of the deceased often keep a vigil at the gravesite for three days after the burial. The vigil ends at dawn on the third day, when religious leaders lead a prayer for the family.

Christian graves may be marked with an engraved headstone or a cross. The size and style of grave markings depend on what the family can afford. Some graves are marked by planting a tree or a bed of flowers. The Kikuyu bury their dead in communal cemeteries. Muslims generally do not mark their graves.

Diet

The most common meats in Kenya are goat, beef, lamb, chicken, and fish. Staple foods include milk, *ugali* (a stiff dough made from cornmeal, millet, sorghum, or cassava), *uji* (porridge made from *ugali* ingredients), red bean stew, *mandazi* (a doughnut-like food), *githeri* (corn and beans), and *chapati* (a flat bread). *Sukuma wiki* (collard greens) is grown in nearly every garden and is a popular side dish to *ugali*. Abundant fruits include pineapples, mangoes, oranges, bananas, plantains, and papaya. Sweet potatoes, avocados, and cassava are also common. European cuisine is prevalent in major cities, and Nairobi and Mombassa have restaurants with a wide variety of international cuisine.

Recreation

Sports

Soccer is the most popular team sport in Kenya. Highly organized but poorly equipped leagues operate in even the poorest areas. They are valued for giving youth a chance to develop discipline, teamwork, and physical skills. Men often congregate in bars and cafés to drink and watch televised

sports, especially soccer games. Many Kenyans have little interest in the country's professional soccer team but enthusiastically follow European teams.

Track-and-field activities join soccer as Kenya's national sports. The nation has produced world-famous long-distance runners and other athletes. Urban residents might play field hockey, tennis, cricket, or rugby. Basketball is enjoyed by the wealthy. Some girls also enjoy playing netball (similar to basketball). In western Kenya, bullfighting is popular, and people breed special varieties of bulls for this purpose.

Leisure

Poverty severely limits most rural Kenyans' recreational time and choices. Activities are often improvised. Many Kenyans enjoy a traditional strategy game (sometimes called *bao* or *ajua*) played with pebbles or seeds. Storytelling, riddles, and proverbs are also popular. Children often lack toys, so they make their own from whatever materials they can find. Many people garden for both recreation and subsistence.

In urban areas people do usually have more regular leisure time. They spend it doing things like swimming, working out at fitness clubs, eating out at restaurants, going to movie theaters, and relaxing at parks.

Vacation

Vacations are unaffordable for many. Middle-class families often visit the coast, sometimes renting a small cabin, or one of Kenya's national parks. Some families rent tents and go camping for a weekend or holiday.

The Arts

Music in Kenya's cities is heavily influenced by Western imports, particularly gospel, as well as Congolese *lingala* music. One of the most popular locally developed styles is the contemporary dance music known as *benga*. First popularized during the 1970s, *benga* fuses traditional rhythms of the Luo ethnic group with modern instruments such as the electric guitar. In rural areas, homemade drums and guitars commonly accompany dancing. The style of indigenous music and dance varies by region. *Taraab* music has Arab roots and developed in coastal areas. The Maasai are renowned for singing multipart harmonies. The Luo play the *nyatiti*, an eight-string lyre, to accompany lyrics about fables and legends. The Kenya National Theater, in Nairobi, offers drama, concerts, and dance programs.

Holidays

Kenyans celebrate New Year's Day (1 January), Easter (Good Friday to Easter Monday), Labor Day (1 May), Madaraka Day (1 June), Mashujaa Day (20 October), Jamhuri Day (12 December), Christmas (25 December), and Boxing Day (26 December).

Christian Holidays

Christmas and Easter are the most widely celebrated holidays. Christianity is greatly emphasized during both holidays, and attendance at church services is high. Non-Christians participate in the secular aspects of the holidays. They celebrate by spending time with family, going on picnics or to the beach. Some might enjoy a meal or a night in a local hotel, while others vacation elsewhere in the country.

Easter is especially important to Catholics. The Easter

season begins with Ash Wednesday (the seventh Wednesday before Easter). Palm leaves collected the previous year are burned and the ash is reserved. After a special church service, a cross is drawn in ash on the forehead of each person in attendance. Ash Wednesday also marks the beginning of Lent, during which Catholics fast and give up something (such as a bad habit) as an indication of their Christian faith. During this time, people gather at churches to follow the stations of the cross (a series of prayers said in front of depictions of the last events in Christ's life). Lent ends shortly before Easter Sunday. On Good Friday, Catholics attend a mass to mark Christ's death. On Easter Sunday, people attend a mass to celebrate Christ's resurrection, and then families gather for a meal of roasted meat.

Business in the country essentially shuts down 24–30 December. Most people travel to be with family at this time, and gifts are exchanged between relatives and friends. The religious spend Christmas Eve at church, celebrating the birth of Christ. On Christmas Day, people gather for drinks and roasted meat. The day after Christmas, people celebrate Boxing Day, which comes from the British tradition of presenting small boxed gifts to service workers, tradesmen, and servants. It is now primarily a day for visiting family and friends.

Islamic Holidays

The Islamic population observes a variety of Muslim holidays. One of the most important is *Eid al-Fitr*, a three-day feast at the end of *Ramadan* (the holy month of fasting). The first day is an official holiday for Muslims, but celebrations on the next two days occur after working hours. During *Ramadan*, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset, after which they eat meals and visit one another.

Independence Holidays

Kenyans celebrate their country's independence on Madaraka Day and Jamhuri Day. Madaraka (Swahili for "power" or "position") Day commemorates Kenya's 1963 declaration of self-rule. Jamhuri Day celebrates the day, six months later, that the British handed control of the country to Kenyans. Both holidays are commemorated with pomp and ceremony, with the head of state leading celebrations at Independence Square in Nairobi. People also gather for a military parade.

Until 2010, Mashujaa (Swahili for "heroes") Day was called Kenyatta Day and honored Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta. In 2010, the scope of the holiday was broadened to include all Kenyans who struggled for their country's independence. On this day, people gather in public places to commemorate their national heroes.

SOCIETY

Government Structure

Kenya's president serves as both head of state and head of government. The president is elected by popular vote to a five-year term, with a two-term limit. The legislature is formed by a bicameral parliament. Members of both houses of parliament serve five-year terms.

The parliament's lower house is the 349-seat National

Assembly. Voters directly elect 290 members through a majoritarian system. An additional 47 are women elected to represent each of Kenya's 47 counties, and 12 more members are nominated by political parties represented in the National Assembly.

The 67-seat Senate is parliament's upper house. Forty-seven members of the Senate are directly elected to represent each of Kenya's 47 counties. An additional 16 women are nominated by political parties in the Senate, and 2 members each (one man and one woman) are nominated to represent youth and persons with disabilities. The Speaker of the Senate also holds a seat.

A constitutional referendum in 2010 drastically changed the structure of the country's government. Changes included the creation of the Senate, the creation of 47 counties to replace Kenya's 8 districts, the abolition of the office of prime minister, and the transfer of some presidential powers to the counties.

Political Landscape

Many political parties operate, and they represent a wide range of interests. However, parties tend to not last very long, and coalitions are often made only to win elections. The two major alliances currently in power include the Jubilee Alliance, which was created in 2013 to support Uhuru Kenyatta, and the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), which supported Raila Odinga. CORD's strongest member is the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which holds slightly more seats than the National Assembly's other largest party, the Jubilee Alliance's The National Alliance (TNA). Party alliances tend to be ethnically based.

The government faces significant challenges from instability caused by ethnic tensions, challenges in implementing constitutional changes, government conflict with wildlife poachers, and Islamist militant attacks resulting from Kenya's military involvement with Somalia.

Government and the People

Kenya's 2010 constitution promises to protect some basic rights, including freedom of speech, the press, and assembly, though government practices often limit free speech and free press. Freedom of religion is respected. Despite some government efforts to decrease it, corruption remains a serious problem in Kenya. Police brutality is widespread, and little legal action is taken against it.

Elections have often been plagued with fraud and other problems, but they are becoming more fair and transparent. Since the end of one-party rule, voter turnout for both legislative and presidential elections has ranged between 57 percent and nearly 86 percent of registered voters. The voting age is 18.

Economy

Though weakened by a series of factors, including political turmoil, severe drought, market reforms, rampant corruption, and insecurity, the Kenyan economy remains one of the largest in Africa and has seen steady growth in recent years. Foreign investment is important to further growth. The nation is dependent on loans from foreign donors, and most people still struggle to meet basic needs. The government has successfully battled high inflation and currency devaluation in

recent years.

Agriculture is important for Kenya, as it employs 61 percent of the workforce. The chief cash crops are tea, coffee, and horticultural products. Other agricultural products include corn, wheat, sugarcane, fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat products, and pyrethrum (a flower used to make insecticides). While traditionally self-sufficient in food production, in recent years Kenya has struggled to adequately feed its population. Industries focus on small-scale manufactured items.

The tourist industry is a major contributor to the economy but is threatened by insecurity in the country caused primarily by attacks carried out by the Somali militant group al-Shabab. The currency is the Kenyan *shilling* (KES).

Transportation and Communications

Kenya has good international and domestic air links. Travel by train or bus is slow and unreliable due to neglect of the nation's infrastructure. Most rural roads are unpaved. Large buses and *matatus* (14-seater vans) run throughout the country, but drivers are often reckless and accidents are common. Traffic is often congested. Many people get around on foot. Rural people rarely have cars, so for distances that they cannot walk they rely on *matatus*, which run on regular routes but without schedules. In 2014, the government introduced a cashless payment system on *matatus* in an effort to decrease corruption and increase tax revenue; however, implementation of the new system has been slow. Taxis are plentiful in Nairobi. *Tuktuks* (small, three-wheeled vehicles) and *bodabodas* (motorbikes) also function like taxis. Traffic moves on the left side of the road. Mombasa is the primary shipping port, serving a number of East African countries.

Kenya has one of Africa's best telecommunications systems. The phone network is expanding, driven largely by cellular phone technology. Today, cellular phones far outnumber landlines in the country. Access reaches even many remote rural areas without access to electricity. In these areas, people may charge their phones using solar power. A growing number of people use the internet, and Kenya has one of the highest rates of internet usage in Africa. Most Kenyans listen to radio broadcasts, which are offered in Swahili, English, and various local languages. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation is a private corporation indirectly controlled by the government. Several private television and radio stations offer extensive programming. There are several national newspapers as well.

Education

Structure and Access

Primary school consists of eight grades that begin at age six and is free and compulsory. After primary school, students take the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam to determine which secondary school they can attend. Students study hard before the exam, and the stress level is high. Students who don't pass can repeat the previous year of school and then try again.

Secondary school lasts four years and is also free. Public secondary schools may be classified as either national, provincial, or district. National schools are the highest

quality, and positions are highly sought after by both teachers and students. The next tiers are occupied by provincial schools and then district schools. Many private schools are Christian- or Muslim-run, but the average Kenyan family cannot afford the tuition. High-achieving students may be awarded scholarships to more prestigious, expensive schools. Attendance at boarding school is common, regardless of the family's income, often from an early age.

Kenyans generally view education as the path to a better life. Families sometimes sell possessions or portions of land in order to send their children to good schools. Since free primary school was introduced in 2003, enrollment rates have increased significantly. Students must provide their own uniforms, text books, and school supplies. About 82 percent of children are enrolled in primary school, but fewer go on to secondary school. In rural areas especially, if a family cannot afford to send all of their children to school, they often send only their sons. Though increasingly uncommon, girls sometimes marry as soon as they reach puberty, and few continue their education after marriage.

School Life

Rural children are first taught in Swahili or sometimes their ethnic tongue. English is introduced in first grade and is the language of instruction for all subjects (except Swahili language classes) after the third grade. Urban schoolchildren usually begin instruction in English. Most schools focus on math and science education. Teaching styles are generally authoritarian and focus on memorizing information for exams. Teachers and students do not generally have close relationships and rarely interact outside of class time.

Public schools (especially in rural areas) suffer from considerable underfunding. Some teachers take second jobs to supplement inadequate salaries. Classes are large. Many schools lack classrooms and supplies for all students, and classes may be held outside under trees. In remote areas, many students travel long distances to reach the nearest school. Few schools have computers or other technology.

Higher Education

Public and private universities operate in Kenya, but only a small percentage of Kenyans are able to attend. Those who do are often aided by sponsorships or scholarships from local businesses, politicians, communities, or churches. Officially, students' grades in secondary school and scores on a national exam determine which universities they will be accepted to, but the application process is widely viewed as corrupt and disorganized.

Those students who can afford it seek higher education abroad, usually in the United States or the United Kingdom. People may also enter two-year vocational schools to study subjects like information technology, teaching, auto engineering, computer repair, and tourism.

Health

Many Kenyans, especially in rural areas, do not have access to basic health care. Rural Kenyans often avoid government hospitals because they have inadequate medical supplies. Patients in hospitals must often provide their own medications and meals. A number of private facilities exist for those who can afford them. Rural Kenyans continue to rely on traditional

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healing methods, although Western medicine is becoming more widely accepted. Infant mortality rates have dropped in recent years. However, a relatively high rate of HIV infection has lowered life expectancy. Diseases such as malaria are prevalent in low-lying regions, though illnesses and deaths due to malaria in particular are decreasing because of government and private programs.

Kenya

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information

Embassy of Kenya, 2249 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 387-6101; web site www.kenyaembassydc.org.

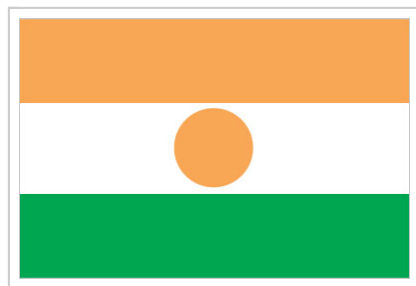
Country and Development Data

Capital	Nairobi
Population	48,397,527 (rank=29)
Area (sq. mi.)	224,081 (rank=48)
Area (sq. km.)	580,367
Human Development Index	143 of 188 countries
Gender Inequality Index	137 of 188 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$3,500
Adult Literacy	81% (male); 75% (female)
Infant Mortality	36 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	65 (male); 70 (female)
Currency	Kenyan Shilling

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AFRICA :: NIGER

Introduction :: NIGER

Background:

Niger became independent from France in 1960 and experienced single-party and military rule until 1991, when Gen. Ali SAIBOU was forced by public pressure to allow multiparty elections, which resulted in a democratic government in 1993. Political infighting brought the government to a standstill and in 1996 led to a coup by Col. Ibrahim BARE. In 1999, BARE was killed in a counter coup by military officers who restored democratic rule and held elections that brought Mamadou TANDJA to power in December of that year. TANDJA was reelected in 2004 and in 2009 spearheaded a constitutional amendment allowing him to extend his term as president. In February 2010, military officers led a coup that deposed TANDJA and suspended the constitution. ISSOUFOU Mahamadou was elected in April 2011 following the coup and reelected to a second term in early 2016. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world with minimal government services and insufficient funds to develop its resource base, and is ranked last in the world on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. The largely agrarian and subsistence-based economy is frequently disrupted by extended droughts common to the Sahel region of Africa. The Nigerien Government continues its attempts to diversify the economy through increased oil production and mining projects. A Tuareg rebellion emerged in 2007 and ended in 2009. Niger is facing increased security concerns on its borders from various external threats including insecurity in Libya, spillover from the conflict in Mali, and violent extremism in northeastern Nigeria.

Geography :: NIGER

Location:

Western Africa, southeast of Algeria

Geographic coordinates:

16 00 N, 8 00 E

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 1.267 million sq km

land: 1,266,700 sq km

water: 300 sq km

country comparison to the world: 23

Area - comparative:

slightly less than twice the size of Texas

Area comparison map:**Land boundaries:**

total: 5,834 km

border countries (7): Algeria 951 km, Benin 277 km, Burkina Faso 622 km, Chad 1196 km, Libya 342 km, Mali 838 km, Nigeria 1608 km

Coastline:

0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims:

none (landlocked)

Climate:

desert; mostly hot, dry, dusty; tropical in extreme south

Terrain:

predominately desert plains and sand dunes; flat to rolling plains in south; hills in north

Elevation:

mean elevation: 474 m

lowest point: Niger River 200 m

highest point: Idoukal-n-Taghes 2,022 m

Natural resources:

uranium, coal, iron ore, tin, phosphates, gold, molybdenum, gypsum, salt, petroleum

Land use:

agricultural land: 35.1% (2011 est.)

arable land: 12.3% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 0.1% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 22.7% (2011 est.)

forest: 1% (2011 est.)

other: 63.9% (2011 est.)

Irrigated land:

1,000 sq km (2012)

Population distribution:

majority of the populace is located in the southernmost extreme of the country along the border with Nigeria and Benin

Natural hazards:

recurring droughts

Environment - current issues:

overgrazing; soil erosion; deforestation; desertification; contaminated water; inadequate potable water; wildlife populations (such as elephant, hippopotamus, giraffe, and lion) threatened because of poaching and habitat destruction

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Ozone Layer Protection, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: Law of the Sea

Geography - note:

landlocked; one of the hottest countries in the world; northern four-fifths is desert, southern one-fifth is savanna, suitable for livestock and limited agriculture

People and Society :: NIGER**Population:**

19,866,231 (July 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 59

Nationality:

noun: Nigerien(s)

adjective: Nigerien

Ethnic groups:

Hausa 53.1%, Zarma/Songhai 21.2%, Tuareg 11%, Fulani (Peuhl) 6.5%, Kanuri 5.9%, Gurma 0.8%, Arab 0.4%, Tubu 0.4%, other/unavailable 0.9% (2006 est.)

Languages:

French (official), Hausa, Djerma

Religions:

Muslim 99.3%, Christian 0.3%, animist 0.2%, none 0.1% (2012 est.)

Demographic profile:

Niger has the highest total fertility rate (TFR) of any country in the world, averaging close to 7 children per woman in 2016. A slight decline in fertility over the last few decades has stalled. This leveling off of the high fertility rate is in large part a product of the continued desire for large families. In Niger, the TFR is lower than the desired fertility rate, which makes it unlikely that contraceptive use will increase. The high TFR sustains rapid population growth and a large youth population – almost 70% of the populace is under the age of 25. Gender inequality, including a lack of educational opportunities for women and early marriage and childbirth, also contributes to high population growth.

Because of large family sizes, children are inheriting smaller and smaller parcels of land. The dependence of most Nigeriens on subsistence farming on increasingly small landholdings, coupled with declining rainfall and

the resultant shrinkage of arable land, are all preventing food production from keeping up with population growth.

For more than half a century, Niger's lack of economic development has led to steady net outmigration. In the 1960s, Nigeriens mainly migrated to coastal West African countries to work on a seasonal basis. Some headed to Libya and Algeria in the 1970s to work in the booming oil industry until its decline in the 1980s. Since the 1990s, the principal destinations for Nigerien labor migrants have been West African countries, especially Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, while emigration to Europe and North America has remained modest. During the same period, Niger's desert trade route town Agadez became a hub for West African and other Sub-Saharan migrants crossing the Sahara to North Africa and sometimes onward to Europe.

More than 60,000 Malian refugees have fled to Niger since violence between Malian government troops and armed rebels began in early 2012. Ongoing attacks by the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency, dating to 2013 in northern Nigeria and February 2015 in southeastern Niger, have pushed tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees and Nigerien returnees across the border to Niger and to displace thousands of locals in Niger's already impoverished Diffa region.

Age structure:

0-14 years: 48.68% (male 4,878,031 /female 4,793,021)

15-24 years: 19.36% (male 1,899,879 /female 1,945,806)

25-54 years: 26.02% (male 2,581,597 /female 2,587,913)

55-64 years: 3.3% (male 340,032 /female 315,142)

65 years and over: 2.64% (male 268,072 /female 256,738) (2018 est.)

population pyramid:



Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 111.6 (2015 est.)

youth dependency ratio: 106.2 (2015 est.)

elderly dependency ratio: 5.4 (2015 est.)

potential support ratio: 18.6 (2015 est.)

Median age:

total: 15.5 years (2018 est.)

male: 15.4 years

female: 15.7 years

country comparison to the world: 228

Population growth rate:

3.16% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 7

Birth rate:

43.6 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 2

Death rate:

11.5 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 20

Net migration rate:

-0.5 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 125

Population distribution:

majority of the populace is located in the southernmost extreme of the country along the border with Nigeria and Benin

Urbanization:

urban population: 16.5% of total population (2019)

rate of urbanization: 4.27% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

1.252 million NIAMEY (capital) (2019)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.98 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 1.08 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 1.04 male(s)/female

total population: 1.01 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

18.1 years (2012 est.)

note: median age at first birth among women 25-29

Maternal mortality rate:

509 deaths/100,000 live births (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 20

Infant mortality rate:

total: 79.4 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

male: 83.7 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 75 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 5

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 56.3 years (2018 est.)

male: 55 years

female: 57.7 years

country comparison to the world: 216

Total fertility rate:

6.35 children born/woman (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 1

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

11% (2018)

Drinking water source:**improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 48.6% of population

total: 58.2% of population

unimproved:

urban: 0% of population

rural: 51.4% of population

total: 41.8% of population (2015 est.)

Current Health Expenditure:

6.2% (2016)

Physicians density:

0.05 physicians/1,000 population (2014)

Sanitation facility access:**improved:**

urban: 37.9% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 4.6% of population (2015 est.)

total: 10.9% of population (2015 est.)

unimproved:

urban: 62.1% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 95.4% of population (2015 est.)

total: 89.1% of population (2015 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

0.3% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 93

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

36,000 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 70

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

1,200 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 58

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high (2016)

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever (2016)

vectorborne diseases: malaria and dengue fever (2016)

water contact diseases: schistosomiasis (2016)

animal contact diseases: rabies (2016)

respiratory diseases: meningococcal meningitis (2016)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

5.5% (2016)

country comparison to the world: 177

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

31.4% (2016)

country comparison to the world: 9

Education expenditures:

3.5% of GDP (2017)

country comparison to the world: 123

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 19.1%

male: 27.3%

female: 11% (2015)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 6 years

male: 7 years

female: 6 years (2017)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 0.7%

male: 0.9%

female: 0.4% (2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: 180

Government :: NIGER

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Niger

conventional short form: Niger

local long form: Republique du Niger

local short form: Niger

etymology: named for the Niger River that passes through the southwest of the country; from a native term "Ni Gir" meaning "River Gir"

note: pronounced nee-zher

Government type:

semi-presidential republic

Capital:

name: Niamey

geographic coordinates: 13 31 N, 2 07 E

time difference: UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

7 regions (regions, singular - region) and 1 capital district* (communaute urbaine); Agadez, Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Niamey*, Tahoua, Tillaberi, Zinder

Independence:

3 August 1960 (from France)

National holiday:

Republic Day, 18 December (1958); note - commemorates the founding of the Republic of Niger which predated independence from France in 1960

Constitution:

history: several previous; passed by referendum 31 October 2010, entered into force 25 November 2010

amendments: proposed by the president of the republic or by the National Assembly; consideration of amendments requires at least three-fourths majority vote by the Assembly; passage requires at least four-fifths majority vote; if disapproved, the proposed amendment is dropped or submitted to a referendum; constitutional articles on the form of government, the multiparty system, the separation of state and religion, disqualification of Assembly members, amendment procedures, and amnesty of participants in the 2010 coup cannot be amended; amended 2011 (2017)

Legal system:

mixed legal system of civil law, based on French civil law, Islamic law, and customary law

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

Citizenship:

citizenship by birth: no

citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of Niger

dual citizenship recognized: yes

residency requirement for naturalization: unknown

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President ISSOUFOU Mahamadou (since 7 April 2011)

head of government: Prime Minister Brigi RAFINI (since 7 April 2011)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president

elections/appointments: president directly elected by absolute majority popular vote in 2 rounds if needed for a 5-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 21 February 2016 with a runoff on 20 March 2016 (next to be held in 2021); prime minister appointed by the president, authorized by the National Assembly

election results: ISSOUFOU Mahamadou reelected president in second round; percent of vote in first round - ISSOUFOU Mahamadou (PNDS-Tarrayya) 48.6%, Hama AMADOU (MODEN/FA Lumana Africa) 17.8%, Seini OUMAROU (MNSD-Nassara) 11.3%, other 22.3%; percent of vote in second round - ISSOUFOU Mahamadou 92%, Hama AMADOU 8%

Legislative branch:

description: unicameral National Assembly or Assemblée Nationale (171 seats; 158 members directly elected from 8 multi-member constituencies in 7 regions and Niamey by party-list proportional representation, 8 reserved for minorities elected in special single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote, 5 seats reserved for Nigeriens living abroad - 1 seat per continent - elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote; members serve 5-year terms); note - the number of National Assembly seats increased from 113 to 171 in the February 2016 legislative election

elections: last held on 21 February 2016 (next to be held in 2021)

election results: percent of vote by party - PNDS-Tarrayya 44.1%, MODEN/FA Lumana 14.7%, MNSD-Nassara 11.8%, MPR-Jamhuriya 7.1%, MNRD Hankuri-PSDN Alheri 3.5%, MPN-Kishin Kassa 2.9%, ANDP-Zaman Lahiya 2.4%, RSD-Gaskiya 2.4%, CDS-Rahama 1.8%, CPR-Inganci 1.8%, RDP-Jama'a 1.8%, AMEN AMIN 1.8%, other 3.9%; seats by party - PNDS-Tarrayya 75, MODEN/FA Lumana 25, MNSD-Nassara 20, MPR-Jamhuriya 12, MNRD Hankuri-PSDN Alheri 6, MPN-Kishin Kassa 5, ANDP-Zaman Lahiya 4, RSD-Gaskiya 4, CDS-Rahama 3, CPR-Inganci 3, RDP-Jama'a 3, RDP-Jama'a 3, AMEN AMIN 3, other 8; composition - men 146, women 24 percent of women 14.6%

Judicial branch:

highest courts: Constitutional Court (consists of 7 judges); High Court of Justice (consists of 7 members)

judge selection and term of office: Constitutional Court judges nominated/elected - 1 by the president of the Republic, 1 by the president of the National Assembly, 2 by peer judges, 2 by peer lawyers, 1 law professor by peers, and 1 from within Nigerien society; all appointed by the president; judges serve 6-year nonrenewable terms with one-third of membership renewed every 2 years; High Judicial Court members selected from among the legislature and judiciary; members serve 5-year terms

subordinate courts: Court of Cassation; Council of State; Court of Finances; various specialized tribunals and customary courts

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance of Movements for the Emergence of Niger or AMEN AMIN [Omar Hamidou TCHIANA]

Congress for the Republic or CPR-Inganci [Kassoum MOCTAR]

Democratic Alliance for Niger or ADN-Fusaha [Habi Mahamadou SALISSOU]

Democratic and Social Convention-Rahama or CDS-Rahama [Abdou LABO]

National Movement for the Development of Society-Nassara or MNSD-Nassara [Seini OUMAROU]

Nigerien Alliance for Democracy and Progress-Zaman Lahiya or ANDP-Zaman Lahiya [Moussa Moumouni DJERMAKOYE]

Nigerien Democratic Movement for an African Federation or MODEN/FA Lumana [Hama AMADOU]

Nigerien Movement for Democratic Renewal or MNRD-Hankuri [Mahamane OUSMANE]

Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism or PNDS-Tarrayya [Mahamadou ISSOUFOU]

Nigerien Patriotic Movement or MPN-Kishin Kassa [Ibrahim YACOUBA]
 Party for Socialism and Democracy in Niger or PSDN-Alheri
 Patriotic Movement for the Republic or MPR-Jamhuriya [Albade ABOUBA]
 Rally for Democracy and Progress-Jama'a or RDP-Jama'a [Hamid ALGABID]
 Social and Democratic Rally or RSD-Gaskiyya [Amadou CHEIFFOU]
 Social Democratic Party or PSD-Bassira [Mohamed BEN OMAR]
 Union for Democracy and the Republic-Tabbat or UDR-Tabbat [Amadou Boubacar CISSE]

note: the SPLM and SPLM-DC are banned political parties

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, CD, ECOWAS, EITI (compliant country), Entente, FAO, FZ, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, ILO, IMF, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIL, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WADB (regional), WAEMU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Ambassador Hassana ALIDOU (since 23 February 2015)

chancery: 2204 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 483-4224 through 4227

FAX: [1] (202) 483-3169

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Eric P. WHITAKER (since 26 January 2018)

telephone: [227] 20-72-26-61

embassy: BP 11201, Rue Des Ambassades, Niamey

mailing address: 2420 Niamey Place, Washington DC 20521-2420

FAX: [227] 20-73-55-60

Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of orange (top), white, and green with a small orange disk centered in the white band; the orange band denotes the drier northern regions of the Sahara; white stands for purity and innocence; green symbolizes hope and the fertile and productive southern and western areas, as well as the Niger River; the orange disc represents the sun and the sacrifices made by the people

note: similar to the flag of India, which has a blue spoked wheel centered in the white band

National symbol(s):

zebu; national colors: orange, white, green

National anthem:

name: "La Nigerienne" (The Nigerien)

lyrics/music: Maurice Albert THIRIET/Robert JACQUET and Nicolas Abel Francois FRIONNET

note: adopted 1961

Economy :: NIGER

Economy - overview:

Niger is a landlocked, Sub-Saharan nation, whose economy centers on subsistence crops, livestock, and some of the world's largest uranium deposits. Agriculture contributes approximately 40% of GDP and provides

livelihood for over 80% of the population. The UN ranked Niger as the second least developed country in the world in 2016 due to multiple factors such as food insecurity, lack of industry, high population growth, a weak educational sector, and few prospects for work outside of subsistence farming and herding.

Since 2011 public debt has increased due to efforts to scale-up public investment, particularly that related to infrastructure, as well as due to increased security spending. The government relies on foreign donor resources for a large portion of its fiscal budget. The economy in recent years has been hurt by terrorist activity near its uranium mines and by instability in Mali and in the Diffa region of the country; concerns about security have resulted in increased support from regional and international partners on defense. Low uranium prices, demographics, and security expenditures may continue to put pressure on the government's finances.

The Government of Niger plans to exploit oil, gold, coal, and other mineral resources to sustain future growth. Although Niger has sizable reserves of oil, the prolonged drop in oil prices has reduced profitability. Food insecurity and drought remain perennial problems for Niger, and the government plans to invest more in irrigation. Niger's three-year \$131 million IMF Extended Credit Facility (ECF) agreement for the years 2012-15 was extended until the end of 2016. In February 2017, the IMF approved a new 3-year \$134 million ECF. In June 2017, The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) granted Niger \$1 billion over three years for IDA18, a program to boost the country's development and alleviate poverty. A \$437 million Millennium Challenge Account compact for Niger, commencing in FY18, will focus on large-scale irrigation infrastructure development and community-based, climate-resilient agriculture, while promoting sustainable increases in agricultural productivity and sales.

Formal private sector investment needed for economic diversification and growth remains a challenge, given the country's limited domestic markets, access to credit, and competitiveness. Although President ISSOUFOU is courting foreign investors, including those from the US, as of April 2017, there were no US firms operating in Niger. In November 2017, the National Assembly passed the 2018 Finance Law that was geared towards raising government revenues and moving away from international support.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$21.86 billion (2017 est.)

\$20.84 billion (2016 est.)

\$19.87 billion (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 146

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$8.224 billion (2017 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

4.9% (2017 est.)

4.9% (2016 est.)

4.3% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 55

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$1,200 (2017 est.)

\$1,100 (2016 est.)

\$1,100 (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 224

Gross national saving:

22.4% of GDP (2017 est.)

20.6% of GDP (2016 est.)

21.2% of GDP (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 70.2% (2017 est.)

government consumption: 9.4% (2017 est.)

investment in fixed capital: 38.6% (2017 est.)

investment in inventories: 0% (2017 est.)

exports of goods and services: 16.4% (2017 est.)

imports of goods and services: -34.6% (2017 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 41.6% (2017 est.)

industry: 19.5% (2017 est.)

services: 38.7% (2017 est.)

Agriculture - products:

cowpeas, cotton, peanuts, millet, sorghum, cassava (manioc, tapioca), rice; cattle, sheep, goats, camels, donkeys, horses, poultry

Industries:

uranium mining, petroleum, cement, brick, soap, textiles, food processing, chemicals, slaughterhouses

Industrial production growth rate:

6% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 41

Labor force:

6.5 million (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 70

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 79.2%

industry: 3.3%

services: 17.5% (2012 est.)

Unemployment rate:

0.3% (2017 est.)

0.3% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 3

Population below poverty line:

45.4% (2014 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 3.2%

highest 10%: 26.8% (2014)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

34 (2014)

50.5 (1995)

country comparison to the world: 105

Budget:

revenues: 1.757 billion (2017 est.)

expenditures: 2.171 billion (2017 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

21.4% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 140

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-5% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 169

Public debt:

45.3% of GDP (2017 est.)

45.2% of GDP (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 115

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.4% (2017 est.)

0.2% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 121

Central bank discount rate:

4.25% (31 December 2015)

4.25% (31 December 2014)

country comparison to the world: 95

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

5.4% (31 December 2017 est.)

5.3% (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 137

Stock of narrow money:

\$1.804 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.511 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

Stock of broad money:

\$1.804 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.511 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Stock of domestic credit:

\$1.506 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.196 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

Market value of publicly traded shares:

NA

Current account balance:

-\$1.16 billion (2017 est.)

-\$1.181 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 147

Exports:

\$4.143 billion (2017 est.)

\$1.101 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 115

Exports - partners:

France 30.2%, Thailand 18.3%, Malaysia 9.9%, Nigeria 8.3%, Mali 5%, Switzerland 4.9% (2017)

Exports - commodities:

uranium ore, livestock, cowpeas, onions

Imports:

\$1.829 billion (2017 est.)

\$1.715 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 171

Imports - commodities:

foodstuffs, machinery, vehicles and parts, petroleum, cereals

Imports - partners:

France 28.8%, China 14.4%, Malaysia 5.7%, Nigeria 5.4%, Thailand 5.3%, US 5.1%, India 4.9% (2017)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$1.314 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.186 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 126

Debt - external:

\$3.728 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$2.926 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 140

Exchange rates:

Communaute Financiere Africaine francs (XOF) per US dollar -

605.3 (2017 est.)

593.01 (2016 est.)

593.01 (2015 est.)

591.45 (2014 est.)

494.42 (2013 est.)

Energy :: NIGER

Electricity access:

population without electricity: 19 million (2017)

electrification - total population: 16.2% (2016)

electrification - urban areas: 65.4% (2016)

electrification - rural areas: 4.7% (2016)

Electricity - production:

494.7 million kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 167

Electricity - consumption:

1.065 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 153

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

Electricity - imports:

779 million kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 74

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

184,000 kW (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

95% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 45

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 190

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

5% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 108

Crude oil - production:

9,000 bbl/day (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 79

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 176

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 176

Crude oil - proved reserves:

150 million bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 61

Refined petroleum products - production:

15,280 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 94

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

14,000 bbl/day (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Refined petroleum products - exports:

5,422 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Refined petroleum products - imports:

3,799 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 180

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 180

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 184

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 163

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 178

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

2.534 million Mt (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Communications :: NIGER

Telephones - fixed lines:

total subscriptions: 114,352

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 1 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

Telephones - mobile cellular:

total subscriptions: 8,778,884

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 46 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Telephone system:

general assessment: small system of wire, radio telephone communications, and microwave radio relay links concentrated in southwestern Niger; mobile services stronger than fixed telecoms; broadband penetration inconsequential; LTE license secured for the future; government tax of telecom sector (2018)

domestic: fixed-line 1 per 100 persons and mobile-cellular teledensity remains 46 per 100 persons despite a rapidly increasing cellular subscribership base; domestic satellite system with 3 earth stations and 1 planned (2018)

international: country code - 227; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Atlantic Ocean and 1 Indian Ocean)

Broadcast media:

state-run TV station; 3 private TV stations provide a mix of local and foreign programming; state-run radio has only radio station with national coverage; about 30 private radio stations operate locally; as many as 100 community radio stations broadcast; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters are available

Internet country code:

.ne

Internet users:

total: 805,702

percent of population: 4.3% (July 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 138

Broadband - fixed subscriptions:

total: 8,650

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: less than 1 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 171

Military and Security :: NIGER

Military expenditures:

2.45% of GDP (2018)

2.47% of GDP (2017)

2.22% of GDP (2016)

1.78% of GDP (2014)

1.38% of GDP (2013)

country comparison to the world: 34

Military and security forces:

Nigerien Armed Forces (Forces Armees Nigeriennes, FAN): Army, Nigerien Air Force (Force Aerienne du Niger), Niger Gendarmerie (GN); Ministry of Interior: Niger National Guard (GNN) (2019)

Military service age and obligation:

18 is the legal minimum age for compulsory or voluntary military service; enlistees must be Nigerien citizens and unmarried; 2-year service term; women may serve in health care (2017)

Transportation :: NIGER

National air transport system:

number of registered air carriers: 2 (2015)

inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers: 2 (2015)

annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 15,242 (2015)

annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 0 mt-km (2015)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:

5U (2016)

Airports:

30 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 116

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 10 (2017)

2,438 to 3,047 m: 3 (2017)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 6 (2017)

914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2017)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 20 (2013)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 3 (2013)

914 to 1,523 m: 15 (2013)

under 914 m: 2 (2013)

Heliports:

1 (2013)

Pipelines:

464 km oil

Roadways:

total: 18,949 km (2010)

paved: 3,912 km (2010)

unpaved: 15,037 km (2010)

country comparison to the world: 116

Waterways:

300 km (the Niger, the only major river, is navigable to Gaya between September and March) (2012)

country comparison to the world: 93

Merchant marine:

total: 1

by type: other 1 (2018)

country comparison to the world: 174

Terrorism :: NIGER

Terrorist groups - home based:

Islamic State of Iraq and ash-sham networks in the Greater Sahara (ISGS): aim(s): replace regional governments with an Islamic state

area(s) of operation: mostly concentrated along the Mali-Niger border region; targets primarily security forces (2018)

Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)-West Africa: aim(s): implement ISIS's strict interpretation of Sharia; replace the Nigerian Government with an Islamic state

area(s) of operation: based primarily in the southeast along the border with Nigeria, with its largest presence in northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad region; targets primarily regional military installations, especially in the southeastern Diffa region (2018)

Terrorist groups - foreign based:

al-Mulathamun Battalion: aim(s): replace several African governments, including Niger's government, with an Islamic state

area(s) of operation: conducts attacks against Nigerien military and security personnel; targets Westerners for kidnappings for ransom (2018)

al-Qa'ida-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM): aim(s): establish an Islamic state centered in Mali

area(s) of operation: primarily based in northern and central Mali; targets Western and local interests in West Africa and Sahel; has claimed responsibility for attacks in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso

note: pledged allegiance to al-Qa'ida and AQIM; holds Western hostages; wages attacks against security and peacekeeping forces in Mali (2018)

Boko Haram: aim(s): establish an Islamic caliphate across Africa

area(s) of operation: conducts kidnappings, bombings, and assaults; responsible for displacing thousands of people and contributing to food insecurity

note: violently opposes any political or social activity associated with Western society, including voting, attending secular schools, and wearing Western dress (2018)

Transnational Issues :: NIGER

Disputes - international:

Libya claims about 25,000 sq km in a currently dormant dispute in the Tommo region; location of Benin-Niger-Nigeria tripoint is unresolved; only Nigeria and Cameroon have heeded the Lake Chad Commission's admonition to ratify the delimitation treaty that also includes the Chad-Niger and Niger-Nigeria boundaries; the dispute with Burkina Faso was referred to the ICJ in 2010

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 161,359 (Nigeria), 56,499 (Mali) (2019)

IDPs: 187,359 (includes the regions of Diffa, Tillaberi, and Tahoua; unknown how many of the 11,000 people displaced by clashes between government forces and the Tuareg militant group, Niger Movement for Justice, in 2007 are still displaced; inter-communal violence; Boko Haram attacks in southern Niger, 2015) (2019)

Niger country profile

- 19 February 2018



A vast, arid state on the edge of the Sahara desert, Niger is rated by the UN as one of the world's least-developed nations.

Niger fell victim to a series of coups and political instability following its independence from France in 1960.

Today the country struggles in the face of frequent droughts, insurgency and wide-spread poverty. Niger is betting on increased oil exploration and gold mining to help modernize its economy.

But basic rights issues, such as slavery - which was only banned in 2003 and still remains a problem - and a high rate of illiteracy and disease, remain stubborn challenges.

The US has a significant military presence in the country, intended to combat Islamist militants. Niger has become noted as a major transit route for migrants heading to Europe.

FACTS

The Republic of Niger

Capital: Niamey

- **Population** 16.6 million
- **Area** 1.27 million sq km (489,000 sq miles)
- **Major languages** French (official), Hausa, Songhai, Arabic
- **Major religions** Islam, indigenous beliefs
- **Life expectancy** 55 years (men), 56 years (women)
- **Currency** CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) franc
UN, World Bank

LEADER

Niger leader: Mahamadou Issoufou



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Veteran opposition leader Mahamadou Issoufou became president in March 2011 polls that ended a year-long military junta.

The election was aimed at returning democracy after former president Mamadou Tandja was ousted by the army in February 2010 following a decade in power.

The military junta that overthrew him vowed to usher in a civilian government, and none of its members ran in the election.

Mr Issoufou gained another term in a run-off election in March 2016 that was boycotted by supporters of his opponent, Hama Amadou, who had been jailed.

MEDIA



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Radio is a key news source and local privately-owned stations operate alongside the national state broadcaster.

Many media outlets struggle to survive financially. Journalists face difficulties, including detention or prosecution over critical reporting.

Around 10% of citizens are online.

TIMELINE

Some key events in Niger's history:

1890 - French occupy Niger.

1960 - Niger becomes independent but a severe drought devastates the country, which enters a period of political instability and coups.

1990 - A rebellion starts in northern Niger, adding to the country's political unrest.

2003 - Slavery is outlawed and Niger gains international prominence when then-US President George Bush claims Iraq was trying to obtain uranium from Niger for its nuclear programme.

2005 - UN warns that millions of people face severe malnutrition because of food shortages caused by drought and locust infestations.

2010 - A new constitution designed to restore civilian rule approved in referendum; Mahamadou Issoufou becomes president in 2011.



Image copyrightGETTY IMAGESImage caption

Tuareg's promote their traditions with festivals. Dissatisfaction with the central government has prompted rebellion to press demands for greater autonomy for the north



BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Niger (pronounced nee-JAIR or ny-jur) is slightly larger than Venezuela, or three times larger than the U.S. state of California. Four-fifths of it is part of the Sahara Desert. As the Sahara grows, droughts occur more frequently and last longer than in the past. Southern Niger is part of Africa's semiarid region called the Sahel, which receives rain and supports vegetation such as scrub brush and baobab trees. All of Niger's farming is done in the Sahel or near desert oases. The Niger River flows through the southwest, making this the most fertile region.

Niger is one of the hottest countries in the world, with average daily temperatures above 90°F (32°C) during the hottest months. From March to May, daytime highs soar above 110°F (43°C). It is a bit cooler in the rainy season (June through September). In the "cold" season (November through February), dry harmattan winds blow sand off the desert.

History

Early Nomads

Nomads traversed Niger more than five thousand years ago, but little is known of their history. Tuareg came from the north in the 11th century and established a sultanate in Agadez by the 15th century. Niger served as an important trading crossroads for mighty African empires, including the Songhai Empire of Gao in the 16th century. Even today, Tuareg caravans carry salt across the desert. In the 17th

century, Djermas settled as farmers near present-day Niamey. Groups like the Hausa, Fulani, and Tuareg were primarily responsible for spreading and establishing Islam in the region.

Colonization and Independence

Despite resistance by local groups (especially the Tuareg) to French military incursions after 1890, Niger became a French colony in 1922. The French moved the capital from Zinder to Niamey in 1926. In the late 1950s, a fierce political struggle ensued over independence from France, which was finally granted in 1960. President Hamani Diori governed until he was ousted by a coup in 1974, when General Seyni Kountché assumed power. Kountché's regime was known for its stability and its success in reducing corruption.

Political Instability

With Kountché's death in 1987, Niger entered a lengthy period of political uncertainty under several successive national leaders. Kountché's Supreme Military Council first governed under General Ali Saibou. His rule proved unpopular and destabilizing, and a High Council of the Republic was convened by a national conference in 1991 to govern until 1993 elections.

The newly elected government under President Mahamane Ousmane faced a deteriorating economy, ethnic rebellions, and political rivalries. Elections in 1995 forced Ousmane to appoint his rival, Hama Amadou, as prime minister. Their rivalry paralyzed the government, leading to strikes and unrest. The military deposed both men and sponsored elections in 1996. Coup leader Colonel Ibrahim Baré Maïnassara was elected president by rigging the vote. His regime was known for corruption, repression, and incompetence. Protests, strikes, and even mutinies by unpaid

soldiers plagued Maïnassara. He was assassinated by his presidential guard in April 1999.

Elections and Coups

Major Daouda Malam Wanké, head of the presidential guard, became president, lifted a ban on political activity, and announced elections for November 1999. In that vote, Mamadou Tandja was elected president. He became the first president to complete a full term in office since democratic elections were introduced in 1993. Tandja won the election in December 2004 for a second term. In 2009, he suspended the constitution and introduced a new one designed to expand his powers, give him a three-year term extension, and end presidential term limits.

A military coup in February 2010 removed Tandja from power. The coup's leader, Salou Djibo, pledged to return Niger to civilian rule. A new constitution was passed in October 2010; it aimed to end military rule, establish a stable political system, and limit the role of the president. Opposition leader Mahamadou Issoufou won the presidential election in March 2011 and was sworn in the following month, peacefully transitioning the country from military to civilian rule. Issoufou won a second term in 2016.

Regional Conflict

While Niger is relatively stable, the country experiences challenges from humanitarian issues, a large migrant population, and conflicts in neighboring countries. This is especially true of Nigeria's conflict with the militant Islamist group Boko Haram, which has been spilling over Niger's southern border since 2009. Boko Haram and affiliated militant groups have carried out attacks within Niger, killing and displacing citizens as well as crippling local economies. Niger also struggles to absorb refugees fleeing violence in Nigeria and Mali. Niger contributes troops to a regional military force created to combat Boko Haram in the area.

THE PEOPLE

Population

The majority of Nigeriens live in rural areas. Niamey is the capital and largest city, with over one million residents. About 53 percent of the population is Hausa. Other major groups include the Djerma (21 percent), Tuareg (11), Fulani (also called Peuhl, 7), Kanuri (6), Toubou (0.4), and Gourmantché. The Hausa population is centered around the city of Zinder, although Hausaland stretches east nearly to Lake Chad and west nearly to Dosso. Djerma live mostly in the west, from Dosso to the coast. The Fulani and Tuareg tend to be seminomadic, though many Tuareg can be found near Agadez and throughout the north. Despite Niger's ethnic diversity, various groups generally coexist peacefully.

Language

French is the official language and is used in government and some business situations. However, only a small percentage of Nigeriens speak it. Hausa is the primary language for communication between ethnic groups in the east. In the west, Djerma and French serve this purpose. National languages include Arabic, Boudouma, Djerma, Fulfulde,

Gourmantchéma, Hausa, Kanuri, Tamachek, Tasawak, and Toubou. Many people are multilingual.

Religion

Around 99 percent of Nigeriens are Muslim. The remaining 20 percent of the population practices Christianity or animism (a belief that all objects and beings possess a life force). While some practice animism exclusively, nearly all Nigeriens, regardless of religion, practice at least some aspects of animism.

Muslims accept and revere all major Judeo-Christian prophets from Adam to Jesus, but they proclaim Muhammad to be the seal of the prophets, meaning he was the last prophet to receive revelation from God (*Allah*). The *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book) is composed of revelations from God to Muhammad. Muslims show devotion by following the Five Pillars of Islam: professing that there is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet; praying five times daily while facing Mecca, Saudi Arabia; giving money to the poor; fasting during daylight hours for the month of *Ramadan* (called *Azumi* in Hausa and *Mehaou* in Djerma); and trying to make the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, once in their lifetime.

Many Muslims pray wherever they find themselves at designated prayer times. For example, they may pray in their homes, outside their stores, or in their fields. Men and sometimes women dress in white to visit the mosque on Friday afternoon to pray and worship. Women who go to mosques (usually elderly women) line up behind men to pray. People in Hausaland and the east tend to be more religiously conservative than the west. Children memorize Arabic verses written with charcoal on wooden boards at local *Qur'anic* schools (Islamic schools). Islam plays a key role in major life events such as naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals. Most Muslims aspire to pay for their parents' *hajj*, which can be extremely expensive for the average Nigerien.

General Attitudes

Nigeriens are often characterized as being patient and accepting of life as it comes. They often end sentences with *In sha'allah* (Arabic for "God willing") to indicate that matters are out of their hands. This allows them to be stoic in the face of frequent hardships. Still, they laugh and joke often, and they rarely display real anger in public, especially when it involves personal matters. Proverbs are used in everyday conversation. For instance, when Nigeriens face difficult situations like disasters, government oppression, or death, they might say *Hay kul no gonda me kal irkoy hina* (Djerma) or *Babou may-yi say Allah* and *Komi dunya may karewa ne* (Hausa), all of which indicate that only God's power is endless. People often encourage each other to "have patience" (*Sai hankuri* in Hausa and *Kala suru* in Djerma). Time is flexible; events and appointments do not necessarily begin on time.

Nigeriens tend to identify first with family, followed by their village, ethnic group, and religion before the nation. Personal achievements are not often emphasized in this group-oriented society. Social status is based on age, wealth, or job title. Chiefs are given great respect in villages.

Superiors can ask people of lower status to run errands or do other favors for them.

Personal Appearance

Nigeriens, especially in urban areas, like to dress well. In rural areas, people often reserve their best clothing for special occasions like weddings and holidays or for trips to the weekly market. Throughout Niger, many men wear *boubous* (long robes over drawstring pants) or shirts and pants made from matching material as well as small embroidered caps. Formal dress usually includes a *boubou* with extensive embroidery. Tuareg men wear large turbans of different colors, mainly blue and white, that cover the entire face except the eyes, while Tuareg women reveal their faces.

Women wear a *pagne* (colorful wraparound skirt) with a matching tailored blouse and a headscarf. Married women wear an extra *pagne* around their shoulders or waist, and they may use it to carry children on their backs. Women often elaborately braid their hair and wear jewelry. Some urban women wear Western-style clothing.

Many people wear secondhand clothing (such as T-shirts and jeans) from Europe or the United States. Adults do not wear shorts. Young children or teens in various ethnic groups receive distinctive facial scars in elaborate ceremonies. The wounds are rubbed with ash to make them darker.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings

Proper greetings come before any conversation, and it is rude to not greet someone—even a passing stranger. In social situations, the older person is always greeted first. In a group setting, the youngest person in the group begins the greetings and is followed by the next youngest person and so on. Initial phrases are followed by inquiries about health, family, work, or the weather. The greeting depends on the season and time of day. For example, in Hausa, *Ina kwana?* (How did you sleep?) is appropriate in the morning, while *Ina ini?* (How did you pass the day?) is for the afternoon. A response to either is *Lahiya lau* ("In health"). Responses are always positive; one admits to illness or bad times only after the greetings are over.

Nigerien men shake hands upon meeting and parting. The handshaking may continue until all greetings are exchanged. To show special respect, one might touch the upper chest with one's right hand and return to the handshake. It is polite to shake the hand of every adult at a small gathering. For large groups, one may instead raise the hands to chest level, palms out, and give a verbal greeting. Traditional Muslim men do not shake hands with women. Some urban Nigeriens may greet with a kiss to each cheek. In the east, the Kanuri greet by shaking a closed fist at head level and calling *Wooshay!* *Wooshay!* (Hello! Hello!).

Nigeriens rarely call each other by given name. People are often addressed by job title. For example, a taxi driver would be called *mai mota* (person with the car). The elderly are called *tsohoa* (old woman) or *tsoho* (old man). A Muslim who makes a pilgrimage to Mecca earns the title of *el hadj*, for men, or *hadjia*, for women. In most other settings, nicknames

dominate. A nickname can be related to an event in a person's life, one's relationship to another person (*Mamadou nya* is "Mamadou's mother"), or the day of week on which one was born (for example, *Jum'ah* is "Friday"). Women cannot say their husband's name, even if referring to someone else with the same name, and adults do not address their in-laws directly. A deceased person's name is not spoken.

Gestures

Nigeriens eat or pass items with the right hand or both hands; the left hand alone is reserved for personal hygiene. Flicking the five fingers out in an openhanded gesture is insulting. To indicate "five," one brings all the fingertips of the hand together. To beckon, one waves the fingers of the right hand, palm facing down. To get someone's attention, people may snap the fingers or hiss. Students snap their fingers rather than raise their hands to signal the teacher. One can point by puckering the lips in the indicated direction. To indicate approval or agreement, Nigeriens may nod their head, make a clicking sound deep in the throat, or rapidly suck in air. Personal space is limited except between members of the opposite sex. Men and women do not hold hands in public or otherwise display their affection. However, male friends often hold hands. Traditionally, only people of equal social standing make extended eye contact. Younger people look down to show respect.

Visiting

Visiting someone's home is a sign of respect. Invitations are rarely issued; people are expected to drop in. When they approach a home, they signal their presence by clapping and calling out *Al-salaam alaykum* (Peace be upon you). The hosts respond with *Amin, alaykum al-salaam* (Amen, upon you peace) and the guests enter and remove their shoes. Hosts offer the best seat and something to drink, usually *hura*, a drink made of millet flour mixed with water and sometimes spices, milk, or sugar. One does not eat in front of another person; food is always shared. Visitors bring gifts if staying the night. Typical gifts include *goro* (kola nuts), dates, peanuts, onions, fruit, or soap. Women and men generally socialize separately, even in the home. For example, within a family's compound, men and women sit and talk in different parts of the home or yard. Among the younger generation, men and women may sometimes socialize together. In public, women socialize at the market or the well, and men meet at the market or mosque.

Visiting is an important aspect of family relationships. Younger people visit older people, rarely vice versa. An older person visits the home of someone younger only for events held at the home. Grown children, particularly sons, are expected to visit their mothers as often as possible to show respect.

Tea is an important custom for Tuareg, Fulani, and others. At least three rounds of tea are served. Sugar and mint are added each time to make the strong tea progressively sweeter. To describe the three rounds, Nigeriens use the phrase "Strong like life, subtle like friendship, sweet like love." The tea is made in small colorful teapots over coals and served in very small cups. Leaving before all rounds are finished is

impolite. After a visit, it is polite for the host to accompany guests out the door a ways or even to walk them home.

Eating

Meals are served in a communal bowl and eaten with the right hand or a spoon. Nigeriens generally drink after, not during, the meal. The main meal, which may be eaten in the afternoon or evening, often consists of *tuwo* (a thick, gelatinous millet paste) and a spicy sauce. Rural men and women eat separately, sitting on woven mats. Urban men and women eat together at a table. An urban breakfast may consist of bread and coffee, but a rural breakfast is generally leftovers from the day before. Snacks include peanuts, sugarcane, fruit, spiced cabbage or hibiscus leaves, and millet or bean cakes. People also chew kola nuts and tobacco leaves. Food can be scarce in the rainy season before the new harvest.

Restaurants vary from a table on a street corner to expensive indoor restaurants in large cities. Only men eat in public, as it is considered improper for women to eat outside the home. Women usually prepare food sold on the street, often sitting by open fires making *kosai*, a deep-fried bean cake, or doughnut-like *beignets*. Men selling cooked meat walk through the cities, balancing a tray on their heads.

LIFESTYLE

Family

Structure

The family, both extended and nuclear, is very important in Nigerien culture. Depending on the ethnic group, a family may be either patriarchal or matriarchal. Extended families often live together, with couples moving in with the husband's family after marriage. Wealthier family members are expected to share with and help members of the extended family, no matter how distant their relationship. A hierarchy is respected within an extended family. Older family members are highly honored and must be obeyed by younger people. In recent years, the family structure has been thrown into a state of transition, as economic conditions have changed traditional gender roles, particularly in urban areas.

Parents and Children

The average woman in Niger has six or seven children. Children are seen as belonging to the entire community, and they may be disciplined by neighbors or friends. Parents expect to support their children until they marry and sometimes longer. While young people traditionally remained at home until marriage and often lived with their parents after marriage, a growing number of young men choose to move out before they marry. Women remain in the family home until they marry, no matter their age. Girls are closely supervised by their parents and brothers in order to protect their honor (or reputation), as well as that of their family. Mothers teach their daughters domestic skills, such as cooking and cleaning. Boys are given more freedom and often work to help support the family. All children are expected to be obedient to their parents, particularly their fathers. The elderly commonly live with their adult children, who expect to support them financially.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are rigidly defined. The husband is usually the head of the family in Niger. However, Tuareg women are often seen as the head of the family and have more freedom than other women in Niger. Non-Tuareg may view Tuareg women as promiscuous because of their greater freedom in terms of behavior and dress. Wives are generally economically dependent upon their husbands, as opportunities for education and employment are severely limited. Women cook, clean, collect firewood, draw each day's water from the well, and care for the children. They generally must ask permission or at least inform their husbands of their plans when leaving the home. Both men and women work in the fields. Men maintain structures (such as homes and fences), provide food, herd livestock, and buy clothing for the family before major holidays. In areas where men keep their wives away from public view, the men shop in the market. Women who are not able to have children occupy a low position in society, and sterility is seen by many as a valid reason for divorce.

Niger's economic struggles have led to women (and sometimes children) taking on the roles traditionally reserved for men, such as heading families or working outside the home. In most families, whether or not a woman works outside the home is decided by her husband. A growing number of women are seeking education and professional employment, and a certain number of positions in government are reserved for women.

Housing

Home Life

Four main types of homes predominate in Niger: tents, huts, clay houses, and concrete houses. The style of a family's home is determined by factors such as the area of the country, the family's economic status, and their lifestyle. The most common form of housing in Niger is a rectangular home, made from clay. Roofs are usually constructed of wood, which is then covered with woven mats or straw, followed by a coating of clay. These homes may be made up of a single room or multiple rooms. There is generally also a kitchen and at least one bathroom with plumbing (in urban areas) or an outdoor latrine (in rural areas). Clay homes are occupied by the wealthy in rural areas and the poor in urban areas; in general, by urban standards, the wealthy in rural areas would still be considered poor.

Rural

In rural areas, most families live in huts (called *bukka* in Hausa) within a walled family compound. Wealthy families usually prefer clay walls, while poorer families' huts have straw walls. Huts with clay walls are structurally more stable and are usually larger. The huts are topped with conical straw roofs and usually have dirt floors. Each hut contains a single circular room without windows. These homes are built without foundations and are supported by a post in the middle of the room. Most family activities take place in a corner of the compound, under a separate structure with a thatched roof.

Tuareg nomads and Fulani in the northern part of the country live in leather tents. Inside, the tents are equipped

with beds, wooden stools, and a leather container for water. Nomads generally move according to the seasons, seeking grazing land for their livestock. The tents are packed up and transported on the backs of camels and donkeys. A Tuareg woman may construct her own house and then invite her husband to live in it.

Electricity and plumbing are rarely available in rural settings. Televisions are less common in rural areas than urban areas. Most rural houses have no furniture except for a bed and a few chairs or stools. Decorations may include patterned rugs and curtains.

Urban

In large urban areas, a concrete house with a corrugated metal roof (a structure locally known by the French term *maison en dur*) is increasingly popular. Generally owned by the wealthy, these homes are the most durable type of home found in Niger. Often the metal roof is covered with wood in order to insulate the home from the heat. Many such homes also have a terrace, where the family can relax.

Many urban houses have electricity, but the power supply may be sporadic in some cities. Indoor plumbing is less common. Most urban homes are furnished with armchairs and sofas; low-income families may have only a rug to sit on. Depending on the family's economic status, urban homes may also contain radios, televisions, and refrigerators. Wealthy families have cement or tile flooring, but many homes have dirt floors.

Ownership

Home ownership is greatly valued in Niger, and most people aspire to own a home. Being granted a home loan shows that a person is considered trustworthy by a bank and brings with it a measure of prestige. In rural areas, the majority of people own their homes. Many have access to land or homes that have been in their families for generations. In urban areas, most people rent, as many workers come to cities seeking economic opportunities and do not plan to live there permanently.

Dating and Marriage

Dating and Courtship

Dating is not common in villages, though young people interact in the evenings when girls dance in the village center. In these areas, marriages are typically arranged by the family, but people can suggest a partner or decline their family's choice. In urban areas, a growing number of young people choose their spouses, though parental influence is strong. Urban youth may meet at social events such as dances or weddings.

Marriage in Society

Marriage is greatly valued in Nigerien society. For women, marriage is essential in order to gain any social standing, and it is not proper for a woman to be unmarried. For men, marriage indicates status and virility. When seeking to marry, virginity and a respectful demeanor are viewed as the most important traits for a woman to possess. When choosing a husband, women generally take into consideration a man's family, social rank, income, and education. Same-sex marriage is illegal. Though not illegal, sexual relations between same-sex partners are highly stigmatized.

It is socially and religiously unacceptable for unmarried couples to live together. Pregnancy outside of wedlock is considered shameful by all ethnic groups in Niger. A girl who becomes pregnant outside of marriage may be thrown out of her home or disowned by her family. Couples who conceive a child outside of marriage generally choose to marry. However, such children are not eligible to receive family inheritance and often face prejudice throughout their lives.

Weddings

In rural areas, people generally marry young; girls often marry in their mid-teens, and men usually marry between 18 and 25. Urban Nigeriens marry later. The groom's parents pay an elaborate bride-price to the bride's parents before the marriage. The bride-price may consist of money, livestock, or land. Among some groups (such as the Kanuri), engaged women are identified by the way they dress or style their hair.

Most Nigeriens marry in traditional ceremonies. Traditional weddings include feasting, dancing, and drumming. Various customs are employed to bring the bride and groom together for the wedding. In some areas, the bride must identify (in the spirit of fun) one of two hooded men as her husband. In other places, a veiled bride is taken by camel to the groom's house. Elsewhere, a bride runs away the night before the wedding and must be retrieved from a friend's house by her future husband and his escorts. Kola nuts and dates, which are symbols of friendship and mutual respect, are served to wedding guests. Though urban and more educated couples usually fulfill the legal requirement of also registering their marriages, most other couples do not.

Muslim weddings are often more simplistic ceremonies. At such weddings, *al-fatiha* (the first chapter of the *Qur'an*, the Islamic holy book) is offered by a *marabout* (a Muslim religious leader), and four family members (two from the husband's side and two from the wife's side) serve as witnesses.

Polygamy

Polygamy is commonplace and permitted by Islam, traditional customs, and civil law. A man may have as many as four wives. The more wives a man has, the more important he is considered to be. Polygamy is less common among Niger's urban educated and among younger men. Many men are moving away from polygamy because of the financial difficulties associated with supporting more than one wife and because of the desire to follow the Western model of marriage. The dynamic inside polygamous marriages can be complicated. Each wife has her own hut within the family compound. The husband spends time with each wife in rotation. Wives take turns cooking for all. Although men are expected to provide equal treatment for each wife, some men may choose a favorite wife, and she and her children are generally given more freedom, attention, and support.

Divorce

Couples may obtain a divorce through a civil court, a traditional court, or an Islamic association. Most divorces are finalized in Islamic associations because the process is faster than in civil and traditional courts. A man can also divorce his wife either verbally or in writing. In these cases, a formal divorce is only sought if the divorce is contested. Because a woman's social standing is based mostly upon her marriage

and her children, there is a strong social stigma attached to divorced women. For this reason, women rarely initiate a divorce, although they have the legal right. After a divorce, the woman must return to her parent's house and wait at least three months to date or remarry. Until she remarries, she is the responsibility of her elder brothers or her parents. A man's social standing is largely unaffected by a divorce, and there are no restrictions on when a man may take another wife as long as he can afford the bride-price.

Any child born to a couple is viewed as belonging to the father. After a divorce, children normally remain with the father. In a polygamous family, the children of the ex-wife are raised by the man's other wives. If the man does not have additional wives, the children are raised by his mother or one of his married siblings.

Life Cycle

Birth

A woman does not discuss her pregnancy before her baby is born, as it is believed this will cause God to take back the baby. After the birth, the new mother and her baby are expected to stay home with her mother or another close female relative, who cares for her and helps her with the baby for 40 days. It is believed that during this time the new mother is surrounded by evil spirits. On the 40th day, the new mother dresses in her finest clothes and is given gifts by her husband, sisters-in-law, and close friends. She also makes sacrifices (such as sugar or millet) on this day in order to thank God for a safe birth.

A naming ceremony takes place on the seventh day after the birth. Guests bring money or soap for the new mother. The men and women gather separately (usually with women inside the mother's parents' house and the men outside) as the local *marabout* (Muslim religious leader) says a prayer in Arabic. During the prayer, a sheep or goat is slaughtered. Then the baby's name is announced. Kola nuts, dates, and the meat from the sheep or goat are distributed to the guests.

Milestones

In many ways, childhood in Niger ends at age seven, the age at which many boys are circumcised. Both boys and girls take on adult responsibilities at this age. Boys begin helping their fathers with tasks considered the man's responsibilities, such as herding livestock. Girls begin helping their mothers with the housework, and mothers begin to teach them about womanhood. In rural eastern regions, girls as young as seven may be promised to a man for marriage, which would generally take place within the year following her first menstruation. Female circumcision, also known as female genital mutilation, is practiced in some areas but is not common in Niger.

Women are considered adults when they marry. For example, although the voting age is 18, a married woman may vote regardless of her age. Men are considered adults either at marriage or around age 21, whichever comes first.

Death

According to Islam, when a person dies, the body is usually buried within the first 24 hours. In rural areas, the body is kept in the family home until burial. In urban areas, it is more common for the body to stay at a mortuary. The body is

washed and wrapped in a white sheet and then in straw mats. Traditionally, women do not attend the burial. After burial, the first chapter of the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book), *al-fatihah*, is recited first at the gravesite and then at the family home, where visitors come to offer their condolences to the family.

The mourning period lasts 40 days. During this time, family and close friends who were unable to attend the funeral make an effort to visit the family and offer their condolences. Nearby relatives also visit and send food to the family often. On the 40th day after the death, relatives and friends gather at the home of the deceased early in the morning. *Al-fatihah* is said, and then kola nuts, dates, millet cakes, and porridge are served.

Diet

Millet, sorghum, beans, rice, macaroni, and corn are staple foods throughout the country. All are eaten with sauces made from ingredients such as okra, baobab leaves, peanuts, tomatoes, and spices. Yams, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, and tomatoes are available in the cold season and mostly in urban areas. Fruits such as mangoes come in the hot season. Goat and mutton are the most common meats, but beef, chicken, and camel are also available. Meat is usually reserved for special occasions. *Hura* (millet drink) and *tuwo* (millet paste) are prepared daily. Most families in rural areas drink *hura* for lunch and eat *tuwo* with a tomato or okra sauce for dinner. In cities, rice is usually eaten for lunch, and *tuwo* is typically eaten for dinner. *Kilishi* (spiced beef or sheep jerky) and *brochette* (similar to a kebab) are popular foods.

Recreation

Sports

Many men enjoy traditional wrestling, and annual wrestling competitions are important and well-attended events. Each region has wrestling teams that compete for national titles. On the last day of the competition, the top two wrestlers compete. The winner is given prize money and a horse. He is also awarded a sword, which he keeps until the following year, when it is passed on to the new winner.

Men, especially boys, enjoy playing soccer. When soccer balls are unavailable, they may use a bunch of rags wrapped tightly in old socks. The Fulani and Tuareg people enjoy camel races. Women of all ages generally do not participate in sports.

Leisure

For all Nigeriens, visiting is the most popular form of recreation. Women socialize when pounding millet, braiding hair, or (on special occasions) painting intricate designs on their hands and feet with henna. Many enjoy celebrating and preparing for events like weddings and birth celebrations, where they dance to *tam-tam* (traditional dancing) rhythms. Many women organize social clubs, where women meet to socialize and contribute to a collective fund, which is paid to the host of the meeting. Group members take turns hosting and collecting these funds. These types of local micro-financing activities allow women to save and to earn money that they can use to start a business or to send their children to school. Women and men rarely spend leisure time together, and men have more leisure time and mobility than

do women.

Young girls have the least amount of leisure time because of their many responsibilities at home and the restrictions placed on their mobility. They usually spend their free time at home, sometimes dancing and singing. In urban areas, many young people spend their evenings in downtown areas or at night clubs, though this behavior is frowned upon by many in the older generations.

Urban men go to outdoor movie theaters. Martial arts and Indian romance films are the most popular. At night, people enjoy watching television, often outdoors, where it is cooler. In villages without electricity, televisions are powered by car batteries. Many Nigeriens enjoy a gambling game called *dilli*, which is played on the ground with palm nuts and small sticks. Young people in urban areas enjoy a French card game called *belote*, in which players bid on how many points they expect to earn during each round.

The Arts

Traditional dancing, known as *tam-tam*, is popular in Niger's villages; drummers play while young women dance. Spectators place coins on the foreheads of their favorite dancers. The money drops to the ground and is swept up by the drummers' apprentice for their pay. Tuareg dance to the *tandé* (a small drum played with the hands). Unlike other ethnic groups, Tuareg women sing and drum while the men dance.

Nigerien artisans carve animals, human figures, and kitchen utensils using materials from their surroundings, such as wood and cow horn. Stringed instruments, bowls, and containers are made from decoratively painted dried gourds. Textile arts also thrive, especially *kunta* (fabric strips sewn together to form geometric patterns) and batik (a resist-dye process). *Kunta* is often woven into blankets, which are given as wedding presents and kept as family heirlooms. Tuareg are noted for their exquisite silver jewelry. Artisans produce many of these items for the tourist market. A national cooperative has been formed to promote local artisans and their work.

Holidays

Nigeriens celebrate New Year's (1 January), Reconciliation Day (24 April), Independence Day (3 August, celebrated by planting trees in efforts to decrease the effects of desertification), and the Proclamation of the Republic (18 December). Islamic holidays are widely celebrated, with dates determined by the lunar calendar. Some Islamic holidays include *al-Mawlid al-Nabawi* (Muhammad's birthday), *Ramadan* (holy month of fasting), *Karamin Sallah* (also known as *Eid al-Fitr*, a three-day feast held at the end of *Ramadan*), and *Tabaski* (also known as *Eid al-Adha*). School holidays are taken at Christmas and Easter.

New Year's

New Year's Eve is an important holiday in cities and among young people. Restaurants, nightclubs, and cafés are crowded with merrymakers. Others prefer to celebrate at home. Regardless of where they celebrate, people wear their best clothing on this night. Fireworks begin at midnight. As on other holidays, well wishes are extended to relatives and

friends.

Al-Mawlid al-Nabawi

On the night of *al-Mawlid al-Nabawi* (Muhammad's birthday), people stay up late reading from the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book) and praising the prophet. Many people travel to the village of Kiota on this day, because it was once the home of some of West Africa's most important Muslim leaders. In the cities, Muslims go to mosques to participate in the same rituals held in Kiota. Because people stay up late the night of *al-Mawlid al-Nabawi*, the next day is declared a public holiday so that people can rest.

Tabaski

Tabaski, or *Eid al-Adha* (held 40 days after the *Ramadan* feast), commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. Both *Karamin Sallah* (literally, "Little Feast") and *Ramadan* are occasions to wear new clothes, visit relatives, and exchange presents. On *Tabaski*, also called *Babban Sallah* (literally, "Big Feast"), a sheep or goat is slaughtered. Because many families eat meat only on rare occasions, the feast is eagerly awaited by people of all ages. Children take the meat around to the homes of friends and neighbors, who give them money in return. This gesture is called *Barka da Sallah* in Hausa and *Kai Yéssi* in Djerma. In Niamey, families may take children to the zoo on this day. In other areas, children are invited to the chief's house for a festival.

September Celebrations

Some holidays are unique to a certain ethnic group. The Bororo (a nomadic subgroup of the Fulani) celebrate *Guéréwol* in September. They gather to celebrate the end of the rainy season with dancing, clapping, and socializing. This is an opportunity for many young people to meet their spouses. Also in September, some Fulani and Tuareg celebrate *Cure Salée* in Ingall, in northern Niger. People dance, sing, and participate in beauty competitions, livestock exhibitions, and camel races.

SOCIETY

Government

Structure

Niger is a semi-presidential republic. Niger's president is head of state and is directly elected to serve a five-year term. The president appoints a prime minister who serves as head of government. The 171-seat National Assembly is the legislature. Members are elected to five-year terms. Eight seats are reserved for minorities and five for Nigeriens living abroad. A parliamentary quota for women is in place, but it is not always respected in practice. Though mostly independent, the judiciary is sometimes influenced by the executive branch.

Most large cities, including Zinder, Tahoua, Dosso, and Agadez, have sultans who hold office based on lineage. Villages often have a chief who is chosen by birth and ability. The central government ultimately makes most decisions, but on the local level, the word of a sultan or chief carries great weight. Disputes are often resolved by going to a respected elder or chief. Villages have leaders for the fields, neighborhoods (in large villages), women, young men, and so

on.

Political Landscape

Many political parties are active in Niger. The center-left Party for Democracy and Socialism (PNDS) is the ruling party. The opposition includes the Nigerien Democratic Movement for an African Federation (MODEN/FA). Government crackdowns on opposition leaders are common. Corruption is widespread at all levels of government. In some parts of Niger, insecurity is a major problem, as attacks from Boko Haram, a Nigerian-based militant Islamist group, spill over the border.

Government and the People

Nigeriens expect their government to provide equality and to protect their civil liberties. They also desire more employment opportunities, better wages, and lower taxes. The constitution guarantees freedoms of assembly, the press, expression, and religion. However, rights are often limited in practice. Discrimination against women, minority groups, and LGBT people is common. Many Nigeriens do not have access to basic services.

Nigeriens are becoming increasingly involved in political processes. The average voter turnout is about 51 percent. Recent elections have been marred by irregularities such as vote buying and vote rigging. The voting age is 18. When voting, men and women often stand in separate lines.

Economy

Niger is one of the world's poorest countries. Uranium is the most important export. Other industries, though minor, include petroleum, cement, brick, textiles, chemical production, and slaughterhouses. About 79 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and livestock herding, mainly at the subsistence level. Primary crops are cowpeas, cotton, peanuts, millet, sorghum, cassava, and rice. Animals raised include cattle, sheep, goats, camels, donkeys, horses, and poultry. Most consumer items are exported. The private sector is growing slowly as state enterprises are privatized. Many young village men travel to neighboring countries (called *l'Exode*, or "the Exodus") in search of work and return to Niger during the rainy season. Niger receives significant amounts of international aid. The currency is the *CFA franc* (XOF).

Transportation and Communications

Only major highways and city roads are paved. Highways connect Niamey to N'guigmi in the east and to Agadez in the north, though many of them are in poor condition. Only wealthy Nigeriens own cars. People often walk long distances to visit relatives and friends or to gather firewood and haul water. They may also ride a motorcycle, moped, or bicycle, or sometimes a donkey or camel. A national bus line serves major routes, but most people cover long distances by "bush-taxis" (*taxis de brousse*). Bush-taxis carry 8 to 10 passengers (vans hold 17–25); they leave when full, so schedules are not definite. Villagers ride bush-taxis to the weekly market, and the cars or vans often become loaded with livestock, grains, and other goods. During the taxis' frequent stops, vendors sell goods and snacks to passengers through the windows. Taxis also stop for prayer times.

Cellular phone reception is available in much of the country. Many people in these areas have cellular phones, which are cheaper and more widely available than landlines. A growing number of teenagers own cellular phones, which they mainly use to connect to free Wi-Fi in public places. People may send messages via word-of-mouth or radio. Internet use is very limited but is growing. Connection speeds are generally very slow compared to those in more industrialized countries. A government newspaper and several independent papers operate. Although journalists are sometimes subject to legal action, freedom of the press has improved in recent years, allowing journalists to report without fear of intimidation or physical harm. Most people get their news from radio stations, both domestic and international, as literacy rates in the country are low.

Education

Structure

The school system is based on the French model. Primary school begins at age seven and lasts six years. Secondary school lasts seven years and is divided into two levels: four years in middle school and three years in high school. Although primary school is technically compulsory, about one-third of children do not attend. The enrollment rate is even lower in secondary school, with less than a quarter of children being enrolled. Niger has a variety of schools, including government, private, vocational, and religious.

Access

The most common factors affecting access to education are poverty and availability of school facilities. Many families place greater value on religious education than on academics. *Qur'anic* schools (Islamic schools) are more accessible for many because the cost is lower than in government schools. Students do not pay tuition to attend government schools. However, families are still responsible for some fees and supplies, which most families cannot afford. Urban girls attend more school than rural girls, but both have many household responsibilities at home, which may interfere with their education. Students from rural areas may have to travel to larger towns for secondary school, where they usually stay with extended family or with family friends. Most families will not allow their girls to make such a journey.

School Life

French is the language of instruction, which makes learning difficult for primary school children who have never spoken it before. Knowledge of French is seen as an important skill because it is Niger's official language and is used in communications with other French-speaking countries. Some alternative schools use local languages for instruction.

Students must pass difficult exams to advance to each level of schooling. Primary school covers basic subjects such as French, science, mathematics, history, and geography. In lower secondary school, students begin studying English, physics, and chemistry. In upper secondary school, students may also learn Arabic, Spanish, or German. In *Qur'anic* schools, students called *talibé*, or *almajiri*, memorize verses from the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book) in Arabic, although most don't understand the language. These students often move from their rural villages to live at the school. In addition to

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studying the *Qur'an*, students beg on the streets for money and food, which they bring back to their instructors as payment. In rural areas, students work in their teacher's field or do other chores in exchange for lessons at these schools.

Most students cannot afford school materials like books. Teachers often write the lessons on the blackboard for students to copy into their notebooks. In primary school, the teaching style is generally authoritative and teachers focus on memorization. In secondary school, education incorporates more discussion and analysis. Schools are underfunded, and teachers may strike for months when they are not paid.

Higher Education

Despite the availability of universities in each region, enrollment rates at higher education institutions are often low. It is rare for girls to attend because most marry soon after secondary school and the increased demands on their time make it difficult. After secondary school, some students study at vocational schools, where they study subjects such as health care, computer science, accounting, administration, and electronics. Two of Niger's main universities are Abdou Moumouni University and the Islamic University of Niger.

Health

The Republic of Niger has one of the world's lowest life expectancies and highest infant mortality rates. Malnutrition, meningitis, measles, and diarrhea are serious problems. Malaria is responsible for most of the child deaths in Niger. In recent years, child deaths have been drastically reduced due to the distribution of bed nets, which prevent the spread of malaria by mosquitoes. In 2005, the government introduced a free healthcare policy that provides women and children access to free medical care and medicine. Additional foreign aid and government funding is needed to maintain these healthcare improvements.

Only the largest cities have hospitals, and there is a shortage of trained healthcare workers. However, the number of health outposts is growing and they are managed by capable community health workers. Village health posts work to reduce maternal and infant mortality by providing women with prenatal and neonatal care, as well as classes, led by midwives, to educate women on the signs of danger during pregnancy. Access to emergency cesareans has also been improved. General healthcare costs remain high for men. Nigeriens generally turn first to herbal medicine.

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information

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Niger

Country and Development Data

Capital	Niamey
Population	19,866,231 (rank=58)
Area (sq. mi.)	489,191 (rank=21)
Area (sq. km.)	1,267,000
Human Development Index	188 of 188 countries
Gender Inequality Index	151 of 188 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$1,200
Adult Literacy	27% (male); 11% (female)
Infant Mortality	79 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	59 (male); 61 (female)
Currency	CFA Franc BCEAO

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AFRICA :: SENEGAL

Introduction :: SENEGAL

Background:

The French colonies of Senegal and French Sudan were merged in 1959 and granted independence in 1960 as the Mali Federation. The union broke up after only a few months. Senegal joined with The Gambia to form the nominal confederation of Senegambia in 1982. The envisaged integration of the two countries was never implemented, and the union was dissolved in 1989. The Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance has led a low-level separatist insurgency in southern Senegal since the 1980s. Several attempts at reaching a comprehensive peace agreement have failed to resolve the conflict but, despite sporadic incidents of violence, an unofficial cease-fire has remained largely in effect since 2012. Senegal remains one of the most stable democracies in Africa and has a long history of participating in international peacekeeping and regional mediation. Senegal was ruled by the Socialist Party of Senegal, first under President Léopold Sédar SENGHOR, and then President Abdou DIOUF, for 40 years until Abdoulaye WADE was elected president in 2000. He was re-elected in 2007 and during his two terms amended Senegal's constitution over a dozen times to increase executive power and weaken the opposition. His decision to run for a third presidential term sparked a large public backlash that led to his defeat in a March 2012 runoff with Macky SALL. A 2016 constitutional referendum reduced the term to five years with a maximum of two consecutive terms for future presidents - the change did not apply to SALL's first term. SALL won his bid for re-election in February 2019; his term will end in 2024. A month after the election, the National Assembly voted to abolish the office of the prime minister. Opposition organizations and civil society have criticized the decision as a further concentration of power in the executive branch at the expense of the legislative and judicial branches.

Geography :: SENEGAL

Location:

Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania

Geographic coordinates:

14 00 N, 14 00 W

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 196,722 sq km

land: 192,530 sq km

water: 4,192 sq km

country comparison to the world: 89

Area - comparative:

slightly smaller than South Dakota; slightly larger than twice the size of Indiana

Area comparison map:**Land boundaries:**

total: 2,684 km

border countries (5): The Gambia 749 km, Guinea 363 km, Guinea-Bissau 341 km, Mali 489 km, Mauritania 742 km

Coastline:

531 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate:

tropical; hot, humid; rainy season (May to November) has strong southeast winds; dry season (December to April) dominated by hot, dry, harmattan wind

Terrain:

generally low, rolling, plains rising to foothills in southeast

Elevation:

mean elevation: 69 m

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed elevation 2.8 km southeast of Nepen Diaka 648 m

Natural resources:

fish, phosphates, iron ore

Land use:

agricultural land: 46.8% (2011 est.)

arable land: 17.4% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 0.3% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 29.1% (2011 est.)

forest: 43.8% (2011 est.)

other: 9.4% (2011 est.)

Irrigated land:

1,200 sq km (2012)

Population distribution:

the population is concentrated in the west, with Dakar anchoring a well-defined core area; approximately 70% of the population is rural

Natural hazards:

lowlands seasonally flooded; periodic droughts

Environment - current issues:

deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; desertification; periodic droughts; seasonal flooding; overfishing; weak environmental protective laws; wildlife populations threatened by poaching

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

westernmost country on the African continent; The Gambia is almost an enclave within Senegal

People and Society :: SENEGAL

Population:

15,020,945 (July 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 72

Nationality:

noun: Senegalese (singular and plural)

adjective: Senegalese

Ethnic groups:

Wolof 37.1%, Pular 26.2%, Serer 17%, Mandinka 5.6%, Jola 4.5%, Soninke 1.4%, other 8.3% (includes Europeans and persons of Lebanese descent) (2017 est.)

Languages:

French (official), Wolof, Pular, Jola, Mandinka, Serer, Soninke

Religions:

Muslim 95.9% (most adhere to one of the four main Sufi brotherhoods), Christian 4.1% (mostly Roman Catholic) (2016 est.)

Demographic profile:

Senegal has a large and growing youth population but has not been successful in developing its potential human capital. Senegal's high total fertility rate of almost 4.5 children per woman continues to bolster the

country's large youth cohort – more than 60% of the population is under the age of 25. Fertility remains high because of the continued desire for large families, the low use of family planning, and early childbearing. Because of the country's high illiteracy rate (more than 40%), high unemployment (even among university graduates), and widespread poverty, Senegalese youths face dim prospects; women are especially disadvantaged.

Senegal historically was a destination country for economic migrants, but in recent years West African migrants more often use Senegal as a transit point to North Africa – and sometimes illegally onward to Europe. The country also has been host to several thousand black Mauritanian refugees since they were expelled from their homeland during its 1989 border conflict with Senegal. The country's economic crisis in the 1970s stimulated emigration; departures accelerated in the 1990s. Destinations shifted from neighboring countries, which were experiencing economic decline, civil wars, and increasing xenophobia, to Libya and Mauritania because of their booming oil industries and to developed countries (most notably former colonial ruler France, as well as Italy and Spain). The latter became attractive in the 1990s because of job opportunities and their periodic regularization programs (legalizing the status of illegal migrants).

Additionally, about 16,000 Senegalese refugees still remain in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau as a result of more than 30 years of fighting between government forces and rebel separatists in southern Senegal's Casamance region.

Age structure:

0-14 years: 41.15% (male 3,106,942 /female 3,074,740)

15-24 years: 20.33% (male 1,521,868 /female 1,531,484)

25-54 years: 31.45% (male 2,176,052 /female 2,547,566)

55-64 years: 4.05% (male 261,682 /female 347,374)

65 years and over: 3.02% (male 200,079 /female 253,158) (2018 est.)

population pyramid:



Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 85.4 (2015 est.)

youth dependency ratio: 79.8 (2015 est.)

elderly dependency ratio: 5.6 (2015 est.)

potential support ratio: 18 (2015 est.)

Median age:

total: 19 years (2018 est.)

male: 18.1 years

female: 19.9 years

country comparison to the world: 205

Population growth rate:

2.36% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 30

Birth rate:

32.9 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 27

Death rate:

7.9 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 94

Net migration rate:

-1.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Population distribution:

the population is concentrated in the west, with Dakar anchoring a well-defined core area; approximately 70% of the population is rural

Urbanization:

urban population: 47.7% of total population (2019)

rate of urbanization: 3.73% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

3.057 million DAKAR (capital) (2019)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.99 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.85 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.75 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.79 male(s)/female

total population: 0.94 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

21.9 years (2017 est.)

note: median age at first birth among women 25-29

Maternal mortality rate:

315 deaths/100,000 live births (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 35

Infant mortality rate:

total: 48 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

male: 53.7 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 42.1 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 32

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 62.5 years (2018 est.)

male: 60.4 years

female: 64.7 years

country comparison to the world: 199

Total fertility rate:

4.2 children born/woman (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 30

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

27.8% (2017)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 92.9% of population

rural: 67.3% of population

total: 78.5% of population

unimproved:

urban: 7.1% of population

rural: 32.7% of population

total: 21.5% of population (2015 est.)

Current Health Expenditure:

5.5% (2016)

Physicians density:

0.07 physicians/1,000 population (2016)

Hospital bed density:

0.3 beds/1,000 population

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 65.4% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 33.8% of population (2015 est.)

total: 47.6% of population (2015 est.)

unimproved:

urban: 34.6% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 66.2% of population (2015 est.)

total: 52.4% of population (2015 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

0.4% (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 84

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

42,000 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 65

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

1,300 (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 54

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high (2016)

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever (2016)

vectorborne diseases: malaria and dengue fever (2016)

water contact diseases: schistosomiasis (2016)

animal contact diseases: rabies (2016)

respiratory diseases: meningococcal meningitis (2016)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

8.8% (2016)

country comparison to the world: 146

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

14.4% (2017)

country comparison to the world: 46

Education expenditures:

4.8% of GDP (2017)

country comparison to the world: 74

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 51.9%

male: 64.8%

female: 39.8% (2017)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 9 years

male: 9 years

female: 9 years (2017)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 8.1%

male: 7.4%

female: 8.9% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 142

Government :: SENEGAL**Country name:****conventional long form:** Republic of Senegal**conventional short form:** Senegal**local long form:** Republique du Senegal**local short form:** Senegal**former:** Senegambia (along with The Gambia), Mali Federation**etymology:** named for the Senegal River that forms the northern border of the country; many theories exist for the origin of the river name; perhaps the most widely cited derives the name from "Azenegue," the Portuguese appellation for the Berber Zenaga people who lived north of the river**Government type:**

presidential republic

Capital:**name:** Dakar**geographic coordinates:** 14 44 N, 17 38 W**time difference:** UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)**etymology:** the Atlantic coast trading settlement of Ndakaaru came to be called "Dakar" by French colonialists**Administrative divisions:**

14 regions (regions, singular - region); Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kaolack, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint-Louis, Sedhiou, Tambacounda, Thies, Ziguinchor

Independence:

4 April 1960 (from France); note - complete independence achieved upon dissolution of federation with Mali on 20 August 1960

National holiday:

Independence Day, 4 April (1960)

Constitution:**history:** previous 1959 (preindependence), 1963; latest adopted by referendum 7 January 2001, promulgated 22 January 2001**amendments:** proposed by the president of the republic or by the National Assembly; passage requires Assembly approval and approval in a referendum; the president can bypass a referendum and submit an amendment directly to the Assembly, which requires at least three-fifths majority vote; the republican form of government is not amendable; amended several times, last in 2019 (2019)**Legal system:**

civil law system based on French law; judicial review of legislative acts in Constitutional Court

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCt jurisdiction

Citizenship:**citizenship by birth:** no

citizenship by descent only: at least one parent must be a citizen of Senegal

dual citizenship recognized: no, but Senegalese citizens do not automatically lose their citizenship if they acquire citizenship in another state

residency requirement for naturalization: 5 years

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Macky SALL (since 2 April 2012)

head of government: President Macky SALL (since 2 April 2012)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the president

elections/appointments: president directly elected by absolute majority popular vote in 2 rounds if needed for a single renewable 5-year term; election last held on 24 February 2019 (next to be held in February 2024)

election results: Macky SALL elected president in first round; percent of vote - Macky SALL (APR) 58.3%, Idrissa SECK (Rewmi) 20.5%, Ousmane SONKO (PASTEF) 15.7%

Legislative branch:

description: unicameral National Assembly or *Assemblée Nationale* (165 seats; 105 members including 15 representing Senegalese diaspora directly elected by plurality vote in single- and multi-seat constituencies and 60 members directly elected by proportional representation vote in single- and multi-seat constituencies)

elections: National Assembly - last held on 2 July 2017 (next to be held in July 2022)

election results: National Assembly results - percent of vote by party/coalition - BBK 49.5%, CGWS 16.7%, MTS 11.7%, PUR 4.7%, CP-Kaddu Askan Wi 2%, other 15.4%; seats by party/coalition - BBY 125, CGWS 19, MTS 7, PUR 3, CP-Kaddu Askan Wi 2, other 9; composition - men 96, women 69, percent of women 41.8%

Judicial branch:

highest courts: Supreme Court or Cour Supreme (consists of the court president and 12 judges and organized into civil and commercial, criminal, administrative, and social chambers); Constitutional Council or Conseil Constitutionnel (consists of 7 members, including the court president, vice president, and 5 judges)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court judges appointed by the president of the republic upon recommendation of the Superior Council of the Magistrates, a body chaired by the president and minister of justice; judge tenure varies, with mandatory retirement either at 65 or 68 years; Constitutional Council members appointed - 5 by the president and 2 by the National Assembly speaker; judges serve 6-year terms, with renewal of 2 members every 2 years

subordinate courts: High Court of Justice (for crimes of high treason by the president); Courts of Appeal; Court of Auditors; assize courts; regional and district courts; Labor Court

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance for the Republic-Yakaar or APR-Yakaar [Macky SALL]

Alliance of Forces of Progress or AFP [Moustapha NIASSE]

Alliance for Citizenship and Labor or ACT [Abdoul MBAYE]

And-Jef/African Party for Democracy and Socialism or AJ/PADS [Mamadou DIOP Decriox]

Benno Bokk Yakaar or BBY (United in Hope) [Macky SALL] (coalition includes AFP, APR, BGC, LD-MPT, PIT, PS, and UNP)

Bokk Gis Gis coalition [Pape DIOP]

Citizen Movement for National Reform or MCRN-Bes Du Nakk [Mansour Sy DJAMIL]

Democratic League-Labor Party Movement or LD-MPT [Abdoulaye BATHILY]

Dare the Future movement [Aissata Tall SALL]

Front for Socialism and Democracy/Benno Jubel or FSD/BJ [Cheikh Abdoulaye Bamba DIEYE]
 Gainde Centrist Bloc or BGC [Jean-Paul DIAS]
 General Alliance for the Interests of the Republic or AGIR [Thierno BOCOUM]
 Grand Party or GP [Malick GAKOU]
 Independence and Labor Party or PIT [Magatte THIAM]
 Madicke 2019 coalition [Madicke NIANG]
 National Union for the People or UNP [Souleymane Ndene NDIAYE]
 Only Senegal movement [Pierre Goudiaby ATEPA]
 Party for Truth and Development or PVD [Cheikh Ahmadou Kara MBAKE]
 Party of Unity and Rally or PUR [El Hadji SALL]
 Patriotic Convergence Kaddu Askan Wi or CP-Kaddu Askan Wi [Abdoulaye BALDE]
 Patriots of Senegal for Ethics, Work and Fraternity or (PASTEF) [Ousmane SONKO]
 Rewmi Party [Idrissa SECK]
 Senegalese Democratic Party or PDS [Abdoulaye WADE]
 Socialist Party or PS [Ousmane Tanor DIENG]
 Tekki Movement [Mamadou Lamine DIALLO]

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, CD, CPLP (associate), ECOWAS, EITI (candidate country), FAO, FZ, G-15, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICt, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNMIL, UNMISS, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WADB (regional), WAEMU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

Ambassador Momar DIOP (since 22 June 2018)

chancery: 2215 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20007

telephone: [1] (202) 234-0540

FAX: [1] (202) 629-2961

consulate(s) general: Houston, New York

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Tulinabo S. MUSHINGI (since August 2017); note - also accredited to Guinea-Bissau

telephone: [221] 33-879-4000

embassy: Route des Almadies, Dakar

mailing address: B.P. 49, Dakar

FAX: [221] 33-822-2991

Flag description:

three equal vertical bands of green (hoist side), yellow, and red with a small green five-pointed star centered in the yellow band; green represents Islam, progress, and hope; yellow signifies natural wealth and progress; red symbolizes sacrifice and determination; the star denotes unity and hope

note: uses the popular Pan-African colors of Ethiopia; the colors from left to right are the same as those of neighboring Mali and the reverse of those on the flag of neighboring Guinea

National symbol(s):

lion; national colors: green, yellow, red

National anthem:

name: "Pincez Tous vos Koras, Frappez les Balafons" (Pluck Your Koras, Strike the Balafons)

lyrics/music: Leopold Sedar SENGHOR/Herbert PEPPER

note: adopted 1960; lyrics written by Leopold Sedar SENGHOR, Senegal's first president; the anthem sometimes played incorporating the Koras (harp-like stringed instruments) and Balafons (types of xylophones) mentioned in the title

Economy :: SENEGAL

Economy - overview:

Senegal's economy is driven by mining, construction, tourism, fisheries and agriculture, which are the primary sources of employment in rural areas. The country's key export industries include phosphate mining, fertilizer production, agricultural products and commercial fishing and Senegal is also working on oil exploration projects. It relies heavily on donor assistance, remittances and foreign direct investment. Senegal reached a growth rate of 7% in 2017, due in part to strong performance in agriculture despite erratic rainfall.

President Macky SALL, who was elected in March 2012 under a reformist policy agenda, inherited an economy with high energy costs, a challenging business environment, and a culture of overspending. President SALL unveiled an ambitious economic plan, the Emerging Senegal Plan (ESP), which aims to implement priority economic reforms and investment projects to increase economic growth while preserving macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability. Bureaucratic bottlenecks and a challenging business climate are among the perennial challenges that may slow the implementation of this plan.

Senegal receives technical support from the IMF under a Policy Support Instrument (PSI) to assist with implementation of the ESP. The PSI implementation continues to be satisfactory as concluded by the IMF's fifth review in December 2017. Financial markets have signaled confidence in Senegal through successful Eurobond issuances in 2014, 2017, and 2018.

The government is focusing on 19 projects under the ESP to continue The government's goal under the ESP is structural transformation of the economy. Key projects include the Thiès-Touba Highway, the new international airport opened in December 2017, and upgrades to energy infrastructure. The cost of electricity is a chief constraint for Senegal's development. Electricity prices in Senegal are among the highest in the world. Power Africa, a US presidential initiative led by USAID, supports Senegal's plans to improve reliability and increase generating capacity.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$54.8 billion (2017 est.)

\$51.15 billion (2016 est.)

\$48.15 billion (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 107

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$21.11 billion (2017 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

7.2% (2017 est.)

6.2% (2016 est.)

6.4% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 18

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$3,500 (2017 est.)

\$3,300 (2016 est.)

\$3,200 (2015 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 188

Gross national saving:

21.2% of GDP (2017 est.)

21.3% of GDP (2016 est.)

20.4% of GDP (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 86

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 71.9% (2017 est.)

government consumption: 15.2% (2017 est.)

investment in fixed capital: 25.1% (2017 est.)

investment in inventories: 3.4% (2017 est.)

exports of goods and services: 27% (2017 est.)

imports of goods and services: -42.8% (2017 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 16.9% (2017 est.)

industry: 24.3% (2017 est.)

services: 58.8% (2017 est.)

Agriculture - products:

peanuts, millet, corn, sorghum, rice, cotton, tomatoes, green vegetables; cattle, poultry, pigs; fish

Industries:

agricultural and fish processing, phosphate mining, fertilizer production, petroleum refining, zircon, and gold mining, construction materials, ship construction and repair

Industrial production growth rate:

7.7% (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 26

Labor force:

6.966 million (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 67

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 77.5%

industry: 22.5%

industry and services: 22.5% (2007 est.)

Unemployment rate:

48% (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: 216

Population below poverty line:

46.7% (2011 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 2.5%

highest 10%: 31.1% (2011)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

40.3 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 63

Budget:

revenues: 4.139 billion (2017 est.)

expenditures: 4.9 billion (2017 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

19.6% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 155

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-3.6% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Public debt:

48.3% of GDP (2017 est.)

47.8% of GDP (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 108

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

1.3% (2017 est.)

0.8% (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 73

Central bank discount rate:

0.25% (31 December 2010)

4.25% (31 December 2009)

country comparison to the world: 140

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

5.4% (31 December 2017 est.)

5.3% (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 138

Stock of narrow money:

\$5.944 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$4.689 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Stock of broad money:

\$5.944 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$4.689 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 99

Stock of domestic credit:

\$6.695 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$5.219 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 121

Market value of publicly traded shares:

NA

Current account balance:

-\$1.547 billion (2017 est.)

-\$769 million (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

Exports:

\$2.362 billion (2017 est.)

\$2.498 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Exports - partners:

Mali 14.8%, Switzerland 11.4%, India 6%, Cote d'Ivoire 5.3%, UAE 5.1%, Gambia, The 4.2%, Spain 4.1% (2017)

Exports - commodities:

fish, groundnuts (peanuts), petroleum products, phosphates, cotton

Imports:

\$5.217 billion (2017 est.)

\$4.966 billion (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 125

Imports - commodities:

food and beverages, capital goods, fuels

Imports - partners:

France 16.3%, China 10.4%, Nigeria 8%, India 7.2%, Netherlands 4.8%, Spain 4.2% (2017)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$1.827 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$116.9 million (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 122

Debt - external:

\$8.571 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$6.327 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

Exchange rates:

Communaute Financiere Africaine francs (XOF) per US dollar -

617.4 (2017 est.)

593.01 (2016 est.)

593.01 (2015 est.)

591.45 (2014 est.)

494.42 (2013 est.)

Energy :: SENEGAL**Electricity access:**

population without electricity: 6 million (2017)

electrification - total population: 65% (2017)

electrification - urban areas: 90% (2017)

electrification - rural areas: 43% (2017)

Electricity - production:

4.167 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 126

Electricity - consumption:

3.497 billion kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 195

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

977,000 kW (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 129

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

82% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 79

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 179

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

7% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 127

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

11% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 190

Crude oil - imports:

17,880 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 65

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Refined petroleum products - production:

17,590 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

48,000 bbl/day (2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 107

Refined petroleum products - exports:

4,063 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 94

Refined petroleum products - imports:

32,050 bbl/day (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 98

Natural gas - production:

59.46 million cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 85

Natural gas - consumption:

59.46 million cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 111

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 180

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 186

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 191

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

8.644 million Mt (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 113

Communications :: SENEGAL

Telephones - fixed lines:

total subscriptions: 290,636

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 2 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 115

Telephones - mobile cellular:

total subscriptions: 15,758,366

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 107 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 64

Telephone system:

general assessment: good system with microwave radio relay, coaxial cable and fiber-optic cable in trunk system; mobile penetration reached 108% in March 2019; mobile broadband accounts for close to 100% (97.2%) Internet accesses; 3G and LTE services (2018)

domestic: generally reliable urban system with a fiber-optic network; about two-thirds of all fixed-line connections are in Dakar; mobile-cellular service is steadily displacing fixed-line service, even in urban areas; fixed-line 2 per 100 and mobile-cellular 107 per 100 persons (2018)

international: country code - 221; landing points for the ACE, Atlantis-2, MainOne and SAT-3/WASC submarine cables providing connectivity from South Africa, numerous western African countries, Europe and South America; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (2019)

Broadcast media:

state-run Radiodiffusion Television Senegalaise (RTS) broadcasts TV programs from five cities in Senegal; in most regions of the country, viewers can receive TV programming from at least 7 private broadcasters; a wide range of independent TV programming is available via satellite; RTS operates a national radio network and a number of regional FM stations; at least 7 community radio stations and 18 private-broadcast radio stations are available; transmissions of at least 5 international broadcasters are accessible on FM in Dakar (2019)

Internet country code:

.sn

Internet users:

total: 3,675,209

percent of population: 25.7% (July 2016 est.)

country comparison to the world: 91

Broadband - fixed subscriptions:

total: 111,795

subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 1 (2017 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

Military and Security :: SENEGAL

Military expenditures:

1.38% of GDP (2019 est.)

1.44% of GDP (2018)

1.46% of GDP (2017)

1.73% of GDP (2016)

1.58% of GDP (2015)

country comparison to the world: 85

Military and security forces:

Senegalese Armed Forces: Army, Senegalese National Navy (Marine Senegalaise, MNS), Senegalese Air Force (Armee de l'Air du Senegal), National Gendarmerie (includes Territorial and Mobile components) (2019)

Military service age and obligation:

18 years of age for voluntary military service; 20 years of age for selective conscript service; 2-year service obligation; women have been accepted into military service since 2008 (2016)

Transportation :: SENEGAL

National air transport system:

annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers: 115,355 (2015)

annual freight traffic on registered air carriers: 3,095,523 mt-km (2015)

Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:

6V (2016)

Airports:

20 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 136

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 9 (2017)

over 3,047 m: 2 (2017)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 6 (2017)

914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2017)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 11 (2013)

1,524 to 2,437 m: 7 (2013)

914 to 1,523 m: 3 (2013)

under 914 m: 1 (2013)

Pipelines:

43 km gas, 8 km refined products (2017)

Railways:

total: 906 km (713 km operational in 2017) (2017)

narrow gauge: 906 km 1.000-m gauge (2017)

country comparison to the world: 94

Roadways:

total: 16,665 km (2017)

paved: 6,126 km (includes 241 km of expressways) (2017)

unpaved: 10,539 km (2017)

country comparison to the world: 118

Waterways:

1,000 km (primarily on the Senegal, Saloum, and Casamance Rivers) (2012)

country comparison to the world: 63

Merchant marine:

total: 28

by type: general cargo 4, oil tanker 1, other 23 (2018)

country comparison to the world: 130

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Dakar

Transnational Issues :: SENEGAL

Disputes - international:

cross-border trafficking in persons, timber, wildlife, and cannabis; rebels from the Movement of Democratic Forces in the Casamance find refuge in Guinea-Bissau

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 14,155 (Mauritania) (2019)

IDPs: 18,000 (clashes between government troops and separatists in Casamance region) (2017)

Illicit drugs:

transshipment point for Southwest and Southeast Asian heroin and South American cocaine moving to Europe and North America; illicit cultivator of cannabis

Senegal country profile

- 14 May 2018



Long considered one of Africa's model democracies, the western African nation of Senegal has a tradition of stable governments and civilian rule.

Hundreds of Senegalese were killed in a local separatist conflict in the southern region of Casamance, but violence has waned since a 2014 ceasefire.

The country's stability has allowed it to send peacekeeping troops to DR Congo, Liberia and Kosovo.

Slaves, ivory and gold were exported from the coast during the 17th and 18th centuries and now the economy is based mainly on agriculture. The money sent home by Senegalese living abroad is a key source of revenue.

FACTS

Republic of Senegal

Capital: Dakar

- **Population** 15.5 million
- **Area** 196,722 sq km (75,955 sq miles)
- **Major languages** French (official), Wolof
- **Major religion** Islam
- **Life expectancy** 65 years (men), 69 years (women)
- **Currency** CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) franc
UN, World Bank

LEADER

President: Macky Sall



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Once an ally of former President Abdoulaye Wade, Macky Sall created his own opposition party in 2008 and defeated Wade in the 2012 elections.

During his time in office, the separatist conflict in the southern Casamance region has waned, and in 2014 rebel leader Salif Sadio declared a unilateral ceasefire.

Mr Sall proposed reducing the presidential term from seven years to five, saying he wanted to set an example within Africa, where many leaders cling to power beyond their allotted term. The proposal won approval in a March 2016 referendum but will only be implemented after Mr Sall's term.

Senegal has a lively political scene, with parties competing across ethnic, religious and ideological lines.

MEDIA



Image copyrightGETTY IMAGES

The Senegalese island of Goree was the largest slave-trading centre on the African coast

Senegal has traditionally had one of the most unrestricted and diverse media scenes in the region.

The constitution guarantees freedom of information and abuses against journalists are relatively infrequent, says press freedom group Reporters Without Borders.

TIMELINE

Some key dates in Senegal's history:



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Leopold Senghor was independent Senegal's first president and led the country for two decades

8th century - Present-day Senegal is part of the Kingdom of Ghana.

1677 - French take over island of Goree from the Dutch, the start of nearly 300 years of French oversight.

1756-63 - Seven Years' War: Britain takes over French posts in Senegal, forms colony of Senegambia. France regains its holdings during American Revolutionary War of 1775-83.

1960 - Senegal becomes an independent country.

2000 - Opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade wins second round of presidential elections, ending 40 years of Socialist Party rule.

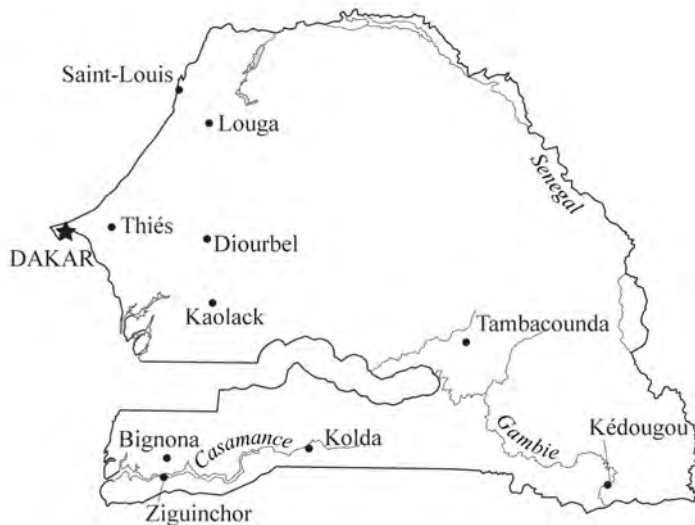
2004 - Casamance Movement of Democratic Forces and government sign pact aimed at ending secessionist struggle in the southern province of Casamance. But violence continues until rebel leader Salif Sadio declares a unilateral ceasefire in 2014.

2012 - Macky Sall wins presidential elections and his coalition wins the parliamentary elections. MPs abolish the upper house, the Senate, and the post of vice president in an effort to save money for flood relief. Critics say the aim is to weaken the opposition.



Image copyrightGETTY IMAGESImage caption

President Abdoulaye Wade (left) agreed a peace deal with the founder of the separatist Democratic Forces of Casamance, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor in 2004. But the agreement did not last.



BACKGROUND

Land and Climate

Senegal lies in the westernmost part of Africa. The country covers an area slightly larger than Syria, or about the size of the U.S. state of South Dakota. Most of the country north of The Gambia (a separate country that cuts through Senegal's southwest) is flat, with rolling plains and few trees. Part of northern Senegal lies in Africa's semiarid Sahel region and is subject to desertification. The southeast has plateaus with elevations over 1,600 feet (480 meters). The southwest features forests and seasonally flooded lowlands. Much of Senegal is subject to drought, overgrazing, and deforestation. Dakar, the capital, is a major port for West Africa.

Senegal has a tropical climate with warm temperatures year-round. During the hot, humid rainy season (about May to November, depending on the region) temperatures regularly reach 95°F (35°C). The rainy season brings nearly all of the annual precipitation. This is 24 inches (60 centimeters) in Dakar, about half that amount in the north, and more than 50 inches (127 centimeters) in the Casamance region, the section of Senegal below The Gambia. Temperatures moderate during the dry season (December–April), with highs around 80°F (27°C). Dakar and other coastal areas are generally cooler than the rest of the country.

History

Early Kingdoms and Traders

Black Africans historically have lived in the area now called Senegal. Great empires and independent kingdoms existed in

the area from AD 300 to the 19th century. Islamic merchants from North Africa introduced Islam to the animistic peoples of the area in the 10th century. Portuguese sailors first traded with the people in the mid-1400s but were replaced by the French, English, and Dutch in the 1500s. The slave trade was established, and peanuts were introduced as a new crop to supply European demand. Several million West Africans were shipped to the Americas as slaves between the 16th and 19th centuries. Many were sold at an auction house that still stands on Gorée Island (near Dakar), which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Colonization and Independence

By the 1800s, France began to dominate the area, conquering various kingdoms and establishing Senegal as one of several colonies in an administrative federation called French West Africa. Slavery was abolished in 1848, but French economic, educational, political, and judicial systems remained intact at the administrative level. After World War II, many residents began to demand independence. On 4 April 1960, the colony became a sovereign nation. France and Senegal still maintain close political, economic, and social ties. Léopold Senghor became Senegal's president upon independence and held the position for more than 20 years.

Casamance Conflict

Though Senegal's history has been largely peaceful, the nation has suffered the effects of a long-running separatist movement in the Casamance region. In 1982, a rebel group based primarily in the Jola-majority areas launched a campaign for independence, claiming discrimination by the more numerous Wolof people of northern Senegal. More than two decades of violence cost an estimated 3,500 lives. In

December 2004, the government reached a peace agreement with the main rebel group, the Movement for the Democratic Forces of Casamance (known by its French acronym, MFDC). However, MFDC factions have opposed the treaty and continue to fight for the region's independence.

Elections

In 1981, Senegal's constitution was amended to eliminate restrictions on political parties. Abdou Diouf was elected president and his party, the Senegalese Socialist Party (PS), came to dominate parliament. Diouf was reelected in 1988 and 1993. When his party again dominated 1998 parliamentary elections, opposition groups refused to accept the results, claiming widespread fraud. Diouf reversed a vow to retire in 2000 by entering the race for president in February of that year. After the second round of voting, his rival and five-time presidential candidate, Abdoulaye Wade of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), was elected president. Diouf accepted the results and stepped down peacefully. Wade served as president from 2000 to 2012.

In March 2012, Wade announced his controversial bid for a third term as president, sparking violent protests that left six dead. In the first round of elections, Wade fell short of the majority vote, and in the runoff, he conceded to Macky Sall. Sall's presidential victory reinforced Senegal's working democracy and current political stability, characteristics further strengthened in March 2016, when Senegalese voters approved a referendum to reduce the presidential term limit from seven to five years, effective 2019. Senegal is the only West African nation to not have seen a coup or civil war since its independence.

Recent Events and Trends

- **Declining fish populations:** In March 2017, a study by scientists measuring fish populations in Senegal estimated that large Chinese fishing trawlers were stealing roughly 40,000 tons (worth about US\$28 million) of fish from Senegalese waters. Senegal's fish populations have declined dramatically in recent years due to illegal fishing by large foreign vessels. With more frequent dry spells and drought, growing numbers of Senegalese have moved to the coasts in search of food and work but find making a living through fishing increasingly difficult.
- **New airport:** In December 2017, after more than a decade of construction and delays, Senegal opened Blaise Diagne International Airport, a new international airport outside of Dakar. The hope is that the facility, one of the largest and most expensive in the region, will become a new travel hub and help re-energize the nation's economy.
- **Senegambia bridge:** In January 2019, a new bridge spanning the River Gambia was formally opened by Senegalese president Sall and Gambian president Adama Barrow. The bridge, which spans 1.2 miles (1.9 kilometers) and took seven years to build, was planned in the 1970s but wasn't built until 2019 due to strained relations between Senegal and The Gambia. Prior to the bridge's construction, travelers had to take unreliable ferries to cross the River Gambia or drive the long route around it.

Population

Dakar is Senegal's capital and largest city. Other major urban centers include Touba, Thiès, Rufisque, and Kaolack. A growing number of young people from rural areas move to cities, searching for better economic opportunities. During the rainy season, many people migrate to the rural areas to work harvesting crops. Roughly 43 percent of the population is younger than age 15. The nation's largest ethnic groups are the Wolof and Pular. Other groups include the Serer, Mandinka, Jola, Soninke, and a number of smaller groups. Europeans and Lebanese comprise less than 10 percent of the population.

Language

The nation's official language is French. This is the language of school instruction and is used in business and government settings. However, French is becoming less popular because many see it as the language of Senegal's colonizers. In everyday conversation, people use the language of their ethnic group, such as Wolof, Fula (or Pulaar), Serer, Jola, and Mandinka. The most widely spoken language is Wolof, the native language of the dominant ethnic group. In fact, non-Wolofs north of The Gambia are bilingual in Wolof and their own ethnic language. Senegalese languages are primarily oral. Attempts to create writing systems for these languages have met with some success. Many younger children now can write in their native language using a modified Latin alphabet. Muslims often use the Arabic alphabet to write in Wolof or one of the other local languages. Students in university frequently choose to study a foreign language to improve their job opportunities.

Religion

About 96 percent of the population is Muslim, about 4 percent is Christian (mostly Roman Catholic), and less than 1 percent is animist or follows indigenous beliefs. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Both Muslim and Catholic holy days are national holidays, but Islam dominates social and political activities. Most Senegalese Muslims follow Sufism, a mystical branch of Islam, which emphasizes personal religious journeys and the teachings of *marabouts* (religious leaders). *Marabouts* became powerful during the drive for independence. They were the movement's most vocal and supportive leaders and drew many animists to Islam because of their popularity. Today, *marabouts* influence voting patterns and economic practices and have a strong impact on the country's development.

Many Senegalese, especially in the south, combine their formal religion (Islam or Christianity) with indigenous animist practices and ceremonies. Villagers believe in spirits and genies and often wear a *gri gri* (charm) around their arms, stomach, or neck to protect them from illness and evil spirits. For instance, a woman who is having headaches may pin a *gri gri* in her hair to protect herself.

General Attitudes

Senegal has many diverse ethnic groups within its borders, each with its own history, language, and culture. Interactions

THE PEOPLE

between these groups and with non-African cultures have produced a multicultural people proud of their origins. Typically, a person's allegiances extend toward the family first, and then, in descending order, to an ethnic group, a religion, the home village, Senegal, the region of French West Africa, and finally, Africa. Personal relations, including doing favors and returning them, are extremely important in daily life. According to the Senegalese concept of hospitality, or *teranga*, one freely shares with family and friends; this is considered integral to good relations.

Concepts of time and distance are defined by a person's background. For example, a Senegalese farmer, whose way of life may not include motor vehicles, will consider a five-hour walk to another village a short trip. But that would be a long trip for an urban professional, who might drive rather than walk a short distance. Most Senegalese, urban and rural, are interested in domestic and world politics.

Personal Appearance

Senegalese tend to place great emphasis on their appearance and personal hygiene. Most bathe more than once a day, and perfumes or colognes are popular. Dressing well is considered important. Clothing is usually ironed. Men do not go out in public without a shirt, and few women, with the exception of young, urban women, wear pants or shorts. Revealing clothing is not appropriate in public. People wear beachwear only on the beach; shorts are for athletics.

Most adults wear traditional clothing. Young urban dwellers wear Western fashions or mix Western and traditional African styles. Young people in rural areas are also adopting Western styles, but to a lesser extent. As they grow older, most people choose to wear more traditional clothing. Traditional clothing for men includes loose-fitting cotton robes (*boubous*) worn over bouffant pants and a loose shirt. The amount or quality of embroidery can indicate one's level of wealth. Women typically wear a long robe over a long wraparound skirt (*pagne*); some skirts have multiple layers. A matching head wrap completes the outfit. Some ethnic groups have facial tattoos or ritual facial scarring. Most Muslim women wear a head covering called a *mussor*, and few wear veils. Muslim women who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, wear a white scarf, while men who have made this journey wear a white headdress; these people are generally treated with great respect.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings

Senegalese greetings vary depending on the circumstances and how well people know each other. Muslim Senegalese greet each other with the Arabic saying *Assalaam 'alaikum* (May peace be upon you); the response is *Wa 'alaikum assalaam* (And peace be upon you). Friends may ask *Na nga def?* which means "How are you?" in Wolof; one may reply *Maa ngi fi rek* (I'm doing well). Most Senegalese shake hands, though social rules determine who may shake with whom. Some urban women may greet each other with a kiss on each cheek. A minority of Muslim men do not shake hands

with women. In traditional families, children and women respectfully curtsy to their elders when greeting. When joining or leaving a small group, one must acknowledge each individual separately. Whatever greeting was used between two people is also used when parting. Upon parting, most Senegalese ask each other to extend best wishes to their families and mutual friends.

Gestures

Senegalese receive and give objects with their right hand or with both hands. Use of the left hand alone is considered unclean and disrespectful. Senegalese tell street vendors they are not interested in their goods by motioning with a pushing back gesture and avoiding eye contact. They hail taxis by raising one arm. To get another person's attention, one might snap the fingers if close or hiss ("tsss") if farther away.

Senegalese avoid eye contact with a person who is of the opposite sex or considered a superior (in age or status). Men and women keep their distance in public and are expected to be dignified and reserved around members of the opposite sex. More relaxed behavior is acceptable with members of the same gender, age, or status. Public displays of affection are considered impolite, although some urban couples hold hands. People of the same sex may hold hands in public as a sign of friendship.

Visiting

Senegalese enjoy visiting one another often. Dropping in uninvited is acceptable and appreciated. Still, uninvited guests try to visit before mealtimes, either in the late morning or early evening. In urban areas, it is more common to call before stopping by. Work, health, family matters, and mutual friends are briefly discussed before a visitor addresses the purpose of the visit. However, it is considered bad luck to ask specific questions about children, such as when a baby is due, how many children one has, or what their ages are. People remove their shoes when visiting the home of a *marabout* (Muslim religious leader) or when entering a mosque; women cover their heads.

Senegalese are generally hospitable and can make a guest feel comfortable without expecting anything in return. However, friends will often bring gifts such as fruit or some cookies for the children. Hosts will offer something to drink, like green tea, coffee, or *bissap* (hibiscus tea). Guests are often treated to three rounds of tea, with more sugar added in each round. To decline a drink, it is polite to say one has just finished drinking. It is impolite to refuse other refreshments. Hosts and visitors often share a kola nut (which contains a mild caffeine stimulant). The nuts also play an important role in conflict resolution and social celebrations, such as weddings. Although smoking is widespread among males, visitors to traditional Muslim homes avoid cigarette smoking until they leave. It is considered bad manners for women to smoke.

Eating

Generally, breakfast is between 6 and 9 a.m., lunch is between 1 and 3 p.m., and dinner is after 8 p.m. During the week, family members in urban areas may eat individually

because of conflicting work and school schedules. Most Senegalese families like to eat together on the weekends. In traditional homes, the sexes and different age groups eat separately.

The main dish usually is served in large bowls placed on mats on the floor or ground, or on coffee tables. Today, many people use plates and utensils when eating. In more traditional circles, several people eat from the same bowl using the fingers or a spoon, depending on personal habit, the occasion, and the dish. It is important for diners to have clean hands, eat only from the portion of the communal dish directly in front of them, and avoid eye contact with persons still eating. Children often wait for adults to serve them the meat or fish that is usually in the middle of the communal bowl. It is considered rude for them to help themselves. One uses only the right hand to eat. The left can assist the right when eating difficult foods, such as fruit or meat with bones, but the left hand should never be put in the communal bowl.

LIFESTYLE

Family

Structure

In general, the family is a source of strength and pride for Senegalese. Closeness and togetherness are greatly valued, as personal privacy and solitude are not commonly observed. In most rural areas and among traditional urban families, extended families live together in compounds (with separate dwellings for each nuclear family) or in a large house divided among nuclear families. The urban trend is for nuclear families to live in single households, though often near relatives. Rural family strength and unity are weakened as young men migrate to cities in search of work.

Extended families usually make decisions jointly. Individual decisions are left to the individual, although family input is always given and usually heeded. Conflicts are resolved within the family whenever possible, without involving non-family members. Resources are shared among family members. If someone is in need, other family members contribute what they can to help. This aid is freely given and generally expected, with the understanding that the assistance will be reciprocated when needed.

Parents and Children

Within each family, one sibling is expected to serve as a protector, peacemaker, and advisor to the other siblings, and when the parents pass away, this person takes over the leadership role in the nuclear family. The role develops slowly and informally over time, and other siblings are expected to respect this leadership.

Generally, children live with their parents until they find employment or get married. When a woman marries, she generally goes to live with her husband's family. Traditionally, very few people moved from their family's compound. Today, people may leave to seek economic opportunities elsewhere, mainly in the larger cities. People may also move out as part of the growing trend toward living in nuclear families. Especially in cities, the younger generation's focus is narrowing from the extended family to

the nuclear family. Many see this as less a conscious choice and more a response to economic challenges. Despite these changes to the traditional family living arrangements, Senegalese families strive to remain close. Families visit one another often, sometimes going to stay at each other's homes for extended periods of time, and keep in touch through phone calls as much as possible. The elderly receive great respect and are cared for by their families.

Gender Roles

Men are considered the head of the home and make most of the decisions concerning the family, while women are responsible for all household duties. Women are active in all aspects of Senegalese society. However, more opportunities are available to urban, educated women than to rural women. While a woman may run a business or attend university, she is still responsible for the care of the household, children, and sometimes her husband's parents. Children's behavior, even after children are grown, is seen as a reflection on the mother more so than the father. This idea is reflected in the Wolof proverb "Like mother, like child."

Housing

Rural

Rural dwellings are usually made from natural materials available in the surrounding area. Most homes are mud-brick structures with thatched roofs. Mud is also used as mortar. In the north, huts are square and roof beams are split palm trunks. In the south, huts are round and the roof is a bamboo frame covered by long woven-grass mats. The mats tightly overlap to keep out rain. Many homes have steeply sloping roofs that are designed to deflect rain. Roofs are often made of straw or zinc, if the owner can afford it. Wealthier families prefer cement homes. In rural areas, homes are generally bigger and more spread out. Most rural homes have a small farm behind them, where people grow gardens and keep livestock. An extended family lives in a compound of several one-room huts. A majority of rural areas lack access to electricity, but most rural populations have access to drinking water.

Urban

Apartments are an important part of the urban landscape. Apartment buildings may have multiple storeys and contain many small apartments, as landlords attempt to fit as many paying tenants into a space as possible. Shantytowns are common in urban areas. Conditions in the slums are often crowded and unsanitary. Most shantytowns lack access to electricity and running water. Dwellings are constructed from whatever materials can be salvaged, such as corrugated tin and cardboard.

Most urban houses are rectangular and have concrete-block walls and corrugated tin roofs. These structures have several rooms to house the entire nuclear family. People paint their homes in a variety of colors, or they may choose to tile the outside walls if they can afford it. Floors are usually tile or linoleum. While most urban homes and apartments have electricity and drinking water, these services are unreliable and outages are common. People must often get their water from a local pump or well.

Home Life

Daily life revolves around the home. When possible, the husband has his own hut, while the wife shares another, larger hut with her children. The bathroom and kitchen are separate structures. There is also usually a small building where food is stored after the harvest. Most people prefer to cook over an open flame or with a propane tank instead of using an electric stove.

Interiors vary according to the home owner's income. Furniture is often minimal. Bed frames are usually made from branches and bamboo, and mattresses often consist of rice sacks stitched together and stuffed with dry grass. Furniture is usually placed against the walls, keeping the middle of the hut open. Cleanliness is generally deemed more important than decoration, and people go to great lengths to keep their homes tidy.

Dating and Marriage

Dating and Courtship

Western-style dating, where relative strangers go out with one another, is uncommon in Senegal. People tend to go out in groups or in couples with a person they and their families know. In fact, a couple's families tend to be heavily involved in courtship. Traditional families arrange marriages, but a growing number of urban residents marry according to their choice. Couples are often encouraged to marry young. However, it is acceptable for college students to wait until after they finish school. Muslim engagements are generally short, while Christians may be engaged for longer periods of time. Only Christian women wear engagement rings after becoming engaged.

Marriage in Society

A woman's virtue is greatly valued. It is considered shameful for a woman to become pregnant before marriage. Unwed fathers are less stigmatized. Sexual relations before marriage are widely condemned on both social and religious grounds. Unmarried couples living together are rare in rural areas but more common in cities. Sexual relations between same-sex partners are illegal in Senegal, and many LGBT individuals face discrimination and abuse.

Marriages between Muslim men and Christian women are not uncommon. However, marriages between Muslim women and Christian men and marriages between any Muslim and a person whose faith does not include the existence of God (such as animism) are condemned on religious grounds. Although such marriages sometimes occur, especially in urban areas, they often lead to rifts within the couple's families.

Many Muslims practice polygamy. Islamic law permits a man to have as many as four wives, but he must have the consent of the other wife (or wives); however, some men may not tell their wife (or wives) until after the new marriage. According to the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book), a man must divide his resources and time equally among his wives' households. As a result, it is common for a man to have two wives but rare for him to have more than this. In recent years, the attitude toward polygamy has become increasingly mixed, with some Senegalese opposing it. This, coupled with the economic strain associated with multiple wives, has led to a decline in polygamy.

A husband is often much older than his wife (especially a second wife) because he needs to accumulate enough wealth to afford the bride-price presented to the wife's family prior to the marriage. The bride-price may be paid in cash, cattle, or land. Paying a bride-price to a woman's family is a requirement in all marriages, regardless of religion or ethnic group. After lengthy negotiations, the man pays the woman's family to compensate for the loss of their daughter, who lives with the groom's family after the wedding.

Weddings

Senegalese weddings contain religious, traditional, and civil elements. Weddings are often seen as the union of two communities, represented by the couple. The religious part of the ceremony differs between Muslims, Christians, and animists. Muslim ceremonies begin at the mosque after the 5 p.m. prayers. The bride usually does not attend the ceremony at the mosque but waits at home in her mother's room instead. She is represented at the ceremony by the male members of her family. After the ceremony, the men come to the home to congratulate the bride and pray for her successful marriage.

Christian ceremonies take place in a church and are performed by a priest. After the wedding, a festive reception is held. Food and drinks are served, and music is played by a live band or on speakers. Guests bring gifts for the couple. Animist weddings are celebrated with elaborate feasts and singing and dancing, sometimes lasting up to three days.

Cultural traditions surrounding a wedding are determined by ethnic group. While each ethnic group has different traditions, there are a number of common elements. After the ceremony, the bride's friends come to her home to celebrate with food and gifts. The groom invites his friends to his home as well. The bride then moves in with her husband's family.

The first time the bride goes to her husband's home, she is escorted by a female relative from her father's side of the family and by her friends. Two cars usually come to take the bride to her new home. The bride and her escort ride in the smaller car, while her friends ride in the bigger car, where they sing songs for the bride during the drive. The songs they sing traditionally tell of the challenges of married life. The groom generally organizes a small welcoming party for the bride at his family's home. Before the bride enters the home, friends, family members, and neighbors gather around to give her marriage advice.

The day after the wedding, the bride's friends come to her new home for more celebrations. There is music, dancing, singing, and eating. A few days after the wedding, the couple goes to sign the legal papers and receive their marriage certificate.

Divorce

Divorce rates are on the rise, especially in urban areas. According to Senegal's Family Code, both men and women have the right to ask for a divorce. Divorces must be filed with the court to be considered legal. Divorced women often face more stigma than men.

Life Cycle

Birth

Pregnancy is not publicly discussed. The woman's mother is usually the first person to be told about the pregnancy. Some

women may avoid leaving the home while they are visibly pregnant. A pregnant woman makes it a point to bundle up because wind is believed to be harmful to both her and the baby.

Rural women usually give birth at home with assistance from the village midwife. In urban areas, women commonly give birth in a hospital. Women try to stay home until the seventh day after giving birth, though rural women may return to their household work within a couple of days of giving birth, even if they cannot yet resume tasks in the fields. Women often carry their babies with them while they perform daily tasks.

Muslim families hold a celebration on the seventh day after the birth, when the infant is given a name. The child is held by the mother's sister while the village religious leader gives the child a name, which the parents have provided on the morning of the ceremony. He recites verses from the *Qur'an* (Muslim holy book) and whispers the name into the baby's right ear. The naming is followed by a large feast featuring a slaughtered sheep or goat. This ceremony (called *ngente*, which means "to get out") is also a celebration for the new mother, who is not supposed to leave her room for seven days after giving birth. After the naming ceremony, she is free to "get out" and move about again. Children are often named after religious figures, friends, or relatives, which serves to strengthen bonds between people. Because of the stigma associated with out-of-wedlock pregnancies, the naming ceremony for a child born to an unwed mother is much smaller and celebrations are not held afterward.

Milestones

For many children in Senegal, childhood is short. Adult roles are taken on early. Mothers teach their daughters to cook and keep a household from a very young age. Fathers generally teach their sons their trade and how to support a family. For girls, coming of age is represented by the first menstruation.

Though less common than in the past, many boys still go through a circumcision ceremony sometime before the age of 16. In some cases, the ceremony is a month-long process. Several boys may stay in a secluded place in the nearby forest, where village elders teach them their duties as men. The circumcision rite is the culmination of this instruction. Once the boys have healed, they return to the village for a celebration. Some Senegalese celebrate a circumcision with a ceremony called *kasak*, a series of songs and dances. Two to three nights after the circumcision, the boys' families and friends gather around a fire. The circumcised boys (called *ndiulli*) sit on a mat accompanied by their guides (older boys who have already been circumcised and serve as mentors, called *selbe*). The attendees sing songs praising the boys on their bravery.

Death

For Muslims, death is seen as the will of God and a chance for reinforcement of faith. When a person dies, female family members begin a long and loud wailing ritual. The sound serves two purposes: expressing the family's grief and notifying the community that someone has died. When a person dies, a burial takes place within 24 hours. The body is prepared by ritual cleansing in the family compound, wrapped in a white sheet, and carried by men to the burial ground. The

body is buried along a north-south orientation with the head facing east, toward the *Ka'abah* (one of Islam's holiest sites), in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Only men accompany the body to the burial grounds, which are considered sacred. Verses of the *Qur'an* are read at the grave. Funerals are usually held at the home of the deceased three days after the death. Wealthier families may hold additional ceremonies on the eighth and fortieth days after the death. At the funeral, the *Qur'an* is read and prayers are said for the soul of the deceased. Those who knew the deceased say a few words. For three days, friends and relatives gather to mourn.

Senegalese people often visit burial grounds in order to pray and express faithfulness to the departed ones, particularly to parents. Sons, especially those in rural areas, are expected to keep their parents' grave site clean. Cremation is not practiced in Senegal. Widows are expected to be in mourning for four months and ten days. After this period, the widow may remarry if she chooses.

Diet

Food preparation and presentation are skills that Senegalese women learn at an early age. Each ethnic group has its own traditional dishes, and some urban women also cook French meals. Many believe wealth is measured by body size, because the wealthier the family, the more oil and rice that can be used in preparing dishes.

Meals usually consist of one main dish of rice, millet, or corn, covered with a sauce composed of vegetables, meat (traditional Muslims do not eat pork), poultry, fish, beans, or milk and sugar. Muslims eat only *halal* meat, which means it is slaughtered according to Islamic tradition, which includes saying a prayer first. A dessert of fruit and/or yogurt might be served.

A popular dish is *yassa*, rice and chicken covered with a sauce made of sliced onions and spices. *Thiebou dien*, a meal of fish and rice, is a typical lunch dish. *Ceebu jeen* (translated as "rice and fish") is one of the country's most popular dishes. There are many variations, but most include fish stuffed with vegetables and seasonings and served over rice. A traditional Wolof dish is *mbaxal-u-Saloum*: a sauce of ground peanuts, dried fish, meat, tomatoes, and spices served with rice. Because rice is more expensive than other staple foods, it is generally reserved for lunch, the main meal of the day. Millet is more common at other meals.

Recreation

Sports

Traditional wrestling is Senegal's national sport. On Sundays, men and women often gather to watch wrestling groups or teams compete. People enjoy watching and betting on wrestling matches. Soccer is the most popular sport. Senegalese avidly follow national and international soccer competitions. Many men play soccer informally on the weekends, and sometimes friendly competitions between neighborhoods are arranged. Other favorite sports are basketball, volleyball, and track and field, which are usually practiced in urban areas.

Leisure

Many urban residents enjoy movies and books, and a growing number have access to the internet for both business and leisure. Watching movies and attending concerts and dance clubs are popular in areas with electricity. After the harvest, rural families visit relatives in urban areas. They also enjoy dancing. Family and village celebrations, as well as the weekly market, provide the main form of recreation for most rural people.

The Simbe (false lion) ceremony is a favorite diversion. People gather in a large public area, with three people dressed as lions in the center. Tickets are sold, but young people often do not purchase a ticket. The lions chase and catch those who have not purchased tickets, refusing to free them until another attendee agrees to purchase a ticket for them. The lions sing and dance throughout the ceremony.

The Arts

Senegalese songs are usually unwritten, and certain instruments or musical styles (such as *yela* music for women) are reserved for specific genders or age groups. In the past, only *griots* could perform music. Their traditional role was transmitting oral history, keeping track of genealogies and social rankings, engaging in diplomacy, and telling stories. Today, *griots* continue to participate in naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals.

A type of drum called the *sabar* is played by the Wolof people and accompanied by dancing. Another popular instrument is the *kora* (a 21-string harp made of the calabash gourd). *Mbalax* music began as a tribal style using *sabar* drums but now incorporates a mix of Afro-Caribbean pop; it is popular in many parts of Africa.

Holidays

Senegal celebrates Islamic, Catholic, and national holidays, including New Year's Day (1 January), *al-Mawlid al-Nabawi* (celebrating the prophet Muhammad's birth), Easter, Independence Day (4 April, commemorates Senegal's independence from France in 1960; patriotic parades take place throughout the country, and a main, televised parade takes place in the capital), Labor Day (1 May), Ascension, Whit Monday (celebrated 50 days after Easter), *Korite*, *Tabaski*, *Tamkharit*, All Saints' Day (1 November), and Christmas. Muslims and Christians generally invite each other to take part in their religious celebrations. Islamic holidays follow the lunar calendar and fall on different dates each year, while Christian and secular holidays generally fall on the same day each year.

In 2012, *Magal de Touba* became a public holiday in Senegal. *Magal de Touba* is an Islamic religious holiday, celebrated on the 18th day of the month of *Safar* (the second month of the Islamic calendar), and commemorates the exile of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, the founder of Mouridism, a Sufi brotherhood.

Korite and Tabaski

Korite, also known as *Eid al-Fitr*, marks the end of the holy month of *Ramadan*, when Muslims go without food or drink from sunrise to sundown each day. Celebrations revolve around food, starting after the 9 a.m. prayer with a special breakfast (called *laax*) of millet with curdled milk, sugar, and

the juice of the baobab fruit and ending with a lunch and dinner of lamb, beef, or chicken. After *laax*, is the *baalou akh* (forgiveness). The Senegalese believe that it is natural for people who live together to offend one another, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The *baalou akh* is a time for friends and neighbors to start fresh in their relationships. People go from house to house asking and granting forgiveness. In the afternoon, the *ndewenel* takes place. Children go from door to door receiving money.

Tabaski, also known as *Eid al-Adha*, honors Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son and is celebrated at the end of the *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia). The head of each household sacrifices a sheep and divides the meat among relatives and the poor. People wear traditional clothing in the afternoon on both *Korite* and *Tabaski*.

Tamkharit

Tamkharit, the Islamic New Year, is also believed to be the day on which *Allah* (God) determines people's destinies. Special prayers are said throughout the day. That night, people celebrate with a meal that includes lamb and a vegetable-couscous dish. At night, *Taajaboon* begins. Boys dress like girls and girls dress like boys, all applying ashes to their faces for a humorous look. They form small groups and go from house to house dancing. They receive rice, millet, and sugar as gifts. The group performs the *Taajaboon* song, which reminds people to behave well in their lives, as the end of the year is considered a time of judgment.

Christian Holidays

Most Senegalese see Christmas as a natural conclusion to the year, so most people, regardless of religion, celebrate Christmas to some extent. Young people often organize Christmas parties for their friends of all religions. Easter is also widely celebrated. Christians reach out to their Muslim neighbors and friends, bringing gifts of *ngalax* (a sweet combination of millet meal and peanut butter) and holding feasts of beef and mutton, because devout Muslims do not eat pork.

SOCIETY

Government

Senegal's president is head of state and, since the office of prime minister was abolished in 2019, head of government. The president is elected to a five-year term by popular vote. The legislative body is the 165-seat National Assembly (*Assemblée Nationale*). Members of the National Assembly are directly elected; 105 seats are filled by simple majority vote, and 60 seats are filled by proportional representation vote. An appointed cabinet also aids the president. To the average person, local authority is often more important than departments of the central government. The voting age is 18.

Economy

Although there is a growing middle class and a small wealthy elite, the majority of families live at subsistence levels as agricultural workers; about 75 percent of Senegal's labor force is engaged in agriculture. Since introduced by colonial powers, peanuts have remained the country's main cash crop

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and occupy much of the country's cropland. Other agricultural products include millet, corn, sorghum, rice, cotton, tomatoes, vegetables, poultry, and cattle. The most important industries include food processing, phosphate mining, fertilizer production, and petroleum refining. Fish processing is the key component in Senegal's food industry. Senegal has one of the most stable economies in Africa. However, the economy faces many challenges, such as corruption, high rates of poverty, and widespread unemployment. Senegal uses West Africa's regional currency, the CFA franc (XOF).

Transportation and Communications

Paved roads link major cities, while inland villages are connected by unpaved paths and waterways. Efforts are underway to improve roads and bridges throughout the country. A few major airports have regular commercial airline service. A railroad system extends from Dakar to the north and to Mali in the east. Most people do not own cars; they travel by public transport (buses, taxis, or a minivan system for longer distances), horse and cart, bicycle, motorcycle, or on foot. Ferry transportation is also available.

The government sponsors a daily newspaper; other weekly and daily papers are also available. While most urban residents have access to information through print or television, villagers rely more on radio because they lack electricity and local postal services. Most rural people have access to daily radio news broadcasts in local languages. Also, oral or written messages passed from person to person are an effective means of communication among villages. Cellular phones are quickly replacing landlines. In urban areas, nearly everyone has a cellular phone. There is cellular phone reception in a growing number of rural areas.

Education

Structure

Senegal's educational system is based on the French model. Children start primary school at age six or seven. At about age 12, students enter secondary school, which lasts seven years. Vocational and *Qur'anic* schools (Islamic schools) are also available, though religious schools are not recognized as part of the formal educational system. Education is compulsory and free, but attendance is not strictly regulated.

Access

Many (predominantly rural) Senegalese see school as being irrelevant to their daily activities, so they drop out early. However, schools within the formal system that place an emphasis on the *Qur'an* (Islamic holy book) are growing in popularity. Attendance is also affected by the need for children to work in the fields, a distrust of secular (versus religious) education, teacher strikes calling for better wages and working conditions, and other factors. Literacy rates have increased in recent years as a result of government campaigns to encourage families to keep their girls in school. About 74 percent of all children enter primary school, but less than two-thirds finish. Enrollment drops sharply in secondary school.

School Life

Classes are taught in French, so most of the literate population has learned to read and write in French. However,

Senegal

French typically is not spoken in the home, and most children do not speak it when they begin school, which hampers early learning. Officials hesitate to replace French because they fear most ethnic groups would resist an educational system based on a single ethnic language. In addition, they believe dropping French would isolate Senegal from the rest of the world. Students also study subjects such as history, geography, math, and science. Learning is assessed through exams.

Cheating is rare and is seen as bringing shame to the student and the family. Children who attend *Qur'anic* schools study Islam and learn some Arabic.

Higher Education

Most university students pursue fields of study related to their high school specializations. Many students choose to study accounting, marketing, finance, and information technology (IT). Some may enroll in professional training at private colleges. Senegal's main universities include Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar and Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis. After graduation, many educated Senegalese struggle to find jobs in their fields.

Health

Although health conditions are improving, diseases and infections continue to afflict many Senegalese, particularly those in rural areas who cannot afford or do not have access to modern medical treatment. Most physicians practice in Dakar. While doctors in Dakar have access to modern facilities, rural healthcare facilities often lack equipment and medical supplies. Villagers rely on traditional healers and cures for many ailments. A growing number of women receive prenatal care. Rural women generally give birth in their village with the help of a midwife. In urban areas, most women give birth in a hospital.

AT A GLANCE

Contact Information

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Country and Development Data

Capital	Dakar
Population	15,020,945 (rank=71)
Area (sq. mi.)	75,955 (rank=66)
Area (sq. km.)	196,722
Human Development Index	165 of 188 countries
Gender Inequality Index	124 of 188 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$3,500
Adult Literacy	70% (male); 47% (female)
Infant Mortality	46 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	65 (male); 69 (female)
Currency	CFA Franc BCEAO

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