



# ATLAS

A POCKET GUIDE TO THE WORLD TODAY

6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

A-Z



# ATLAS

## A-Z



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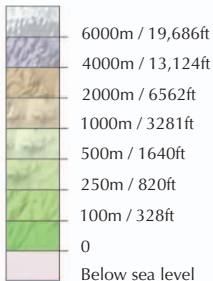
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



# Key to map symbols

## ELEVATION



-  Mountain
-  Depression





## BORDERS

-  Full international
-  Disputed *de facto*
-  Territorial claim
-  Cease-fire line
-  Undefined
-  State/Province



## DRAINAGE FEATURES

-  River
-  Seasonal river
-  Canal
-  Lake
-  Seasonal lake

## SETTLEMENTS

-  Capital city
-  Major town
-  Minor town
-  Major port

## COMMUNICATIONS

-  Major road
-  Rail
-  International airport
-  Insight; facts, figures, and amazing information from around the world

# Atlas contents

The Political World . . . . .	8-9
The Physical World . . . . .	10-11
Time Zones . . . . .	12-13
Atlas Opener . . . . .	14-15



## North & Central America 16–17

Western Canada & Alaska . . .	18-19
Eastern Canada . . . . .	20-21
USA: The Northeast . . . . .	22-23
USA: Central States . . . . .	24-25
USA: The West . . . . .	26-27
USA: The Southwest . . . . .	28-29
USA: The Southeast . . . . .	30-31
Mexico . . . . .	32-33
Central America . . . . .	34-35
The Caribbean . . . . .	36-37



## South America 38–39

Northern South America . . .	40-41
Peru, Bolivia, & North Brazil	42-43
Paraguay, Uruguay, & South Brazil . . . . .	44-45
Southern South America . . .	46-47

The Atlantic Ocean . . . . .	48-49
------------------------------	-------



## Africa 50–51

Northwest Africa . . . . .	52-53
Northeast Africa . . . . .	54-55
West Africa . . . . .	56-57
Central Africa . . . . .	58-59
Southern Africa . . . . .	60-61



## Europe 62–63

The North Atlantic . . . . .	64-65
Scandinavia & Finland . . . . .	66-67
The Low Countries . . . . .	68-69
The British Isles . . . . .	70-71
France, Andorra, & Monaco . . . . .	72-73
Spain & Portugal . . . . .	74-75
Germany & the Alpine States . . . . .	76-77
Italy . . . . .	78-79
Central Europe . . . . .	80-81
Southeast Europe . . . . .	82-83
The Mediterranean . . . . .	84-85

# Atlas contents

Bulgaria & Greece . . . . .	86-87
The Baltic States & Belarus . . . . .	88-89
Ukraine, Moldova, & Romania . . . . .	90-91
European Russia . . . . .	92-93



## North & West Asia 94-95

Russia & Kazakhstan . . . . .	96-97
Turkey & the Caucasus . . . . .	98-99
The Near East & West Bank . . . . .	100-101
The Middle East . . . . .	102-103
Central Asia . . . . .	104-105



## South & East Asia 106-107

Western China & Mongolia . . . . .	108-109
Eastern China & Korea . . . . .	110-111
Japan . . . . .	112-113
South India & Sri Lanka . . . . .	114-115
North India & Pakistan . . . . .	116-117

Mainland Southeast Asia . . . . .	118-119
Maritime Southeast Asia . . . . .	120-121
The Indian Ocean . . . . .	122-123



## Australasia & Oceania 124-125

The Southwest Pacific . . . . .	126-127
Western Australia . . . . .	128-129
Eastern Australia . . . . .	130-131
New Zealand . . . . .	132-133
The Pacific Ocean . . . . .	134-135
Antarctica . . . . .	136
Arctic . . . . .	137



## Country Factfiles 138-359

*See overleaf for contents*

Overseas territories . . . . .	360-365
International organizations . . . . .	366
Abbreviations . . . . .	367
Index . . . . .	368-432

# Factfile contents

## A

Afghanistan	153
Albania	154
Algeria	155
Andorra	156
Angola	157
Antarctica	158
Antigua & Barbuda	159
Argentina	160
Armenia	161
Australia	162-163
Austria	164
Azerbaijan	165

## B

Bahamas, The	166
Bahrain	167
Bangladesh	168
Barbados	169
Belarus	170
Belgium	171
Belize	172
Benin	173
Bhutan	174
Bolivia	175
Bosnia & Herzegovina	176
Botswana	177
Brazil	178-179
Brunei	180
Bulgaria	181
Burkina Faso	182
Burma	<i>see Myanmar</i>
Burundi	183

## C

Cambodia	184
Cameroon	185
Canada	186-187
Cape Verde	188
Central African Republic	189

Chad	190
Chile	191
China	192-193
Colombia	194
Comoros	195
Congo	196
Congo, Dem. Rep.	197
Costa Rica	198
Côte d'Ivoire	199
Croatia	200
Cuba	201
Cyprus	202
Czech Republic	203

## D

Denmark	204
Djibouti	205
Dominica	206
Dominican Republic	207

## E

East Timor	208
Ecuador	209
Egypt	210
El Salvador	211
Equatorial Guinea	212
Eritrea	213
Estonia	214
Ethiopia	215

## F

Fiji	216
Finland	217
France	218

## G

Gabon	219
Gambia	220
Georgia	221
Germany	222
Ghana	223
Greece	224
Grenada	225

Guatemala	226
Guinea	227
Guinea-Bissau	228
Guyana	229

## H

Haiti	230
Honduras	231
Hungary	232

## I

Iceland	233
India	234-235
Indonesia	236-237
Iran	238
Iraq	239
Ireland	240
Israel	241
Italy	242

## J

Jamaica	243
Japan	244-245
Jordan	246

## K

Kazakhstan	247
Kenya	248
Kiribati	249
Korea, North	250
Korea, South	251
Kosovo	252
Kuwait	253
Kyrgyzstan	254

## L

Laos	255
Latvia	256
Lebanon	257
Lesotho	258
Liberia	259



# Factfile contents

Libya . . . . .	260	Panama . . . . .	295	Swaziland . . . . .	328
Liechtenstein . . . . .	261	Papua New Guinea . . . . .	296	Sweden . . . . .	329
Lithuania . . . . .	262	Paraguay . . . . .	297	Switzerland . . . . .	330
Luxembourg . . . . .	263	Peru . . . . .	298	Syria . . . . .	331
<b>M</b>					
Macedonia . . . . .	264	Philippines . . . . .	299	<b>T</b>	
Madagascar . . . . .	265	Poland . . . . .	300	Taiwan . . . . .	332
Malawi . . . . .	266	Portugal . . . . .	301	Tajikistan . . . . .	333
Malaysia . . . . .	267	<b>Q</b>			
Maldives . . . . .	268	Qatar . . . . .	302	Tanzania . . . . .	334
Mali . . . . .	269	<b>R</b>			
Malta . . . . .	270	Romania . . . . .	303	Thailand . . . . .	335
Marshall Islands . . . . .	271	Russian		Togo . . . . .	336
Mauritania . . . . .	272	Federation . . . . .	304	Tonga . . . . .	337
Mauritius . . . . .	273	Rwanda . . . . .	305	Trinidad & Tobago . . . . .	338
Mexico . . . . .	274	<b>S</b>			
Micronesia . . . . .	275	St. Kitts & Nevis . . . . .	306	Tunisia . . . . .	339
Moldova . . . . .	276	St. Lucia . . . . .	307	Turkey . . . . .	340
Monaco . . . . .	277	St. Vincent & the		Turkmenistan . . . . .	341
Mongolia . . . . .	278	Grenadines . . . . .	308	Tuvalu . . . . .	342
Montenegro . . . . .	279	Samoa . . . . .	309	<b>U</b>	
Morocco . . . . .	280	San Marino . . . . .	310	Uganda . . . . .	343
Mozambique . . . . .	281	Sao Tome & Principe . . . . .	311	Ukraine . . . . .	344
Myanmar (Burma) . . . . .	282	Saudi Arabia . . . . .	312	United Arab Emirates . . . . .	345
<b>N</b>					
Namibia . . . . .	283	Senegal . . . . .	313	United Kingdom . . . . .	346-347
Nauru . . . . .	284	Serbia . . . . .	314	United States . . . . .	348-350
Nepal . . . . .	285	Seychelles . . . . .	315	Uruguay . . . . .	351
Netherlands . . . . .	286	Sierra Leone . . . . .	316	Uzbekistan . . . . .	352
New Zealand . . . . .	287	Singapore . . . . .	317	<b>V</b>	
Nicaragua . . . . .	288	Slovakia . . . . .	318	Vanuatu . . . . .	353
Niger . . . . .	289	Slovenia . . . . .	319	Vatican City . . . . .	354
Nigeria . . . . .	290	Solomon Islands . . . . .	320	Venezuela . . . . .	355
Norway . . . . .	291	Somalia . . . . .	321	Vietnam . . . . .	356
<b>O</b>					
Oman . . . . .	292	South Africa . . . . .	322	<b>Y</b>	
<b>P</b>					
Pakistan . . . . .	293	South Sudan . . . . .	323	Yemen . . . . .	357
Palau . . . . .	294	Spain . . . . .	324	<b>Z</b>	
		Sri Lanka . . . . .	325	Zambia . . . . .	358
		Sudan . . . . .	326	Zimbabwe . . . . .	359
		Suriname . . . . .	327		

# The Political World





# The Physical World

A

B

C

D



A

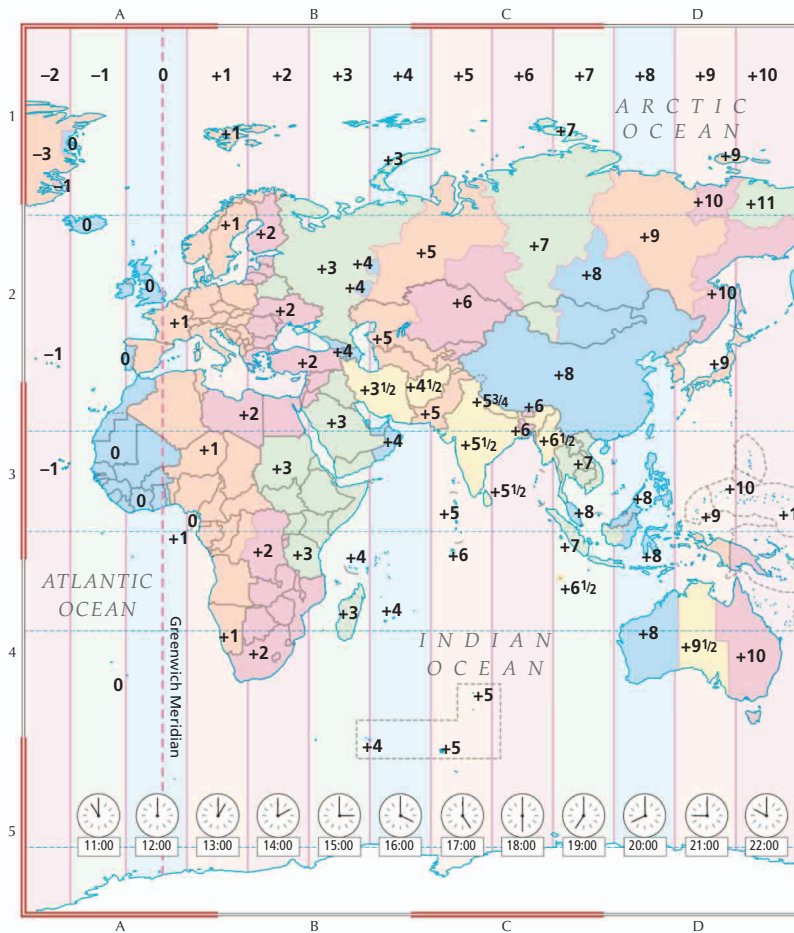
B

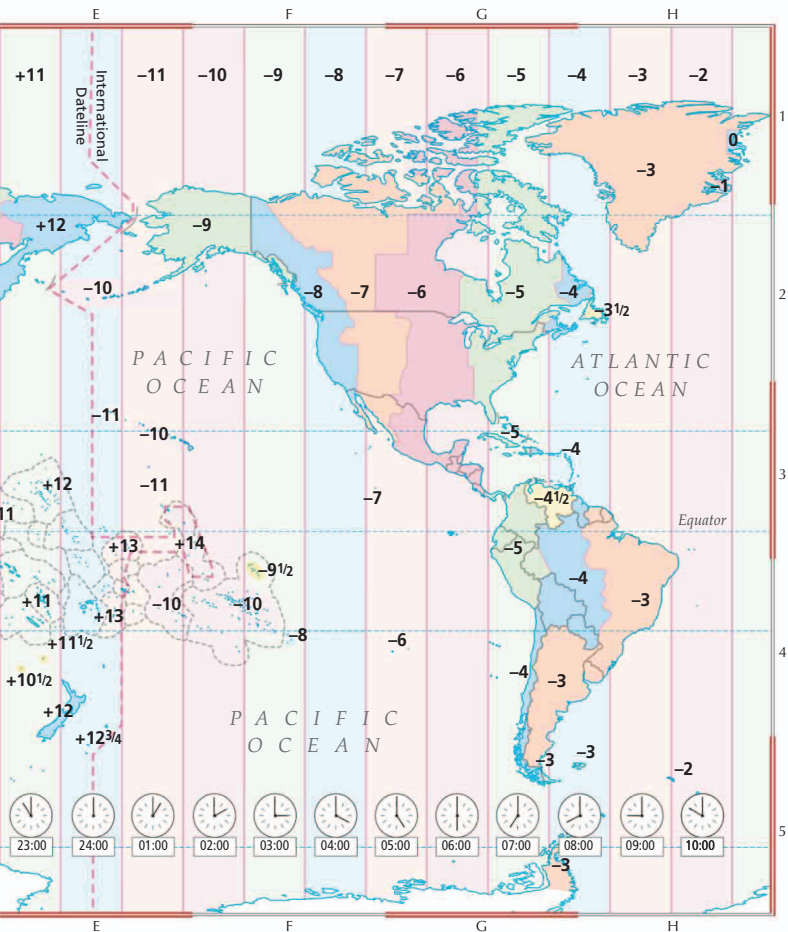
C

D



# Standard Time Zones





# The world's regions







# North & Central America





# Western Canada & Alaska





# Eastern Canada





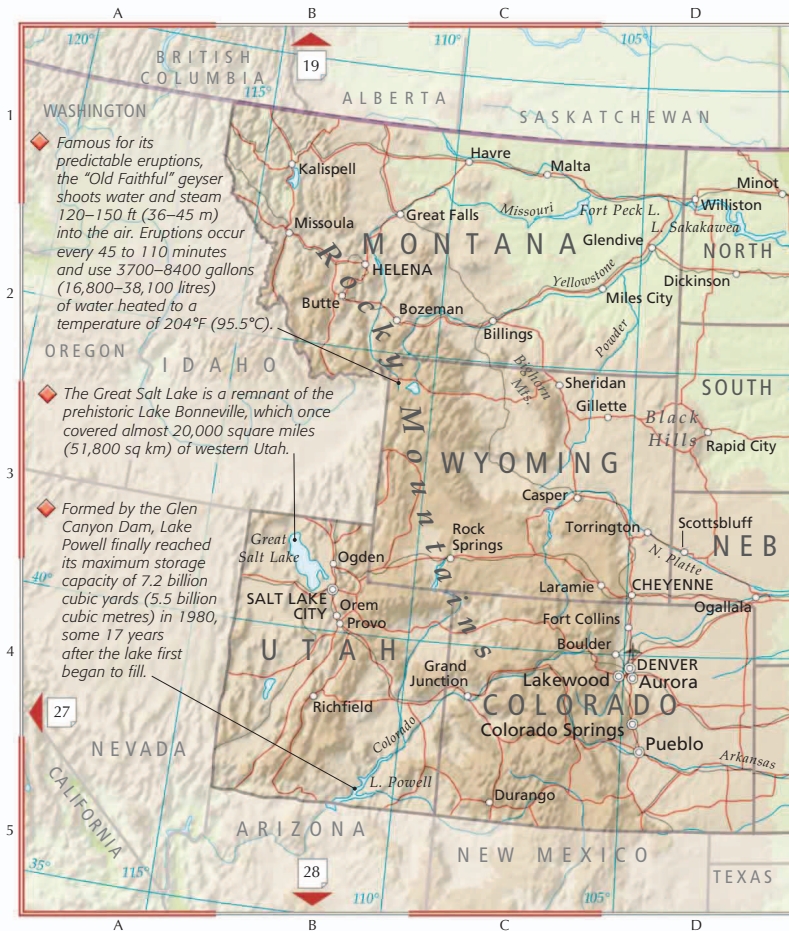
## USA: The Northeast

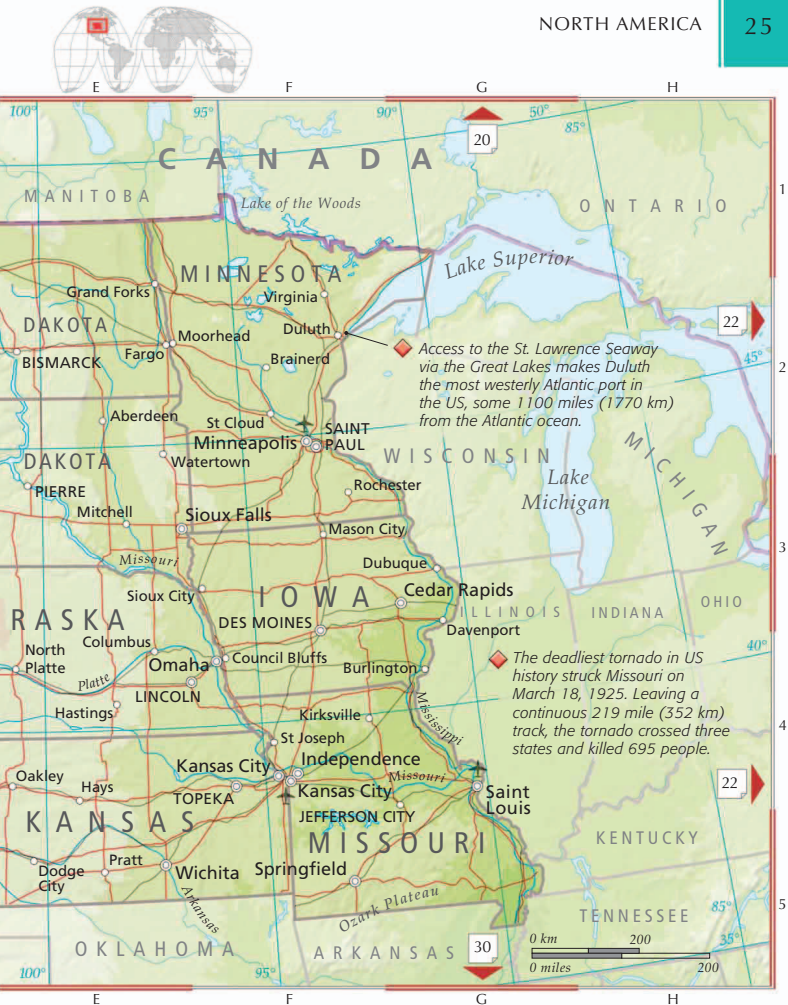






## USA: Central States





## USA: The West



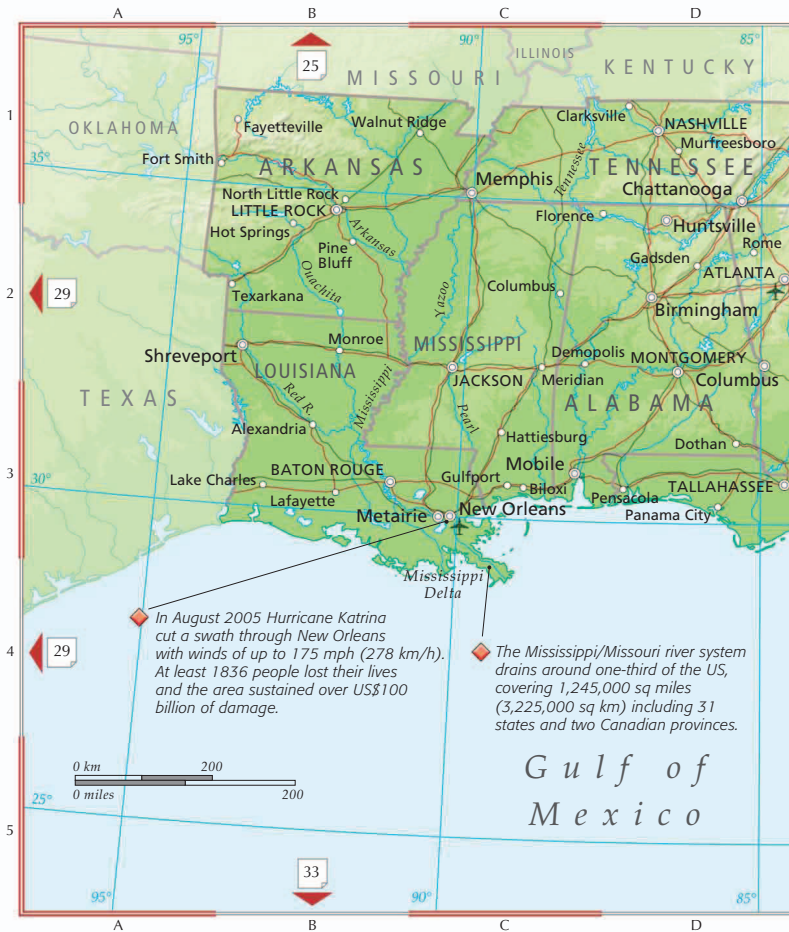


## USA: The Southwest





# USA: The Southeast







## Mexico





## Central America





# The Caribbean





# South America







# Northern South America





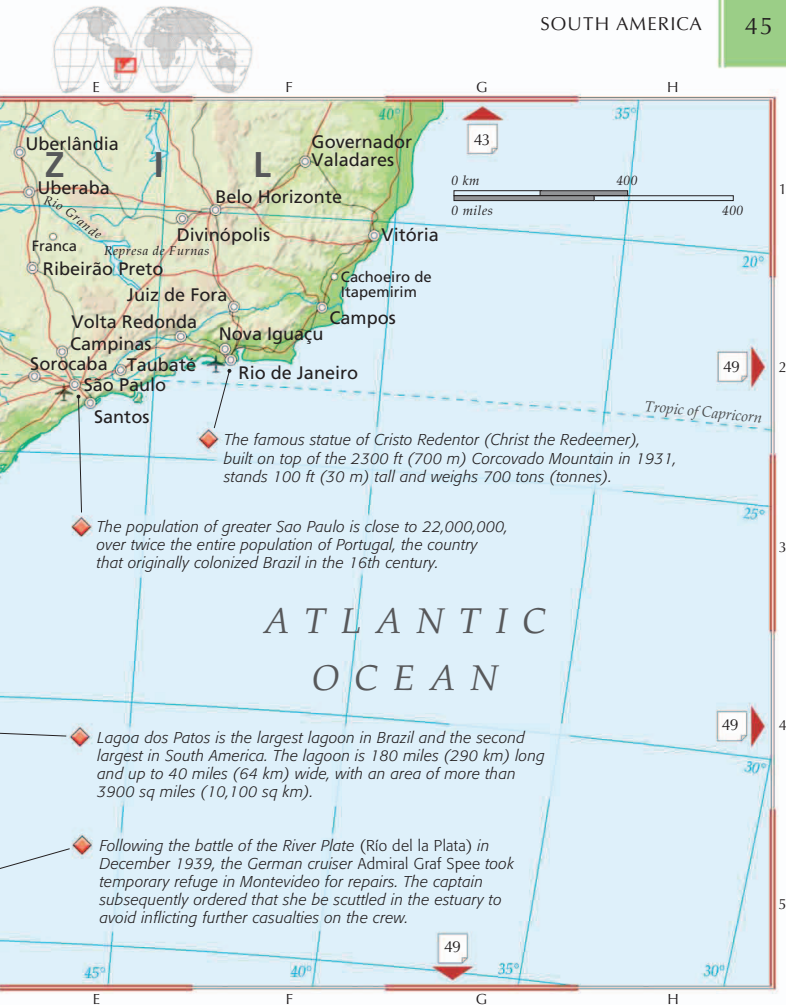
## Peru, Bolivia &amp; North Brazil





## Paraguay, Uruguay &amp; South Brazil





# Southern South America







# The Atlantic Ocean









# Northwest Africa





# Northeast Africa





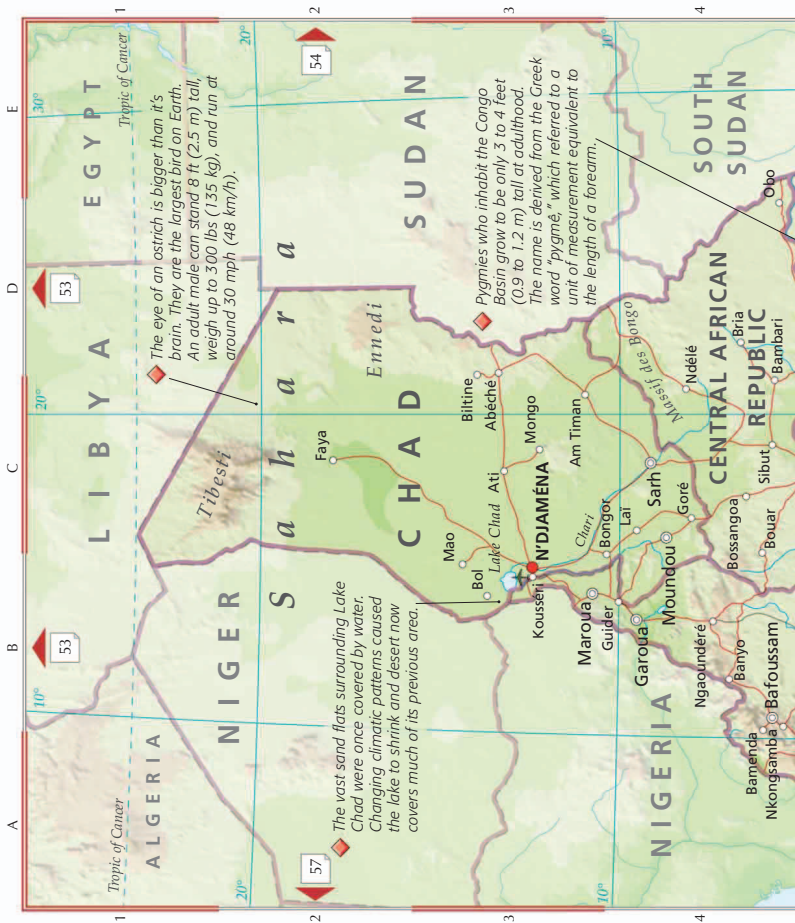


## West Africa





## Central Africa





# Southern Africa

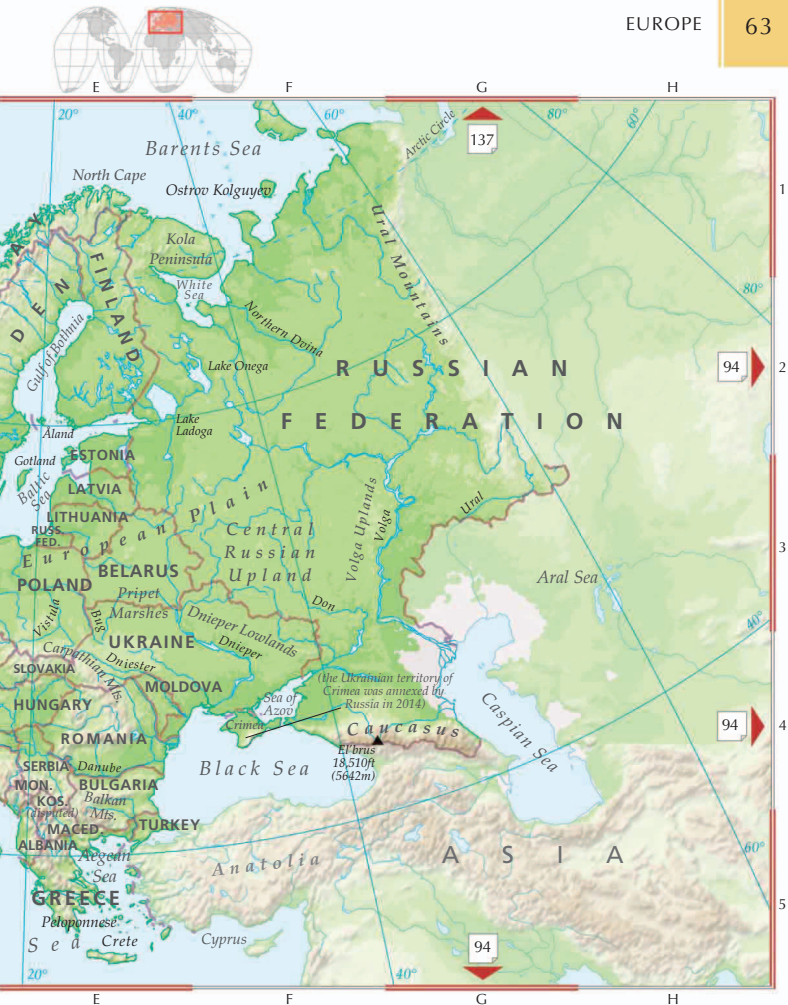




## Europe

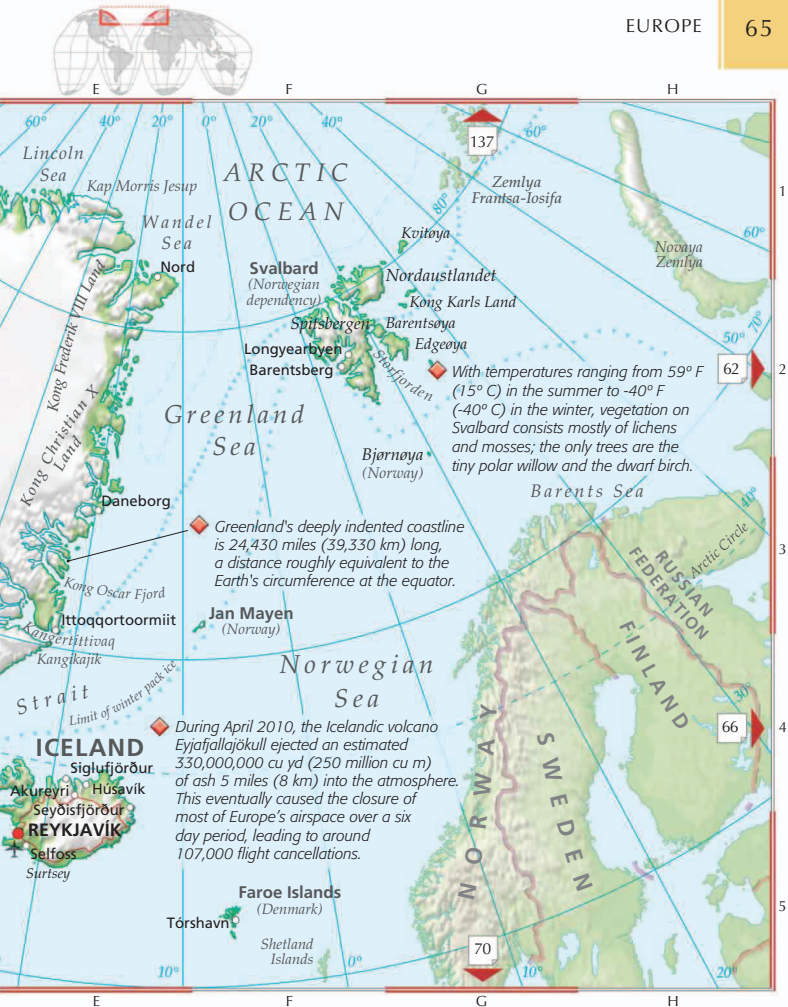






## The North Atlantic





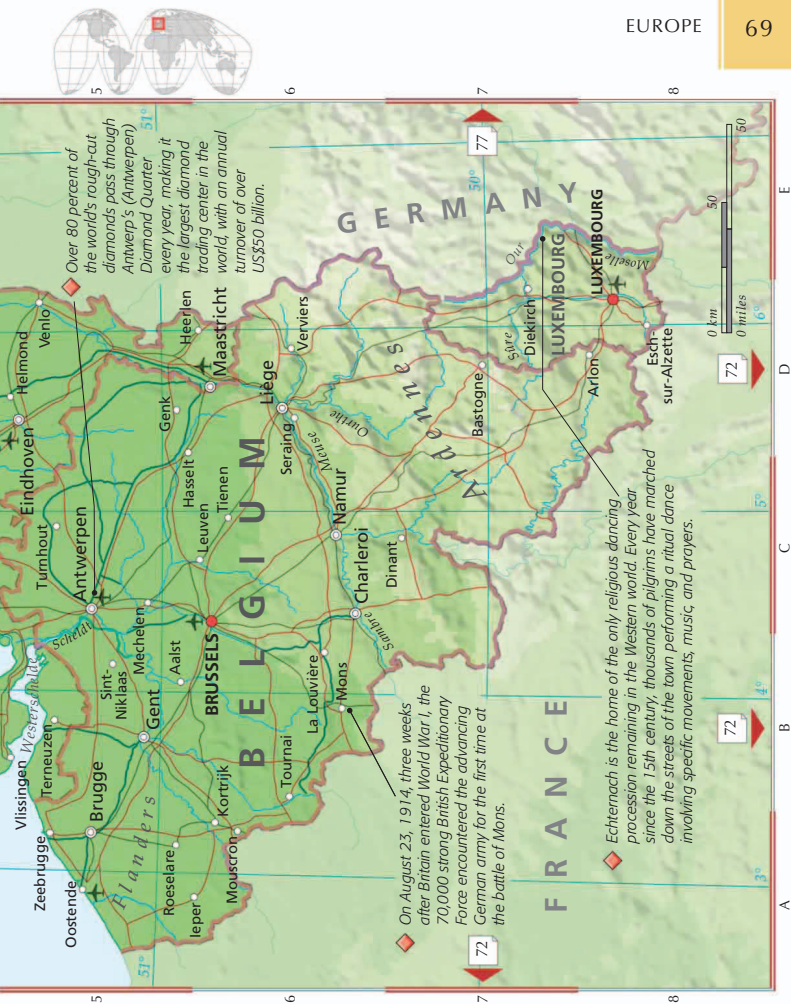
# Scandinavia & Finland





# The Low Countries





# The British Isles







# France, Andorra & Monaco



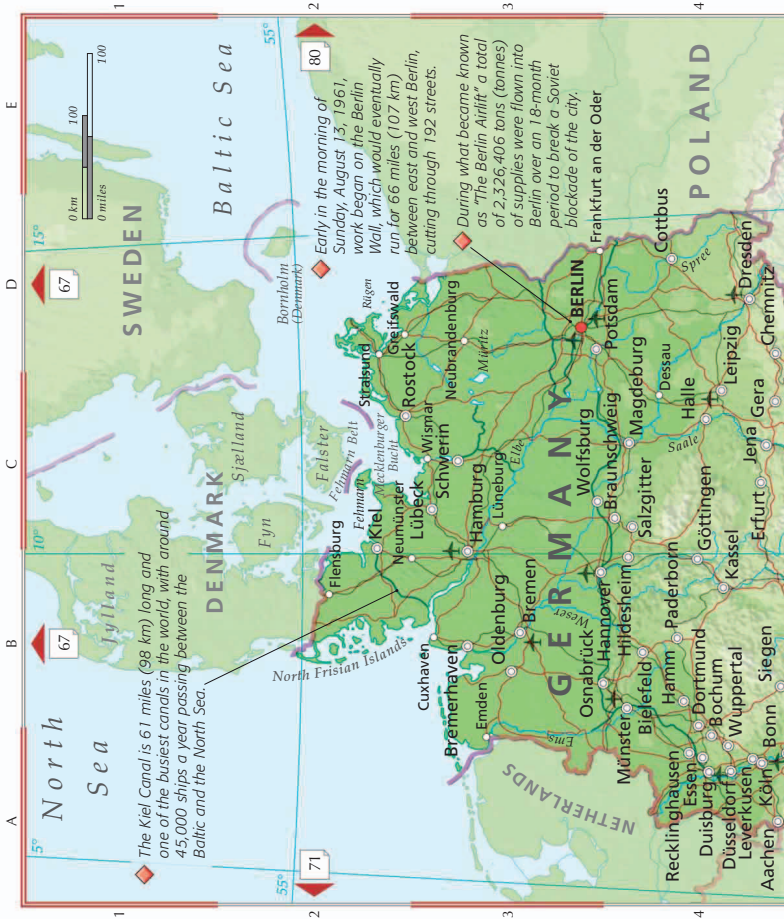


## Spain &amp; Portugal





# Germany & The Alpine States





♦ At 528 ft (161 m) high and containing 768 steps, the steeple of Ulm Minster makes it the tallest church in the world.

Born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was already writing music by the age of five, and at eleven he produced his first opera.

The acrylic glass roof over the Olympic stadium in München (Munich) measures 914,940 sq ft (85,000 sq m), making it the biggest structure of its kind in the world.

When it is completed in 2016, the Gotthard Base Tunnel will run for 35.5 miles (57 km) beneath the Lepontine Alps to become the longest rail tunnel in the world.

73

78

78

73

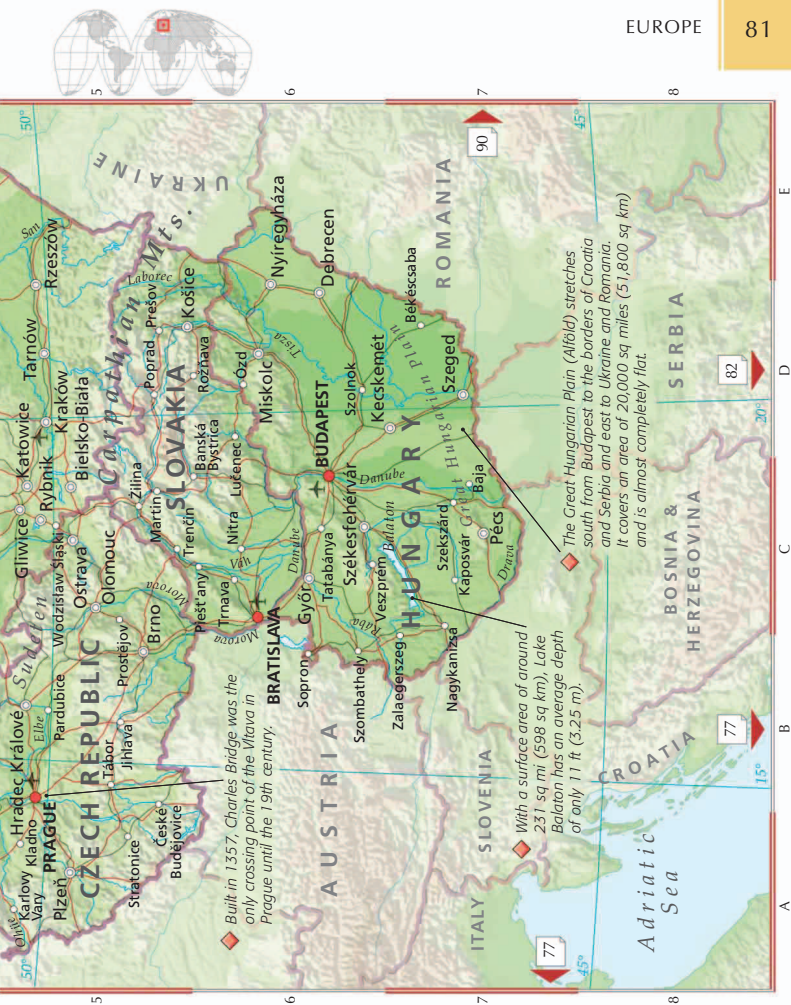






# Central Europe





# Southeast Europe





# The Mediterranean

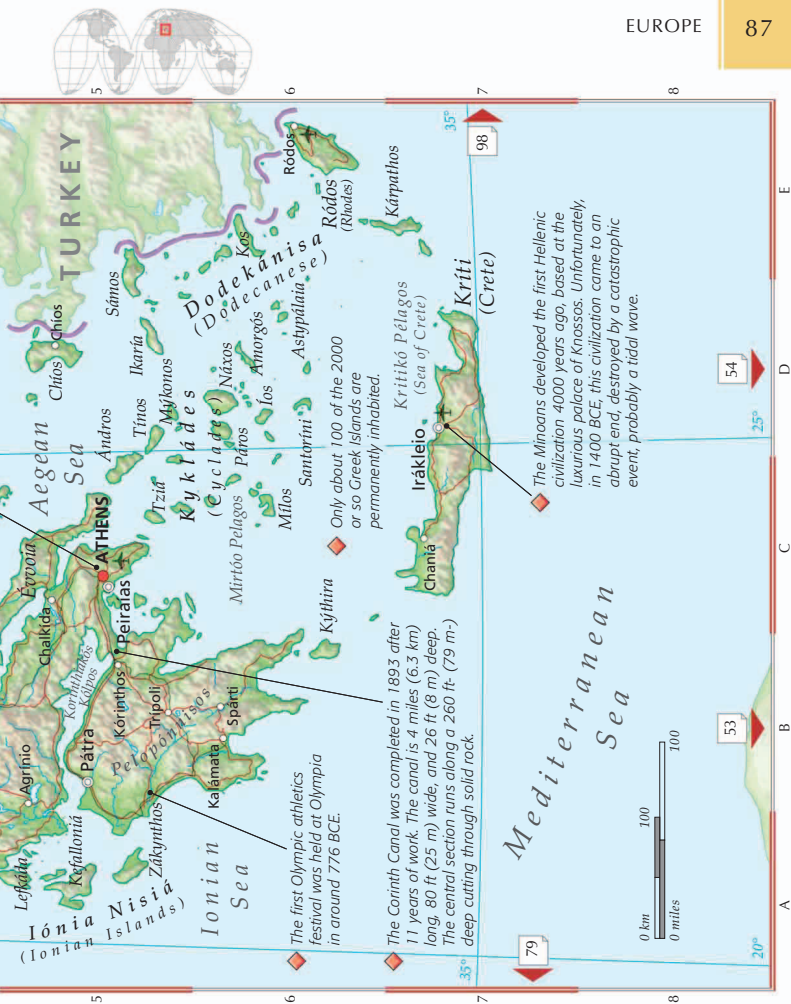




# Bulgaria & Greece

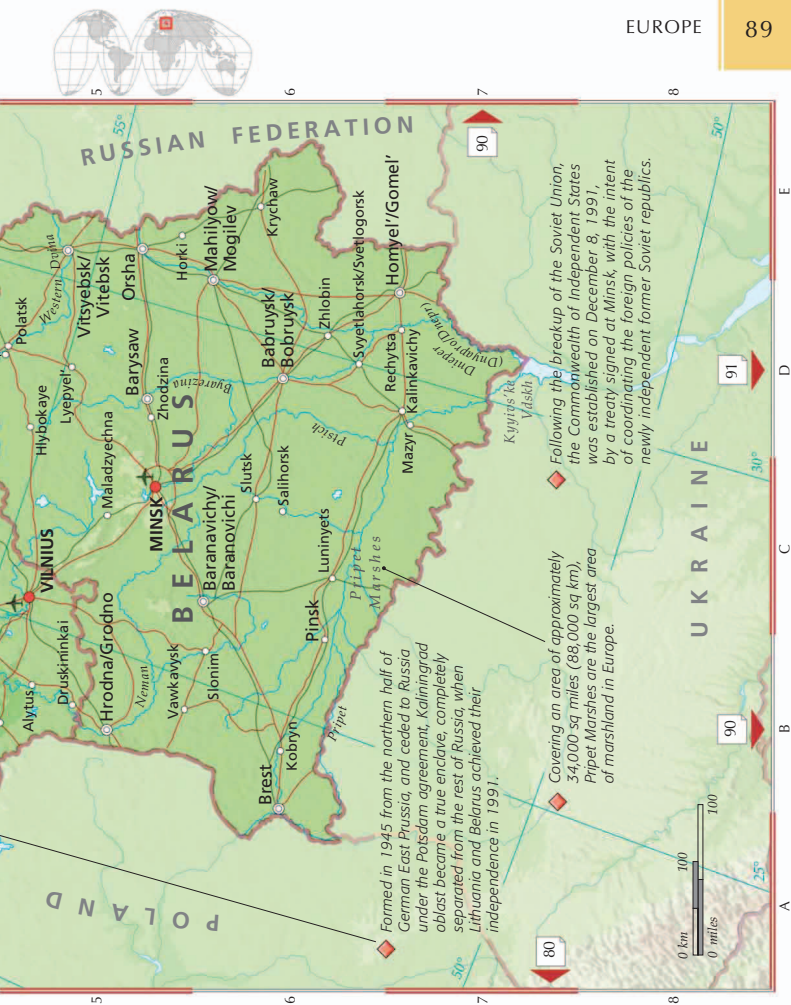






# The Baltic States & Belarus





## Ukraine, Moldova &amp; Romania





# European Russia





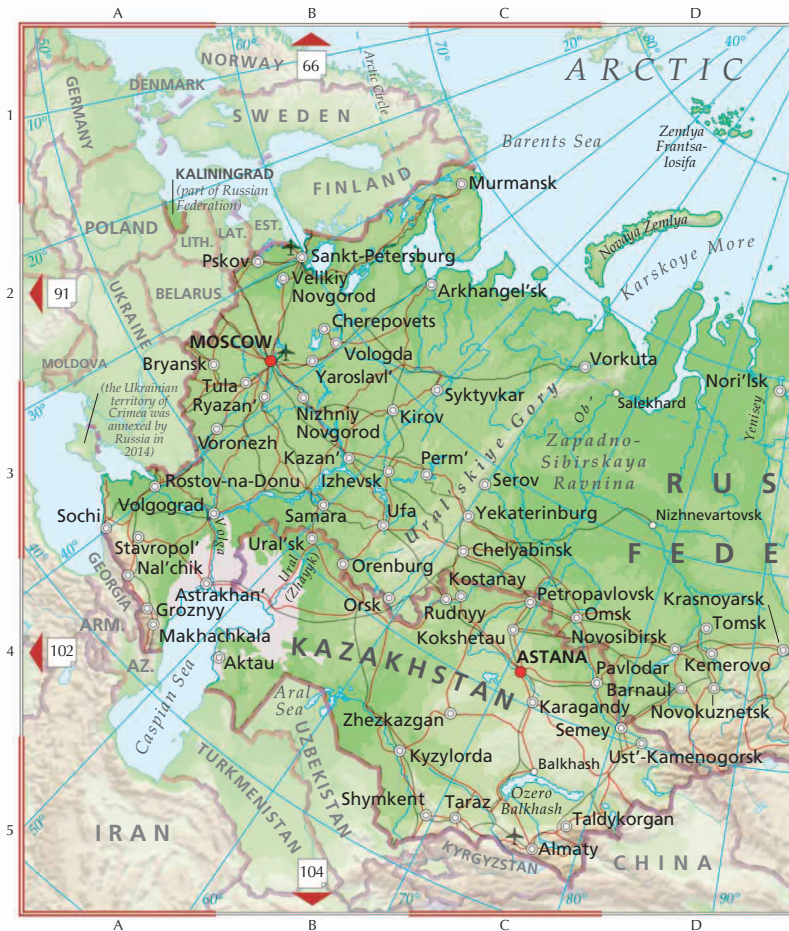
# North & West Asia







## Russia &amp; Kazakhstan





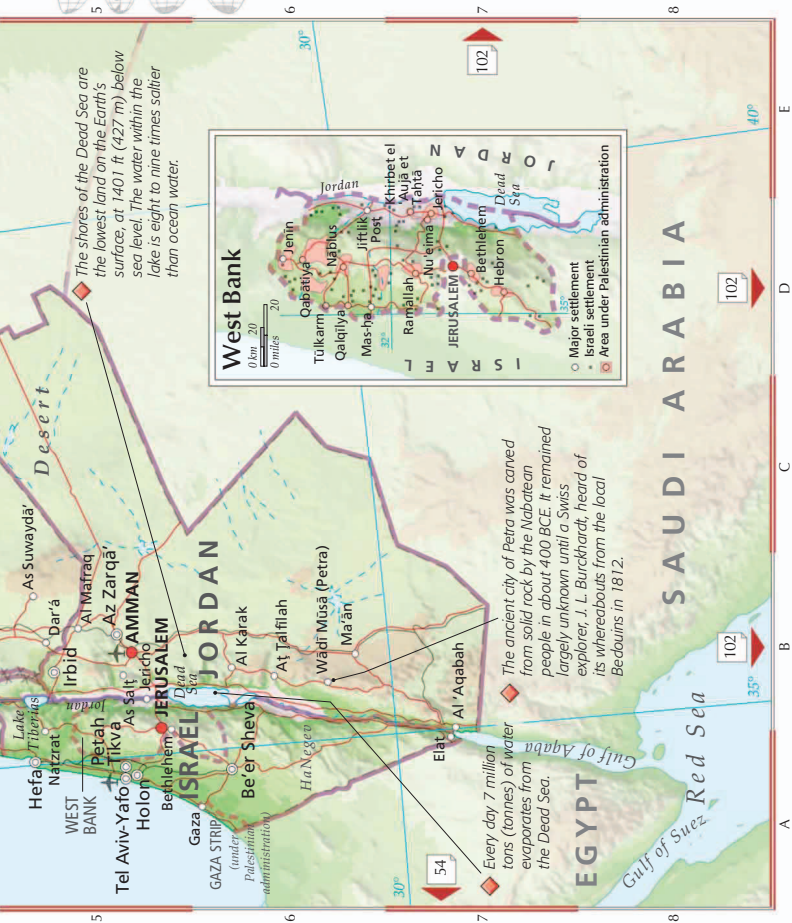
# Turkey & the Caucasus



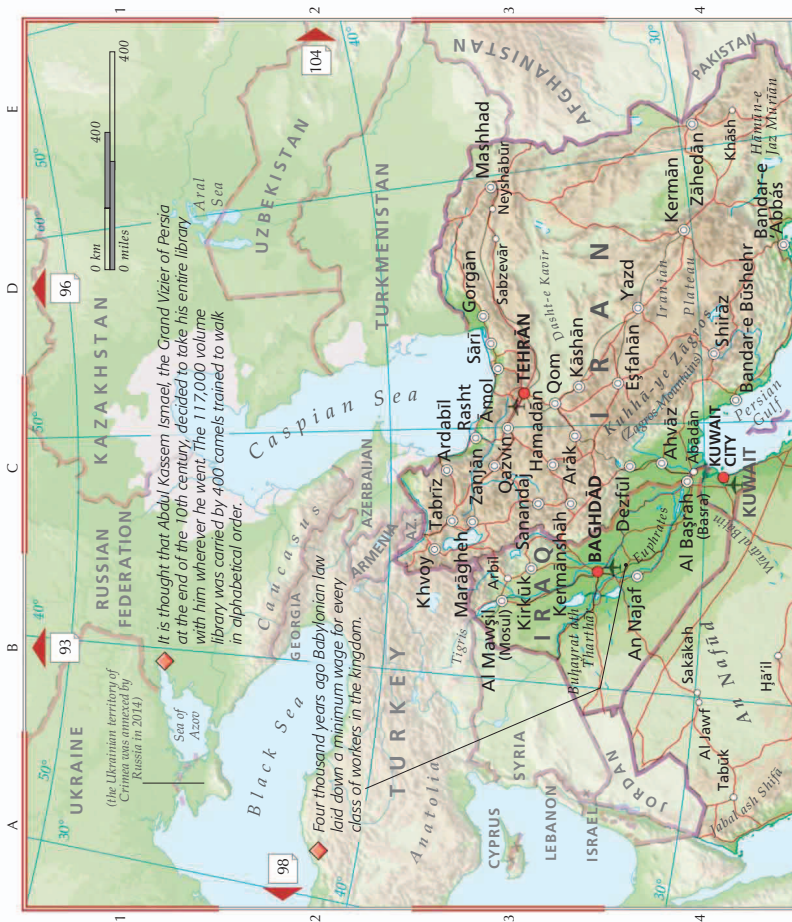


# The Near East





# The Middle East







## Central Asia





# South & East Asia



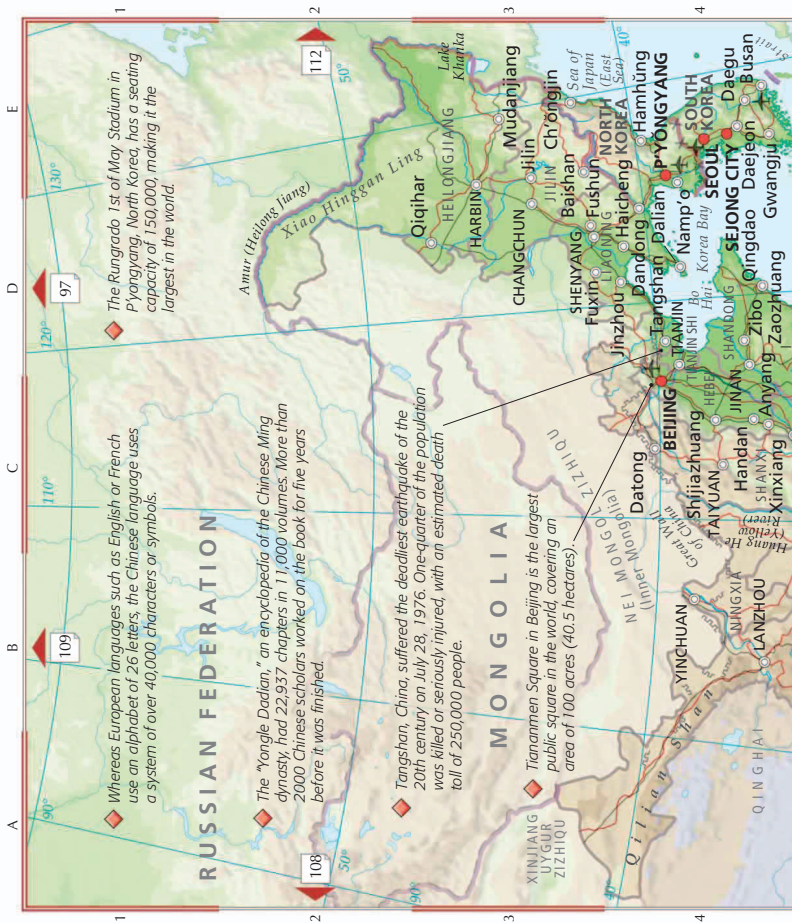


# Western China & Mongolia





# Eastern China & Korea

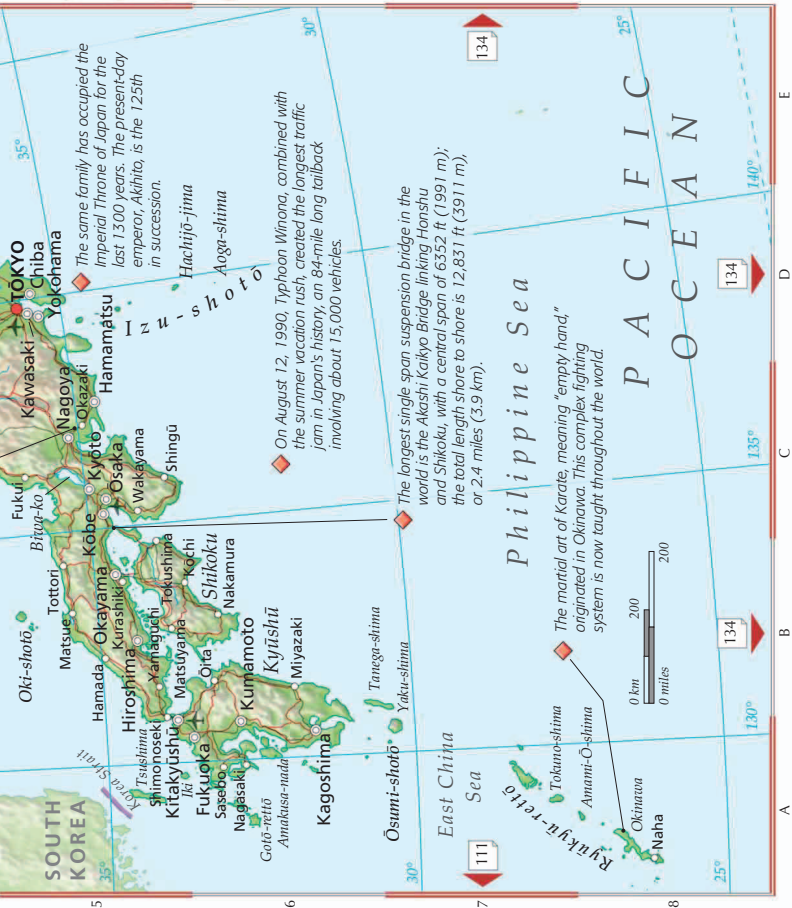






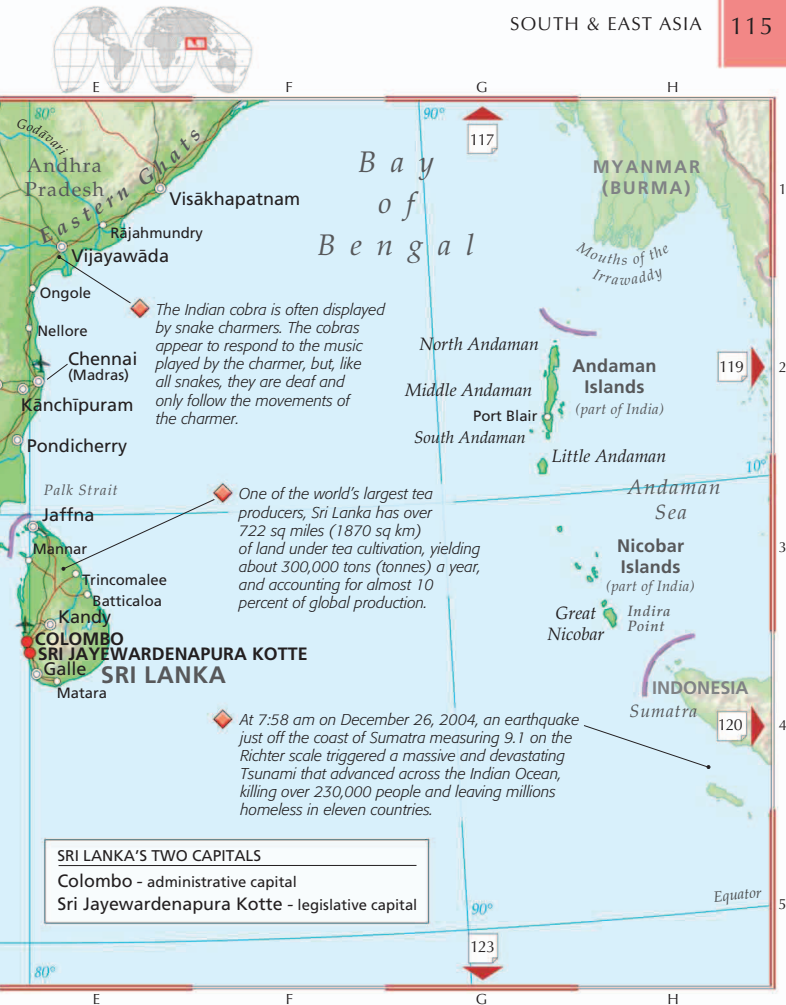
## Japan





# Southern India & Sri Lanka





# North India & Pakistan





◆ The northern ranges of the Himalayas contain the highest mountains in the world, with average heights of more than 23,000 ft (7000 m) and many peaks higher than 26,000 ft (8000m).

◆ Cherrapunji, 4872 ft (1484 m) above sea level, has an average annual rainfall of 450 inches (1143 cm), although most of this falls during the monsoon – the winter is a virtual drought. The highest-ever seasonal rainfall was 904 inches (2298 cm).

◆ The Kingdom of Bhutan is the only country in the world to measure the happiness of its citizens.

**Arunchal Pradesh (claimed by China)**

**Guwāhātī**

Dispur

Kohīma

**Sylhet**

**Imphāl**

**Tropic of Cancer**

**Chittagong**

◆ The heaviest hailstones on record, weighing about 2.25 lbs (1 kg), are reported to have killed 92 people in the Gopalganj area of Bangladesh on April 14, 1986.

## Mainland Southeast Asia







# Maritime Southeast Asia





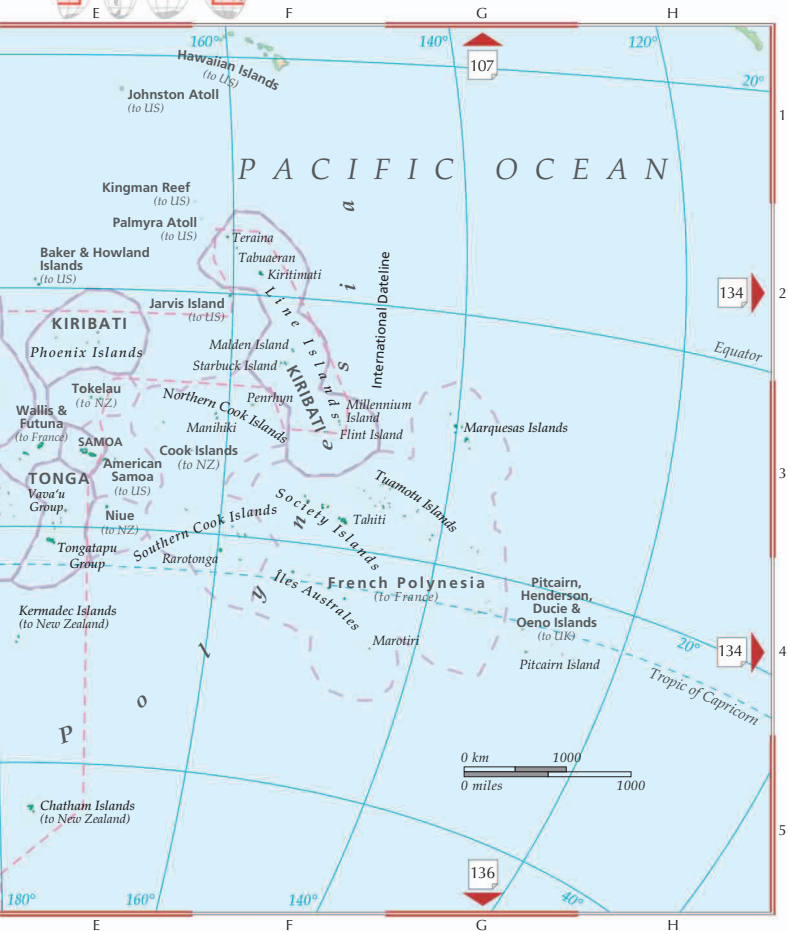
# The Indian Ocean





# Australasia & Oceania





# The Southwest Pacific

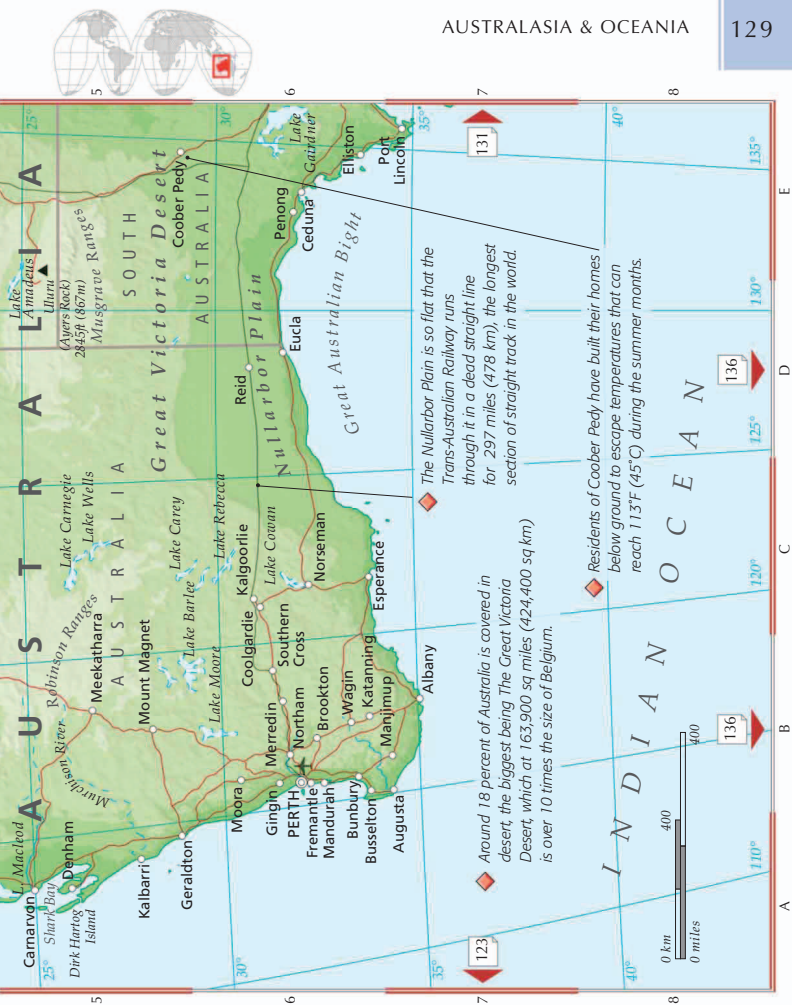






# Western Australia





# Eastern Australia





## New Zealand





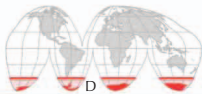
# The Pacific Ocean

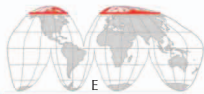






## Antarctica





## Arctic



# The world factfiles





# North & Central America





# South America





**POLITICAL FACTFILE**

 **TOTAL AREA:**  
673,428 sq miles  
(17,484,410 sq km)

 **TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES:**  
12

 **TOTAL POPULATION:**  
406 million

 **LARGEST CITY WITH POPULATION:**  
São Paulo, Brazil 21.7 million



**COUNTRY WITH HIGHEST POPULATION DENSITY:**  
Ecuador 147 people per sq mile  
(57 people per sq km)

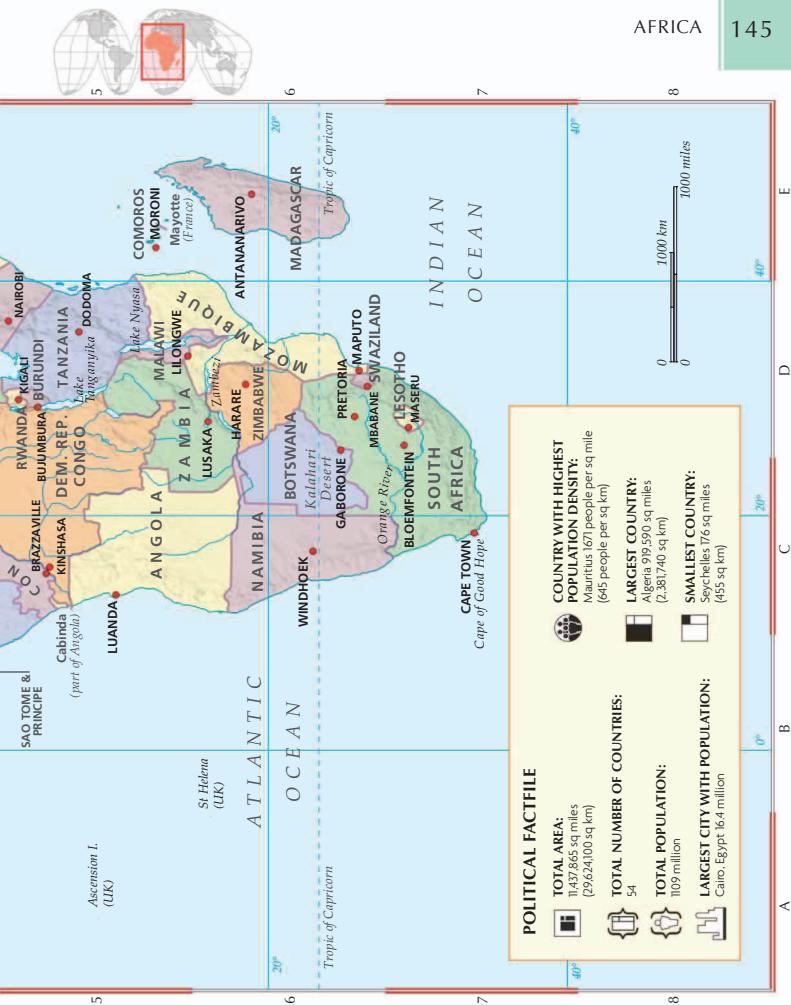


**LARGEST COUNTRY:**  
Brazil 3,286,670 sq miles  
(8,511,965 sq km)



**SMALLEST COUNTRY:**  
Suriname 63,039 sq miles  
(163,270 sq km)



**POLITICAL FACTFILE****TOTAL AREA:**  
11,437,865 sq miles  
(29,624,100 sq km)**TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES:**  
54**TOTAL POPULATION:**  
1109 million**LARGEST CITY WITH POPULATION:**  
Cairo, Egypt 16.4 million**COUNTRY WITH HIGHEST POPULATION DENSITY:**  
Mauritius 1,671 people per sq mile  
(645 people per sq km)**LARGEST COUNTRY:**  
Algeria 919,590 sq miles  
(2,381,740 sq km)**SMALLEST COUNTRY:**  
Seychelles 176 sq miles  
(455 sq km)

## Europe





## Asia





# Australasia & Oceania







# Key to factfile maps

## FOREWORD

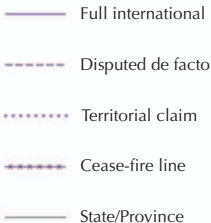
This factfile is intended as a guide to a world that is continually changing as political fashions and personalities come and go. Nevertheless, all the material in these factfiles has been researched from the most up-to-date and authoritative sources to give an incisive portrait of the geographical, social, and economic characteristics that make each country unique.

## KEY TO MAP SYMBOLS

### ELEVATION



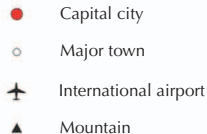
### BORDERS



### DRAINAGE FEATURES



### SYMBOLS



*The asterisk in the Factfile denotes the country's official language(s)*

*Date of formation denotes the date of political origin or independence of a state, i.e. its emergence as a recognizable entity in the modern political world*

*The area figure denotes total land area*



# Afghanistan

About 75% of this landlocked Asian country is inaccessible. The Islamist *Taliban*, ousted in 2001, continue to fight a guerrilla war against Afghan and NATO-led forces.



## GEOGRAPHY

Predominantly mountainous. Highest range is the Hindu Kush. Mountains are bordered by fertile plains. Desert plateau in the south.



## CLIMATE

Harsh continental. Hot, dry summers. Cold winters with heavy snow, especially in the Hindu Kush.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

*Mujahideen* factions fought first against Soviet invaders (from 1979), and then against each other (after 1989). *Taliban* insurgents won control in 1996 and imposed a strict Islamist regime: women were denied all rights and ethnic tensions were exacerbated. In 2001, a US-led intervention justified as a “war on terrorism” helped install an elected anti-*Taliban* regime. NATO troops led the anti-insurgency campaign, but aimed ultimately to hand over and withdraw.



## THE ECONOMY

Mainly agricultural, severely disrupted by war. Illicit opium trade is big cash earner. Natural gas pipeline planned from the Caspian Sea to Pakistan.



**INSIGHT:** *The UN estimates that it could take 100 years to remove the 10 million landmines laid since 1979*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1919

**CAPITAL:** Kabul

**POPULATION:** 30.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 250,000 sq. miles  
(647,500 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 122 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Pashtu\*, Tajik, Dari\*, other

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 80%,  
Shi'a Muslim 19%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Pashtun 38%, Tajik 25%, Hazara  
19%, Uzbek and Turkmen 15%, other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Nonparty system

**CURRENCY:** Afghan = 100 pul

# Albania



Lying at the southeastern end of the Adriatic Sea, Albania was the last east European country to liberalize its economy. The regional strife of the 1990s has left a difficult legacy.



## GEOGRAPHY

Narrow coastal plain. Interior is mostly hills and mountains. Forest and scrub cover over 40% of the land.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean coastal climate, with warm summers and cool winters. Mountains receive heavy rains or snows in winter.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The pace of economic reform remains a major issue. Albania's application for EU membership reached candidate status in 2014. Mosques and churches have reopened in what was once the world's only officially atheist state. The Greek minority in the south suffers much discrimination.



**INSIGHT:** *The Albanians' name for their country, Shqipërisë, means "Land of the Eagles"*



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas reserves have potential to offset rudimentary infrastructure and lack of foreign investment. Organized crime problem.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Albania

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1912

**CAPITAL:** Tirana

**POPULATION:** 3.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 11,100 sq. miles  
(28,748 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 302 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Albanian\*, Greek

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 70%,  
Albanian Orthodox 20%,  
Roman Catholic 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Albanian 98%, Greek 1%,  
other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Lek = 100 qindarka (qintars)



# Algeria

On the Mediterranean coast, and independent from France since 1962, Algeria is now Africa's largest country. Its regime used the army to keep Islamists from power in 1992.



## GEOGRAPHY

85% of the country lies within the Sahara Desert. Fertile coastal region with plains and hills rises to meet the Atlas Mountains.



## CLIMATE

Coastal areas are warm and temperate, with most rainfall during the mild winters. The south is very hot, with negligible rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Algerians are predominantly Arab, under 35 years of age, and urban. Berbers consider the mountainous Kabylia region in the northeast to be their homeland. They have been granted greater ethnic rights in recent years. The Sahara sustains just 500,000 people, mainly oil workers or Tuareg nomads herding goats and camels. A national reconciliation process has followed the suppression of the Islamist challenge to the regime.

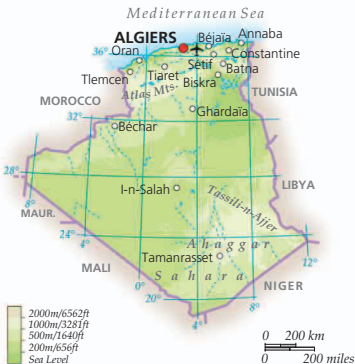


## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas exports. Political turmoil has led to exodus of skilled foreign labor. Limited agriculture.



**INSIGHT:** Some of the world's highest dunes are located in the deserts of east central Algeria



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Algiers

**POPULATION:** 39.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 919,590 sq. miles  
(2,381,740 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 43 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Tamazight, French

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 99%,  
Christian and Jewish 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 75%, Berber 24%,  
European and Jewish 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Algerian dinar = 100 centimes

# Andorra



A tiny landlocked principality, Andorra lies high in the eastern Pyrenees between France and Spain. It held its first full elections in 1993. Tourism is the main source of income.



## GEOGRAPHY

High mountains, with six deep, glaciated valleys that drain into the Valira River as it flows into Spain.



## CLIMATE

Cool, wet springs followed by dry, warm summers. Mountain snows linger until March.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Immigration is strictly monitored and restricted by quota to French and Spanish nationals seeking employment in Andorra. Low taxes attract wealthy expatriates. A referendum in 1993 ended 715 years of semifeudal status, but Andorran society remains conservative.



**INSIGHT:** *Andorra's coprincipality status dates from the 13th century.*

*The "princes" are the president of France and the bishop of Urgel in Spain.*



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism and duty-free sales dominate the economy. Banking secrecy laws and low consumer taxes promote investment and commerce. France and Spain effectively decide economic policy. The country is dependent on imported food and raw materials.

2000m/6562ft  
1000m/3281ft  
500m/1640ft



0 5 km  
0 5 miles

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Principality of Andorra

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1278

**CAPITAL:** Andorra la Vella

**POPULATION:** 85,293

**TOTAL AREA:** 181 sq. miles  
(468 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 474 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish, Catalan\*, French, Portuguese

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 94%, other 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Spanish 46%, Andorran 28%, other 18%, French 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Angola

Located in southwest Africa, Angola suffered a civil war following independence from Portugal in 1975, until a 2002 peace deal. Hundreds of thousands of people died.



## GEOGRAPHY

Most of the land is hilly and grass-covered. Desert in the south. Mountains in the center and north.



## CLIMATE

Varies from temperate to tropical. Rainfall decreases north to south. Coast is cooler and dry.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Civil war pitched the ruling Kimbundu-dominated MPLA against UNITA, representing the Ovimbundu. Multiparty elections in 1991–1992, after the MPLA had abandoned Marxism, failed to stall the war for long. Power-sharing from 2002 ended when the MPLA won the 2008 election. In 2006, separatists in the Cabinda exclave agreed a peace deal.



**INSIGHT:** Angola has the greatest number of amputees (caused by landmines) in the world



## THE ECONOMY

Potentially one of Africa's richest countries, but long civil war hampered economic development. Oil and diamonds are exported.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Angola

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** Luanda

**POPULATION:** 21.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 481,351 sq. miles  
(1,246,700 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 45 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Portuguese\*, Umbundu, Kimbundu, Kikongo

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 68%, Protestant 20%, indigenous beliefs 12%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Ovimbundu 37%, other 25%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Readjusted kwanza = 100 lwei

# Antarctica



The circumpolar continent of Antarctica is almost entirely covered by ice, some up to 1.2 miles (2 km) thick. It also contains 90% of the Earth's freshwater reserves.



## GEOGRAPHY

The bulk of Antarctica's ice is contained in the Greater Antarctic Ice Sheet – a huge dome that rises steeply from the coast and flattens to a plateau in the interior.



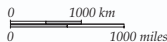
## CLIMATE

Powerful winds create a storm belt around the continent, which brings cloud, fog, and blizzards. Winter temperatures can fall to  $-112^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-80^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).

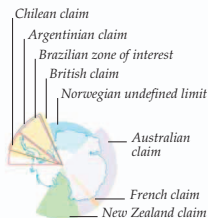


## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

No indigenous population. Scientists and logistical staff work at the 40 permanent, and as many as 100 temporary, research stations. A few Chilean settler families live on King George Island. Tourism is mostly by cruise ship to the Antarctic Peninsula. Annual tourist numbers are around 35,000.



### Territorial Claims:



The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 holds all territorial claims in abeyance in the interest of international cooperation



## FACTFILE

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1961

**TOTAL AREA:** 5,405,000 sq. miles  
(14,000,000 sq. km)

**INSIGHT:** If the ice sheets of Antarctica were to melt, the world's oceans would rise by as much as 200–210 ft (60–65 m)





# Antigua & Barbuda

A former colony of Spain, France, and the UK, Antigua and Barbuda lies at the outer edge of the Leeward Islands group in the Caribbean, and includes the uninhabited islet of Redonda.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly low-lying limestone and coral islands with some higher volcanic areas. Antigua's coast is indented with bays and harbors.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, moderated by trade winds and sea breezes. Humidity and rainfall are low for the region.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population almost entirely of African origin, with small communities of Europeans and South Asians. Women's status has risen as a result of greater access to education. Wealth disparities are small. The Bird family dominated politics from 1960, but lost power to the United Progressive Party (UPP) from 2004.



**INSIGHT:** In 1865, Redonda was "claimed" by an eccentric Englishman as a kingdom for his son



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism is the main source of revenue and the biggest provider of jobs. Financial services and Internet gambling are expanding. High debt.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Antigua and Barbuda

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1981

**CAPITAL:** St. John's

**POPULATION:** 90,156

**TOTAL AREA:** 170 sq. miles

(442 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 530 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, English patois

**RELIGIONS:** Anglican 45%, other Protestant 42%, Roman Catholic 10%, other 2%, Rastafarian 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black African 95%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** E. Caribbean \$ = 100 cents

# Argentina



Argentina occupies most of southern South America. After 30 years of intermittent military rule, democracy returned in 1983. Economic crash in 2001 led to largest-ever debt default.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Andes form a natural border with Chile in the west. East are the heavily wooded plains (Gran Chaco) and treeless but fertile Pampas plains. Bleak and arid Patagonia lies in the south.



## CLIMATE

The Andes are semiarid in the north and snowy in the south. Pampas have a mild climate with summer rains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

People are largely of European descent; over one-third are of Italian origin. Indigenous peoples are now a tiny minority, living mainly in Andean regions or in the Gran Chaco. The middle classes were worst hit by the economic meltdown of 2001–2002.



**INSIGHT:** *The Tango originated in the poorer quarters of Buenos Aires at the end of the 19th century*



## THE ECONOMY

Agricultural exports led recovery. Drought and global downturn in 2008. Recession again in 2014, another default.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Argentina

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1816

**CAPITAL:** Buenos Aires

**POPULATION:** 41.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 1,068,296 sq. miles  
(2,766,890 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 39 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Italian, Amerindian languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 70%, other 18%, Protestant 9%, Muslim 2%, Jewish 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Indo-European 97%, *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian) 2%, Amerindian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Argentine peso = 100 centavos



# Armenia



The smallest of the former USSR's republics, Armenia lies landlocked in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains. After 1988, a confrontation with Azerbaijan dominated national life.



## GEOGRAPHY

Rugged and mountainous, with expanses of semidesert and a large lake in the east: Sevana Lich.



## CLIMATE

Continental climate, with little rainfall in the lowlands. The winters are often bitterly cold.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Christianity is the dominant religion, but minority groups are well integrated. War with Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno Karabakh forced 350,000 Armenians living in Azerbaijan to return home, many to live in poverty. There are close and important ties to the 11-million-strong Armenian diaspora.



**INSIGHT:** *In the 4th century, Armenia became the first country to adopt Christianity as its state religion*



## THE ECONOMY

Overseas remittances and agriculture each account for a sixth of GDP. Main products are wine, tobacco, potatoes, and fruit. Well-developed machine-building and manufacturing – includes textiles and bottling of mineral water.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Armenia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Yerevan

**POPULATION:** 3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 11,506 sq. miles  
(29,800 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 261 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Armenian\*, Azeri, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Armenian Apostolic Church (Orthodox) 88%, Armenian Catholic Church 6%, other 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Armenian 98%, Yezidi 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Dram = 100 luma

# Australia



An island continent in its own right, Australia is the world's sixth-largest country. European settlement began over 200 years ago. Most Australians now live in cities along the coast.



## GEOGRAPHY

Located between the Indian and Pacific oceans, Australia has a variety of landscapes, including tropical rainforests, the arid plateaus, ridges, and vast deserts of the “red center,” the lowlands and river systems draining into Lake Eyre, rolling tracts of pastoral land, and magnificent beaches around much of the coastline. In the far east are the mountains of the Great Dividing Range. Famous natural features include Uluru (Ayers Rock) and the Great Barrier Reef.



## CLIMATE

The west and south are semi-arid with hot summers. The arid interior can reach 120°F (50°C) in the central desert areas. The north is hot throughout the year, and humid during the summer monsoon. East, southeast, and southwest coastal areas are temperate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The first settlers arrived in Australia at least 100,000 years ago. Today, the Aborigines make up around 2% of the population. European colonization began in 1788, and was dominated by British and Irish immigrants, some of whom were convicts. White-only immigration drives brought many Europeans to Australia, but since the 1960s multiculturalism has been encouraged and most new settlers are Asian; Cantonese has overtaken Italian as the second most widely spoken language. Wealth disparities are small, but Aborigines, the exception in an otherwise integrated society, are marginalized: their average life expectancy is around ten years less than other Australians. Illegal immigration is a key political divide; Liberal–National government policies aim to turn back asylum seekers or process and resettle them offshore.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Commonwealth of Australia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1901

**CAPITAL:** Canberra

**POPULATION:** 23.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 2,967,893 sq. miles  
(7,686,850 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 8 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Cantonese, other

**RELIGIONS:** Various Protestant 38%, Roman Catholic 26%, nonreligious 19%, other 17%

**ETHNIC MIX:** European 90%, Asian 7%, Aboriginal 2%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Australian dollar = 100 cents

## THE ECONOMY

Efficient mining and agriculture: particular success in viticulture. Large resource base: coal, iron ore, bauxite, and most other minerals. Protectionism abandoned to open up Australian markets. Concentration on trade with Asia: China's rapidly expanding demand for minerals means it has now surpassed Japan as Australia's major trading partner.

Upward trend in Asian visitor arrivals has strengthened tourism. The effects of droughts, floods, and cyclones have dented economic growth in recent years.

**INSIGHT:** Australia has the most endemic mammals and reptiles in the world. Species include marsupials such as the kangaroo and wombat, the egg-laying platypus, and the freshwater crocodile



# Austria



Bordering eight countries in the heart of Europe, Austria was created in 1918 after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. Neutral after World War II, it joined the EU in 1995.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly mountainous. Alps and foothills cover the west and south. Lowlands in the east are part of the Danube River basin.



## CLIMATE

Temperate continental climate. The western Alpine regions have colder winters and more rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Though Austrians speak German, they like to stress their distinctive identity in relation to Germany. Vienna is a major cultural center. Minorities are few; there are some ethnic Croats, Slovenes, and Hungarians, plus refugees from conflict in former Yugoslavia. Though strongly Roman Catholic, Austrian society is less conservative than some southern German *Länder*. Class divisions remain strong.



## THE ECONOMY

Large manufacturing base, despite lack of energy resources. The skilled labor force is key to high-tech exports. Eurozone member. Limited GDP growth has returned since 2009 recession.



**INSIGHT:** Many of the world's great composers were Austrian, including Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, and Strauss



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Austria

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1918

**CAPITAL:** Vienna

**POPULATION:** 8.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 32,378 sq. miles  
(83,858 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 266 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** German\*, Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian (Magyar)

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 78%, nonreligious 9%, other 8%, Protestant 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Austrian 93%, Croat, Slovene, and Hungarian 6%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Azerbaijan



Situated on the western coast of the Caspian Sea, it was the first Soviet republic to declare independence in 1991.

Territorial disputes with Armenia have dominated politics since.



## GEOGRAPHY

Caucasus Mountains in west, including Naxçivan exclave south of Armenia. Flat, low-lying terrain on the coast of the Caspian Sea.



## CLIMATE

Low rainfall. Continental, with bitter winters, inland. Subtropical in coastal regions.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Azeris, a Muslim people with ethnic links to Turks, form a large majority. Thousands of Armenians, Russians, and Jews have left since independence. Influx of half a million Azeri refugees fleeing war with Armenia over the disputed enclave of Nagorno Karabakh. Armenians there operate with de facto independence. The status of women deteriorated after the fall of communism but they are slowly regaining their position.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas exports drive economic growth. Pipeline to Ceyhan, Turkey, has opened up European market. Severe pollution in Baku.



**INSIGHT:** *The fire-worshipping Zoroastrian faith originated in Azerbaijan in the 6th century BCE*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Azerbaijan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Baku

**POPULATION:** 9.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 33,436 sq. miles  
(86,600 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 281 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Azeri\*, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Shi'a Muslim 68%, Sunni Muslim 26%, Russian Orthodox 3%, Armenian Apostolic Church (Orthodox) 2%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Azeri 91%, other 3%, Lazs 2%, Russian 2%, Armenian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New manat = 100 gopik

# The Bahamas



Located off the Florida coast in the western Atlantic, the Bahamas comprises an archipelago of some 700 islands and 2400 cays, only around 30 of which are inhabited.



## GEOGRAPHY

Long, mainly flat coral formations with a few low hills. Some islands have pine forests, lagoons, and mangrove swamps.



## CLIMATE

Subtropical. Hot summers and mild winters. Heavy rainfall, especially in summer. Hurricanes can strike in July–December.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Over 60% of the population live on New Providence. Tourism employs over half of the labor force. There are marked wealth disparities, from urban professionals in the banking sector to traditional fishermen on outlying islands and illegal Haitian and Cuban immigrants. More women are now entering the professions. Government priorities are tackling narcotics trafficking and combating money laundering.



## THE ECONOMY

Major tourist destination, especially for US visitors. Financial services: banking and insurance.



**INSIGHT:** *The country's extensive merchant fleet consists mainly of "flag-of-convenience" vessels registered by foreign owners*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Commonwealth of the Bahamas

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1973

**CAPITAL:** Nassau

**POPULATION:** 400,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 5382 sq. miles  
(13,940 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 103 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, English Creole, French Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Baptist 32%, other 29%,

Anglican 20%, Roman Catholic 19%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black African 85%, other 15%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Bahamian dollar = 100 cents





# Bahrain

Bahrain is an archipelago of 49 islands between the Qatar peninsula and the Saudi Arabian mainland. Only three of the islands are inhabited. It was the first Gulf emirate to export oil.



## GEOGRAPHY

All islands are low-lying. The largest, Bahrain Island, is mainly sandy plains and salt marshes.



## CLIMATE

Summers are hot and humid. Winters are mild. Low rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The key social division is between the Shi'a majority and Sunni minority. Sunnis hold the best jobs in bureaucracy and business while Shi'as tend to do menial work. Bahrain is socially liberal. The al-Khalifa family has ruled since 1783, but transformed Bahrain into a constitutional monarchy in 2002. Protests calling for greater democracy rocked the country since the 2011 "Arab Spring".



**INSIGHT:** *The 16 Hawar Islands were awarded to Bahrain in 2001 after a lengthy dispute with Qatar*



## THE ECONOMY

Main exports are refined petroleum and aluminum products. As oil reserves run out, natural gas is of increasing importance. Major Middle East offshore banking center, hit by global banking crisis in 2008–2009.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Bahrain

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1971

**CAPITAL:** Manama

**POPULATION:** 1.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 239 sq. miles  
(620 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 4762 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Shi'a) 99%,  
other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bahraini 63%, Asian 19%,  
other Arab 10%, Iranian 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed monarchical-  
parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Bahraini dinar = 1000 fils

# Bangladesh



Bangladesh lies at the north end of the Bay of Bengal and frequently suffers devastating flood, cyclones, and famine. It seceded from Pakistan in 1971.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly flat alluvial plains and deltas of the Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers. Southeast coasts are fringed with mangrove forests.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid. During the monsoon, water levels can rise 20 ft (6 m) above sea level.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

After a period of military rule, Bangladesh returned to democracy in 1991; political instability has continued, however, and corruption is a major problem. A third of the population live in poverty, but living standards are improving. Women are prominent in politics, but their rights are neglected.



**INSIGHT:** *Torrential monsoon rains flood two-thirds of the country every year*



## THE ECONOMY

Agriculture is vulnerable to unpredictable climate. Bangladesh accounts for 80% of world jute fiber exports. Poor infrastructure deters investment. Growing textile industry.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** People's Republic of Bangladesh

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1971

**CAPITAL:** Dhaka

**POPULATION:** 157 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 55,598 sq. miles  
(144,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 3029 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bengali\*, Urdu, Chakma, Marma, Garo, Khasi, Santhali, Tripuri, Mro

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 88%, Hindu 11%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bengali 98%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Taka = 100 poisha



# Barbados

Barbados is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands. Once solely inhabited by the native Arawak, Barbados was first colonized by British settlers in the 1620s.



## GEOGRAPHY

Encircled by coral reefs. Fertile and predominantly flat, with a few gentle hills to the north.



## CLIMATE

Moderate tropical climate. Sunnier and drier than its more mountainous neighbors.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Independent from the UK since 1966. Some latent tension between the economically dominant white community and the majority black population, but violence is rare. Increasing social mobility has enabled black Barbadians to enter the professions. Despite political stability, and good welfare and education services, pockets of abject poverty remain.



**INSIGHT:** Barbados retains a strong British influence and is referred to by its neighbors as "Little England"



## THE ECONOMY

Well-developed tourism sector based on climate and accessibility. Financial services, offshore banking, and information processing are key industries. Sugar production has dwindled. High cost of living.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Barbados

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1966

**CAPITAL:** Bridgetown

**POPULATION:** 300,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 166 sq. miles  
(430 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1807 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bajan (Barbadian English), English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Anglican 40%, other 24%, nonreligious 17%, Pentecostal 8%, Methodist 7%, Roman Catholic 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black African 92%, White 3%, other 3%, mixed race 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Barbados dollar = 100 cents

# Belarus



Literally “White Russia,” Belarus lies landlocked in eastern Europe. It reluctantly became independent when the USSR broke up in 1991. It has few resources other than agriculture.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly plains and low hills. The Dnieper and Dvina rivers drain the eastern lowlands. Vast Pripet Marshes in the southwest.



## CLIMATE

Extreme continental climate. Winters are long, sub-freezing, but mainly dry; summers are hot.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Only 2% of people are non-Slav, so ethnic tension is minimal. Russian culture dominates. Belarus was the slowest ex-Soviet state to implement political reform; President Lukashenko has been labeled as Europe’s last dictator. Enthusiasm for a merger with Russia has waned. Wealth is held by a small ex-Communist elite. Fallout from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine still seriously affects health and the environment.



## THE ECONOMY

Industry outmoded and mainly state-owned. Depends on Russia for energy and raw materials: tensions over natural gas prices.



**INSIGHT:** *The number of cancer and leukemia cases soared after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Belarus

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Minsk

**POPULATION:** 9.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 80,154 sq. miles  
(207,600 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 117 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Belarussian\*, Russian\*

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 80%,  
Roman Catholic 14%, other 4%,  
Protestant 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Belarussian 81%, Russian 11%,  
Polish 4%, Ukrainian 2%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Belarussian rouble = 100 kopeks



# Belgium



Belgium lies in northwestern Europe. Its history has been marked by tensions between the majority Dutch-speaking (Flemish) and minority French-speaking (Walloon) communities.



## GEOGRAPHY

Low-lying coastal plain covers two-thirds of the country. Land becomes hilly and forested in the southeast (Ardennes).



## CLIMATE

Maritime climate with Gulf Stream influences. Mild temperatures, with heavy cloud cover and rain. More rainfall and weather fluctuations at the coast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Since 1970, Flemish regions have become more prosperous than those of the minority Walloons, overturning traditional roles and increasing friction. Belgium moved to a federal system from 1980 in order to contain tensions, but recent fractious politics have raised doubts over the union's survival. The Flemish separatist N-VA heads the Flanders government and since 2010 has been the largest party at federal level. Brussels hosts key EU institutions.



## THE ECONOMY

Variety of industrial exports, including steel, glassware, cut diamonds, and textiles. High levels of public debt. Bureaucracy larger than European average.

**INSIGHT:** Belgium holds the world record for the country with the longest period without a government



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Belgium

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1830

**CAPITAL:** Brussels

**POPULATION:** 11.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 11,780 sq. miles  
(30,510 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 876 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Dutch\*, French\*, German\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 88%, other 10%, Muslim 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Fleming 58%, Walloon 33%, other 6%, Italian 2%, Moroccan 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# Belize



Belize lies on the eastern shore of the Yucatan Peninsula. Formerly called British Honduras, Belize was the last Central American country to gain its independence, in 1981.



## GEOGRAPHY

Almost half the land area is forested. Low mountains in southeast. Flat swampy coastal plains.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Very hot and humid, with May–December rainy season.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

English-speaking black Creoles are outnumbered by Spanish speakers, including native *mestizos* (European–Amerindian) and immigrants from neighboring states. The Creoles have traditionally dominated society, but high levels of emigration to the US have weakened their influence. The Afro-Carib *garifuna* have their own language. Corruption, and trafficking of people and narcotics, are major problems.



**INSIGHT:** *Belize's barrier reef is the second-largest in the world*



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism, agriculture, and offshore banking. Oil extraction began in 2005. Sugar, textiles, lobsters, and shrimp are exported. Serious hurricane damage is a recurring problem.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Belize

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1981

**CAPITAL:** Belmopan

**POPULATION:** 300,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 8867 sq. miles  
(22,966 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 34 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English Creole, Spanish, English\*, Mayan, Garifuna (Carib)

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 62%, other 20%, Anglican 12%, Methodist 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 49%, Creole 25%, Maya 11%, other 9%, Garifuna 6%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Belizean dollar = 100 cents



# Benin



Benin stretches north from the west African coast. In 1990, Benin became one of the pioneers of African democratization, ending 17 years of one-party Marxist-Leninist rule.



## GEOGRAPHY

Sandy coastal region. Numerous lagoons lie just behind the shoreline. Forested plateaus inland. Mountains in the northwest.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid in the south. Two rainy seasons. Hot, dusty *harmattan* winds blow during the December–February dry season.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

There are 42 different ethnic groups. The southern Fon have tended to dominate politics. Other major groups are the Adja and Yoruba. The northern Fulani follow a nomadic lifestyle. North–south tension is mainly due to the south being more developed. French culture, centered on Cotonou, is highly prized. Substantial differences in wealth reflect a strongly hierarchical society.



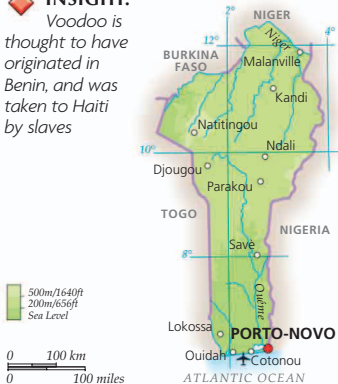
## THE ECONOMY

Strong agricultural sector: cash crops include cotton, oil palm, and cashew nuts. Large-scale smuggling is a serious problem. France is the main aid donor. Recent floods.



## INSIGHT:

*Voodoo is thought to have originated in Benin, and was taken to Haiti by slaves*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Benin

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Porto-Novo

**POPULATION:** 10.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 43,483 sq. miles  
(112,620 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 241 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Fon, Bariba, Yoruba, Adja, Houeda, Somba, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Indigenous beliefs and Voodoo 50%, Christian 30%, Muslim 20%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Fon 41%, other 21%, Adja 16%, Yoruba 12%, Bariba 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Bhutan



Perched in the eastern Himalayas between India and China lies the landlocked Kingdom of Bhutan. It is largely closed to the outside world to protect its culture; TV was banned until 1999.



## GEOGRAPHY

Low, tropical southern strip rising through fertile central valleys to high Himalayas in the north. Around 70% of the land is forested.



## CLIMATE

South is tropical, north is alpine, cold, and harsh. Central valleys warmer in east than west.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The king was absolute monarch until 1998, and the first democratic elections were held a decade later. Most people are devoutly Buddhist and originate from Tibet. The Hindu Nepalese settled in the south. Bhutan has 20 languages. In 1988, Dzongkha (a Tibetan dialect native to just 16% of the people) was made the official language. The Nepalese community regard this as "cultural imperialism," causing considerable ethnic tensions.



## THE ECONOMY

Reliant on India for trade. Most people farm their own plots of land and herd cattle and yaks. Steep land unsuited for cultivation. Development of cash crops for Asian markets.



**INSIGHT:** In 2004 Bhutan became the first country in the world to ban smoking and the sale of tobacco



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Bhutan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1656

**CAPITAL:** Thimphu

**POPULATION:** 800,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 18,147 sq. miles  
(47,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 44 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Dzongkha\*, Nepali, Assamese

**RELIGIONS:** Mahayana Buddhist 75%,  
Hindu 25%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Drukpa 50%, Nepalese 35%,  
other 15%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed monarchical-  
parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Ngultrum = 100 chetrum





# Bolivia

Landlocked high in central South America, Bolivia is one of the region's poorest countries. La Paz is the world's highest capital city: 13,385 feet (3631 m) above sea level.



## GEOGRAPHY

A high windswept plateau, the *altiplano*, lies between two Andean mountain ranges. Semiarid grasslands to the east; dense tropical forests to the north.



## CLIMATE

*Altiplano* has extreme tropical climate, with night-frost in winter. North and east are hot and humid.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Wealthy Spanish-descended families have traditionally controlled the economy. The indigenous majority faces widespread discrimination. Amerindian Evo Morales, president from 2005, is cutting poverty, redistributing land, and pushing for international recognition of legal coca use.



**INSIGHT:** *Between 1825 and 1982*

*Bolivia averaged more than one armed coup a year*



## THE ECONOMY

Gold, silver, zinc, tin, oil, natural gas: all vulnerable to world price fluctuations. Social issues and nationalization of natural gas sector deter investors. Major coca producer. Lack of manufacturing. Rich eastern provinces want autonomy.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Plurinational State of Bolivia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1825

**CAPITALS:** La Paz (administrative);  
Sucre (judicial)

**POPULATION:** 10.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 424,162 sq. miles  
(1,098,580 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 26 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Aymara\*, Quechua\*, Spanish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 93%, other 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Quechua 37%, Aymara 32%,  
*Mestizo* (mixed European–Amerindian) 13%,  
European 10%, other 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Boliviano = 100 centavos

# Bosnia & Herzegovina



Perched in the highlands of southeast Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina was the focus of the bitter ethnic conflict that accompanied the early 1990s dissolution of the Yugoslav state.



## GEOGRAPHY

Hills and mountains, with narrow river valleys. Lowlands in the north. Mainly deciduous forest covers about half of the total area.



## CLIMATE

Continental. Hot summers and cold, often snowy winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Despite sharing the same origin and spoken language, Bosnians have been divided by history between Orthodox Serbs, Roman Catholic Croats, and Muslim Bosniaks. Ethnic cleansing was practiced by all sides in the civil war, displacing about 60% of the population. Hopes for EU integration will require further ethnic reconciliation.



**INSIGHT:** *The murder of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo in 1914 triggered the First World War*



## THE ECONOMY

Potential to recover status as a thriving market economy with a strong manufacturing base, but still struggles with resettling refugees and the legacy of war. Little foreign investment.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Bosnia and Herzegovina

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1992

**CAPITAL:** Sarajevo

**POPULATION:** 3.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 19,741 sq. miles  
(51,129 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 192 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bosnian\*, Serbian\*, Croatian\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 40%, Orthodox Christian 31%, Roman Catholic 15%, other 10%, Protestant 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bosniak 48%, Serb 34%, Croat 16%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Marka = 100 pfeninga



# Botswana



Landlocked in the heart of southern Africa, Botswana boasts the world's largest inland river delta. Diamonds provide potential wealth, but the country is crippled by HIV/AIDS.



## GEOGRAPHY

Lies on vast plateau, high above sea level. Hills in the east. Kalahari Desert in center and southwest. Swamps and salt pans elsewhere and in Okavango Basin.



## CLIMATE

Dry and prone to drought. Summer wet season, April–October. Winters are warm, with cold nights.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The nomadic San bushmen, the first inhabitants, are marginalized. One in five adults are living with HIV/AIDS; only Swaziland and Lesotho are worse affected. Life expectancy is around 64 years. Diamond revenue has widened wealth inequalities.



**INSIGHT:** *Water, Botswana's most precious resource, is honored in the name of the currency – pula*



## THE ECONOMY

Overreliance on diamonds: vulnerable to world price fluctuations. Beef is exported to Europe. Tourism aimed at wealthy wildlife enthusiasts. AIDS is devastating the population.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Botswana

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1966

**CAPITAL:** Gaborone

**POPULATION:** 2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 231,803 sq. miles  
(600,370 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 9 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Setswana, English\*, Shona, San, Khoikhoi, isiNdebele

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 70%, nonreligious 20%, traditional beliefs 6%, other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Tswana 79%, Kalanga 11%, other 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Pula = 100 thebe

# Brazil



Covering almost half of South America, Brazil is the site of the world's largest and ecologically most important rainforest. The country has immense natural and economic resources.



## GEOGRAPHY

Rainforest grows around the massive Amazon River and its delta, covering almost half of Brazil's total land area. Apart from the basin of the River Plate to the south, the rest of the country consists of highlands. The mountainous east is part-forested and part-desert. The coastal plain in the southeast has swampy areas. The Atlantic coastline is 1240 miles (2000 km) long.



## CLIMATE

Brazil's share of the Amazon Basin has a model tropical equatorial climate, with high temperatures and rainfall all year round. The Brazilian plateau has far greater seasonal variation. The dry northeast suffers frequent droughts, though coastal regions are occasionally flooded by bouts of torrential rain. The south has hot summers and cool winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Diverse population includes Amerindians, black people of African descent, European immigrants, and those of mixed race. Amerindians suffer prejudice from most other groups. Shanty towns in the cities attract poor migrants from the northeast. Urban crime, violent land disputes, and unchecked development in Amazonia tarnish Brazil's image as a modern nation. Catholicism and the family unit remain strong.



## THE ECONOMY

Dominant regional economy. Huge potential for growth based on abundant natural resources. A leading exporter of coffee, sugar, soybeans, and orange juice. Social tension threatens stability. Infrastructure needs investment. Downturn in 2014.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federative Rep. of Brazil

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1822

**CAPITAL:** Brasília

**POPULATION:** 200 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 3,286,470 sq. miles  
(8,511,965 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 61 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Portuguese\*, German, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Amerindian languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 74%, Protestant 15%, atheist 7%, other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** White 54%, mixed race 38%, Black 6%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Real = 100 centavos

**INSIGHT:** Since 1900, a third of Brazil's indigenous Amerindian groups have become extinct due to disease, starvation, or the forceful taking of land by miners, loggers, and settlers



# Brunei



Lying on the northern coast of the island of Borneo, Brunei is surrounded and divided in two by the Malaysian state of Sarawak. It has been independent since 1984.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly dense lowland rainforest and mangrove swamps, with some mountains in the southeast.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Six-month rainy season with very high humidity.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Malays benefit from positive discrimination. Many in the Chinese community are stateless. Since a failed rebellion in 1962, Brunei has been ruled by decree of the sultan. In 1990, "Malay Muslim Monarchy" was introduced, promoting Islamic values as state ideology. Women, less restricted than in some Muslim states, usually wear headscarves but not the veil.



**INSIGHT:** *The sultan spent US\$350 million building the world's largest palace at Bandar Seri Begawan*



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas production has brought one of the world's highest standards of living. Massive overseas investments. Major consumer of high-tech hi-fi, video equipment, and Western designer clothes.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Brunei Darussalam

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1984

**CAPITAL:** Bandar Seri Begawan

**POPULATION:** 400,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 2228 sq. miles  
(5770 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 197 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Malay\*, English, Chinese

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 66%, Buddhist 14%, Christian 10%, other 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Malay 67%, Chinese 16%, other 11%, indigenous 6%

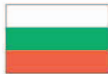
**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Brunei dollar = 100 cents



# Bulgaria

Located in southeastern Europe, Bulgaria was under communist rule from 1947 to 1989. Significant political and economic reform since then enabled it to join the EU in 2007.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountains run east–west across center and along southern border. Danube plain in north, Thracian plain in southeast. Black Sea to the east.



## CLIMATE

Hot summers, cooler at the coast. Snowy winters, especially in mountains. East winds bring seasonal extremes.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The communists tried forcibly to suppress cultural identities; once free movement was allowed in 1989, there was a large exodus of Bulgarian Turks. Privatizations in the 1990s left many Turks landless, prompting further emigration. Roma suffer discrimination at all levels of society. Women have equal rights in theory, but society remains patriarchal. EU accession included caveats demanding further action against organized crime, human trafficking, and corruption.



## THE ECONOMY

Good agricultural production, including grapes, for well-developed wine industry, and tobacco. Expertise in software development. Industry and infrastructure are outdated.



**INSIGHT:** *Archaeologists have found evidence of wine-making in Bulgaria dating back over 5000 years*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Bulgaria

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1908

**CAPITAL:** Sofia

**POPULATION:** 7.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 42,822 sq. miles  
(110,910 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 169 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bulgarian\*, Turkish, Romani

**RELIGIONS:** Bulgarian Orthodox 83%, Muslim 12%, other 4%, Roman Catholic 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bulgarian 84%, Turkish 9%, Roma 5%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Lev = 100 stotinki

# Burkina Faso



The west African state of Burkina Faso was known as Upper Volta until 1984. It became a multiparty state in 1991, though former military ruler Blaise Compaoré remains in power.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Sahara covers the north of the country. The south is largely savanna. The three main rivers are the Black, White, and Red Voltas.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Dry, cool weather November–February. Erratic rain March–April, mostly in southeast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

No single ethnic group is dominant, but the Mossi, from around Ouagadougou, have always played an important part in government. The people from the west are much more ethnically mixed. Extreme poverty has led to a strong sense of egalitarianism. Most women are still denied access to education, though their absence from public life belies their real power and social influence.



## THE ECONOMY

Cotton is the major cash crop, but the encroaching Sahara Desert is restricting agriculture. Beneficiary of foreign debt cancellation plans.



**INSIGHT:** Droughts and poor soils mean that many Burkinabés seek work southward in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Burkina Faso

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Ouagadougou

**POPULATION:** 16.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 105,869 sq. miles  
(274,200 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 160 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Mossi, Fulani, French\*, Tuareg, Dyula, Songhai

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 55%, Christian 25%  
traditional beliefs 20%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Mossi 48%, other 21%,  
Peul 10%, Lobi 7%, Bobo 7%, Mandé 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes





# Burundi



Small, densely populated and landlocked, Burundi lies just south of the equator, on the Nile–Congo watershed in central Africa. More than two-thirds of people live below the poverty line.



## GEOGRAPHY

Hilly with high plateaus in center and savanna in the east. Great Rift Valley on western side.



## CLIMATE

Temperate, with high humidity. Heavy and frequent rainfall, mostly October–May. Highlands have frost.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Burundi has been riven by ethnic conflict between majority Hutu and the Tutsi, who controlled the army – with repeated large-scale massacres: hundreds of thousands of people died between 1993 and 2004. The constitution now guarantees an ethnic balance in the government and army. Twa pygmies were not involved in the conflict.



**INSIGHT:** *Burundi's fertility rate is one of the highest in Africa. On average, women have six children*



## THE ECONOMY

Overwhelmingly agricultural economy, mostly subsistence. Small quantities of gold and tungsten. Potential of oil in Lake Tanganyika. Ongoing political fragility.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Burundi

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Bujumbura

**POPULATION:** 10.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 10,745 sq. miles  
(27,830 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1030 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kirundi\*, French\*,  
Kiswahili

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 62%,  
traditional beliefs 23%, Muslim 10%,  
Protestant 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Hutu 85%, Tutsi 14%, Twa 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Burundi franc = 100 centimes

# Cambodia



Located on the Indochinese peninsula in southeast Asia, Cambodia has emerged from genocide, civil war, and invasion from Vietnam. Tourism has rebounded, and is a key income earner.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly low-lying basin. Tônlé Sap (Great Lake) drains into the Mekong River. Forested mountains and plateau east of the Mekong.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. High temperatures throughout the year. Heavy rainfall during May–October monsoon.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Devastated by US bombing, then by the Khmer Rouge regime, whose extreme Marxist program killed over a million between 1975 and 1979, Cambodia then endured further civil conflict and Vietnamese occupation. The effects are still felt, reflected in the high rates of orphans, widows, and land-mine victims. A fragile stability has lasted since elections in 1993. King Norodom Sihanouk, a key figure in politics, abdicated in 2004.



## THE ECONOMY

Economy is heavily aid-reliant, still recovering from civil war. Rubber and timber are exported. Self-sufficient in rice. Garment industry is growing. Land disputes and corruption issues.



**INSIGHT:** Cambodia has many impressive temples (including Angkor Wat), which date from when the country was the center of the Khmer Empire



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Cambodia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1953

**CAPITAL:** Phnom Penh

**POPULATION:** 15.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 69,900 sq. miles  
(181,040 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 222 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Khmer\*, French, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cham

**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist 93%, Muslim 6%, Christian 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Khmer 90%, Vietnamese 5%, other 4%, Chinese 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Riel = 100 sen



# Cameroon



Situated in the corner of the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon was effectively a one-party state for 30 years. Multiparty elections, since 1992, regularly return that same party to power.



## GEOGRAPHY

Over half the land is forested: equatorial rainforest in north, evergreen forest and wooded savanna in south. Mountains in the west.



## CLIMATE

South is equatorial, with plentiful rainfall, declining inland. Far north is beset by drought.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Around 230 ethnic groups; no single group is dominant. The Bamileke is the largest, though it has never held political power. North-south tensions are diminished by the ethnic diversity. There is more rivalry between majority French- and minority English-speakers.



### INSIGHT: Cameroon's name

derives from the Portuguese word *camarões*, after the shrimp fished by the early European explorers



## THE ECONOMY

Oil reserves. Very diversified agricultural economy – timber, cocoa, bananas, coffee. Fuel smuggling from Nigeria undermines refinery profits. Corruption. Port for Chad and CAR.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Cameroon

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Yaoundé

**POPULATION:** 22.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 183,567 sq. miles  
(475,400 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 124 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bamileke, Fang, Fulani, French\*, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 35%, traditional beliefs 25%, Muslim 22%, Protestant 18%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Cameroon highlanders 31%, Bantu 27%, other 21%, Kirdi 11%, Fulani 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Canada



Canada extends from the Arctic to its US border along the 49th parallel. Unified under British rule from 1763, its development and expansion attracted large-scale immigration.



## GEOGRAPHY

The world's second-largest country, stretching north to Cape Colombia on Ellesmere Island, south to Lake Erie, and across five time zones from the Pacific seaboard to Newfoundland. Arctic tundra and islands in the far north give way southward to forests, interspersed with lakes and rivers, and then the vast Canadian Shield, which covers over half the area of Canada. Rocky Mountains in west, beyond which are the Coast Mountains, islands, and fjords. Fertile lowlands in the east.



## CLIMATE

Ranges from polar and subpolar in the north, to continental in the south. Winters in the interior are colder and longer than on the coast, with temperatures well below freezing and deep snow; summers are hotter. Pacific coast has the mildest winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Two-thirds of the population live in the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence lowlands, fostering some shared cultural values with the neighboring US. Important differences, however, include wider welfare provision and Commonwealth membership. The French-speaking Québécois wish to preserve their culture and language from further Anglicization, and demand to be recognized as a “distinct society.” The government welcomes ethnic diversity among immigrants, promoting a policy that encourages each group to maintain its own culture. Other sizable immigrant groups include Chinese, Italians, Germans, Ukrainians, and Portuguese. Land claims made by the indigenous peoples are being redressed. Nunavut, an Inuit-governed territory that covers nearly a quarter of Canada's land area, was created from a portion of the Northwest Territories in 1999. Women are well represented at most levels of business and government.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Canada

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1867

**CAPITAL:** Ottawa

**POPULATION:** 35.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 3,855,171 sq. miles  
(9,984,670 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 10 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, French\*, Chinese, other

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 44%, Protestant 29%, other and nonreligious 27%

**ETHNIC ORIGIN:** British, French, and other European 87%, Asian 9%, Amerindian, Métis, and Inuit 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Canadian dollar = 100 cents

## **\$** THE ECONOMY

Wide-ranging resources, providing exports, cheap energy, and raw materials for manufacturing, underpin a high standard of living, with smaller wealth disparities than in the US. Prices for primary exports fluctuate, but the high oil price has encouraged development of Alberta's vast oil fields. Manufactured exports have flourished under growing global competition, especially since the

creation in 1994 of the NAFTA free trade area, but reliance on the US market makes the Canadian economy vulnerable to US slowdowns. Unemployment rose during the 2009 recession, but the economy rebounded quickly.

**INSIGHT:** *The Magnetic North Pole, where the dipping needle of a compass stands still, migrates across northern Canada*



# Cape Verde



Off the west coast of Africa, in the Atlantic Ocean, lies the group of islands that make up Cape Verde, a Portuguese colony until it gained independence in 1975.



## GEOGRAPHY

Ten main islands and eight smaller islets, all of volcanic origin. Mostly mountainous, with steep cliffs and rocky headlands.



## CLIMATE

Warm, and very dry. Subject to droughts that can sometimes last for years at a time.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are of mixed Portuguese–African origin (*Mestiço*); the rest are descendants of African slaves or more recent immigrants. Creolization of the culture negates ethnic tensions. Over half of the population live on Santiago. Around 700,000 Cape Verdeans live abroad, mostly in the US.



**INSIGHT:** *Poor soils and lack of surface water mean that Cape Verde is dependent on food aid*



## THE ECONOMY

Most people are subsistence farmers. Clothing is the main export. No natural resources. Mid-Atlantic location ensures work maintaining ships and planes.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Cape Verde

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** Praia

**POPULATION:** 500,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 1557 sq. miles  
(4033 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 321 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Portuguese Creole, Portuguese\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 97%, other 2%, Protestant (Church of the Nazarene) 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestiço* 71%, African 28%, European 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential-parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Escudo = 100 centavos



# Central African Republic



The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country lying between the basins of the Chad and Congo Rivers. Politics suffers frequent interruption by coups and rebellions.



## GEOGRAPHY

Comprises a low plateau, covered by scrub or savanna. North is arid. Equatorial rainforests in the south. The Ubangi River forms the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



## CLIMATE

The south is equatorial; the north is hot and dry. Rain occurs all year round, with heaviest falls between July and October.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Baya and Banda are the largest ethnic groups, but the lingua franca is Sango, a trading creole spoken by the minorities in the south who have traditionally provided most political leaders. Less than 2% of the population live in the north. Recent rebellions by northern militias have displaced thousands of people.



## THE ECONOMY

Dominated by subsistence farming. Exports include diamonds, cotton, timber, and coffee. Aid needed to support refugees. Instability and poor infrastructure hinder progress.



**INSIGHT:** "Emperor" Bokassa's eccentric rule from 1965 to 1979 was followed by military dictatorship until democracy was restored in 1993



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Central African Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Bangui

**POPULATION:** 4.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 240,534 sq. miles  
(622,984 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 19 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Sango, Banda, Gbaya, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Traditional beliefs 35%, Roman Catholic 25%, Protestant 25%, Muslim 15%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Baya 33%, Banda 27%, other 17%, Mandjia 13%, Sara 10%,

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

## Chad



Landlocked in north-central Africa, Chad has had a turbulent history since independence from France in 1960. Intermittent periods of civil war followed a military coup in 1975.

**GEOGRAPHY**

Mostly plateaus sloping westward to Lake Chad. Northern third is Sahara. Tibesti Mountains in north rise to 10,826 ft (3300 m).

**CLIMATE**

Three distinct zones: desert in north, semiarid region in center, and tropics in south.

**PEOPLE & SOCIETY**

Half the population live in Chad's southern fifth. The northern third has only 100,000 people, mainly Muslim Toubou nomads. Democracy was restored in 1996 by ex-coup leader Idriss Déby, who has won all elections since. Instability has continued, first with tension between Muslims and southern Christians and, more recently, with rebellions in the east.



**INSIGHT:** *Lake Chad is slowly drying up – it is now estimated to be just 3% of the size it was in 1963*

**THE ECONOMY**

The discovery of oil, and the opening of a pipeline to the coast via Cameroon, are transforming Chad's economy, though the new wealth is unlikely to reach most people.

**FACTFILE**

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Chad

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** N'Djaména

**POPULATION:** 12.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 495,752 sq. miles  
(1,284,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 26 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French\*, Sara, Arabic\*, Maba

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 51%, Christian 35%, traditional beliefs 7%, animist 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 30%, Sara 28%, Mayo-Kebbi 12%, Arab 12%,

Ouaddai 9%, Kanem-Bornou 9%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes





## Chile

Chile extends in a ribbon down the west coast of South America. It returned to elected civilian rule in 1989 after a referendum forced out military dictator General Pinochet.

**GEOGRAPHY**

Fertile valleys in the center between the coast and the Andes. Atacama Desert in north. Deep-sea channels, lakes, and fjords in south.

**CLIMATE**

Arid in the north. Hot, dry summers and mild winters in the center. Higher Andean peaks have glaciers and year-round snow. Very wet and stormy in the south.

**PEOPLE & SOCIETY**

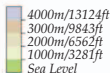
Most people are *mestizo* (mixed Spanish–Amerindian descent), and are highly urbanized. General Pinochet's dictatorship was brutally repressive, but the business and middle classes prospered. Over a third of the population live in Santiago, many in large slums. There are three main indigenous groups, including the Rapa Nui of Easter Island.

**THE ECONOMY**

World's biggest copper producer. Growth in foreign investment due to political stability. Exports include wine, fishmeal, fruits, and salmon. Serious earthquake damage in 2010.

**INSIGHT:**

*Chile's Atacama Desert is the driest place on Earth, making it the perfect location for hi-tech space observatories*

**FACTFILE**

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Chile

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1818

**CAPITAL:** Santiago

**POPULATION:** 17.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 292,258 sq. miles  
(756,950 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 61 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Amerindian languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 89%, other and nonreligious 11%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* and European 90%, other Amerindian 9%, Mapuche 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Chilean peso = 100 centavos

# China



Covering a vast area of eastern Asia, China is bordered by 14 countries. A one-party Communist state since 1949, it has recently become a dominant force in global manufacturing.



## GEOGRAPHY

A land of huge physical diversity, China has a long Pacific coastline to the east. Two-thirds of the country is uplands. The southwestern mountains include Tibet, the world's highest plateau; in the northwest, the Tien Shan Mountains separate the arid Tarim and Dzungarian basins. The rolling hills and plains of the low-lying east are home to two-thirds of the population.

## CLIMATE



China is divided into two main climatic regions. The north and west are semiarid or arid, with extreme temperature variations. The south and east are warmer and more humid, with year-round rainfall. Winter temperatures vary with latitude, but are warmest on the subtropical southeast coast. Summer temperatures are more uniform, rising above 70°F (21°C).



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are Han Chinese. The rest of the population belong to one of 55 minority nationalities, or recognized ethnic groups. Many of these groups have a disproportionate political significance as they live in strategic border areas. A policy of resettling Han Chinese in remote regions is deeply resented and has led to uprisings in Xinjiang and Tibet. The government has relaxed the one-child family policy, particularly for minorities, after some small groups were brought close to extinction. Chinese society is patriarchal in practice, and generations tend to live together. However, economic change is breaking down the social controls of the Mao Zedong era. Divorce and unemployment are rising. A resurgence of religious belief has occurred in recent years. Materialism has replaced the puritanism of the past; there are now more cell phones in China than in the US.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** People's Republic of China

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 960

**CAPITAL:** Beijing

**POPULATION:** 1.39 billion

**TOTAL AREA:** 3,705,386 sq. miles  
(9,596,960 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 385 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Mandarin\*, Cantonese, other

**RELIGIONS:** Nonreligious 59%, traditional beliefs 20%, other 13%, Buddhist 6%, Muslim 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Han 92%, other 4%, Hui 1%, Miao 1%, Manchu 1%, Zhuang 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** One-party state

**CURRENCY:** Yuan = 10 jiao = 100 fen

## THE ECONOMY

China has shifted from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy; liberalization has gone furthest in the south where the emerging business class is based. Exports led annual GDP growth of over 10% in 2003–2007. Faced with a global downturn from 2008, Chinese stimulus packages boosted domestic spending. The buying power of China's huge market for raw materials

and consumer goods helped drive global recovery. China is now the world's largest exporter and second-largest economy. The Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2011–2015) seeks to limit population growth and improve social infrastructure.

**INSIGHT:** *China has the world's oldest continuous civilization. Its recorded history began 4000 years ago, with the Shang dynasty*



# Colombia



Lying in northwest South America, Colombia has coastlines on both the Caribbean and the Pacific. It is primarily noted for its coffee, emeralds, gold, and cocaine trafficking.



## GEOGRAPHY

The densely forested and almost uninhabited east is separated from the western coastal plains by the Andes, which divide into three ranges (*cordilleras*) with intervening valleys.



## CLIMATE

Coastal plains are hot and wet. The highlands are much cooler. The equatorial east has two wet seasons.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Colombians are of mixed blood. Blacks and Amerindians have the least political representation. Civil conflict since the 1960s has killed over 220,000 people and displaced more than five million. The fighting is deeply entwined with the narcotics trade. Violent crime is common.



**INSIGHT:** *Colombia is the world's main source of emeralds*



## THE ECONOMY

Healthy and diversified export sector – includes coffee and coal. Considerable growth potential, but narcotics-related violence and corruption deter foreign investors.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Colombia  
**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1819  
**CAPITAL:** Bogotá  
**POPULATION:** 48.3 million  
**TOTAL AREA:** 439,733 sq. miles (1,138,910 sq. km)  
**DENSITY:** 120 people per sq. mile  
**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Wayuu, Páez, other

Amerindian languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 95%, other 5%  
**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian) 58%, White 20%, European–African 14%, African 4%, African–Amerindian 3%, Amerindian 1%  
**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system  
**CURRENCY:** Colombian peso = 100 centavos



# Comoros

Off the east African coast, between Mozambique and Madagascar, lies the archipelago republic of the Comoros, comprising three main islands and a number of smaller islets.



## GEOGRAPHY

Main islands are of volcanic origin and are heavily forested. The remainder are coral atolls.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid all year round, especially on the coasts. November to May is hottest and wettest period.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Comoros has absorbed a diversity of people over the years, including Africans, Arabs, Polynesians, and Persians. There have also been Portuguese, Dutch, French, and Indian immigrants. Ethnic discord is rare, but regional tensions between islands are marked. The country is politically unstable and there have been frequent coups. A fragile new federal system was introduced in 2002, though in 2009 the island presidents were reduced to governors. A political and business elite controls most of the wealth.



## THE ECONOMY

One of the world's poorest countries. Subsistence-level farming. Vanilla and cloves are main cash crops. Lack of basic infrastructure.



**INSIGHT:** *The Comoros is the world's largest producer of ylang-ylang – an extract from tree blossom used in manufacturing perfumes*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Union of the Comoros

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** Moroni

**POPULATION:** 700,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 838 sq. miles  
(2170 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 813 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Comoran\*, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 98%, Roman Catholic 1%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Comoran 97%, other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Comoros franc = 100 centimes

# Congo



Astride the equator in west-central Africa, this former French colony emerged from 20 years of Marxist-Leninist rule in 1990. Democracy was soon overshadowed by years of violence.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly forest- or savanna-covered plateaus, drained by the Ubangi and Congo river systems. Narrow coastal plain is lined with sand dunes and lagoons.



## CLIMATE

Hot, tropical. Temperatures rarely fall below 86°F (30°C). Two wet and two dry seasons. Rainfall is heaviest south of the equator.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

One of the most tribally conscious and heavily urbanized countries in Africa, with most people living in the Brazzaville–Pointe-Noire region. Main tensions are between the Bakongo in the north and the Mbochi in the south. Relative peace was secured in 1999, and “ninja” rebels in the Pool region, around Brazzaville, signed a peace deal in 2003.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil provides over 85% of export revenue. Timber is extracted. Foreign debt cut by two-thirds in 2010. Industrial base around Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.



**INSIGHT:** In 1970, Congo became the first African country to declare itself a communist state



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of the Congo

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Brazzaville

**POPULATION:** 4.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 132,046 sq. miles  
(342,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 33 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kongo, Teke, Lingala, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Traditional beliefs 50%, Roman Catholic 35%, Protestant 13%, Muslim 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bakongo 51%, Teke 17%, other 16%, Mbochi 11%, Mbédé 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes



# Congo, Dem. Rep. (DRC)

A former Belgian colony in east-central Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is Africa's second-largest country and the scene of one of its worst regional wars.



## GEOGRAPHY

Rainforested basin of Congo River occupies 60% of the land area. High mountain ranges and lakes stretch down the eastern border.



## CLIMATE

Tropical and humid. Distinct wet and dry seasons south of the equator. The north is mainly wet.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

There are 12 main ethnic groups and around 190 smaller ones. Civil war from 1996 drew neighboring countries into a bloody conflict. The indigenous forest pygmies, victimized in the war, are now a marginalized group. A tentative peace deal in 2003 has been undermined by intercommunal violence in the east.



## INSIGHT: The DRC's rainforests

comprise 6% of the world's, and 50% of Africa's, remaining woodlands



## THE ECONOMY

Rich resource base: minerals (copper, coltan, cobalt, diamonds) dominate export earnings. War and decades of corruption have caused economic collapse. Food aid is needed to ease humanitarian crisis.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Democratic Republic of the Congo

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Kinshasa

**POPULATION:** 67.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 905,563 sq. miles  
(2,345,410 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 77 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kiswahili, Tshiluba, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 70%, Kimbanguist 10%, Muslim 10%, traditional beliefs and other 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 55%, Mongo, Luba, Kongo, and Mangbetu-Azande 45%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Congolese franc = 100 centimes

# Costa Rica



Costa Rica, Central America's most stable country, is rich in pristine scenery and exotic wildlife. Its neutrality in foreign affairs is long-standing, but it has strong ties with the US.



## GEOGRAPHY

Coastal plains of swamp and savanna rise to a fertile central plateau, which leads to a mountain range with active volcanic peaks.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid in coastal regions. Temperate central uplands. High annual rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are *mestizo*, of partly Spanish–partly Amerindian origin. There is a black, English-speaking minority and around 35,000 indigenous Amerindians. Plantation owners are the wealthiest group, while one in five people live in poverty. Nonetheless, living standards are high for the region, and education and healthcare provision is good.



**INSIGHT:** *Costa Rica's 1949 constitution bans a national army*



## THE ECONOMY

Main exports are bananas, coffee, pineapples, and beef, but all vulnerable to fluctuating world prices. Stability has attracted multinationals. History of high inflation. Pioneer of eco-tourism. Plans to be the world's first carbon neutral country (by 2025).



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Costa Rica

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1838

**CAPITAL:** San José

**POPULATION:** 4.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 19,730 sq. miles  
(51,100 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 249 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, English Creole, Bribri, Cabecar

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 71%, Evangelical 14%, nonreligious 11%, other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* and European 94%, Black 3%, Chinese 1%, Amerindian 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** C.R. colón = 100 céntimos





# Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)

One of the larger nations along the coast of west Africa, Côte d'Ivoire is the world's biggest cocoa producer. Since 2002 its image of stability has been rocked by civil war and electoral chaos.



## GEOGRAPHY

Sandy coastal strip and rainforested interior, with savanna plateau in north.



## CLIMATE

Hot all year. Two wet seasons in south; north has one, with lower rainfall.

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY



Over 60 tribes; largest is the Baoulé (an Akan group). Southern Christians harbor resentment against non-Ivorian Muslims in the north. Plantations employ millions of migrant workers (including children), though thousands fled back to Burkina during the 2002–2005 civil war. Rebels joined a transitional government in 2007. President Gbagbo delayed elections until 2010 and then refused to step down; civil conflict led to his ouster.

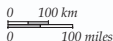


**INSIGHT:** *The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Yamoussoukro is the largest church in the world*



## THE ECONOMY

Main crops are cocoa and coffee. Oil is now major export. Good infrastructure. Lack of professional training. Instability deters investment.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Yamoussoukro

**POPULATION:** 20.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 124,502 sq. miles  
(322,460 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 165 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Akan, French\*, Krou, Voltaïque

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 38%, Roman Catholic 25%, traditional beliefs 25%, Protestant 6%, other 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Akan 42%, Voltaïque 18%, Mandé du Nord 17%, Krou 11%, Mandé du Sud 10%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Croatia



Though it was controlled by Hungary from medieval times and was a part of the Yugoslav state for much of the 20th century, Croatia has a very strong national identity.



## GEOGRAPHY

Rocky, mountainous Adriatic coastline is dotted with islands. Interior is a mixture of wooded mountains and broad valleys.



## CLIMATE

The interior has a temperate continental climate. Mediterranean climate along the Adriatic coast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Croats are distinguished from Bosniaks and Serbs by their Roman Catholic faith and use of the Latin alphabet. Many Serbs fled Croatia during the early 1990s conflict that accompanied Yugoslavia's breakup. Croatia's entry into the EU, delayed by border disputes with Slovenia, finally occurred in 2013.



**INSIGHT:** Croatia only regained control of Serb-occupied Eastern Slavonia, around Vukovar, in 1998



## THE ECONOMY

The war cost the economy an estimated \$50 billion. Unemployment has been persistently high. Corruption deters foreign investment. Tourism is mainly on the Dalmatian coast. EU membership.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Croatia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Zagreb

**POPULATION:** 4.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 21,831 sq. miles  
(56,542 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 197 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Croatian\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 88%,  
other 7%, Orthodox Christian 4%,  
Muslim 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Croat 90%, Serb 5%,  
other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Kuna = 100 lipa



# Cuba

A former Spanish colony, Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean. It became the only communist country in the Americas after Fidel Castro seized power in 1959.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly fertile plains and basins. Three mountainous areas. Forests of pine and mahogany cover one-quarter of the country.



## CLIMATE

Subtropical. Hot all year round, and very hot in summer. Heaviest rainfall in the mountains. Hurricanes can strike in the fall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Castro regime has reduced formerly extreme wealth disparities, given education a high priority, and established an efficient health service. Political dissent, however, is not tolerated. A dramatic fall in living standards since the late 1980s has led thousands of Cubans to flee to the US, to seek asylum. About 70% of Cubans are of Spanish descent. There is little ethnic tension.



## THE ECONOMY

Sugar industry now superseded by tourism and nickel. US trade embargo, since 1961. Shortages drive black market. Parallel use of US dollar (1993–2004), and then convertible peso, boosted investment but created a “dollarized” elite: dual peso system to be scrapped.



**INSIGHT:** *Fidel Castro had become the world's longest-serving non-hereditary ruler before handing power to his brother Raúl in 2006*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Cuba

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1902

**CAPITAL:** Havana

**POPULATION:** 11.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 42,803 sq. miles  
(110,860 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 264 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Nonreligious 49%, Roman Catholic 40%, atheist 6%, other 4%, Protestant 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Mulatto (mixed race) 51%, White 37%, Black 11%, Chinese 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** One-party state

**CURRENCY:** Cuban peso = 100 centavos

# Cyprus



Cyprus lies south of Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean. Since 1974, it has been partitioned between the Turkish-occupied north and the Greek-Cypriot south.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountains in the center-west give way to a fertile plain in the east, flanked by hills to the northeast.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean. Summers are hot and dry. Winters are mild, with snow in the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Greek majority practice Orthodox Christianity. Since the 16th century, a minority community of Turkish Muslims has lived in the north of the island. In 1974 Turkish troops occupied the north and proclaimed the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), but it is recognized only by Turkey. Over 100,000 mainland Turks have settled there since. UN-led mediation failed to reunite the island ahead of EU accession in 2004, so the north was left out of membership; peace talks continue.



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism. Eurozone member. Weathered 2009 downturn, but banks crashed in 2013: Cypriots lost savings under IMF/EU bailout terms. North lacks investment and wages are lower.



**INSIGHT:** *The Green Line, which separates north from south, was opened for the first time in 2003*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Cyprus

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Nicosia

**POPULATION:** 1.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 3571 sq. miles  
(9250 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 308 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Greek\*, Turkish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 78%, Muslim 18%, other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Greek 81%, Turkish 11%, other 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential systems

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents  
(new Turkish lira in TRNC = 100 kurus)



# Czech Republic

Once part of Czechoslovakia, a central European communist state in 1948–1989, the Czech Republic peacefully dissolved its union with Slovakia in 1993. It joined the EU in 2004.



## GEOGRAPHY

Landlocked in central Europe. Bohemia, the western territory, is a plateau surrounded by mountains. Moravia, in the east, is characterized by hills and lowlands.



## CLIMATE

Cool, sometimes cold winters and warm summer months, which bring most of the annual rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Secular and urban society, with high divorce rates. Czechs make up the vast majority of the population, while the next largest group are Moravians. The 300,000 Slovaks left after partition are now permitted dual citizenship. Ethnic tensions are few, but there is widespread hostility toward the Roma minority. A new commercial elite is emerging alongside postcommunist entrepreneurs.



## THE ECONOMY

Traditional heavy industries (machinery, iron, car-making) have been successfully privatized. Prague attracts tourists. Skilled workforce. Will join euro in 2017 at earliest.



**INSIGHT:** *Charles University in Prague was founded in the 13th century*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Czech Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1993

**CAPITAL:** Prague

**POPULATION:** 10.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 30,450 sq. miles  
(78,866 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 351 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Czech\*, Slovak, Hungarian (Magyar)

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 39%, atheist 38%, other 18%, Protestant 3%, Hussite 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Czech 90%, other 4%, Moravian 4%, Slovak 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Czech koruna = 100 haleru

# Denmark



Denmark occupies the Jutland peninsula and over 400 islands in southern Scandinavia. Greenland and the Faeroe Islands are self-governing associated territories.



## GEOGRAPHY

Fertile farmland covers two-thirds of the terrain, which is among the flattest in the world. About 100 islands are inhabited.



## CLIMATE

Damp, temperate climate with mild summers and cold, wet winters. Rainfall is moderate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Income distribution is the most even in the West. Danish liberalism is challenged over immigration: cultural clashes have arisen with immigrant minorities. Almost all women now work; Denmark is a world leader in childcare provision. Marriage is becoming less common, even for couples with children.



**INSIGHT:** Denmark is Europe's oldest kingdom – the monarchy dates back to the 10th century



## THE ECONOMY

Natural gas and oil reserves. Skilled workforce key to high-tech industrial success. Pork, bacon, dairy products are exported. Opted not to join the euro, though its currency is pegged.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Denmark

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 950

**CAPITAL:** Copenhagen

**POPULATION:** 5.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 16,639 sq. miles  
(43,094 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 342 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Danish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Evangelical Lutheran 95%,  
Roman Catholic 3%, Muslim 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Danish 96%, other (including  
Scandinavian and Turkish) 3%, Faeroese  
and Inuit 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Danish krone = 100 øre



# Djibouti



A city-state with a desert hinterland, Djibouti lies in northeast Africa on the Red Sea. Once known as the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, independence came in 1977.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly low-lying desert and semidesert, with a volcanic mountain range in the north.



## CLIMATE

Almost no rain, though the monsoon is very humid. The 109°F (45°C) heat of summer is unbearable.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The main ethnic groups are the Issas in the south, and the nomadic Afars in the north. Tensions between them developed into a guerrilla war in 1991–1994. Smaller tribal groups make up the rest of the population, and the rural peoples are mostly nomadic. Wealth is concentrated in Djibouti city. France exerts considerable influence in Djibouti, supporting it financially and maintaining a naval base and a military garrison.

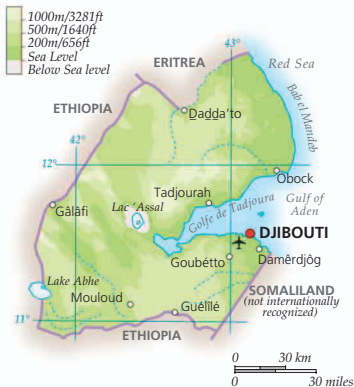


## THE ECONOMY

Djibouti's major assets are its ports in a key Red Sea location.



**INSIGHT:** *Chewing the leaves of the mildly narcotic qat shrub is an age-old social ritual in Djibouti*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Djibouti

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1977

**CAPITAL:** Djibouti

**POPULATION:** 900,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 8494 sq. miles  
(22,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 101 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Somali, Afar, French\*, Arabic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 94%, Christian 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Issa 60%, Afar 35%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Djibouti franc = 100 centimes

# Dominica



Dominica is renowned as the Caribbean island that resisted European colonization until the 18th century. It achieved independence from the UK in 1978.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountainous and densely forested. Volcanic activity has given the land very fertile soils, hot springs, geysers, and black sand beaches.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, cooled by constant trade winds. Heavy annual rainfall. Tropical depressions and hurricanes are likely June–November.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The majority of Dominicans are descendants of African slaves brought over to work on banana plantations. The Carib Territory on the northeast of the island is home to the only surviving indigenous community in the Caribbean. Wealth disparities are not as marked as elsewhere in the region, but the alleviation of poverty has become a major plank of government policy.

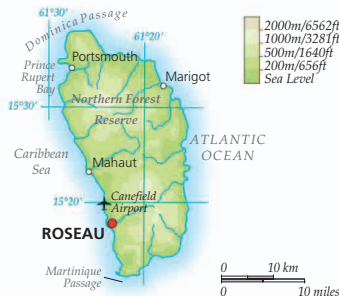


## THE ECONOMY

Based on bananas, but has lost preferential access to EU market. Some diversification: flowers, coffee, fruit. Agriculture vulnerable to hurricanes. Eco-tourism. Some offshore banking.



**INSIGHT:** *Dominica is known as "Nature Island," due to its spectacular flora and fauna*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Commonwealth of Dominica

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1978

**CAPITAL:** Roseau

**POPULATION:** 73,286

**TOTAL AREA:** 291 sq. miles (754 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 253 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French Creole, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 77%, Protestant 15%, other 8%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black 87%, mixed race 9%, Carib 3%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** East Caribbean dollar = 100 cents





# Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean. Spanish-speaking, it seeks closer ties to the anglophone West Indies.



## GEOGRAPHY

Highlands and rainforested mountains – including the highest peak in the Caribbean, Pico Duarte – interspersed with fertile valleys. Extensive coastal plain in the east.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid close to sea level, cooler at altitude. Heavy rainfall, especially in the northeast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

White landowners – especially those descended from the original Spanish settlers – form the wealthy elite. The mixed-race majority controls commerce and forms the bulk of the professional middle classes. White and mixed-race women are entering the professions. Great disparities of wealth exist; the black and Haitian-immigrant populations occupy the bottom of the social ladder.



## THE ECONOMY

Mining (nickel and gold), sugar, and textiles. Tourism, remittances, and exports all rely heavily on US market. Hidden economy based on transshipment of narcotics to the US.



**INSIGHT:** *Santo Domingo is the oldest city in the Americas. It was founded in 1496 by the brother of Christopher Columbus*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Dominican Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1865

**CAPITAL:** Santo Domingo

**POPULATION:** 10.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 18,679 sq. miles  
(48,380 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 557 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, French Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 95%, other and nonreligious 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Mixed race 73%, European 16%, Black African 11%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Dominican Republic peso  
= 100 centavos

# East Timor



East Timor occupies the once Portuguese-owned eastern half of the island of Timor. Invaded by Indonesia in 1975, it became independent in 2002 following a long struggle.



## GEOGRAPHY

A narrow coastal plain gives way to forested highlands. The mountain backbone rises to 9715 ft (2963 m).



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Heavy rain in wet season (December–March), then dry and hot, particularly in the north.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The population is almost entirely Roman Catholic. The Timorese are a mix of Malay and Papuan peoples, and many indigenous Papuan tribes survive. There is an urban Chinese minority, and ethnic Indonesian settlers became numerous after annexation in 1975. Preindependence violence in 1999 was politically rather than ethnically motivated. Women do not have access to the professions and levels of domestic violence are notably high. Living standards are low.



## THE ECONOMY

Widespread poverty. Violence in 1999 damaged infrastructure. Riots in 2006 undermined stability, further deterring foreign investment. Agreement with Australia on division of oil revenue from the Timor Sea.



**INSIGHT:** Once dependent on sandalwood, the economy is being transformed by oil under the Timor Sea



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 2002

**CAPITAL:** Dili

**POPULATION:** 1.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 5756 sq. miles (14,874 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 195 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Tetum\* (Portuguese/Austronesian), Bahasa Indonesia, Portuguese\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 95%, other (including Muslim and Protestant) 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Malay/Papuan groups c. 85%, Indonesian c. 13%, Chinese 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** US dollar = 100 cents



Once part of the Inca heartland, Ecuador lies on the western coast of South America. Its territory includes the fascinating Galápagos Islands, 610 miles (970 km) to the west.



## GEOGRAPHY

Broad coastal plain, inter-Andean central highlands, dense jungle in upper Amazon basin.



## CLIMATE

The climate is hot and moist on the coast, cool in the Andes, and hot equatorial in the Amazon basin.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are of Amerindian-Spanish extraction (*mestizo*). Black communities exist on the coast. The strong and largely unified Amerindian movement leads the pressure for social reform. Recent left-wing policies have given greater rights to women, the poor, and Amerindians. Extreme poverty has fallen from 17% in 2006 to 8.6% in 2013.



**INSIGHT:** *Darwin's study on the Galápagos Islands in 1856 played a major part in his theory of evolution*



## THE ECONOMY

Oil provides around half of export earnings. World's biggest banana exporter. Use of US dollar offers stability, but less control. Defaulted on debt in 2008, prioritizing social spending.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Ecuador

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1830

**CAPITAL:** Quito

**POPULATION:** 15.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 109,483 sq. miles  
(283,560 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 147 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Quechua, other Amerindian languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 95%; Protestant, Jewish, and other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 77%, White 11%, Amerindian 7%, Black African 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** US dollar = 100 cents

# Egypt



Occupying the northeast corner of Africa, Egypt is divided by the highly fertile Nile Valley. A long tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance has been shaken by the rise in Islamism.



## GEOGRAPHY

Fertile Nile Valley separates arid Libyan Desert from smaller semiarid eastern desert. Sinai peninsula has mountains in south.



## CLIMATE

Summers are very hot, but winters are cooler. Rainfall is negligible, except on the coast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Mubarak's military-backed regime was ousted in a popular uprising in the "Arab Spring" of 2011, but the subsequent elected Muslim Brotherhood government was in turn ousted. Clashes between Muslims and Copts are rising. Women's access to education and economic status are threatened by Islamism. Rapidly growing population. Poverty in the south.



**INSIGHT:** *In 450 BCE Herodotus visited the already-ancient pyramids*



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and gas. Cotton. Tolls from the Suez Canal. Tourist industry and foreign investment affected by terrorist attacks and ongoing political instability.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Arab Republic of Egypt

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1936

**CAPITAL:** Cairo

**POPULATION:** 82.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 386,660 sq. miles  
(1,001,450 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 214 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, French, English, Berber

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 90%, Coptic Christian and other 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Egyptian 99%, other (Nubian, Armenian, Greek, Berber) 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** Egyptian pound = 100 piastres



# El Salvador

El Salvador is Central America's smallest and most densely populated country. Already struggling to recover from a civil war in the 1980s, it was badly struck by earthquakes in 2001.



## GEOGRAPHY

El Salvador is a narrow coastal belt backed by two mountain ranges. There is a central plateau. The country is located within a seismic zone, and there are more than 20 volcanic peaks.



## CLIMATE

Tropical coastal belt is very hot, with seasonal rains. Cooler, temperate climate in highlands.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnic tensions are few. Economic disparities sparked the 1981–1991 civil war between the US-backed government and left-wing FMLN guerrillas; 75,000 people died, many of them unarmed civilians, and human rights abuses were widespread. In 2009 the FMLN won the presidency, but wealth disparities still exist despite some reform. Gangs now control much of daily life; the murder rate is rising again despite a 2012 truce.



## THE ECONOMY

Coffee, sugar. Garment industry. Overseas remittances. Frequent natural disasters damage infrastructure and deepen country's reliance on aid. Most businesses suffer extortion by gangs. Violence deters investors and tourism.



**INSIGHT:** *Independent since 1841, El Salvador is named after Jesus Christ, "the savior" of Christians*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of El Salvador

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1841

**CAPITAL:** San Salvador

**POPULATION:** 6.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 8124 sq. miles  
(21,040 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 788 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 80%,  
Evangelical 18%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian)  
90%, White 9%, Amerindian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Salvadorean colón  
= 100 centavos; US dollar = 100 cents

# Equatorial Guinea



Comprising the mainland territory of Río Muni and five islands on the west coast of central Africa, Equatorial Guinea, despite its name, lies just north of the equator.



## GEOGRAPHY

The islands are mountainous and volcanic. The mainland is lower, with mangrove swamps along the coast.



## CLIMATE

The island of Bioko is extremely wet and humid. The mainland is only marginally drier and cooler.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Equatorial Guinea is the only Spanish-speaking country in Africa. Río Muni is sparsely populated and most people there are Fang, an ethnic group also found in Cameroon and northern Gabon. Bioko is populated by Bubi and a minority of Creoles known as Fernandinos. Tensions between the two territories have been reignited by the discovery of oil off Bioko. Wealth is concentrated in the ruling clan; oil revenue since 1995 has made little impact on most people.

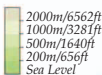


## THE ECONOMY

Oil and gas now account for almost all of exports; the government has promised to reinvest oil funds in development. Timber, cocoa, coffee.



**INSIGHT:** In 2003, state radio declared President Obiang Nguema to be "like God in Heaven"



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Equatorial Guinea

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1968

**CAPITAL:** Malabo

**POPULATION:** 800,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 10,830 sq. miles  
(28,051 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 74 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Fang, Bubi, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 90%, other 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Fang 85%, other 11%, Bubi 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes



# Eritrea



Lying along the southwest shore of the Red Sea, Eritrea won a long war for independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The two neighbors fought a bitter border war in 1998–2000.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly consists of rugged mountains, bush, and the Danakil Desert, which falls below sea level.



## CLIMATE

Warm in the mountains; desert areas are hot. Droughts from July onward are common.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Tigrinya-speakers, mainly Orthodox Christians, are the most numerous of nine main ethnic groups. A strong sense of nationhood has been forged by war. Women played a vital role in combat. Around two-thirds of people are subsistence farmers. Multiparty elections, due under the 1997 constitution, are yet to be held.



**INSIGHT:** *Eritrea was modern Italy's first African colony. It's named for the ancient Greek for Red Sea: Erythra Thalassa*



## THE ECONOMY

Legacy of disruption and destruction from wars; resettlement of refugees. Susceptible to drought and famine: dependent on food aid. Most of the population live at subsistence level. Potential for extraction of gold, copper, and oil. Red Sea location: port at Massawa.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of Eritrea

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1993

**CAPITAL:** Asmara

**POPULATION:** 6.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 46,842 sq. miles (121,320 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 139 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Tigrinya\*, English\*, Tigre, Afar,

Arabic\*, Saho, Bilen, Kunama, Nara, Hadareb

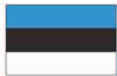
**RELIGIONS:** Christian 50%, Muslim 48%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Tigray 50%, Tigre 31%, other 9%, Saho 5%, Afar 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential-parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Nakfa = 100 cents

# Estonia



The smallest and most Western-oriented of the former Soviet-ruled Baltic states, Estonia is also the most developed, but its standard of living is well below the EU average.



## GEOGRAPHY

Estonia's terrain is flat, boggy, and partly forested, with over 1500 islands. Lake Peipus forms much of the eastern border with Russia.



## CLIMATE

Maritime, with some continental extremes. Harsh winters, with cool summers and damp springs.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Estonians are related ethnically and linguistically to the Finns. Friction between ethnic Estonians and the large Russian minority led to a reassertion of Estonian culture and language. Outright discrimination against the Russian language was only ended in 2000. Estonians are predominantly Lutheran. Families are small. The divorce rate has reduced since the 1980s peak. Market reforms have increased prosperity; a few people have become very rich.



## THE ECONOMY

Timber and oil shale. Good productivity. Strong growth accompanied EU accession in 2004, but first EU country to enter recession in 2008. Drastic spending cuts aided quick revival. Joined eurozone in 2011. Low debt burden.

**INSIGHT:** Estonia pioneered online voting in 2007, and voting by cell phone in 2011



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Estonia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Tallinn

**POPULATION:** 1.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 17,462 sq. miles  
(45,226 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 75 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Estonian\*, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Evangelical Lutheran 56%,  
Orthodox Christian 25%,  
other 19%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Estonian 69%, Russian 25%,  
other 4%, Ukrainian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents





# Ethiopia



The former empire of Ethiopia once dominated northeast Africa. A Marxist regime in 1974–1991, now a free-market democracy, it has suffered economic, civil, and natural crises.



## GEOGRAPHY

Great Rift Valley divides mountainous northwest region from desert lowlands in northeast and southeast. Ethiopian Plateau is drained mainly by the Blue Nile.



## CLIMATE

Moderate, with summer rains. Highlands are warm, with night frost and snowfalls on the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

76 Ethiopian nationalities speak 286 languages. Oromo (or Gallas) are the largest group. Ethnic representation is a major political issue. Orthodox Christianity has a very ancient history in Ethiopia. Former emperor Haile Selassie inspired Rastafarianism.



**INSIGHT:** *King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba are said to have founded the Kingdom of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) c. 1000 BCE*



## THE ECONOMY

Overwhelmingly dependent on agriculture; coffee is main export crop. War-damaged infrastructure and periodic serious droughts and famines undermine growth. There is a heavy reliance on food aid. Landlocked since secession of Eritrea.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1896

**CAPITAL:** Addis Ababa

**POPULATION:** 94.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 435,184 sq. miles  
(1,127,127 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 220 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Amharic\*, Tigrinya, other

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 40%, Muslim 40%, traditional beliefs 15%, other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Oromo 40%, Amhara 25%, other 13%, Sidama 9%, Tigray 7%, Somali 6%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Birr = 100 cents

# Fiji



A volcanic archipelago in the South Pacific, with two large islands and 880 islets. Tensions between native Fijians and the Indian minority have sparked a succession of coups.



## GEOGRAPHY

Main islands are mountainous, fringed by coral reefs. Remainder are limestone and coral formations.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. High temperatures all year round. Cyclones are a hazard.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The British introduced workers from India in the late 19th century, and by 1946 their descendants outnumbered the ethnic Fijians. Ethnic-Fijian nationalism is strong. Many Indo-Fijians left after the 1987 coup, restoring ethnic Fijians to a majority. The first Indo-Fijian-dominated government was ousted in 2000. The army led another coup in 2006: elections were held in 2014. Women are lobbying for more rights.



## INSIGHT: Both Fijians and Indians

practice fire-walking; Indians walk on hot embers, Fijians on heated stones



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism was main sector, though damaged by instability. Coups have also caused international isolation. All sectors struggling: sugar production, gold mining, textiles, timber, and commercial fishing.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Fiji

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1970

**CAPITAL:** Suva

**POPULATION:** 900,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 7054 sq. miles  
(18,270 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 128 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Fijian, English\*, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu

**RELIGIONS:** Hindu 38%, Methodist 37%, Roman Catholic 9%, Muslim 8%, other 8%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Melanesian (Fijian) 51%, Indian 44%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Fiji dollar = 100 cents



# Finland



Finland's language and national identity have been influenced by both its Scandinavian and Russian neighbors. Once aligned with the USSR, Finland is now a member of the EU.



## GEOGRAPHY

South and center are flat, with low hills and many lakes. Uplands and low mountains in the north. 60% of the land area is forested.



## CLIMATE

Long, harsh winters with frequent snowfalls. Short, warmer summers. Rainfall is low, and decreases northward.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

One in four of the population lives in the Greater Helsinki region. Swedish-speakers live mainly in the Åland Islands in the southwest. The Sámi (Lapps) lead a seminomadic existence inside the Arctic Circle. Women make up 48% of the labor force, continuing a long tradition of equality between the sexes. Finnish women were the first in Europe to get the vote, in 1906, and the first in the world able to stand for parliament. Families tend to be close-knit.



## THE ECONOMY

Strong engineering and electronics sectors: home of Nokia. Wood, pulp, and paper production.



**INSIGHT:** Finland has Europe's largest inland waterway system



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Finland

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1917

**CAPITAL:** Helsinki

**POPULATION:** 5.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 130,127 sq. miles  
(337,030 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 46 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Finnish\*, Swedish\*, Sámi

**RELIGIONS:** Evangelical Lutheran 83%, other 15%, Orthodox Christian 1%, Roman Catholic 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Finnish 93%, other (including Sámi) 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# France



Stretching across western Europe, from the English Channel (la Manche) to the Mediterranean Sea, France was Europe's first modern republic, and is still a leading industrial power.



## GEOGRAPHY

Broad plain covers northern half of the country. High mountain ranges in the east and southwest, with a mountainous plateau in the center.



## CLIMATE

Three main climates: temperate and damp northwest; continental east; and Mediterranean south.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Strong national identity coexists with pronounced regional differences, including local languages. Immigration laws have been tightened since the 1970s, but ethnic minorities growing up in city suburbs feel increasingly alienated. Wearing the veil is banned in public. New equality laws are under debate.



**INSIGHT:** France is the most popular tourist destination in the world, with over 80 million visitors a year



## THE ECONOMY

Chemicals, electronics, heavy engineering, cars, and aircraft typify a strong and diversified export sector. World leader in cosmetics, perfumes, and quality wines. Modernized agriculture.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** French Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 987

**CAPITAL:** Paris

**POPULATION:** 64.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 211,208 sq. miles (547,030 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 303 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French\*, Provençal, German,

Breton, Catalan, Basque

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 88%, Muslim 8%, Protestant 2%, Jewish 1%, Buddhist 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** French 90%, North African 6%, German (Alsace) 2%, Breton 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential-parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Gabon

Gabon is a former French colony straddling the equator on Africa's west coast. Independent since 1960, it returned to multiparty politics in 1990, after 22 years of one-party rule.



## GEOGRAPHY

Low plateaus and mountains lie beyond the coastal strip. Two-thirds of the land is covered by rainforest.



## CLIMATE

Hot and tropical, with little distinction between seasons. Cold Benguela current cools the coast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Some 40 different languages are spoken. The Fang, who live mainly in the north, are the largest ethnic group, but have yet to gain control of the government. Oil wealth has led to the growth of an affluent middle class, but one in three people still live in poverty. Menial jobs are done by immigrant workers. Education follows the French system. With 87% of people living in towns, Gabon is one of Africa's most urbanized countries. The government is encouraging population growth.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil accounts for 75% of exports, but reserves are dwindling; not much post-oil planning. High debt problem. Tropical hardwoods and manganese.



**INSIGHT:** *Libreville was founded as a settlement for freed French slaves in 1849*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Gabonese Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Libreville

**POPULATION:** 1.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 103,346 sq. miles (267,667 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 17 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Fang, French\*, Punu, Sira,

Nzebi, Mpongwe

**RELIGIONS:** Christian (mainly Roman Catholic) 55%, traditional beliefs 40%, other 4%, Muslim 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Fang 26%, Shira-punu 24%, other 24%, foreign residents 15%, Nzabi-duma 11%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Gambia



Gambia is a riverbank state on the west coast of Africa, almost entirely surrounded by Senegal. It was renowned for its stability until its government was overthrown in a coup in 1994.



## GEOGRAPHY

Located on the narrow strip of land bordering the Gambia River. Long, sandy beaches are backed by mangrove swamps along the river. Savanna and tropical forests higher up.



## CLIMATE

Subtropical, with wet, humid months July–October, and warm, dry season November–May.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Little tension between various ethnic groups. The largest group, the Mandinka, has traditionally held power. Islam is a strong social influence, though there is no official state religion. A small expatriate community from the UK lives on the coast. Seasonal migrants come from neighboring states to harvest groundnuts each year. Women are active as traders. Yahya Jammeh, who led the 1994 coup, is still the elected president.

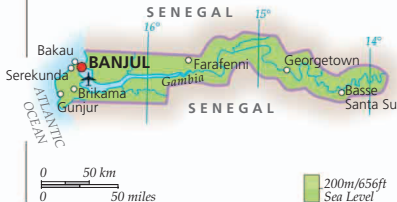


## THE ECONOMY

Around 75% of the labor force is involved in agriculture. Groundnuts are the principal crop. Fish stocks are declining. Eco-tourism is promoted, though most visitors come for the beaches. Banjul is one of west Africa's finest deepwater ports: significant re-export trade. Smuggling problems.



**INSIGHT:** *Overfishing in the waters off Gambia and Senegal, mainly by foreign vessels, is a growing problem*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of the Gambia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1965

**CAPITAL:** Banjul

**POPULATION:** 1.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 4363 sq. miles  
(11,300 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 466 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Mandinka, Fulani, Wolof, Jola, Soninke, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 90%, Christian 8%, traditional beliefs 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Mandinka 42%, Fulani 18%, Wolof 16%, Jola 10%, Serahuli 9%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Dalasi = 100 butut



# Georgia

Located on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, Georgia has been torn by civil war and ethnic disputes since achieving independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.



## GEOGRAPHY

Kura Valley lies between Caucasus Mountains in the north and Lesser Caucasus range in south. Lowlands along the Black Sea coast.



## CLIMATE

Subtropical along the coast, changing to continental extremes at high altitudes. Rainfall is moderate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Paternalistic society, with strong family, cultural, and literary traditions. Georgia was converted to Christianity in 326 CE. Armenians in the south are the poorest group. Civil conflicts in the early 1990s against Abkhaz and Osset separatists displaced 300,000 people. Abkhazia and South Ossetia now effectively operate as separate states, backed up by Russian forces since the 2008 war. Russia opposes Georgian hopes of joining the EU and NATO.



## THE ECONOMY

Transit revenues from pipelines taking oil to the West. Long-established and booming wine industry. Political instability. Fast pace of reforms in late 2000s, at cost of high unemployment.



**INSIGHT:** *Western Georgia was the land of the legendary Golden Fleece of Greek mythology*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Georgia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Tbilisi

**POPULATION:** 4.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 26,911 sq. miles (69,700 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 160 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Georgian\*, Russian, Azeri,

Armenian, Mingrelian, Ossetian, Abkhazian

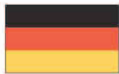
**RELIGIONS:** Georgian Orthodox 74%, Muslim 10%, Russian Orthodox 10%, Armenian Apostolic Church (Orthodox) 4%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Georgian 84%, Armenian 6%, Azeri 6%, Russian 2%, Ossetian 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Lari = 100 tetri

# Germany



Europe's strongest industrial power and its most populous nation, Germany was divided after military defeat in 1945 into a free-market west and a communist east, but reunified in 1990.



## GEOGRAPHY

Central European coastal plains in the north, rising to rolling hills of central region and Alps in far south.



## CLIMATE

Damp, temperate in northern and central regions. Continental extremes in mountainous south.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Regionalism is strong. The north is mainly Protestant, while the south is staunchly Roman Catholic. Social and economic differences still exist between east and west. Turks are the largest single ethnic minority; many came as guest workers in the 1950s–1970s. Immigration rules now favor skilled workers. Feminism is strong.



**INSIGHT:** Germany's rivers and canals carry as much freight as its busy highways



## THE ECONOMY

Major exporter of electronics, heavy engineering, chemicals, and cars. Worst recession for 60 years in 2008–2009. Aging population.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federal Republic of Germany

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1871

**CAPITAL:** Berlin

**POPULATION:** 82.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 137,846 sq. miles  
(357,021 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 613 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** German\*, Turkish

**RELIGIONS:** Protestant 34%, Roman Catholic 33%, other 30%, Muslim 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** German 92%, other 3%, other European 3%, Turkish 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents





# Ghana

The heartland of the ancient Ashanti kingdom, Ghana in west Africa was once known as the Gold Coast. It has experienced intermittent periods of military rule since independence in 1957.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly low-lying. The west is covered by rainforest. One of the world's largest artificial lakes – Lake Volta – was created by damming the White Volta River.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. There are two wet seasons in the south, but the north is drier, and has just one.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Around 75 cultural-linguistic groups. The largest is the Akan, who include the Ashanti and Fanti peoples. Southern peoples are richer and more urban than those of the north. There are few tribal tensions. Family ties are strong. Women play a major role in market trading. The 2000 election saw Ghana's first peaceful handover of power. Poverty levels have been significantly reduced.



## THE ECONOMY

World's second-largest cocoa producer. Oil discovered in 2007: on stream from 2010. Hardwood trees such as maple and sapele. Gold mining.



**INSIGHT:** *Ghana was the first colony in west Africa to gain independence*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Ghana

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1957

**CAPITAL:** Accra

**POPULATION:** 25.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 92,100 sq. miles  
(238,540 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 292 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Twi, Fanti, Ewe, Ga, Adangbe, Gurma, Dagomba (Dagbani), English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 69%, Muslim 16%, traditional beliefs 9%, other 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Akan 49%, Mole-Dagbani 17%, Ewe 13%, other 13%, Ga and Ga-Adangbe 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Cedi = 100 pesewas

## Greece



The Balkan state of Greece is bounded on three sides by the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Ionian seas. It has a strong seafaring tradition, with some of the world's richest shipowners.

**GEOGRAPHY**

Mountainous peninsula and over 2000 islands. Large plain along the mainland's Aegean coast.

**CLIMATE**

Mainly Mediterranean, with dry, hot summers. Alpine climate in northern mountain areas.

**PEOPLE & SOCIETY**

Postwar industrial development altered the dominance of agriculture and seafaring. Rural exodus to cities has been stemmed but a third of the population lives in Athens. Age-old culture and Greek Orthodox Church balance social mobility. Civil marriage and divorce only legalized in 1982. There has been much recent civil unrest against severe austerity measures.



**INSIGHT:** *The modern Olympics, first held in Athens in 1896, evolved from Olympia's ancient Greek games*

**THE ECONOMY**

Public debt and budget deficit very high: EU bailouts to avoid bankruptcy. World's largest shipping fleet. One of Europe's top tourist destinations. Fruit, vegetables, olives. Large black economy.

**FACTFILE**

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Hellenic Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1829

**CAPITAL:** Athens

**POPULATION:** 11.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 50,942 sq. miles  
(131,940 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 220 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Greek\*, Turkish, Macedonian, Albanian

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 98%, Muslim 1%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Greek 98%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Grenada

The southernmost of the Windward Islands, Grenada made world headlines in 1983 when the US and Caribbean allies mounted an invasion to sever links with Castro's Cuba.



## GEOGRAPHY

Volcanic in origin, with densely forested central mountains. Its territory also includes the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, tempered by trade winds. Hurricanes are a hazard in the July–November wet season.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Grenadians are mainly of African origin; their traditions remain strong, especially on Carriacou. Inter-ethnic marriage has reduced tensions between the groups. Extended families, often headed by women, are the norm. Wealth disparities are not marked, but levels of poverty are growing.

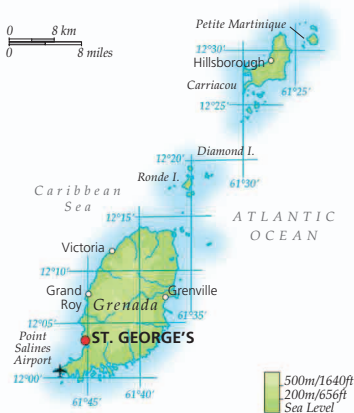


**INSIGHT:** Known as “the spice island of the Caribbean,” it is the world’s second-largest nutmeg producer



## THE ECONOMY

Severe damage from Hurricane Ivan in 2004 to crops and 90% of buildings; reconstruction taking years. Nutmeg, cocoa, bananas, and mace. Smuggling is a serious problem.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Grenada

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1974

**CAPITAL:** St. George's

**POPULATION:** 109,590

**TOTAL AREA:** 131 sq. miles  
(340 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 837 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, English Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 68%,  
Anglican 17%, other 15%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black African 82%, Mulatto  
(mixed race) 13%, East Indian 3%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** East Caribbean dollar =  
100 cents

# Guatemala



The largest and most populous nation on the Central American isthmus, Guatemala returned to civilian rule in 1986 after 32 years of violent and repressive military rule.



## GEOGRAPHY

Narrow Pacific coastal plain. Central highlands with volcanoes. Short coast on the Caribbean Sea. Tropical rainforests in the north.



## CLIMATE

Tropical: hot and humid in coastal regions and north. More temperate in central highlands.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Amerindians, concentrated in the highlands, form a majority. Power, wealth, and land are controlled by *ladinos* (Westernized Amerindians and *mestizos*). Catholicism is predominant, mixed with Amerindian beliefs. Literacy is low. A quarter of the population live on less than \$2 a day. Violent crime is a problem.



**INSIGHT:** *Guatemala, which means "land of trees," was the center of the ancient Mayan civilization*



## THE ECONOMY

Coffee, sugar, and bananas are top exports. Tourism. Damage from natural disasters. Marked wealth inequalities inhibit domestic market.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Guatemala

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1838

**CAPITAL:** Guatemala City

**POPULATION:** 15.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 42,042 sq. miles  
(108,890 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 370 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Quiché, Mam, Cakchiquel, Kekchí, Spanish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 65%, Protestant 33%, other and nonreligious 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Amerindian 60%, *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian) 30%, other 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Quetzal = 100 centavos



# Guinea



Located on the west coast of Africa, Guinea was the first French colony in Africa to gain independence, in 1958. The country was under military rule in 1984–1995 and 2008–2010.



## GEOGRAPHY

Coastal plains and mangrove swamps in west rise to forested or savanna highlands in the south. Semidesert in the north.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with a wet season April–October. Conakry is especially rainy. Hot, dry *harmattan* wind blows from Sahara during dry season.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Peul and Malinké make up most of the population, but rivalries between them have allowed coastal peoples such as the Soussou to dominate politics. Daily life revolves around the extended family. Women acquired influence under Marxist party rule between 1958 and 1984, but the Muslim revival since then has reversed the trend. Private enterprise has created a business class. A deadly Ebola outbreak hit the country in 2014.



## THE ECONOMY

Substantial gold, diamond, and especially bauxite reserves. Cash crops: bananas, coffee, pineapples, palm oil. Poor infrastructure. Instability.



**INSIGHT:** *The colors of Guinea's flag represent the three words of the country's motto: work (red), justice (yellow), and solidarity (green)*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Guinea

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1958

**CAPITAL:** Conakry

**POPULATION:** 11.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 94,925 sq. miles  
(245,857 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 123 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Pulaar, Malinké, Soussou, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 85%, Christian 8%  
traditional beliefs 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Peul 40%, Malinké 30%,  
Soussou 20%, other 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Guinea franc = 100 centimes

# Guinea-Bissau



Known as Portuguese Guinea while a colony, Guinea-Bissau lies on Africa's west coast. Since 1994, its nascent democracy has been plagued by coups and rebellions.



## GEOGRAPHY

Low-lying, apart from savanna highlands in northeast. Rainforests and swamps are found along coastal areas.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with wet season May–November and dry season December–April. Hot, dry *harmattan* desert wind blows during dry season.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The largest ethnic group is the Balante, who live in the south. Though only around 1% of the population, the mixed race Portuguese–African *mestiços* dominate the top ranks of government and bureaucracy. Most people live and work on small family farms, grouped in self-contained villages. The bulk of the urban population live in Bissau, where they face economic hardship. Narcotics traffickers are taking advantage of the ongoing instability.



## THE ECONOMY

Mostly subsistence farming. Lack of sufficiency in rice staple. Main cash crop is cashew nuts. Major cocaine transit route from South America to Europe. Offshore oil as yet untapped. Fisheries and timber potential.



**INSIGHT:** *In 1974, Guinea-Bissau became the first Portuguese colony to gain independence*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Guinea-Bissau

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1974

**CAPITAL:** Bissau

**POPULATION:** 1.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 13,946 sq. miles  
(36,120 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 157 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Portuguese Creole, Balante, Fulani, Malinké, Portuguese\*

**RELIGIONS:** Traditional beliefs 50%, Muslim 40%, Christian 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Balante 30%, Fulani 20%, other 16%, Mandyako 14%, Mandinka 13%, Papel 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes



# Guyana

On the northeast coast of South America, Guyana is the continent's only English-speaking country. Independent since 1966, it has close ties with the anglophone Caribbean.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly artificial coast, reclaimed by dikes and dams from swamps and tidal marshes. Forests cover 85% of the interior, rising to savanna uplands and mountains.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Coast cooled by sea breezes. Lowlands are hot, wet, and humid. Highlands are a little cooler.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Guyana is a complex multiracial society. Tension exists between the Afro-Guyanese, descended from slaves, and the Indo-Guyanese, descendants of laborers brought over after slavery was abolished. Politics is highly polarized around this split and has often spilled over into violence on the streets. Amerindian subsistence farmers are the poorest people in society and have little representation.



## THE ECONOMY

Diverse exports: gold, sugar, fish, bauxite, rice, timber, diamonds. Debt relief granted. Narcotics transit zone.



**INSIGHT:** *Guyana means "land of many waters," reflecting its dense network of rivers*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Cooperative Republic of Guyana

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1966

**CAPITAL:** Georgetown

**POPULATION:** 800,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 83,000 sq. miles (214,970 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 11 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English Creole, Hindi, Tamil, Amerindian languages, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 57%, Hindu 28%, Muslim 10%, other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** East Indian 43%, Black African 30%, mixed race 17%, Amerindian 9%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Guyanese dollar = 100 cents

# Haiti



Formerly a French colony, Haiti shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic. At independence in 1804, it became the world's first black republic.



## GEOGRAPHY

Predominantly mountainous, with forests and fertile plains.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with rain throughout the year. Humid in coastal areas, much cooler in the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Haitians are of African descent. A few have European roots, primarily French. The rigid class structure maintains vast disparities of wealth. The majority of the population live in extreme poverty; Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Americas. A combination of political oppression and a collapsing economy led thousands to seek asylum in the US or the Dominican Republic. Though most are Christians, many Haitians practice Voodoo, which was recognized as an official religion in 2003.



## THE ECONOMY

Fragile economy completely shattered by 2010 earthquake. Ongoing problems of instability, hurricane damage, high unemployment, narcotics trafficking.



**INSIGHT:** A slave rebellion headed by Toussaint Louverture in 1791 led to Haiti's independence



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Haiti

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1804

**CAPITAL:** Port-au-Prince

**POPULATION:** 10.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 10,714 sq. miles  
(27,750 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 968 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French Creole\*, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 55%, Protestant 28%, other (including Voodoo) 16%, nonreligious 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black African 95%, Mulatto (mixed race) and European 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Gourde = 100 centimes





# Honduras

Straddling the Central American isthmus, Honduras returned to democratic rule in 1984, after a period of military government. Hurricane Mitch devastated the country in 1998.



## GEOGRAPHY

Narrow plains along both coasts, with a mountainous interior, cut by river valleys. Tropical forests, swamps, and lagoons in the east.



## CLIMATE

Tropical coastal lowlands are hot and humid, with May–October rains. Interior is cooler and drier.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The majority of the population is *mestizo* (mixed European–Amerindian). An English-speaking *garifuna* (black) community and Miskito Amerindians struggle to preserve their rights to land along the remote Caribbean coast. Women's status remains low. Wealth inequalities are large and poverty is at the root of social tension. Two-thirds of the population live in poverty. The army ousted the president in 2009. Violent crime is a major issue.



## THE ECONOMY

Garments, coffee, bananas, and shellfish are exported. Remittances account for a fifth of GDP. Debt relief from 2005. Mineral potential. High underemployment and corruption.



**INSIGHT:** *The Honduran currency is named after a Lenca Indian chief who was the main leader of resistance to the Spanish conquest in the 16th century*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Honduras

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1838

**CAPITAL:** Tegucigalpa

**POPULATION:** 8.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 43,278 sq. miles  
(112,090 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 187 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Garifuna (Carib), English Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 97%, Protestant 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 90%, Black African 5%, Amerindian 4%, White 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Lempira = 100 centavos

# Hungary



Landlocked in central Europe, Hungary was one of the twin centers of the once-great Habsburg Empire. It lost two-thirds of its historical territory for supporting Germany in WW I.



## GEOGRAPHY

Landlocked. Fertile plains in east and northwest; west and north are hilly. The Danube River cuts through the country and the capital.



## CLIMATE

Continental, with wet springs, late but very hot summers, and cold, cloudy winters. The transition between seasons tends to be sudden.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Hungary's population has been shrinking since the 1980s. Mostly ethnic Hungarian (Magyar), there are small minorities of Germans, Jews, and neighboring peoples. Roma face particular discrimination. The government is greatly concerned about the fate of ethnic Hungarians in Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. Hungary joined the EU in 2004. Working hours are longer than in western Europe.



## THE ECONOMY

Strong industrial base. Hard-hit by 2007–2009 global downturn: currency plummeted. IMF bailout to avoid meltdown. Spending cuts. Fast growth in 2014. No date set for joining euro.



**INSIGHT:** *The Hungarian language is Asian in origin and is most closely related to Finnish*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Hungary

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1918

**CAPITAL:** Budapest

**POPULATION:** 10 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 35,919 sq. miles  
(93,030 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 280 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Hungarian (Magyar)\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 52%, Calvinist 16%, other 15%, nonreligious 14%, Lutheran 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Magyar 90%, Roma 4%, German 3%, Serb 2%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Forint = 100 fillér



# Iceland

Europe's westernmost country, Iceland's strategic ocean location straddles the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Its spectacular landscape is largely uninhabited, aside from coastal towns.



## GEOGRAPHY

Grassy coastal lowlands, with fjords in the north. Central plateau of cold lava desert, geothermal springs, and glaciers. Around 200 volcanoes, with numerous geysers and solfataras.



## CLIMATE

Its location in the middle of the Gulf Stream moderates the climate. Mild winters and brief, cool summers.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Icelanders share a strong national identity, with few foreign residents. Their language has changed little in 700 years, in part due to the country's isolation. There is high social mobility, free health care, and low-cost heating (geothermal and hydropower). Iceland's recent banking collapse and near financial ruin has swung the long-running debate over EU membership in favor of joining.



## THE ECONOMY

Once reliant on fish. Aluminum smelting. Tourism. Banks overexposed in 2007–2009 global downturn. Nation bankrupt, króna depreciated 90%.



**INSIGHT:** *The word geysir is taken from Geysir (the "gusher") in southwest Iceland*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Iceland

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1944

**CAPITAL:** Reykjavik

**POPULATION:** 300,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 39,768 sq. miles  
(103,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 8 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Icelandic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Evangelical Lutheran 84%, nonreligious 3%, Roman Catholic 3%, other (mostly Christian) 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Icelandic 94%, other 5%, Danish 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Icelandic króna = 100 aurar

# India



India is the world's second most populous country and largest democracy. Despite some success in reducing the birth rate, its population will probably overtake China's by 2028.



## GEOGRAPHY

Separated from northern Asia by the Himalaya mountain range, India forms a subcontinent. As well as the Himalayas, there are two other main geographical regions, the Indo-Gangetic plain, which lies between the foothills of the Himalayas and the Vindhya Mountains, and the central-southern Deccan plateau. The Ghats are smaller mountain ranges located on the east and west coasts.



## CLIMATE

Varies greatly according to latitude, altitude, and season. Most of India has three seasons: hot, wet, and cool. Summer temperatures in the north can reach 104°F (40°C). Monsoon rains normally break in June, petering out in September to October. In the cool season, the weather is mainly dry. The climate in the warmer south is less variable than in the north.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

India's planners, overseeing an economic revolution, see its growing population rather than environmental constraints as the main brake on development. Nationwide awareness campaigns promote birth control but cultural and religious pressures encourage large families. Rural deprivation spurs urban migration, to live in sprawling slums. Over 70% of people survive on less than \$2 a day. The majority of Indians are Hindu. Various attempts to reform the Hindu caste system, which determines social standing and even marriage, have met with violent opposition. Severe tensions exist between Hindus and the Muslim minority, especially in Kashmir and Gujarat. Smaller ethnic groups exist in the northeast, and many struggle for greater autonomy. Over two million people are living with HIV/AIDS.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of India

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1947

**CAPITAL:** New Delhi

**POPULATION:** 1.25 billion

**TOTAL AREA:** 1,269,338 sq. miles  
(3,287,590 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1091 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Hindi\*, English\*, Urdu, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Bihari, Gujarati, Kanarese

**RELIGIONS:** Hindu 81%, Muslim 13%, Christian 2%, Sikh 2%, Buddhist 1%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

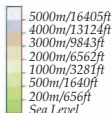
**CURRENCY:** Indian rupee = 100 paise

## THE ECONOMY

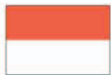
One of the world's fastest-growing economies. Protectionism has given way to free-market economics. Tea, gems,

textiles exported. High-tech industries, outsourcing center. Success of "Bollywood" films. Cheap labor. Huge market, held back by poverty.

**INSIGHT:** India's national animal, the tiger, was depicted as early as 4000 years ago by the Mohenjo-Daro civilization



# Indonesia



Formerly called the Dutch East Indies, Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago, with 18,108 islands scattered across 3000 miles (5000 km). It is the world's fourth most populous nation.



## GEOGRAPHY

Indonesia is highly mountainous, with numerous tropical swamps. The land is covered with dense rainforest, especially on New Guinea, where it remains largely unexplored. There are more than 200 volcanoes, many of which are still active. Earthquakes, eruptions, and tsunamis are hazards. The islands of Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumatra, and Borneo were once joined together by dry land, which has since been submerged by rising sea levels. Coastal lowland development distinguishes some of the large islands.



## CLIMATE

The climate is predominantly tropical monsoon. Variations relate mainly to differences in latitude and altitude; hilly areas are cooler overall. Rain falls throughout the year, often in thunderstorms, but there is a relatively dry season from June to September.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The basic Melanesian–Malay ethnic division disguises a diverse society. Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, coexists with at least 250 other spoken languages or dialects. Attempts by the Javanese



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Indonesia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1949

**CAPITAL:** Jakarta

**POPULATION:** 250 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 741,096 sq. miles  
(1,919,440 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 360 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Bahasa Indonesia\*, Dutch

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 86%, Christian 9%, Hindu 2%, other 2%, Buddhist 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Javanese 41%, other 32%, Sundanese 15%, coastal Malays 12%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

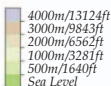
**CURRENCY:** Rupiah = 100 sen

political elite to suppress local cultures have been vigorously opposed, especially by the Aceh of northern Sumatra, and the Papuans. Religious and interethnic hostility is a problem, with clashes between Christians and Muslims in many areas, and discrimination against ethnic Chinese leading to mob attacks on their businesses. Gender equality is enshrined in law; women are active in public life.

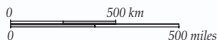


## THE ECONOMY

Varied resources, especially natural gas. Cheap and plentiful labor pool. Sizable state-owned sector, and state control of prices of basic goods. Large foreign debt rescheduled. The 2004 tsunami, which killed over 130,000 people, devastated northern Sumatra. Bureaucracy and corruption damage business confidence. Regional conflicts and terrorist attacks deter tourists and investors. Piracy is rife.



**INSIGHT:** Indonesia has a very youthful population: almost 30% of its people are under 15 years of age



# Iran



Since the 1979 Islamic fundamentalist revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, the Middle Eastern country of Iran has been the world's largest theocracy.



## GEOGRAPHY

High desert plateau with large salt pans in the east. West and north are mountainous. Coastal land bordering Caspian Sea is rainy and forested.



## CLIMATE

Desert climate. Hot summers, and bitterly cold winters. Area around the Caspian Sea is more temperate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Many ethnic groups, including Persians, Azaris (ethnically related to Azeris), and Kurds. Militant Shi'a Islamism has dominated since the 1979 revolution. The mullahs' belief that adherence to religious values is more important than economic welfare has led to fall in living standards. Female emancipation has been reversed. Student-backed demonstrations favoring greater liberalism have been suppressed. International sanctions press for end of uranium enrichment program.



## THE ECONOMY

A leading oil producer, though sanctions limit exports. Government restricts contact with the West, blocking acquisition of vital technology. High unemployment, inflation. Black market.



**INSIGHT:** *More than a hundred offenses carry the death penalty*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Islamic Republic of Iran

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1502

**CAPITAL:** Tehran

**POPULATION:** 77.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 636,293 sq. miles  
(1,648,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 123 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Farsi\*, Azeri, Luri, Gilaki, Arabic, Mazanderani, Kurdish, Turkmen, Baluchi

**RELIGIONS:** Shi'a Muslim 89%,  
Sunni Muslim 9%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Persian 51%, Azari 24%,  
other 10%, Lur and Bakhtiari 8%, Kurdish 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Islamic theocracy

**CURRENCY:** Iranian rial = 100 dinars





# Iraq



Oil-rich Iraq is situated in the central Middle East. The last five decades have been dominated by dictatorship, war, and civil strife. A US-led Coalition ousted Saddam Hussein in 2003.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly desert. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers water fertile regions and create the southern marshland. Mountains along northeast border.



## CLIMATE

Southern deserts have hot, dry summers and mild winters. North has dry summers, but winters can be harsh in the mountains. Rainfall is low.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Carved out of remnants of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq is home to Arab Muslims (mainly Shi'a, some Sunni), northern Kurds (persecuted under Saddam), and smaller minorities. Since Saddam's removal, sectarian violence has overshadowed efforts to build democracy. US forces withdrew in 2011. By 2014 Islamic State jihadists controlled part of the country. After years of war and sanctions, poverty is widespread.



## THE ECONOMY

Economy and infrastructure have been destroyed. Given stability and aid for reconstruction, hopes of recovery would rest on massive oil reserves.



**INSIGHT:** As Mesopotamia, Iraq was the site where the Sumerians established the world's first civilization



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Iraq

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1932

**CAPITAL:** Baghdad

**POPULATION:** 33.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 168,753 sq. miles  
(437,072 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 200 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Kurdish\*,

Turkic languages, Armenian, Assyrian

**RELIGIONS:** Shi'a Muslim 60%, Sunni Muslim 35%, other (including Christian) 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 80%, Kurdish 15%, Turkmen 3%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** New Iraqi dinar = 1000 fils

## Ireland



In the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Britain, the Irish Republic governs about 85% of the island of Ireland, with the remainder (Northern Ireland) being part of the UK.

**GEOGRAPHY**

Low mountain ranges along an irregular coastline surround an inland plain punctuated by lakes, undulating hills, and peat bogs.

**CLIMATE**

The Gulf Stream accounts for the mild and wet climate. Snow is rare, except in the mountains.

**PEOPLE & SOCIETY**

Though homogeneous in ethnicity and Roman Catholic by religion, society has undergone a major generational change, liberalizing birth control, divorce, abortion, and general attitudes. Traditionally an emigrant nation, except for a decade of net immigration in the 2000s. Ireland and the UK signed a peace deal over Northern Ireland in 1998.



**INSIGHT:** *About 40% of Irish people can speak Irish Gaelic*

**THE ECONOMY**

Efficient agriculture, electronics, and food-processing industries. Rapid growth until 2008: housing bubble burst, banks faltered. Large EU bailouts to avoid bankruptcy. Struggling with budget deficit.

**FACTFILE**

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Ireland

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1922

**CAPITAL:** Dublin

**POPULATION:** 4.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 27,135 sq. miles  
(70,280 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 173 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Irish Gaelic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 87%,  
other and nonreligious 10%,  
Anglican 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Irish 99%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary  
system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



Created as a new state in 1948, Israel lies on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation has led to years of fierce violence.



## GEOGRAPHY

Coastal plain. Desert in the south. In the east lie the Great Rift Valley and the Dead Sea – the lowest point on the Earth's land surface.



## CLIMATE

Summers are hot and dry. Wet season, March–November, is mild.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Large numbers of Jews settled in Palestine before Israel was founded in 1948. After World War II, there was a massive increase in immigration. Sephardi Jews from the Middle East and Mediterranean are now in the majority, but Ashkenazi Jews from central Europe still dominate business and politics. Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho gained limited autonomy in 1994 but Israeli–Palestinian talks on a two-state solution, backed by most of the world, have repeatedly foundered.



## THE ECONOMY

High-tech industries, modern infrastructure, and educated workforce, but hampered by conflict and boycotts.



**INSIGHT:** All Jews worldwide have the right to Israeli citizenship



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of Israel

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1948

**CAPITAL:** Jerusalem (not internationally recognized)

**POPULATION:** 7.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 8019 sq. miles  
(20,770 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 981 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Hebrew\*, Arabic\*, Yiddish, German, Russian, Polish, Romanian, Persian

**RELIGIONS:** Jewish 76%, Muslim (mainly Sunni) 16%, other 4%, Christian 2%, Druze 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Jewish 76%, Arab 20%, other 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Shekel = 100 agorot

# Italy



The Italian peninsula was home to the Roman Empire, one of the greatest ancient civilizations. The south has two famous volcanoes, Vesuvius and Etna.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Apennines form the backbone of a rugged peninsula, extending from the Alps into the Mediterranean Sea. Alluvial plain in the north.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean in the south. Seasonal extremes in the mountains and on the northern alluvial plain.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnically homogeneous, but with a gulf between the prosperous, industrial north and the poorer, agricultural south. Strong regional identities persist, especially on Sicily and Sardinia. Family ties remain strong, though the influence of the Roman Catholic Church has lessened.

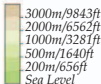


**INSIGHT:** *Italy was a collection of dukedoms, monarchies, and city-states before unification in the 1860s*



## THE ECONOMY

World leader in industrial and product design, fashion, textiles. Strong tourism and agriculture. Large public sector debt; austerity packages. Reforms have failed to restore GDP growth. Lack of jobs.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Italian Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1861

**CAPITAL:** Rome

**POPULATION:** 61 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 116,305 sq. miles  
(301,230 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 537 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Italian\*, German, French, Rhaeto-Romanic, Sardinian

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 85%, other and nonreligious 13%, Muslim 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Italian 94%, other 4%, Sardinian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Jamaica

First colonized by the Spanish and then by the English, the Caribbean island of Jamaica achieved independence in 1962. It remains an influential force in Caribbean politics.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly mountainous, with lush tropical vegetation. Inaccessible limestone area in the northwest. Low, irregular coastal plains are broken by hills and plateaus.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Hot and humid at sea level, with temperate mountain areas. Hurricanes are likely June–November.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Social tensions result from vast disparities in wealth, rather than race. Economic and political life is dominated by a few wealthy, long-established families. Many women hold senior positions in public life. Armed crime, much of it narcotics-related, is a problem. Large areas of Kingston, which have their own patois, are ruled by violent gangs. Jamaican music styles are influential worldwide.



## THE ECONOMY

Major bauxite producer, though sector vulnerable to changes in world prices. Tourism and light industry. Sugar, bananas, coffee, and rum are exported. Debt burden dominates budget. High underemployment.



**INSIGHT:** *Jamaica's Rastafarians revere the late emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, as their spiritual leader, and see Africa as their spiritual home*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Jamaica

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Kingston

**POPULATION:** 2.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 4243 sq. miles (10,990 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 670 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English Creole, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Other and nonreligious 45%, other Protestant 20%, Church of God 18%, Baptist 10%, Anglican 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black African 91%, Mulatto (mixed race) 7%, European and Chinese 1%, East Indian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Jamaican dollar = 100 cents

# Japan



Japan is located off the east Asian coast and comprises four principal islands and over 3000 smaller ones. A powerful economy, it has an emperor as ceremonial head of state.



## GEOGRAPHY

The terrain is predominantly mountainous, with fertile coastal plains; over two-thirds is woodland. There is no single continuous mountain range; the mountains divide into many small land blocks separated by lowlands and dissected by numerous river valleys. The islands lie on the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” and earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are frequent. The Pacific coast is vulnerable to tsunamis. There are numerous hot springs.



## CLIMATE

Generally temperate–oceanic. Spring is warm and sunny, while summer is hot and humid, with high rainfall. In western Hokkaido and northwest Honshu, winters are very cold, with heavy snowfall. Freak storms and damaging floods in recent years have raised concern over global climate changes.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

One of the most racially homogeneous societies in the world. A sense of order and social structure was founded on a strongly ingrained respect for elders and social superiors. In business, this underpinned the now much-diluted “lifetime employer” concept, where company allegiance determined social life as well as career. There is little tradition of generational rebellion, but the youth market is powerful and current fashions focus on teenagers. The education system is highly pressurized. Nongraduates have difficulty reaching management-level jobs, so competition for university places is intense. Long-term jobs for women are now the norm. One of the world’s best healthcare systems and increased longevity have led to an aging population, with one in four people already over 65. The cost of living is high, especially in Tokyo.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Japan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1590

**CAPITAL:** Tokyo

**POPULATION:** 127 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 145,882 sq. miles  
(377,835 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 874 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Japanese\*, Korean, Chinese

**RELIGIONS:** Shinto and Buddhist 76%, Buddhist 16%, other (including Christian) 8%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Japanese 99%, other (mainly Korean) 1%

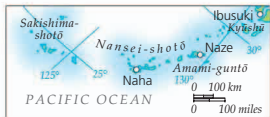
**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Yen = 100 sen

## THE ECONOMY

World's third-largest economy. A market leader in high-tech electronics and cars. Global spread of business. Once-revolutionary management and production methods. Long-term research and development. Talent for developing ideas from abroad. Protectionism in domestic economy. Reform of financial sector delayed by traditional economic power brokers. Major coal importer. Retreat from nuclear power after massive damage caused by 2011 earthquake and tsunami: resulting energy imports bill ended 30 years of trade surpluses.

**INSIGHT:** *The Japanese are still among the world's most avid newspaper readers, with daily sales around 47 million copies*



# Jordan



The Kingdom of Jordan lies east of Israel, and borders the Palestinian West Bank. Usually pro-Western in outlook, Jordan fears the rise of Islamists in Syria and Iraq.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly desert plateaus, with occasional salt pans. Lowest parts lie along the eastern shores of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River.



## CLIMATE

Hot, dry summers. Cool, wet winters. Areas below sea level very hot in summer, and warm in winter.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Jordanians are mainly Muslim with a strong national identity, but with Bedouin roots. The monarchy's power base lies among the rural tribes, which also provide the backbone of the army. Protests since 2011 have elicited gradual political reform, with greater powers for parliament. Jordan ceded its claim to the West Bank to the aspiring Palestinian state in 1988. Palestinian refugees make up over a third of the population. Recent influx of over 600,000 Syrian refugees.

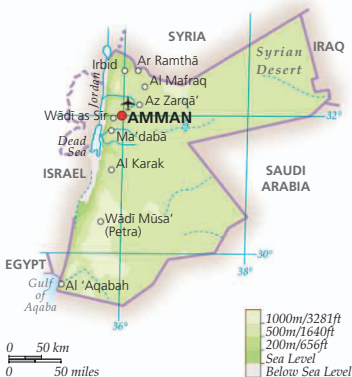


## THE ECONOMY

Lack of water. Exports garments, potash, fertilizers, and phosphates. Tourism hit by regional instability.



**INSIGHT:** *The Nabataean ruins of the ancient city of Petra attract thousands of tourists every year*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1946

**CAPITAL:** Amman

**POPULATION:** 7.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 35,637 sq. miles  
(92,300 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 213 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Jordanian dinar = 1000 fils





# Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan was the last of the former Soviet republics to declare independence. Foreign investment in the oil and natural gas sector is strengthening its regional power.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly steppe. Volga Delta and Caspian Sea in the west. Central plateau. Inhospitable Altai Mountains in the east. Semidesert in the south.



## CLIMATE

Dry continental. Temperature variations between desert south and northern steppes are large. Winters are mildest near the Caspian Sea.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Kazakhstan's ethnic diversity arose mainly from forced settlements there during Soviet times. Since independence, the proportion of ethnic Russians has dropped. Many emigrated, while ethnic Kazakhs arrived from neighboring states. Very few Kazakhs maintain a traditional nomadic lifestyle, but Islam and loyalty to clans remain strong. There are significant disparities of wealth.



## THE ECONOMY

Vast mineral resources: natural gas, oil, bismuth, uranium, and cadmium. Oil pipelines to China and Black Sea. Many Western investors. Wheat exported. Sale of farmland legal only since 2003.



**INSIGHT:** *The Soviet-built Baykonur space center is still an important launch site for international missions*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Kazakhstan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Astana

**POPULATION:** 16.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 1,049,150 sq. miles  
(2,717,300 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 16 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kazakh\*, Russian, Ukrainian, German, Uzbek, Tatar, Uighur

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 47%, Orthodox Christian 44%, other 9%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Kazakh 57%, Russian 27%, other 8%, Ukrainian 3%, Uzbek 3%, German 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Tenge = 100 tiyn

# Kenya



Kenya straddles the equator on Africa's east coast. After nearly 40 years in power, the KANU party was soundly defeated in elections in 2002. Corruption is a serious issue.



## GEOGRAPHY

A central plateau is divided by the Great Rift Valley. North of the equator is mainly semidesert. To the east lies a fertile coastal belt.



## CLIMATE

The coast and the Great Rift Valley are hot and humid. The plateau interior is temperate. The northeastern desert is hot and dry. Rain usually falls April–May and October–November.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

70 ethnic groups share about 40 languages. Strong clan and family links in rural areas are being weakened by urban migration. Poverty, severe drought, and years of high population growth exacerbate ethnic tensions.

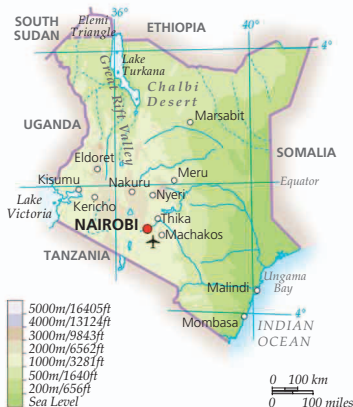


**INSIGHT:** Kenya has more than 60 game reserves, national parks, and marine reservations



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism, hurt by sporadic violence. Flowers, tea, and coffee. Sizable informal economy. Diversified manufacturing sector. Needs food aid, especially to cope with 2011 famine. Oil exploration.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Kenya

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1963

**CAPITAL:** Nairobi

**POPULATION:** 44.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 224,961 sq. miles  
(582,650 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 203 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kiswahili\*, English\*, Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Kamba

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 80%, Muslim 10%  
traditional beliefs 9%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 28%, Kikuyu 22%,  
Luhya 14%, Luo 14%, Kalenjin 11%, Kamba 11%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Kenya shilling = 100 cents

# Kiribati



Situated in the mid-Pacific, the islands adopted the name Kiribati (pronounced “Keer-ee-bus,” a corruption of their former name “Gilberts”) upon independence from Britain in 1979.



## GEOGRAPHY

Kiribati consists of three groups of tiny, very low-lying coral atolls scattered across 1,930,000 sq. miles (5 million sq. km) of ocean. Most of the 33 atolls have central lagoons.



## CLIMATE

Central islands have a maritime equatorial climate. Those to north and south are tropical, with constant high temperatures. There is little rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Officially I-Kiribati, many local people still refer to themselves as Gilbertese. Almost all are Micronesian, apart from the inhabitants of the island of Banaba, who employed anthropologists to establish their racial distinction. Most people are poor subsistence farmers and many travel abroad to work. The islands are effectively ruled by traditional chiefs.

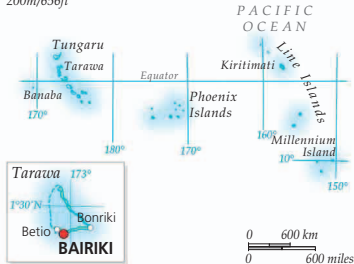


## THE ECONOMY

Since exhaustion of Banaba's phosphate deposits in 1980, copra (dried coconut) and fish have become the main exports. Foreign aid and remittances are vital to compensate for Kiribati's isolation and lack of resources.

**INSIGHT:** *In 1981, the UK paid \$10 million to Banabans to compensate for the destruction of their island by mining.*

All land under  
200m/656ft



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Kiribati

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1979

**CAPITAL:** Bairiki (Tarawa Atoll)

**POPULATION:** 103,248

**TOTAL AREA:** 277 sq. miles

(717 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 377 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Kiribati

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 55%,  
Kiribati Protestant Church 36%,  
other 9%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Micronesian 99%,  
other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Australian dollar = 100 cents

# North Korea



Separated from the democratic South by the world's most heavily defended border, the Stalinist North Korean state has been isolated from the outside world since 1948.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly mountainous, with fertile plains in the southwest.



## CLIMATE

Continental. Warm summers and cold winters, especially in the north, where snow is common.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Life is heavily regulated. Cult of personality is more powerful than the state-controlled religions, which include Korea's own Chondogyo. Women are expected to work and to run the home. Children are looked after in state-run crèches. The Korean Worker's Party is the sole party. Its elite have a privileged lifestyle. Globally condemned for its nuclear weapons tests, the regime's grip on power perpetuates its pariah status.



**INSIGHT:** *Internet access is limited, and restricted to the political elite*



## THE ECONOMY

Minerals are only resource. Vital aid streams lost with global collapse of communism after 1989. Decades of economic mismanagement have led to chronic food shortages. Lack of fuel. Disproportionate defense budget.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Democratic People's Republic of Korea

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1948

**CAPITAL:** Pyongyang

**POPULATION:** 24.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 46,540 sq. miles  
(120,540 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 536 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Korean\*

**RELIGIONS:** Government-controlled religions include Chondogyo, Buddhism, and Christianity

**ETHNIC MIX:** Korean 100%

**GOVERNMENT:** One-party state

**CURRENCY:** North Korean won = 100 chon



# South Korea

South Korea occupies the southern half of the Korean peninsula. Under US sponsorship, it was separated from the communist North in 1948 and is now a capitalist economy.



## GEOGRAPHY

Over 80% is mountainous and two-thirds is forested. The flattest and most populous parts lie along the west coast and in the extreme south.



## CLIMATE

There are four distinct seasons. Winters are dry, and bitterly cold. Summers are hot and humid.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Inhabited for the last 2000 years by a single ethnic group. The nuclear family is replacing traditional extended households. Since the 1953 armistice, the Koreans have remained technically at war. Reunification is the ultimate goal, but the two sides fluctuate between harsh rhetoric or belligerence and conciliation, allowing cross-border family reunions.



**INSIGHT:** *Half of all Koreans are named Kim, Lee, Park, or Choi*



## THE ECONOMY

World's biggest shipbuilder. High-tech goods and cars: rising demand from China. Strong regional competition. Aging population.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Korea  
**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1948  
**CAPITALS:** Seoul; Sejong City (administrative)  
**POPULATION:** 49.3 million  
**TOTAL AREA:** 38,023 sq. miles (98,480 sq. km)  
**DENSITY:** 1293 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Korean\*  
**RELIGIONS:** Mahayana Buddhist 47%, Protestant 38%, Roman Catholic 11%, Confucianist 3%, other 1%  
**ETHNIC MIX:** Korean 100%  
**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system  
**CURRENCY:** South Korean won = 100 chon

# Kosovo



Once part of the former Yugoslav state, Kosovo seceded from Serbia in 2008. International recognition, mainly from Western countries, is strongly opposed by Serbia and Russia.



## GEOGRAPHY

Landlocked and mountainous, with two plains in the east and west.



## CLIMATE

Continental, with warm, sunny summers and cold, snowy winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The balance of Albanians to Serbs in Kosovo has changed dramatically over centuries, both groups suffering interethnic violence at various times. Attacks against Albanians in the late 1990s caused a million to flee. After NATO stepped in, many Serbs left: Albanians now form a 92% majority. Most Albanians are Muslim. Serbs dominate three northern provinces, which have threatened to secede.



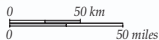
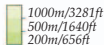
## INSIGHT: *The UN administered*

*Kosovo in 1999–2008 after NATO intervention to stop Serb ethnic cleansing*



## THE ECONOMY

One of the poorest countries in Europe. Aid and remittances cover a large trade deficit. Organized crime: smuggling of fuel, cigarettes, and cement. Uncertain status deters foreign investors. High unemployment. Use of euro has helped fight inflation. Lignite deposits. Inefficient agriculture.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Kosovo

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 2008

**CAPITAL:** Prishtinë

**POPULATION:** 1.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 4212 sq. miles  
(10,908 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 427 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Albanian\*, Serbian\*, Bosniak, Gorani, Roma, Turkish

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 92%, Roman Catholic 4%, Orthodox Christian 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Albanian 92%, Serb 4%, Bosniak and Gorani 2%, Turkish 1%, Roma 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Kuwait



Kuwait lies at the northwest tip of the Gulf, dwarfed by its neighbors Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. It was a British protectorate until 1961, when full independence was granted.



## GEOGRAPHY

Terrain is low-lying desert. The lowest land is in the north. Cultivation is only possible along the coast.



## CLIMATE

Summers are very hot and dry. Winters are cooler, with some rain and occasional frost at night.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Oil-rich monarchy, ruled by the al-Sabah family. It is a conservative Sunni Muslim society, but women are relatively free. Nonetheless, a 1999 decree giving women the vote was blocked for six years in parliament by Islamic traditionalists. Immigrant workers, from other Arab states, India, and Pakistan, now outnumber native citizens. US-led forces rescued Kuwait after the 1990 Iraqi invasion, and later used it as a launchpad for the 2003 invasion to oust Saddam Hussein.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas dominate the economy. Skilled workforce, raw materials, and food are imported. High standard of living. Financial services: stock market lost 40% of value in 2008.



**INSIGHT:** During the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq deliberately set fire to 800 of Kuwait's 950 oil wells



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of Kuwait

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1961

**CAPITAL:** Kuwait City

**POPULATION:** 3.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 6880 sq. miles  
(17,820 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 494 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, English

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 45%,  
Shi'a Muslim 40%, Christian, Hindu,  
and other 15%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Kuwaiti 45%, other Arab 35%,  
South Asian 9%, other 7%, Iranian 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Kuwaiti dinar = 1000 fils

# Kyrgyzstan



A small and mountainous landlocked state in central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is one of the least urbanized ex-Soviet republics, and was slow to develop its own sense of cultural identity.



## GEOGRAPHY

The mountainous spurs of the Tien Shan range contain glaciers, alpine meadows, forests, and narrow valleys. Semidesert in the west.



## CLIMATE

Varies from permanent snow and cold deserts at high altitudes, to hot deserts in low regions.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnic Kyrgyz have only been in the majority since the late 1980s – due to a high birth rate and the emigration of ethnic Russians. Wary of losing skills vital to the economy, the government has attempted to deter Russians from leaving; concessions include making Russian an official language. There are some tensions between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, and a trend toward greater Islamization, particularly in the poorer south.



## THE ECONOMY

Mainly still under state control; corruption issues. Agriculture employs a third of the labor force. Cotton, wool, meat, and tobacco exports. Mercury, gold, and antimony are mined. Great potential for hydroelectric power.

**INSIGHT:** *Kyrgyz folklore is based around the 1000-year-old poem, Manas, which takes a week to recite*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kyrgyz Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Bishkek

**POPULATION:** 5.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 76,641 sq. miles  
(198,500 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 72 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kyrgyz\*, Russian\*, Uzbek, Tatar, Ukrainian

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 70%, Orthodox Christian 30%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Kyrgyz 69%, Uzbek 14%, Russian 9%, other 6%, Dungan 1%, Uighur 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Som = 100 tyiyn





A French colony prior to 1953, Laos lies landlocked in southeast Asia. Heavily bombed during the Vietnam War, it fell in 1975 to communist insurgents, whose regime remains in power.



## GEOGRAPHY

Largely forested mountains, broadening in the north to a plateau. Lowlands along the Mekong Valley.



## CLIMATE

Monsoon rains September–May. The rest of the year is hot and dry.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

There are over 60 ethnic groups. Lowland Laotians (Lao Loum) live along the Mekong River and are rice farmers. Upland and highland Laotians (Lao Theung and Lao Soung) traditionally employ environmentally damaging slash-and-burn farming, and grow illegal cash crops (notably opium). Government efforts to reform these practices are resisted.



**INSIGHT:** *Three small Laotian kingdoms were unified under French control in 1899*



## THE ECONOMY

One of world's least developed nations. Poor infrastructure. Gold, copper, electricity, timber, garments, and coffee are exported. Levels of foreign investment are rising.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Lao People's Democratic Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1953

**CAPITAL:** Vientiane

**POPULATION:** 6.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 91,428 sq. miles (236,800 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 76 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Lao\*, Mon-Khmer, Yao, Vietnamese, Chinese, French

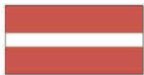
**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist 65%, other (including animist) 34%, Christian 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Lao Loum 66%, Lao Theung 30%, Lao Soung 2%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** One-party state

**CURRENCY:** New kip = 100 at

# Latvia



Latvia lies on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. Like its Baltic neighbors, it regained independence from Moscow in 1991, and joined the EU and NATO in 2004.



## GEOGRAPHY

A flat coastal plain which is deeply indented by the Gulf of Riga. Poor drainage creates many bogs and swamps in the forested interior.



## CLIMATE

Temperate, with warm summers and cold winters. There is steady rainfall throughout the year.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Latvians make up just under two-thirds of the population and are mostly Lutheran. They have been officially favored by the state since 1991 over the largely Orthodox Christian Russian minority. Latvian was declared the only official language in 2000 and has been used exclusively in schools since 2004. This discrimination has strained relations with neighboring Russia. Women enjoy full equality. The divorce rate is high.



## THE ECONOMY

Service-led economy. After fast growth, global credit crunch brought Latvia to verge of bankruptcy in 2008: banks were bailed out, stringent austerity measures imposed. Worst recession in EU ensued. Back to fastest growth in EU in 2012–2013. Adopted euro in 2014.



**INSIGHT:** In Latvia, life expectancy for men is ten years less than for women



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Latvia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Riga

**POPULATION:** 2.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 24,938 sq. miles  
(64,589 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 84 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Latvian\*, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Other 43%, Lutheran 24%, Roman Catholic 18%, Orthodox Christian 15%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Latvian 62%, Russian 27%, Belarussian 3%, other 4%, Ukrainian 2%, Polish 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Lebanon

Once a vibrant cultural hotspot, Lebanon suffered 14 years of civil war and occupation until a 1989 peace deal. It now fears spillover from neighboring Syria's own civil war.



## GEOGRAPHY

Behind a narrow Mediterranean coastal plain, two parallel mountain ranges run the length of the country, separated by the fertile Beqaa Valley.



## CLIMATE

Winters are mild and summers are hot, with high coastal humidity. Snow falls on high ground in winter.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Huge gulf exists between the poor and a small, rich elite. Politics reflects divisions between the traditional ruling Maronite Christians and Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. A 1989 power-sharing deal ended civil war. Syria acted as power broker until made to withdraw in 2005. Political crises add to instability. Israel attacked in 2006 in a botched bid to crush Iran-backed Hezbollah militants. Lebanon hosts over a million Syrian refugees and 450,000 from Palestine.



## THE ECONOMY

Wine and fruit. Much infrastructure destroyed. Instability undermines Beirut's role as regional financial center. High public debt. Refugee influx.



**INSIGHT:** *The Cedar of Lebanon has been the nation's symbol for more than 2000 years*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Lebanese Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1941

**CAPITAL:** Beirut

**POPULATION:** 4.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 4015 sq. miles  
(10,400 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1215 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, French, Armenian, Assyrian

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 60%, Christian 39%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 95%, Armenian 4%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Lebanese pound = 100 piastres

# Lesotho



The landlocked Kingdom of Lesotho is entirely surrounded by – and economically dependent on – South Africa, which even sent in troops to restore calm after rioting in 1998.



## GEOGRAPHY

A high mountainous plateau, cut by valleys and ravines. The Maluti Range runs through the center. The Drakensberg Range lies to the east.



## CLIMATE

Temperate. Summers are hot with torrential rain storms. Snow is frequent in the mountains in winter.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The overwhelming majority of people are Sotho, though there are some South Asians, Europeans, and Chinese. A strong sense of national identity has tended to minimize ethnic tensions. Many men work as migrant laborers in South Africa, leaving women to run households.



**INSIGHT:** *Lesotho has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa – but one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS too*



## THE ECONOMY

Dependent on South Africa. Water and energy exported from Highlands Water Scheme. Subsistence farming. Garment exports struggle to compete. HIV/AIDS is depleting workforce.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Lesotho

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1966

**CAPITAL:** Maseru

**POPULATION:** 2.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 11,720 sq. miles  
(30,355 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 179 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Sesotho\*, isiZulu

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 90%, traditional beliefs 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Sotho 99%, European and Asian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Loti = 100 lisente



# Liberia



Liberia, on Africa's Atlantic coast, was founded as a republic of freed slaves. A brutal coup in 1980 and years of civil war have left a legacy of gang violence and looting.



## GEOGRAPHY

A coastline of beaches and mangrove swamps rises to forested plateaus and highlands inland.



## CLIMATE

High temperatures. There is only one wet season, from May to October, except in the extreme southeast.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The key social distinction used to be between Americo-Liberians – descendants of freed slaves – and the indigenous tribal peoples. However, political assimilation and intermarriage have eased tensions. Intertribal tension is now a much more serious problem, fueling the 1990–2003 civil war. A deadly Ebola outbreak hit the country in 2014.



**INSIGHT:** Liberia is named after the people liberated from slavery who arrived from the US in the 1800s



## THE ECONOMY

War caused economic collapse. Rubber is key export. Bans now lifted on timber and diamond exports. Revenue from merchant shipping licenses. Debt burden. Vast iron ore reserves. Shutdown in 2014 due to Ebola.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Liberia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1847

**CAPITAL:** Monrovia

**POPULATION:** 4.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 43,000 sq. miles  
(111,370 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 116 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kpelle, Vai, Bassa, Kru, Grebo, Kissi, Gola, Loma, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 40%, traditional beliefs 40%, Muslim 20%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Indigenous tribes (12 groups) 49%, Kpellé 20%, Bassa 16%, Gio 8%, Krou 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Liberian dollar = 100 cents

# Libya



Situated on north Africa's Mediterranean coast, Libya was declared a revolutionary state in 1969 by Colonel Gaddafi. Civil war, launched in the 2011 "Arab Spring," ousted his regime.



## GEOGRAPHY

Apart from the coastal strip and a mountain range in the south, Libya is desert or semidesert.



## CLIMATE

Hot and arid. The coastal area has a temperate climate, with mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers.

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY



Once a nation of nomads and livestock herders, it is almost 80% urban. Gaddafi's revolution wiped out private enterprise and the middle classes, and promoted Islam and African unity. Sanctions were lifted after Libya offered compensation for terrorist bombings and ended its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program. In 2011, rebels from the east took power with international help, but failed to unite the country. Tripoli is in the sway of Islamist militias, while rival parliaments vie for political control.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil is key export. Dates, olives, and fruit grow in oases, but most food is imported. Recent instability. Corruption and mismanagement.



**INSIGHT:** 90% of Libya is still desert, despite grand irrigation projects



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of Libya

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1951

**CAPITAL:** Tripoli

**POPULATION:** 6.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 679,358 sq. miles  
(1,759,540 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 9 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Tuareg

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 97%,  
other 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab and Berber 97%,  
other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** Libyan dinar

= 1000 dirhams



# Liechtenstein

Perched in the Alps between Switzerland and Austria, the state of Liechtenstein became an independent principality of the Holy Roman Empire in 1719. It has close links with Switzerland.



## GEOGRAPHY

The upper Rhine Valley covers the western third of the country. The mountains and narrow valleys of the eastern Alps make up the remainder.



## CLIMATE

Warm, dry summers. Winters are cold, with heavy snow in the mountains from December to March.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The principality's role as a financial center accounts for its many foreign residents (a third of the population). Half of the workforce are cross-border commuters. Living standards are high, with few social tensions. Linked by a customs union since 1924, Switzerland handles Liechtenstein's foreign affairs and defense issues.

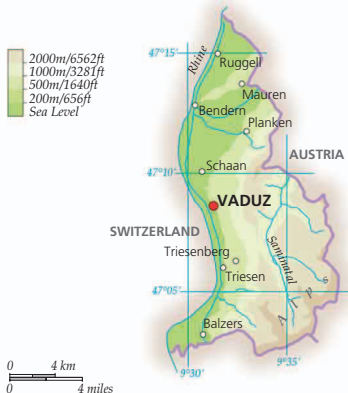


**INSIGHT:** *Women in Liechtenstein obtained the vote only in 1984*



## THE ECONOMY

Banking secrecy (now modified) and low taxes help attract foreign investment. Anti-money-laundering rules are recent. Diversified exports include precision instruments, dental products, and chemicals.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Principality of Liechtenstein

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1719

**CAPITAL:** Vaduz

**POPULATION:** 37,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 62 sq. miles (160 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 597 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** German\*, Alemannish dialect, Italian

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 79%, other 13%, Protestant 8%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Liechtensteiner 66%, other 12%, Swiss 10%, Austrian 6%, German 3%, Italian 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Swiss franc = 100 rappen/centimes

# Lithuania



Lying on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, Lithuania is the largest of the Baltic states. The first Soviet republic to declare independence from Moscow in 1991, it joined the EU in 2004.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly flat with moors, bogs, and an intensively farmed central lowland. Numerous lakes and forested sandy ridges in the east.



## CLIMATE

Coastal location moderates continental extremes. Cold winters, cool summers, and steady rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Homogeneous population, with Lithuanians forming a large majority. Only 1200 Jews, known as Litvaks, remain in Lithuania. Strong Roman Catholic tradition and historic links with Poland. There are better relations among ethnic groups than in other Baltic states and interethnic marriages are fairly common. However, ethnic Russians and Poles see a threat from "Lithuanianization." A large income gap has grown since independence.



## THE ECONOMY

High-tech and heavy industries: engineering, shipbuilding, food processing. Bounced back from deep recession in 2009. Litas pegged to euro; adoption of euro set for 2015.



**INSIGHT:** *The "amber coast" of Lithuania produces most of the world's amber – fossilized resin*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Lithuania

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Vilnius

**POPULATION:** 3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 25,174 sq. miles  
(65,200 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 119 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Lithuanian\*, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 77%, other and nonreligious 17%, Russian Orthodox 4%, Protestant 1%, Old Believers 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Lithuanian 85%, Polish 7%, Russian 6%, Belarussian 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Litas = 100 centu





# Luxembourg

Part of the plateau of the Ardennes in western Europe, Luxembourg is one of Europe's richest states. A tax haven and banking center, it is also home to key EU institutions.



## GEOGRAPHY

Dense Ardennes forests in the north, with a low, open plateau to the south. Undulating terrain throughout.



## CLIMATE

The climate is moist, with warm summers and mild winters. Snow is common only in the Ardennes.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnic tensions are rare, despite a large proportion of foreigners (over a third of residents). Integration has been straightforward; most are fellow western Europeans and Catholics, mainly from Italy and Portugal. Low unemployment and high salaries promote stability. Divorce rates are rising and marriage is becoming less common.



**INSIGHT:** *Luxembourg's capital is home to around 2000 investment funds and 150 banks*



## THE ECONOMY

Traditional industries such as steelmaking have given way to the banking and service sectors. Low taxes and banking secrecy laws attract foreign investors.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1867

**CAPITAL:** Luxembourg-Ville

**POPULATION:** 500,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 998 sq. miles (2586 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 501 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Luxembourgish\*, German\*, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 97%, Protestant, Orthodox Christian, and Jewish 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Luxembourger 62%, foreign residents 38%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# Macedonia



Landlocked Macedonia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, was hit hard in the 1990s by sanctions on its northern trading partners, and in 2001 by conflict with its Albanian minority.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly mountainous or hilly, with deep river basins in the center. Plains in the northeast and southwest.



## CLIMATE

Continental climate with wet springs and dry autumns. Heavy snowfalls in northern mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Slav Macedonians are mostly Orthodox Christians, with some Muslims. Officially, Muslim Albanians account for 25% of the population, but they claim to number a third. Albanian militants fought a bitter war against the state in 2001. A peace deal promised greater equality, but is yet to be fully implemented. A major stumbling block to EU and NATO accession is Greece's objection to the name Macedonia, in order to prevent any possibility of claims to historic "Macedonian" lands in north Greece.



## THE ECONOMY

Steel, minerals, clothing, shoes, and tobacco exported. High unemployment. Organized crime and large gray economy. Progress with reforms. Investment boosted by EU candidate status.



**INSIGHT:** *Ohrid is the deepest lake in Europe at 964 ft (294 m)*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Macedonia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Skopje

**POPULATION:** 2.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 9781 sq. miles (25,333 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 212 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Macedonian\*, Albanian\*

Turkish, Romani, Serbian

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 65%, Muslim 29%, Roman Catholic 4%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Macedonian 64%, Albanian 25%, Turkish 4%, Roma 3%, Serb 2%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential-parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Macedonian denar = 100 deni



# Madagascar

Lying off east Africa in the Indian Ocean, the former French colony of Madagascar is the world's fourth-largest island. Power struggles erupted onto the streets in 2002 and 2009.



## GEOGRAPHY

More than two-thirds is a savanna-covered plateau, which drops in the east through rainforests to the coast.

## CLIMATE



Tropical and often hit by cyclones. Monsoons affect the east coast. The southwest is much drier.

## PEOPLE & SOCIETY



People are Malay-Indonesian in origin, intermixed with later migrants from Africa. The main ethnic division is between the Merina of the central plateau and the poorer *côtier* (coastal) peoples. The Merina were the country's historic rulers, and remain the social elite. The 2009 unrest led to four years of political transition.

**INSIGHT:** 80% of Madagascar's plants and many of its animal species are found nowhere else



## THE ECONOMY

Most people are farmers. Cash crops are vanilla, coffee, and cloves. Garments and shrimp also exported. Political crises deter investors.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Madagascar

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Antananarivo

**POPULATION:** 22.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 226,656 sq. miles  
(587,040 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 102 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Malagasy\*, French\*, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Traditional beliefs 52%, Christian (mainly Roman Catholic) 41%, Muslim 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other Malay 46%, Merina 26%, Betsimisaraka 15%, Betsileo 12%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential-parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Ariary = 5 iraimbilanja

# Malawi



A former colony of the UK, Malawi lies landlocked in southeast Africa, following the Great Rift Valley. Its name means “the land where the sun is reflected in the water like fire.”



## GEOGRAPHY

Lake Nyasa takes up one-fifth of the landscape. Highlands lie west of the lake. Much of the land is covered by forests and savanna.



## CLIMATE

Mainly subtropical. The south is hot and humid. Highlands are cooler.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Malawians share a common Bantu origin. Protestant Chewa live in central regions, while Muslim Yao live along the lake and in the south. Unlike neighboring states, ethnicity has not been exploited for political ends. Multiparty elections in 1994 ended the 30-year dictatorship of Dr. Banda. Half of the population lives in poverty.



**INSIGHT:** Lake Nyasa is 353 miles (568 km) in length and contains at least 500 species of fish



## THE ECONOMY

Mainly subsistence farming. Tobacco accounts for over half of export earnings. Tea and sugar are grown. Drought and corruption are problems.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Malawi

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1964

**CAPITAL:** Lilongwe

**POPULATION:** 16.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 45,745 sq. miles  
(118,480 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 451 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Chewa, Lomwe, Yao, Ngoni, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Protestant 55%, Muslim 20%, Roman Catholic 20%, traditional beliefs 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bantu 99%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Malawi kwacha = 100 tambala



# Malaysia

Malaysia stretches 1240 miles (2000 km) across southeast Asia from the Malay peninsula to Sabah in eastern Borneo. Federated in 1963, it included Singapore for two years.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Malay Peninsula has central mountains, an eastern coastal belt, and fertile western plains. Swampy coastal plains rise to mountains on Borneo.



## CLIMATE

Warm equatorial. Rainfall always heavy, but with distinct rainy seasons.



**INSIGHT:** *Malaysia is southeast Asia's major tourist destination, with over 25 million visitors a year*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Malaysia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1963

**CAPITALS:** Kuala Lumpur; Putrajaya (administrative)

**POPULATION:** 29.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 127,316 sq. miles (329,750 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 234 people per sq. mile



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The key distinction is between Malays (Bumiputras, literally “sons of the soil”) and the Chinese, who traditionally controlled most economic activity. Since the 1970s, Malays have been favored for education and jobs, in order to address this imbalance.



## THE ECONOMY

Successful industrial base includes electronics, manufacturing, and heavy industry. Tourism is a major earner. Leading producer of palm oil, tin, and tropical hardwoods.

**LANGUAGES:** Bahasa Malaysia\*, Malay, Chinese, Tamil, English

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 61%, Buddhist 19%, Christian 9%, Hindu 6%, other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Malay 53%, Chinese 26%, indigenous tribes 12%, Indian 8%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Ringgit = 100 sen

# Maldives



Set in the Indian Ocean, southwest of Sri Lanka, the Maldives is an archipelago of 1191 small coral islands, or atolls. 200 are inhabited. The word atoll comes from the Dhivehi word “atolu.”



## GEOGRAPHY

Consists of low-lying islands and coral atolls. The larger ones are covered in lush, tropical vegetation.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Rain falls throughout the year, but is heaviest June–November, during the monsoon. Violent storms occasionally hit the northern islands.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Maldivians, who are all Sunni Muslim, are descended from Sinhalese, Dravidian, Arab, and black ancestors. A third of the population live on Male'. Tourism has grown on separate resort islands away from residents. Politics was controlled by a group of influential families until young reformers pushed for parties to be legalized in 2005. However, legislative stalemate followed, and a controversial presidential election in 2013 returned the former elite to power.



## THE ECONOMY

Fluctuating tourist industry is the economic mainstay. Fish, especially tuna, are the main export. Upgraded to a “middle income” country, despite 2004 tsunami damage.

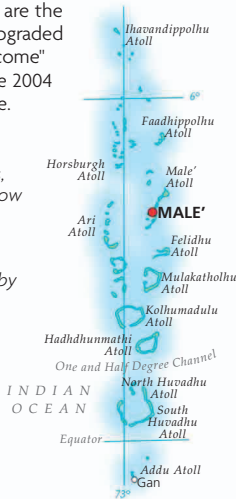
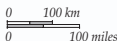


## INSIGHT:

*The islands, which all lie below 4 ft (1.2 m), are threatened by rising sea levels, brought about by global warming and climatic changes*



Sea Level



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Maldives

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1965

**CAPITAL:** Male'

**POPULATION:** 300,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 116 sq. miles  
(300 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 2586 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Dhivehi\* (Maldivian), Sinhala, Tamil, Arabic

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 100%

**ETHNIC MIX:** All Maldivians are of Arab–Sinhalese–Malay descent

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Rufiyaa  
= 100 laari



A former French colony, Mali is landlocked in the heart of west Africa. The 1991 coup ended the 23-year dictatorship of Moussa Traoré and ushered in multiparty elections from 1992.



## GEOGRAPHY

The northern half lies in the Sahara. The inland delta of the Niger River flows through grassy savanna in the south.



## CLIMATE

In the south, intensely hot, dry weather precedes the westerly rains. The north is almost rainless.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people live in the south and are farmers, herders, or river fishermen. Nomadic Fulani and Tuareg herders travel the northern plains. Rebellion broke out there in 2012, initially Tuareg-led, but Islamist insurgents soon seized key towns. They were pushed back with international help, but low-level conflict continues. Women have little status.



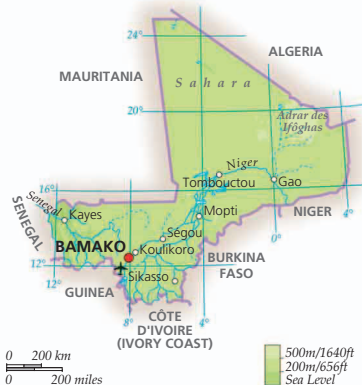
**INSIGHT:** *Tombouctou (Timbuktu)*  
was the center of the 14th-century

*Malinké trading empire*



## THE ECONOMY

Widespread poverty. Less than 2% of land can be cultivated. Vulnerable to drought. Gold, high-quality cotton, and livestock account for 90% of exports. Tourism held back by instability and kidnappings by Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Mali

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Bamako

**POPULATION:** 15.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 478,764 sq. miles  
(1,240,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 32 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bambara, Fulani, Senufo, Soninke, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 90%, traditional beliefs 6%, Christian 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bambara 52%, other 18%, Fulani 11%, Saracolé 7%, Soninka 7%, Tuareg 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Malta



The densely populated Maltese archipelago lies between Africa and Europe. Controlled throughout its history by successive colonial powers, it gained independence from the UK in 1964.



## GEOGRAPHY

The main island of Malta has low hills and a ragged coastline with numerous harbors, bays, sandy beaches, and rocky coves. The island of Gozo is more densely vegetated.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean climate. There are many hours of sunshine all year round, with very little rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Over the centuries, the Maltese have been subject to Arab, Sicilian, Spanish, French, and British influences. Today, the population is socially conservative and devoutly Roman Catholic – Malta only legalized divorce in 2011, the last European country except the Vatican to do so. Population density is among the highest in the world. Illegal migration from Africa has increased since Malta joined the EU in 2004.



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism provides 30% of GDP. Joined eurozone in 2008. Developing offshore banking, high-tech industry. Semiconductors exported. Most goods have to be imported.



**INSIGHT:** *Malta is the only country to receive the George Cross for gallantry, in 1942 for national resilience to relentless German bombardment*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Malta

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1964

**CAPITAL:** Valletta

**POPULATION:** 400,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 122 sq. miles  
(316 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 3226 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Maltese\*, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 98%, other and nonreligious 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Maltese 96%, other 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Marshall Islands



Under US rule as part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands until independence in 1986, the Marshall Islands comprises a group of 34 widely scattered atolls.



## GEOGRAPHY

Narrow coral rings with sandy beaches enclosing lagoons. Those in the south have thicker vegetation. Kwajalein is the world's largest atoll.



## CLIMATE

Tropical oceanic, cooled year round by northeast trade winds.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Over half the population live in Majuro, the capital and commercial center. Life on the outlying islands is still traditional, based around subsistence agriculture and fishing. Tensions are high due to poor living conditions, especially in periods of drought or flooding. Society is matrilineal, with land and titles handed down through the mother's clan.

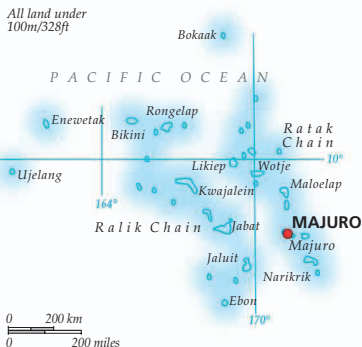


**INSIGHT:** In 1954, Bikini Atoll was the site for the testing of the largest US H-bomb – the 18–22 megaton Bravo



## THE ECONOMY

Almost totally dependent on US aid and the rent paid by the US for its missile base on Kwajalein Atoll. High unemployment. Revenue from licenses to fish in Marshallese waters for tuna. Copra and coconut oil are the only significant agricultural exports.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of the Marshall Islands

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1986

**CAPITAL:** Majuro

**POPULATION:** 69,747

**TOTAL AREA:** 70 sq. miles (181 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 996 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Marshallese\*, English\*, Japanese, German

**RELIGIONS:** Protestant 90%, Roman Catholic 8%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Micronesian 90%, other 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** US dollar = 100 cents

# Mauritania



Two-thirds of Mauritania's territory is desert – the only productive land is that drained by the Senegal River. The country has taken a strongly Arab direction since 1964.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Sahara, barren except for some scattered oases, covers the north. Savanna lands lie to the south.



## CLIMATE

The climate is generally hot and dry, aggravated by the dusty *harmattan* wind. Summer rain in the south, virtually none in the north.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Maures control political and economic life. Family solidarity among nomadic peoples is particularly strong. Ethnic tension centers on the oppression of the black minority. Tens of thousands of blacks are estimated to be in illegal slavery. Coups have interrupted civilian rule in recent years.

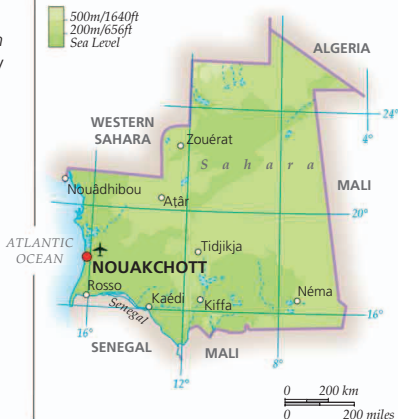


**INSIGHT:** *Slavery officially became illegal in Mauritania in 1980, but de facto slavery still persists*



## THE ECONOMY

Agriculture and herding. Iron, copper, and gold mining. World's largest gypsum deposits. Offshore oil from 2006. Rich fishing grounds.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Islamic Republic of Mauritania

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Nouakchott

**POPULATION:** 3.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 397,953 sq. miles  
(1,030,700 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 10 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Hassaniyah Arabic, Wolof, French

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 100%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Maure 81%, Wolof 7%, Tukolor 5%, other 4%, Soninka 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Ouguiya = 5 khoums



# Mauritius

The islands that make up Mauritius lie in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar. They have enjoyed considerable economic success following recent industrial diversification and expansion.



## GEOGRAPHY

The volcanic main island of Mauritius is ringed by coral reefs, and rises from the coast to a fertile central plateau. The outer islands – Rodrigues, the Agalega Islands, and the Cargados Carajos Shoals – lie some 300 miles (500 km) to the north.



## CLIMATE

Warm and humid. Tropical storms are frequent December–March, the hottest and wettest months.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are descendants of laborers brought over from India in the 19th century. A small minority of French descent form the wealthiest group. Creoles (descendants of African slaves) complain of discrimination. Literacy is high. Health care is free. Crime rates are low. Less-developed Rodrigues has been self-governing since 2001.



## THE ECONOMY

Clothing manufacture, tourism, and sugar. Loss of preferential trade terms for sugar and textiles. Offshore financial center. Growing outsourcing and ICT industries. Most food is imported.

**INSIGHT:** *The islands form part of the Mascarene Archipelago – once a land bridge between Asia and Africa*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Mauritius

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1968

**CAPITAL:** Port Louis

**POPULATION:** 1.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 718 sq. miles (1860 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1671 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French Creole, Hindi, Urdu,

Tamil, Chinese, English\*, French

**RELIGIONS:** Hindu 48%, Roman Catholic 24%, Muslim 17%, Protestant 9%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Indo-Mauritian 68%,

Creole 27%, Sino-Mauritian 3%,

Franco-Mauritian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Mauritian rupee = 100 cents

# Mexico



Mexico stretches from the US border southward into the ancient Aztec and Mayan heartlands. Independence from Spain came in 1836. One in five Mexicans lives in the sprawling capital.



## GEOGRAPHY

Coastal plains along the Pacific and Atlantic seabords rise to a high arid central plateau. To the east and west are the Sierra Madre mountain ranges. Limestone lowlands form the projecting Yucatan peninsula.



## CLIMATE

The plateau and high mountains are warm for much of the year. Pacific coast is tropical: storms occur mostly March–December. Northwest is dry.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Mexicans are *mestizos* of Spanish–Amerindian descent. Rural Amerindians are largely segregated from Hispanic society and most live in poverty, though the state promotes their culture. The Zapatista movement backs indigenous rights. Few women in male-dominated politics and business. Narcotics-related violent crime is rising.



## THE ECONOMY

One of world's largest oil producers. Corn, fruit, vegetables, sugar are cash crops. NAFTA has boosted exports, but exposes farmers to subsidized US competition. Wealth disparity. Hit hard by 2008–2009 global downturn and swine flu crisis.



**INSIGHT:** *More people cross the US–Mexican border each year – illegally or legally – than any other border in the world*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** United Mexican States

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1836

**CAPITAL:** Mexico City

**POPULATION:** 122 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 761,602 sq. miles  
(1,972,550 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 166 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Nahuatl, Mayan,

Zapotec, Mixtec, Otomi, Totonac, Tzotzil

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 77%, other 14%, Protestant 6%, nonreligious 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 60%, Amerindian 30%, European 9%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Mexican peso = 100 centavos



The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), situated in the western Pacific, comprise 607 islands and atolls grouped into four main island states: Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Yap.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mixture of high volcanic islands with forested interiors, and low-lying coral atolls. Some of the islands have coastal mangrove swamps.

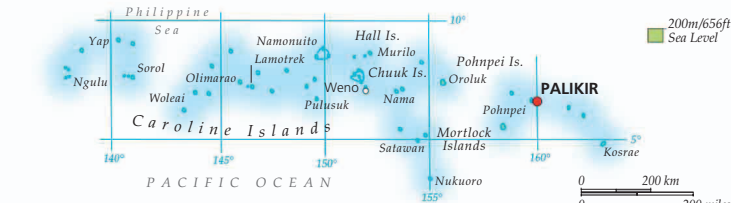


## CLIMATE

Tropical, with high humidity. There is very heavy rainfall outside the January–March dry season.



**INSIGHT:** *Chuuk's lagoon contains the sunken wrecks of over 100 Japanese ships and 270 planes from World War II*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federated States of Micronesia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1986

**CAPITAL:** Palikir (Pohnpei Island)

**POPULATION:** 106,104

**TOTAL AREA:** 271 sq. miles (702 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 392 people per sq. mile



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Micronesians are physically, culturally, and linguistically diverse. Melanesians live on Yap, Polynesians in Pohnpei. The supply of electricity and running water is limited. Society is based on matrilineal clans.



## THE ECONOMY

Dependent on US aid. Fishing licenses are a key source of foreign revenue. Tourism, fishing, betel nuts, copra are economic mainstays. Trust fund created to reduce aid reliance.

**LANGUAGES:** Trukese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, Yapese, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 47%, other 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Chuukese 49%, Pohnpeian 24%, other 14%, Kosraean 6%, Yapese 5%, Asian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Nonparty system

**CURRENCY:** US dollar = 100 cents

# Moldova



The most densely populated of the former Soviet republics, Moldova has strong ethnic, linguistic, and cultural links with Romania, but relations with Russia remain paramount.



## GEOGRAPHY

Steppes and hilly plains are drained by the Dniester and Prut rivers.



## CLIMATE

Warm summers and relatively mild winters. Moderate rainfall is evenly spread throughout the year.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

A shared heritage with Romania defines national identity, though in 1994 Moldovans voted against possible reunification with Romania. Most of the population is engaged in intensive agriculture. Transnistria is a breakaway state along the east bank of the Dniester, home to a largely ethnic Slav population. The Gagauz, in the south, have accepted autonomy.



**INSIGHT:** *Vast underground wine vaults contain entire "streets" of bottles built into rock quarries*



## THE ECONOMY

Poorest country in Europe. Mainly agricultural: produces wine, tobacco, fruit. Food processing and textiles. Depends on Russia for raw materials, fuel, exports. Political instability.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Moldova

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Chisinau

**POPULATION:** 3.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 13,067 sq. miles  
(33,843 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 269 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Moldovan\*, Ukrainian, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 93%, other 6%, Baptist 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Moldovan 84%, Ukrainian 7%, Gagauz 5%, Russian 2%, Bulgarian 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Moldovan leu = 100 bani



# Monaco



Monaco is a tiny principality on the Côte d'Azur. Its destiny changed radically when the casino was opened in 1863. Today, it promotes its image as an upmarket, glamorous destination.



## GEOGRAPHY

A rocky promontory overlooking a narrow coastal strip that has been enlarged through land reclamation.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean. Summers are hot and dry; days with 12 hours of sunshine are not uncommon. Winters are mild and sunny.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Less than 20% of residents are Monégasques. Almost half are French, the rest Italian, American, British, Belgian, and others. Nationals enjoy considerable privileges, including housing subsidies to protect them from Monaco's high property prices, and the right of first refusal before a job can be offered to a foreigner. Women have equal status, but only acquired the vote in 1962. Prince Albert married South African swimmer Charlene Wittstock in 2011.

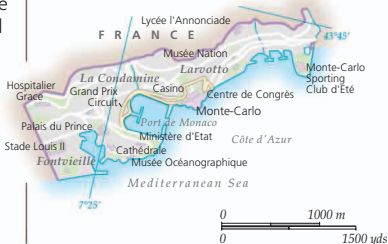


## THE ECONOMY

Tourism, gambling, financial services. Banking secrecy laws and tax-haven conditions attract foreign investment. Close links and customs union with France (but not in EU). No resources: depends on imports.



**INSIGHT:** High-profile social and sporting events attract large crowds each spring, including the Rose Ball, Tennis Open, and Grand Prix



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Principality of Monaco

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1861

**CAPITAL:** Monaco-Ville

**POPULATION:** 36,136

**TOTAL AREA:** 0.75 sq. miles  
(1.95 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 48,181 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French\*, Italian, Monégasque, English

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 89%,  
Protestant 6%, other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** French 47%, other 21%,  
Italian 16%, Monégasque 16%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed monarchical-  
parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# Mongolia



Landlocked between Russia and China, Mongolia is a huge, isolated, and sparsely populated nation. Over two-thirds of the country is part of the Gobi Desert.



## GEOGRAPHY

A mountainous steppe plateau in the north, with lakes in the north and west. The desert region of the Gobi dominates the south.



## CLIMATE

Continental. Mild summers and long, dry, very cold winters, with heavy snowfall. Temperatures can drop as low as  $-22^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Mongolia was unified by Genghis Khan in 1206 and was later absorbed into Manchu China. A majority of ethnic Mongolians live within China in Inner Mongolia. Tibetan Buddhism dominates. The traditional, nomadic way of life has been eroded as urban migration continues, spurred by ferocious winters, known as *zud*, which can devastate the rural economy.



## THE ECONOMY

Rich deposits of oil, coal, copper, uranium, and other minerals remain largely untapped. Cashmere exports. Democracy, from 1990, brought a shift toward a market economy, but also rising poverty. State involvement in mining is an issue. Agriculture uses a third of the workforce, mainly as herders.



**INSIGHT:** *Horseracing, wrestling, and archery are the national sports*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Mongolia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1924

**CAPITAL:** Ulan Bator

**POPULATION:** 2.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 604,247 sq. miles  
(1,565,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 5 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Khalkha Mongolian\*, Kazakh

**RELIGIONS:** Tibetan Buddhist 50%, nonreligious 40%, Shamanist and Christian 6%, Muslim 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Khalkh 95%, Kazakh 4%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential–parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Tugrik (tögrög) = 100 mōngö





# Montenegro



Perched on the Adriatic coast, this tiny republic became a separate state in 2006, after 88 years of federation with its neighbors in various forms of the state of Yugoslavia.



## GEOGRAPHY

A narrow coastal strip on the Adriatic. Fertile lowland plains around Lake Scutari. Mountainous interior with deep canyons.



## CLIMATE

The lowlands have hot, dry summers and mild winters. Heavy snow in winter in the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Montenegrins are Orthodox Christians. They speak a language closely related to Serbian, that also uses Cyrillic script. Muslim Albanians, who make up 70% of the population of the southern Ulcinj region, supported independence. Foreigners, particularly Russians, British, and Serbs, are buying Adriatic real estate.



**INSIGHT:** *Dark forests once cloaked Montenegro's mountains; its name means "Black Mountain"*



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism (along Adriatic) drives growth. Bauxite reserves, aluminum industry. Return of investment, foreign aid. Crackdown on cigarette smuggling, black market, corruption led to approval in 2010 as candidate for EU membership. Uses euro, though not part of eurozone.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Montenegro

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 2006

**CAPITAL:** Podgorica

**POPULATION:** 600,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 5332 sq. miles  
(13,812 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 113 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Montenegrin\*, Serbian, Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 74%, Muslim 18%, Roman Catholic 4%, other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Montenegrin 43%, Serb 32%, other 12%, Bosniak 8%, Albanian 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# Morocco



Morocco is a former French colony in northwest Africa. Since 1975, it has occupied the territory of Western Sahara, the future of which is yet to be determined by UN-supervised referendum.



## GEOGRAPHY

Fertile coastal plain is interrupted in the east by the Rif Mountains. Atlas Mountain ranges to the south. Beyond lies the outer fringe of the Sahara.



## CLIMATE

Ranges from temperate and warm in the north, to semiarid in the south. Cooler in the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Berber minority descend from north Africa's original inhabitants, and live mainly in mountain villages. The Arab majority inhabits the lowlands. Morocco is unusual among Arab states in granting Jews religious freedom and civil rights. The king is spiritual leader and head of state. During the 2011 "Arab Spring" protesters called for more democracy. Islamists have gained influence in politics. Islamist militancy and the emergence of terrorist cells are of concern.



## THE ECONOMY

Major exporter of phosphates. Investment in tourism and agriculture. Fishing. Relations with EU strained over illegal immigrants and cannabis trade.

**INSIGHT:** *Karuein University in Fès, founded in 859 CE, is the world's oldest existing educational institution*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Morocco  
**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1956  
**CAPITAL:** Rabat  
**POPULATION:** 33 million  
**TOTAL AREA:** 172,316 sq. miles (446,300 sq. km)  
**DENSITY:** 192 people per sq. mile  
**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Tamazight (Berber),

French, Spanish

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 99%, other (mostly Christian) 1%  
**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 70%, Berber 29%, European 1%  
**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed monarchical-parliamentary system  
**CURRENCY:** Mor. dirham = 100 centimes



# Mozambique



Mozambique lies on the southeast African coast. It was torn apart by a savage and devastating civil war between the Marxist government and a rebel faction between 1977 and 1992.



## GEOGRAPHY

Largely a savanna-covered plateau. The coast is fringed by coral reefs and lagoons. The Zambezi River bisects the country.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Temperatures are hottest on the coast. Extremes of rainfall: drought and flood.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Tensions exist between north and south, rather than between ethnic groups. Life is centered on the extended family. Polygamy is fairly common. The country is struggling with the legacy of a war that killed around a million people, and the effects of frequent floods and droughts. Half the population lives in abject poverty.



**INSIGHT:** *Maputo's busy port serves Zimbabwe and South Africa*



## THE ECONOMY

Extremely dependent on aid. Mineral potential. Cashew nuts, shrimp, cotton exported. Debt relief.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Mozambique

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** Maputo

**POPULATION:** 25.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 309,494 sq. miles  
(801,590 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 85 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Makua, Xitsonga, Sena, Lomwe, Portuguese\*

**RELIGIONS:** Traditional beliefs 56%,  
Christian 30%, Muslim 14%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Makua Lomwe 47%, Tsonga 23%,  
Malawi 12%, Shona 11%, Yao 4%, other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New metical = 100 centavos

# Myanmar (Burma)



Forming the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea in southeast Asia, Myanmar has suffered from isolation, political repression, and ethnic conflict.



## GEOGRAPHY

The fertile Irrawaddy basin lies at the center. Mountains to the west, Shan plateau to the east. Tropical rainforest covers much of the land.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Hot summers, with high humidity, and warm winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The military, in power from 1962, paid little regard to human rights, and didn't tolerate opposition. The National League for Democracy won elections in 1990, but was kept from power. Elections in 2010, nominally restoring civilian rule, were dominated by the new military-backed party. Ethnic minorities are fighting for independence.



**INSIGHT:** Myanmar is one of the world's biggest teak exporters, though reserves are diminishing rapidly



## THE ECONOMY

Corrupt, mismanaged, subject to sanctions – but gas, teak, and gems are exported. One of world's largest illegal opium producers. Goods sold on black market carry high prices.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of the Union of Myanmar

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1948

**CAPITAL:** Nay Pyi Taw

**POPULATION:** 53.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 261,969 sq. miles (678,500 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 210 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Burmese (Myanmar)\*, Shan, Karen, Rakhine, Chin, Yangbye, Kachin, Mon

**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist 89%, Christian 4%, Muslim 4%, other 2%, Animist 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Burman (Bamah) 68%, other 12%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Kyat = 100 pyas



# Namibia

Located in southwestern Africa, Namibia gained independence from South Africa in 1990, after 24 years of armed struggle. It regained the territory of Walvis Bay in 1994.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Namib Desert stretches along the coastal strip. Inland, a ridge of mountains rises to 8000 ft (2500 m). The Kalahari Desert lies in the east.



## CLIMATE

Almost rainless. The coast is usually shrouded in thick fog, unless the hot, dry *berg* wind is blowing.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Ovambo, the main ethnic group, live mainly in the more populous north. Some 100,000 whites, many of German descent, are centered around Windhoek and still control the economy. The minority San and Khoi bushmen are among the oldest human communities in the world. Homosexual rights are restricted.



**INSIGHT:** *The Namib is the Earth's oldest, and one of its driest, deserts*



## THE ECONOMY

Varied mineral resources, notably uranium and diamonds. Rich offshore fishing grounds. High unemployment. HIV/AIDS epidemic. One of Africa's most skewed distributions of wealth.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Namibia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1990

**CAPITAL:** Windhoek

**POPULATION:** 2.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 318,694 sq. miles  
(825,418 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 7 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Ovambo, Kavango, English\*, Bergdama, German, Afrikaans

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 90%, traditional beliefs 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Ovambo 50%, other tribes 22%, Kavango 9%, Damara 7%, Herero 7%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Namibian dollar = 100 cents

# Nauru



Nauru lies in the Pacific, northeast of Australia.

Phosphate deposits gave its inhabitants huge temporary wealth, but economic mismanagement has left them facing ruin.



## GEOGRAPHY

A single low-lying coral atoll, with a fertile coastal belt. Coral cliffs encircle an elevated interior plateau.



## CLIMATE

Equatorial, moderated by sea breezes. Occasional long droughts.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Native Nauruans are of mixed Micronesian and Polynesian origin. Most live in simple, traditional houses and spend their money on luxury cars and consumer goods. Welfare and education are free. A diet of imported processed foods has caused widespread obesity and diabetes. Mining was left to imported laborers, mainly from Kiribati, who lived in enclaves of male-only barracks and had few rights. Many young Nauruans leave to seek a better life in Australia or New Zealand.

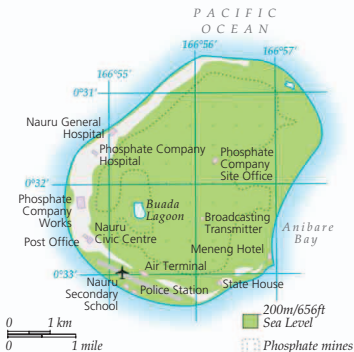


## THE ECONOMY

Phosphate revenues diminished. Sale of fishing rights only other resource. State trust fund invested badly overseas. Offshore banking facilities closed after international pressure.



**INSIGHT:** *Phosphate mining has left 80% of the island uninhabitable*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Nauru

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1968

**CAPITAL:** None

**POPULATION:** 9434

**TOTAL AREA:** 8.1 sq. miles  
(21 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1165 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Nauruan\*, Kiribati, Chinese, Tuvaluan, English

**RELIGIONS:** Nauruan Congregational Church 60%, Roman Catholic 35%, other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Nauruan 93%, Chinese 5%, other Pacific islanders 1%, European 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Nonparty system

**CURRENCY:** Australian dollar = 100 cents



# Nepal



Nepal, lying between India and China on the southern shoulder of the Himalayas, is one of the world's poorest countries. Its agricultural economy is heavily dependent on the monsoon.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly mountainous. The area includes some of the highest mountains in the world, including Mount Everest. Flat, fertile river plains form the south.



## CLIMATE

Warm monsoon season from July to October. The rest of the year is dry, sunny, and mild. Winter temperatures in the Himalayas average 14°F (−10°C).



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Tensions are few between the diverse ethnic groups. Buddhist women, including Sherpas, face fewer social restrictions than Hindus. Trafficking of women and child labor are problems. Human rights violations rose during the 1999–2006 Maoist insurgency. The peace deal led to the abolition of the monarchy and the Maoists joining the political mainstream, but fractious coalitions mean instability continues.



## THE ECONOMY

Agriculture employs two-thirds of workforce. Crops include rice and wheat. Tourism and investment affected by instability. Reliant on aid and overseas remittances. Hydropower potential.



**INSIGHT:** *Southern Nepal was the birthplace of Buddha (Prince Siddhartha Gautama) in 563 BCE*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1769

**CAPITAL:** Kathmandu

**POPULATION:** 27.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 54,363 sq. miles (140,800 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 526 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Nepali\*, Maithili, Bhojpuri

**RELIGIONS:** Hindu 81%, Buddhist 11%, Muslim 4%, other (including Christian) 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 52%, Chhetri 16%, Hill Brahman 13%, Tharu 7%, Magar 7%, Tamang 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** Nepalese rupee = 100 paisa

# Netherlands



Astride the delta of five major rivers in northwest Europe, the Netherlands built its historic wealth on maritime trade. Rotterdam is Europe's largest port.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly flat, with 27% of the land below sea level and protected by dunes, dikes, and canals. There are a few low hills in the south and east.



## CLIMATE

Mild, rainy winters and cool summers. Gales from the North Sea are common in fall and winter.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Dutch have a long history of welcoming immigrants from former colonies and refugees seeking asylum. However, lack of integration is now raising fears about the failing asylum system, immigrant crime, and militant Islam. Population is mostly urban and the density is high. The state does not try to impose a particular morality on its citizens. Laws concerning sexuality, narcotics-taking, and euthanasia are among the world's most liberal.



## THE ECONOMY

Major trading hub. High-profile multinationals. Diverse industrial base: chemicals, machinery, electronics, and metals. Costly social welfare system.



**INSIGHT:** In 2002, the Netherlands became the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of the Netherlands

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1648

**CAPITALS:** Amsterdam and The Hague

**POPULATION:** 16.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 16,033 sq. miles  
(41,526 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1283 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Dutch\*, Frisian

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 36%, other 34%, Protestant 27%, Muslim 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Dutch 82%, other 12%, Turkish 2%, Surinamese 2%, Moroccan 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents





Lying in the South Pacific, 990 miles (1600 km) southeast of Australia, New Zealand comprises North and South Islands, separated by the Cook Strait, and many smaller islands.



## GEOGRAPHY

North Island, noted for hot springs and geysers, has the bulk of the population. South Island is mostly mountainous, with eastern lowlands.



## CLIMATE

Generally temperate and damp. The far north is almost subtropical, whereas southern winters are cold.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Maoris were the first settlers, 1200 years ago. Today's majority European population is descended mainly from British migrants who settled after 1840. Maoris' living and education standards are generally lower than average. The government is continuing to negotiate the settlement of Maori land claims.



**INSIGHT:** *New Zealand was the first country to give women the vote (1893)*



## THE ECONOMY

Modern agricultural sector; world's top exporter of dairy products. Dairy vies with tourism as the biggest foreign-exchange earner. Hi-tech manufacturing. Open economy. Strong trade links.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** New Zealand

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1947

**CAPITAL:** Wellington

**POPULATION:** 4.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 103,737 sq. miles  
(268,680 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 43 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Maori\*

**RELIGIONS:** Anglican 24%, other 22%,  
Presbyterian 18%, nonreligious 16%,  
Roman Catholic 15%, Methodist 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** European 75%, Maori 15%,  
other 7%, Samoan 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** New Zealand dollar = 100 cents

# Nicaragua



Nicaragua lies at the heart of Central America. The Sandinista revolution of 1978 led to 11 years of civil war between the left-wing Sandinistas and the right-wing US-backed Contras.



## GEOGRAPHY

Extensive forested plains in the east. Central mountain region with many active volcanoes. The Pacific coastlands are dominated by lakes.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. The lowlands are hot all year round. The mountains are cooler. Prone to occasional hurricanes.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are *mestizo* (mixed Spanish–Amerindian), and there is a large white elite. Caribbean regions are home to communities of Miskito Amerindians and blacks, who gained autonomy in 1987. The revolution improved the status of women, but these gains have been undone by rampant poverty.



**INSIGHT:** Lake Nicaragua is the only freshwater lake in the world to contain marine animals



## THE ECONOMY

Textiles, coffee, meat, tobacco are main exports: affected by world price fluctuations. Remittances from abroad. Substantial debt relief has cut debt to around 50% of GDP. Corruption.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Nicaragua

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1838

**CAPITAL:** Managua

**POPULATION:** 6.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 49,998 sq. miles  
(129,494 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 133 people per sq. mile)

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, English Creole, Miskito

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 80%, Protestant Evangelical 17%, other 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 69%, White 17%, Black 9%, Amerindian 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Córdoba oro = 100 centavos



# Niger



Niger lies in west Africa, upstream from Nigeria on the Niger River. One of the world's poorest states, it was ruled by one-party or military regimes until multipartyism was allowed in 1992.



## GEOGRAPHY

The north and northeast regions are part of the Sahara. The Air Mountains in the center rise high above the desert. Savanna lies to the south.



## CLIMATE

High temperatures persist for most of the year at around 95°F (35°C). The north is virtually rainless.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Tuareg nomads in the north feel excluded from politics and the benefits of their area's uranium resources. An early 1990s rebellion reignited briefly in 2007–2009. In the south, egalitarianism and a sense of community help to combat economic difficulties. Almost the entire urban population lives in slum conditions. Two-thirds of the population is under 25. Women have limited rights and restricted access to education. The army seized power briefly in 2010.

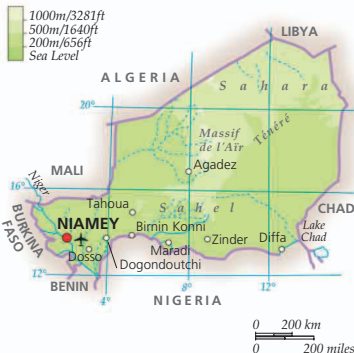


## THE ECONOMY

Vast uranium deposits. Frequent droughts and food shortages. Banditry. Expansion of Sahara. Oil potential.



**INSIGHT:** *The name Niger comes from the Tuareg word n'eghirren, which means "flowing water"*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Niger

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Niamey

**POPULATION:** 17.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 489,188 sq. miles  
(1,267,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 36 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Hausa, Djerma, Fulani, Tuareg, Teda, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 99%, other (including Christian) 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Hausa 53%, Djerma and Songhai 21%, Tuareg 11%, Fulani 7%, Kanuri 6%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Nigeria



West Africa's biggest nation, Nigeria is a federation of 36 states and the capital, Abuja. Dominated by military governments since 1966, democracy returned in 1999.



## GEOGRAPHY

Coastal area of beaches, swamps, and lagoons gives way to rainforest, and then to savanna on the high plateaus. Semidesert to the north.



## CLIMATE

The south is hot, rainy and humid for most of the year. The arid north has one very humid wet season. The Jos Plateau and highlands are cooler.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Some 250 ethnic groups: tensions threaten national unity, with sporadic intercommunal violence. The mainly Muslim north has introduced *sharia* (Islamic law); Boko Haram militants use bombings, assassinations, and abductions to fight for an Islamic state. Women have more economic independence in the south. Militants in the oil-rich Niger Delta demand a share in the oil wealth for the region's impoverished population.



## THE ECONOMY

Overdependent on oil, principal export since 1970s. Mismanagement and corruption. Debt reduced. Instability.



**INSIGHT:** Nigeria is Africa's most populous state – one in every six Africans is Nigerian



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federal Republic of Nigeria

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Abuja

**POPULATION:** 174 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 356,667 sq. miles  
(923,768 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 494 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Hausa, English\*,

Yoruba, Ibo

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 50%, Christian 40%,  
traditional beliefs 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 29%, Hausa 21%,  
Yoruba 21%, Ibo 18%, Fulani 11%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Naira = 100 kobo



# Norway



The Kingdom of Norway traces the rugged western coast of Scandinavia. Settlements are largely restricted to southern and coastal areas. Vast oil and natural gas revenues bring prosperity.



## GEOGRAPHY

The western coast is indented with numerous fjords and features tens of thousands of islands. Mountains and plateaus cover most of the country.



## CLIMATE

Mild coastal climate. Inland, the weather is more extreme, with warmer summers and cold, snowy winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Fairly homogeneous, but has welcomed refugees from Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. Strong family tradition, but divorce is common. Fair-minded consensus promotes female equality, boosted by the generous childcare provision. Wealth is more evenly distributed than in most countries. Voted against joining the EU in 1994.



**INSIGHT:** Near Narvik, mainland Norway is only 4 miles (7 km) wide



## THE ECONOMY

Western Europe's top oil and natural gas producer: trust fund saves for post-oil future. Metal, chemical, and engineering industries. Generous aid donor. High cost of living.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Norway

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1905

**CAPITAL:** Oslo

**POPULATION:** 5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 125,181 sq. miles (324,220 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 42 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Norwegian\* (*Bokmål* "book

language" and *Nynorsk* "new Norsk"), Sámi

**RELIGIONS:** Evangelical Lutheran 88%, other and nonreligious 8%, Muslim 2%, Pentecostal 1%, Roman Catholic 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Norwegian 93%, other 6%, Sámi 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Norwegian krone = 100 øre

# Oman



Oman occupies a strategic position on the Arabian Peninsula, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. It is the least developed Gulf state, despite modest oil exports.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly gravelly desert, with mountains in the north and south. Some narrow fertile coastal strips.



## CLIMATE

Blistering heat in the west. Summer temperatures often climb above 113°F (45°C). Southern uplands receive rains June–September.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Urban drift has seen most Omanis move to northern towns. The majority are Ibadi Muslims who follow an appointed leader, the imam. Ibadism is not opposed to freedom for women, and a few women hold positions of authority. Baluchi from Pakistan are the largest group of foreign workers.

**INSIGHT:** *Until the late 1980s, Oman was closed to all but business or official visitors*



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas account for almost all export revenue. Commercially extractable reserves are limited. Other exports include fish, animals, and dates. Foreigners work in all sectors.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Sultanate of Oman

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1951

**CAPITAL:** Muscat

**POPULATION:** 3.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 82,031 sq. miles  
(212,460 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 44 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Baluchi, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi

**RELIGIONS:** Ibadi Muslim 75%, other Muslim and Hindu 25%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 88%, Baluchi 4%, Persian 3%, Indian and Pakistani 3%, African 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Omani rial = 1000 baisa



# Pakistan



Once a part of British India, Pakistan was created in 1947 in response to demands for an independent Muslim state. In 1971, Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) became a separate state.



## GEOGRAPHY

Indus floodplain across east and south. Hindu Kush mountains in north. Semidesert plateau, mountains in west.



## CLIMATE

Temperatures can soar to 122°F (50°C) in south and west, and fall to -4°F (-20°C) in the Hindu Kush.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Punjabis dominate government and the army. Tensions with minority groups, exacerbated by the vast gap between rich and poor. Strong family ties permeate politics and business. Relations with India are tense over Kashmir and terrorism. Islamist *taliban* insurgency in tribal areas on Afghan border: fighting has displaced millions.

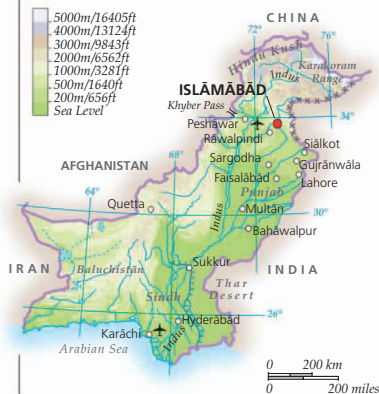


**INSIGHT:** In 1988, Pakistan elected Benazir Bhutto as the first female prime minister in the Muslim world



## THE ECONOMY

Major cotton and rice producer, but unpredictable weather conditions often affect crop. Textiles. Instability. Corruption. Aid to fight terrorism and for earthquake reconstruction.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Islamic Republic of Pakistan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1947

**CAPITAL:** Islamabad

**POPULATION:** 182 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 310,401 sq. miles  
(803,940 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 612 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtu, Urdu\*, Baluchi, Brahui

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 77%, Shi'a Muslim 20%, Hindu 2%, Christian 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Punjabi 56%, Pathan (Pashtun) 15%, Sindhi 14%, Mohajir 7%, Baluchi 4%, other 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Pakistani rupee = 100 paisa

# Palau



The 300-island Palau archipelago (known locally as Belau) lies in the western Pacific Ocean. It achieved independence in 1994, and is gradually reducing its aid dependence.



## GEOGRAPHY

Terrain varies from thickly forested mountains to limestone and coral reefs. Babeldaob, the largest island, is volcanic, with many rivers and waterfalls.



## CLIMATE

Hot and wet. Little variation in daily and seasonal temperatures. February–April is the dry season.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Native Palauans are a mix of the original Southeast Asian migrants and Pacific settlers. A modern influx from Asia, particularly the Philippines, China, and Bangladesh, has led to tension. As 70% of the population live on the island-city of Koror, a new capital was constructed recently on Babeldaob. Native culture is preserved on outer islands despite strong influence from the US and Japan. Modekngei is a blend of Christianity and local beliefs.



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism and fishing licenses are main earners. Coconuts, bananas, and taro. New 15-year US aid plan to 2024.



**INSIGHT:** Palau's reefs contain 1500 species of fish and 700 types of coral



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Palau

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1994

**CAPITAL:** Ngerulmud

**POPULATION:** 21,108

**TOTAL AREA:** 177 sq. miles  
(458 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 108 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Palauan\*, English\*, Japanese, Angaur, Tobi, Sonsorolese

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 66%, Modekngei 34%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Palauan 74%, Filipino 16%, other 6%, Chinese and other Asian 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Nonparty system

**CURRENCY:** US dollar = 100 cents





# Panama

A Spanish colony until 1821, Panama is the southernmost country in Central America. The colossal Panama Canal (which was under US control until 2000) links the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.



## GEOGRAPHY

Lowlands along both coasts, with savanna-covered plains and rolling hills. Mountainous interior. Swamps and rainforests in the east.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid, with heavy rainfall in the May–December wet season. Cooler at high altitudes.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

A multiethnic society, dominated by people of mixed Spanish–Amerindian origin (*mestizo*). Amerindians live in remote areas. The Panama Canal and former US military bases (the last of which closed in 1999) have given society a cosmopolitan outlook, but Catholicism and the extended family remain strong. Wealth is unevenly divided. Money-laundering, narcotics trafficking, and corruption are rife.



## THE ECONOMY

Colón Free Trade Zone: world's second-largest. Income from the canal (expansion project underway) and merchant ships sailing under flag of Panama. Banana and shrimp exports.



**INSIGHT:** *The Panama Canal shortens the sea route between the east coast of the US and Japan by 3000 miles (4800 km)*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Panama

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1903

**CAPITAL:** Panama City

**POPULATION:** 3.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 30,193 sq. miles (78,200 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 133 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English Creole, Spanish\*,

Amerindian languages, Chibchan languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 84%, Protestant 15%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 70%, Black 14%, White 10%, Amerindian 6%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Balboa = 100 centésimos; US dollar is also legal tender

# Papua New Guinea



A former Australian colony, Papua New Guinea (PNG) occupies the eastern section of the island of New Guinea and several other island groups. Much of the country is isolated.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountainous and forested mainland, with broad, swampy river valleys. 40 active volcanoes in the north. Around 600 outer islands.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid in lowlands, cooling toward highlands, where snow can fall on highest peaks.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Around 800 language groups and even more tribes. The main social distinction is between lowlanders, who have frequent contact with the outside world, and the very isolated, but increasingly threatened, highlanders. Great tensions exist between highland tribes, and vendettas can often last several generations. The island of Bougainville has been granted autonomy and promised a referendum on independence by 2020.

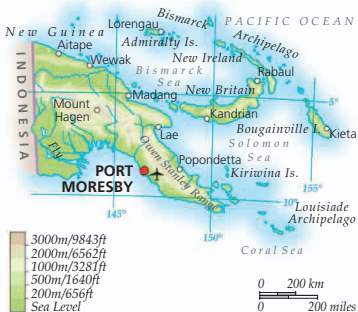


## THE ECONOMY

Minerals: gold, copper, oil, and natural gas. High government spending almost led to national bankruptcy in 2002. Strong GDP growth since 2007.



**INSIGHT:** PNG is home to the only known poisonous birds; contact with the feathers of some species of pitohui produces skin blisters



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Independent State of Papua New Guinea

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** Port Moresby

**POPULATION:** 7.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 178,703 sq. miles  
(462,840 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 42 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Pidgin English, Papuan, English\*, Motu, c.800 native languages

**RELIGIONS:** Protestant 60%, Roman Catholic 37%, other 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Melanesian or mixed race 100%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Kina = 100 toea



# Paraguay

Landlocked in central South America, and once a Spanish colony, Paraguay's post independence history has included periods of military rule. Free elections held since 1993.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Paraguay River divides the hilly and forested east from a flat alluvial plain, with marsh and semidesert scrub land in the west.



## CLIMATE

Subtropical. The Gran Chaco is generally hotter and drier. All areas experience floods and droughts.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The population is mainly *mestizo* (mixed Spanish and native Guaraní origin). Most people are bilingual, though in rural areas Guaraní is more widely used. Cattle ranchers populate the Chaco, along with communities of the German-origin Mennonite Church. Right-wing Colorados in power for decades, except 2008–2012.



## INSIGHT: *The War of the Triple Alliance (1864–1870) killed almost 90% of Paraguay's male population*



## THE ECONOMY

Agriculture: soybeans are the main export. Electricity exported from massive hydroelectric dams, including Itaipú (world's second-largest, jointly run with Brazil). Large informal economy. Corruption and smuggling.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Paraguay

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1811

**CAPITAL:** Asunción

**POPULATION:** 6.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 157,046 sq. miles  
(406,750 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 44 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Guaraní\*, Spanish\*, German

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 90%, Protestant (including Mennonite) 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* 91%, other 7%, Amerindian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Guaraní = 100 céntimos

# Peru



Once the heart of the Inca Empire, before the Spanish conquest in the 16th century, Peru lies on the Pacific coast of South America, just south of the equator.



## GEOGRAPHY

Coastal plain rises to Andes Mountains. Uplands, dissected by fertile valleys, lie east of the Andes. Tropical forest in extreme east.



## CLIMATE

Coast is mainly arid. Middle slopes of the Andes are temperate; higher peaks are snow-covered. East is hot, humid, and very wet.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Though most people are Amerindians or mixed-race *mestizos*, society is dominated by a small group of Spanish descendants. Amerindians, and the small black community, suffer discrimination in towns, but access to information and political power are growing; the first Amerindian president was elected in 2001–2006. Clashes with left-wing militants killed almost 70,000 people between 1980 and 2000.



## THE ECONOMY

Abundant mineral resources: notably copper and gold. Rich Pacific fish stocks. World's largest cocaine producer.



**INSIGHT:** *Lake Titicaca is the world's highest navigable lake*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Peru

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1824

**CAPITAL:** Lima

**POPULATION:** 30.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 496,223 sq. miles  
(1,285,200 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 62 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Quechua\*, Aymara

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 81%, other 19%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Amerindian 45%, *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian) 37%, White 15%, other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New sol = 100 céntimos



# Philippines



Lying in the western Pacific Ocean, the Philippines is the world's second-largest archipelago, with 7107 islands, of which 4600 are named but only around 1000 inhabited.



## GEOGRAPHY

Larger islands are forested and mountainous. Over 20 active volcanoes. Frequent earthquakes.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Warm and humid all year round. Typhoons occur in the rainy season: June–October.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Over 100 ethnic groups, most of which are of Malay origin. The Catholic Church is a dominant cultural force; it opposes family-planning, despite high population growth. The Chinese minority has been established for 400 years. Women play a prominent part in society. High literacy levels. Islamist separatists and communist insurgents undermine stability.



**INSIGHT:** *Mass "People Power" demonstrations have brought down two presidents, in 1986 and 2001*



## THE ECONOMY

Coconuts, bananas, pineapples exported. Growing outsourcing center. Remittances from abroad. Corruption and poor infrastructure limit growth.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of the Philippines

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1946

**CAPITAL:** Manila

**POPULATION:** 98.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 115,830 sq. miles  
(300,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 855 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Filipino\*, English\*, Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, many others

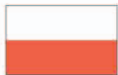
**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 81%, Protestant 9%, Muslim 5%, other (including Buddhist) 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 34%, Tagalog 28%, Cebuano 13%, Ilocano 9%, Hiligaynon 8%, Bisaya 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Philippine peso = 100 centavos

# Poland



Located in the heart of Europe, Poland has undergone massive social, economic, and political change since the collapse of communism in 1989. It joined the EU in 2004.



## GEOGRAPHY

Lowlands, part of the North European Plain, cover most of the country. The Tatra Mountains run along the southern border.



## CLIMATE

Rainfall peaks during the hot summers. Cold winters with snow, especially in mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnic homogeneity masks social tensions. Secular liberals criticize the semiofficial status of the Roman Catholic Church, though its influence is now waning. Abortion is banned, except for special cases. Growing wealth disparities are resented. The German minority in the west is becoming more assertive.



**INSIGHT:** *Wild wisent (European bison) live in the Bialowieza Forest straddling the Poland–Belarus border*



## THE ECONOMY

Heavy industries dominate; services growing. Foreign investment reflects large potential market. Rapid privatization. Only EU state to avoid recession in 2007–2009 global downturn. Not adopting euro yet.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Poland

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1918

**CAPITAL:** Warsaw

**POPULATION:** 38.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 120,728 sq. miles  
(312,685 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 325 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Polish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 93%,  
other and nonreligious 5%,  
Orthodox Christian 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Polish 98%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary  
system

**CURRENCY:** Zloty = 100 groszy



# Portugal

Portugal, with its long Atlantic coast, lies on the western side of the Iberian Peninsula, which it shares with Spain. It is the most westerly country on the European mainland.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Tagus River bisects the country roughly east to west, dividing mountainous north from lower and more undulating south.



## CLIMATE

North is cool and moist. South is warmer, with dry, mild winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

A homogeneous and stable society, which is losing some of its conservative traditions. History of immigration from former colonies, and recently from eastern Europe. Urban areas and the south are more socially liberal. The north is more responsive to traditional Roman Catholic values. Family ties remain important.



**INSIGHT:** Portugal is the world's

leading producer of cork, which comes from the bark of the cork oak



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism. Exports of vegetables, fruit, wine, cars, and clothing. Mounting debt forced EU bailout in 2011 and tough cuts to reduce the budget deficit.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Portuguese Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1139

**CAPITAL:** Lisbon

**POPULATION:** 10.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 35,672 sq. miles  
(92,391 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 299 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Portuguese\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 92%,  
Protestant 4%, nonreligious 3%, other 1%,

**ETHNIC MIX:** Portuguese 98%, African  
and other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary  
system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# Qatar



Qatar projects from the Arabian Peninsula into the Persian Gulf. A founding member of OPEC, it is one of the region's wealthiest states due to oil and natural gas exports.



## GEOGRAPHY

Flat, semiarid desert with dunes and salt pans. Vegetation is limited to small patches of scrub.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid. Temperatures in summer can soar to over 104°F (40°C). Rainfall is rare.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Only one in five residents is native-born; the rest are guest workers from across the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and north Africa. Qataris were once nomadic Bedouins, but since the advent of oil wealth, most now live in Doha and its suburbs, leaving the north dotted with abandoned villages. Women enjoy relative freedom; most wear the veil.



**INSIGHT:** *There are three times as many men as women in Qatar*



## THE ECONOMY

Steady supply of crude oil and huge natural gas reserves, plus related industries. All other raw materials and most foods are imported. Strong GDP growth in 2004–2011. Economy is heavily dependent on foreign workforce.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of Qatar

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1971

**CAPITAL:** Doha

**POPULATION:** 2.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 4416 sq. miles  
(11,437 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 518 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 95%,  
other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Qatari 20%, other Arab 20%,  
Indian 20%, Nepalese 13%, Filipino 10%,  
other 10%, Pakistani 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Qatar riyal = 100 dirhams





# Romania



Once dominated by Poles, Hungarians, and Ottomans, Romania has been slowly converting to a market economy since the 1989 overthrow of its communist regime. It joined the EU in 2007.



## GEOGRAPHY

Carpathian Mountains encircle the Transylvanian plateau. Wide plains to the south and east. Danube River forms southern border.



## CLIMATE

Continental. Summers are hot and humid, winters are cold and snowy. Very heavy spring rains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Romanians are ethnically distinct from their Slav and Hungarian (Magyar) neighbors. Hungarians are the largest minority, living mainly in Transylvania. They are protected by the influence of Hungary, unlike the Roma, who suffer discrimination. Net emigration (since EU membership) is slowing. Low birth rate.



**INSIGHT:** In 2001, Romania became the last country in Europe to lift its ban on homosexuality



## THE ECONOMY

Polluting, outdated heavy industry. Unmechanized agricultural sector. Textile and metal exports led growth in 2000s. High budget deficits exposed economy in 2007–2009 global downturn: IMF bailout, austerity measures. Plans to join euro in 2019. Privatization continues.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Romania

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1878

**CAPITAL:** Bucharest

**POPULATION:** 21.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 91,699 sq. miles (237,500 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 244 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Romanian\*, Hungarian (Magyar),

Romani, German

**RELIGIONS:** Romanian Orthodox 87%, Roman Catholic 5%, Protestant 5%, Greek Orthodox 1%, Uniate 1%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Romanian 89%, Magyar 7%, Roma 3%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New Romanian leu = 100 bani

# Russian Federation



The Russian Federation was the core of the old Soviet Union, which broke up in 1991. Russia is still the world's largest state. Its diversity is a source of both strength and problems.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Ural Mountains divide the European steppes and forests from the tundra and forests of Siberia. South-central deserts and mountains.

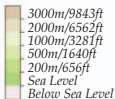


## CLIMATE

Continental in European Russia, with warm summers and freezing winters. Elsewhere climate ranges from sub-arctic to Mediterranean and hot desert.

## INSIGHT: *The Trans-Siberian*

*Railroad, running 5578 miles (9297 km) from Moscow to Vladivostok, is the longest in the world, traversing eight time zones*



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

57 "nationalities" and 95 minorities in addition to ethnic Russians. Separatism suppressed. Population predicted to fall to 107 million by 2050. HIV/AIDS rising.



## THE ECONOMY

Vast resources (oil, gas, metals, timber). Inefficient industry, agriculture. Tax evasion. Black market and organized crime. Wealth disparities. 2009 recession.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Russian Federation

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1480

**CAPITAL:** Moscow

**POPULATION:** 143 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 6,592,735 sq. miles  
(17,075,200 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 22 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Russian\*, Tatar, Ukrainian, other

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 75%,  
Muslim 14%, other 11%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Russian 80%, other 12%,  
Tatar 4%, Ukrainian 2%, Chavash 1%, Bashkir 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential–  
parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Russian rouble = 100 kopeks



# Rwanda



Rwanda lies just south of the equator in east central Africa, far from the nearest sea port. Since independence from France in 1962, ethnic tensions have dominated politics.



## GEOGRAPHY

A series of plateaus descend from the ridge of volcanic peaks in the west to the Akagera River on the eastern border. The Great Rift Valley also passes through this region.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, though tempered by the altitude. Two wet seasons are separated by a dry season, from June to August. Heaviest rain in the west.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

For over 500 years the cattle-owning Tutsi minority were politically dominant over the land-owning Hutu. In 1959, violent revolt led to a reversal of the roles. Ethnic tensions are fierce; in the most recent violence, in 1994, over 800,000 people, mostly Tutsi, were massacred in an act of state-backed genocide; trials are ongoing. Most people live at subsistence level.



## THE ECONOMY

Reliant on aid. Production of tea and speciality coffee is booming. Decade of strong GDP growth. Exports tin, coltan, and iron ore. Ecotourism is growing. Possible oil and gas reserves. Landlocked: high transportation costs.

**INSIGHT:** *Rwanda's parliament in 2008 was the first in the world to have more women members than men*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Rwanda

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Kigali

**POPULATION:** 11.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 10,169 sq. miles  
(26,338 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1225 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kinyarwanda\*, French\*,  
Kiswahili, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 94%, Muslim 5%  
traditional beliefs 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Hutu 85%, Tutsi 14%, other  
(including Twa) 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Rwanda franc = 100 centimes

# St. Kitts & Nevis



A popular Caribbean tourist destination, St. Kitts and Nevis lies in the northern part of the Leeward Island chain. Nevis is the smaller and less developed of the two islands.



## GEOGRAPHY

Volcanic in origin, with forested, mountainous interiors. Nevis has hot and cold springs.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, tempered by trade winds. Little seasonal variation in temperature. Moderate rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The majority of the population are descended from former African slaves. There are small numbers of Europeans, and South Asians, and a community of Lebanese. Levels of emigration are high, and overseas remittances are an important source of national income. The government has pledged to retrain sugar workers. Native professionals and civil servants have largely replaced the former expatriate elite. The secessionist movement on Nevis remains an issue.



## THE ECONOMY

Successful tourist industry is vulnerable to downturns in US market. Financial services. Once-key sugar industry closed down in 2005.



**INSIGHT:** *Nevis has been renowned as a spa since the 18th century, and is known as the "Queen of the Caribbean"*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1983

**CAPITAL:** Basseterre

**POPULATION:** 51,134

**TOTAL AREA:** 101 sq. miles (261 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 368 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, English Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Anglican 33%, Methodist 29%, other 22%, Moravian 9%, Roman Catholic 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black 95%, mixed race 3%, White 1%, other and Amerindian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** East Caribbean dollar = 100 cents



# St. Lucia

St. Lucia is one of the most beautiful of the Caribbean Windward Islands. Ruled by France and the UK at different times in its past, the island retains the influences of both.



## GEOGRAPHY

Volcanic and mountainous, with some broad fertile valleys. The Pitons, ancient lava cones, rise from the sea on the forested west coast.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, moderated by trade winds. May–October wet season brings daily warm showers. Rainfall is highest in the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The population is a tension-free mixture of descendants of Africans, Caribs, and Europeans. Family life and the Roman Catholic Church are important to most St. Lucians. In rural areas, women often head the households and run much of the farming. Plantation and hotel owners are the richest group. There is growing local resistance to overdevelopment of the island for tourism.



## THE ECONOMY

Bananas are still biggest export, but struggling to compete since loss of preferential access to EU market. Successful tourism. Offshore banking.



**INSIGHT:** *St. Lucia has two Nobel laureates, the most per capita in the world*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Saint Lucia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1979

**CAPITAL:** Castries

**POPULATION:** 162,781

**TOTAL AREA:** 239 sq. miles  
(620 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 690 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, French Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 90%,  
other 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black 83%, *Mulatto*  
(mixed race) 13%, Asian 3%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** East Caribbean dollar =  
100 cents

# St. Vincent & the Grenadines



The islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines form part of the Windward group in the Caribbean. St. Vincent is mostly volcanic, while the Grenadines are flat, mainly bare, coral reefs.



## GEOGRAPHY

St. Vincent is mountainous and forested, with one of two active volcanoes in the Caribbean, La Soufrière. The Grenadines are 32 islands and cays, fringed by beaches.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with constant trade winds. Hurricanes are likely during the wet season in July–November.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population is racially diverse; intermarriage has reduced tensions. Society is informal and relaxed, but family life is strongly influenced by the Christian Church. Locals fear that their traditional lifestyle is being threatened by the expanding tourist industry.



**INSIGHT:** *The islands' precolonial inhabitants, the Carib, named them "Harioun" – home of the blessed*



## THE ECONOMY

Dependent on agriculture and tourism. Bananas are the main cash crop. Tourism, targeted at the jet-set and cruise-ship markets, is concentrated on the Grenadines.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1979

**CAPITAL:** Kingstown

**POPULATION:** 103,220

**TOTAL AREA:** 150 sq. miles (389 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 788 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, English Creole

**RELIGIONS:** Anglican 47%, Methodist 28%, Roman Catholic 13%, other 12%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black 66%, *Mulatto* (mixed race) 19%, other 12%, Carib 2%, Asian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** East Caribbean dollar = 100 cents



# Samoa



The Pacific islands of Samoa gained independence from New Zealand in 1962. Four of the nine volcanic islands are inhabited – Apolima, Manono, Savai'i, and Upolu.



## GEOGRAPHY

Comprises two large islands and seven smaller ones. The two largest islands have rainforested, mountainous interiors surrounded by coastal lowlands and coral reefs.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with high humidity. Cooler in May–November. Cyclone season is December–March.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnic Samoans are the world's second-largest Polynesian group, after the Maoris. Their way of life is communal and formalized. Extended family groups own 80% of the land. Each family has an elected chief, who looks after its political and social interests. Large-scale migration to the US and New Zealand reflects the country's lack of jobs and the attractions of a Western lifestyle.



## THE ECONOMY

Exports fish, coconut products (oil, cream, copra), and nonu fruit. Growth of tourism, offshore banking, and light manufacturing (Japanese car parts). Dependent on aid and expatriate remittances. Rainforests are increasingly exploited for timber.



**INSIGHT:** Samoa was named for the sacred (sa) chickens (moa) of Lu, son of Tagaloa, the god of creation



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Independent State of Samoa

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Apia

**POPULATION:** 200,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 1104 sq. miles  
(2860 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 183 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Samoan\*, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 99%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Polynesian 91%,  
Euronesian (mixed European and  
Polynesian) 7%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Tala = 100 sene

# San Marino



Perched on the slopes of Monte Titano in the Italian Apennines, San Marino has maintained its independence since the 4th century CE, but Italy effectively controls most of its affairs.



## GEOGRAPHY

Distinctive limestone outcrop of Monte Titano dominates wooded hills and pastures near Italy's Adriatic coast.



## CLIMATE

High altitude and sea breezes moderate a Mediterranean climate. Hot summers and cool, wet winters.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Territory is divided into nine "castles," or districts. Tightly knit society, with 16 centuries of tradition. Strict immigration rules require 30-year residence before applying for citizenship. Living standards are similar to those in northern Italy. About 12,000 Sammarinesi live abroad, most in Italy.



**INSIGHT:** Sales of postage stamps and coins contribute around 10% of the national income



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism, banking, manufacturing, and investment all hit by 2008–2009 global downturn. Banking transparency has improved. Lower tax rates than Italy. Wine, cheese, olive oil, textiles, and ceramics are exported. Also relies on Italian subsidy and infrastructure.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of San Marino

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1631

**CAPITAL:** San Marino

**POPULATION:** 32,448

**TOTAL AREA:** 23.6 sq. miles  
(61 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1352 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Italian\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 93%, other and nonreligious 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Sammarinese 88%, Italian 10%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents





# Sao Tome & Principe

A former Portuguese colony, Sao Tome and Principe comprises two main islands and surrounding islets, off the west coast of Africa. Elections in 1991 ended 15 years of Marxism.



## GEOGRAPHY

Islands scattered across the equator. Sao Tome and Principe are heavily forested and mountainous.



## CLIMATE

Hot and humid, but cooled by the Benguela Current. Plentiful rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population is mostly black, though Portuguese culture predominates. Blacks run the political parties. Society is well integrated and free from racial prejudice. Principe assumed autonomous status in 1995. There is a growing business class. The extended family offers the main form of social security. One of Africa's highest aid-to-population ratios.

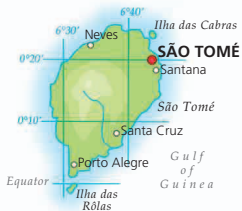
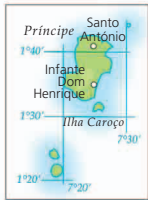
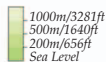


**INSIGHT:** *The population is entirely of immigrant descent: the islands were uninhabited when colonized in 1470*



## THE ECONOMY

Cocoa provides 90% of export earnings. Coconuts, pepper, coffee also farmed. Tourism. Reliant on aid. Offshore oil expected to come onstream shortly.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** São Tomé

**POPULATION:** 200,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 386 sq. miles (1001 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 539 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Portuguese Creole, Portuguese\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 84%, other 16%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black 90%, Portuguese and Creole 10%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Dobra = 100 céntimos

# Saudi Arabia



Occupying most of the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia covers an area the size of western Europe. It is the world's largest oil producer and has a major petrochemicals industry.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly desert or semidesert plateau. Mountain ranges in the west run parallel to the Red Sea and drop steeply to a coastal plain.



## CLIMATE

In summer, temperatures often soar above 118°F (48°C), but in winter they may fall below freezing. Rainfall is rare.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Saudis are Sunni Muslims who embrace *sharia* (Islamic law) and follow the strictly orthodox Wahhabi interpretation of Islam in their daily lives. Women are obliged to wear the veil, cannot hold a driver's license, and have no role in public life. The al-Sa'ud family rules with absolute power. Supported by the religious establishment, it controls all political life and makes few concessions to any calls for wider public participation.



## THE ECONOMY

Vast oil and natural gas reserves. A third of workers are foreign. Attractive jobs for young Saudis are scarce, however.



**INSIGHT:** Three million Muslims a year make the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to the holy city of Mecca. Only practicing Muslims are allowed inside the city



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1932

**CAPITAL:** Riyadh

**POPULATION:** 28.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 756,981 sq. miles  
(1,960,582 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 35 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*

**RELIGIONS:** (Native population) Sunni Muslim 85%, Shi'a Muslim 15%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 72%, foreign residents (mostly south or southeast Asian) 20%, Afro-Asian 8%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Saudi riyal = 100 halalat



# Senegal



Senegal's capital, Dakar, stands on the westernmost cape of Africa. After independence from France, Senegal became a single-party state, but it has had multiparty elections since 1981.



## GEOGRAPHY

Arid semidesert in the north. The south is mainly savanna bushland. Plains in the southeast.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with humid rainy conditions June–October, and a drier season December–May. The coast is cooled by northern trade winds.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Interethnic marriage has reduced ethnic tensions. Groups can be identified regionally. Dakar is a Wolof area, with the Serer concentrated to the east and southeast of Dakar. The Senegal River is dominated by the Peul and Toucouleur. The Diola (Jola) in Casamance have felt politically excluded, prompting a long-running secessionist struggle; a cease-fire in 2014 may signal the conflict's end. A large diaspora raises global awareness of Senegalese culture and music.



## THE ECONOMY

Good infrastructure, particularly port at Dakar. Fishing (though stocks diminishing). Remittances. Phosphate mining. Groundnuts. Development of tourism. Oil potential off Casamance.



**INSIGHT:** *Senegal's name derives from the Muslim Zenega Berbers who invaded in the 1300s*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Senegal

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Dakar

**POPULATION:** 14.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 75,749 sq. miles  
(196,190 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 190 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Wolof, Serer, Pulaar, Diola, Mandinka, Malinké, Soninké, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 95%, Christian (mainly Catholic) 4%, traditional beliefs 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Wolof 43%, Serer 15%, other 14%, Peul 14%, Toucouleur 9%, Diola 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes

# Serbia



The central and eastern region of what was once Yugoslavia, Serbia was a pariah state until Slobodan Milosevic was ousted in 2000. Montenegro broke away in 2006, and Kosovo in 2008.



## GEOGRAPHY

Landlocked since secession of Montenegro. Fertile Danube plain in the north, rolling uplands in the center and southeast. Mountains in southwest.



## CLIMATE

Continental in north, with wet springs and warm summers. Colder winters with heavy snow in south.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Serbs are Orthodox Christian and use the Cyrillic script. Catholic Magyars (Hungarians) in Vojvodina have some autonomy. Society was severely shaken in the 1990s by interethnic conflict. After Serbia's cooperation in apprehending suspected war criminals, it was granted EU candidate status, but the issue of Kosovo is a major obstacle to accession.



**INSIGHT:** *The medieval Serbian Empire reached into northern Greece*



## THE ECONOMY

Recovery from sanctions and 1999 NATO bombing: GDP only returned to pre-1990 level by 2006. Reserves of coal, oil. Strong industrial base. Privatization ongoing. Foreign investment growing. Danube is a key transportation link.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Serbia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 2006

**CAPITAL:** Belgrade

**POPULATION:** 9.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 29,905 sq. miles  
(77,453 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 318 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Serbian\*, Hungarian (Magyar)

**RELIGIONS:** Orthodox Christian 85%,  
other 6%, Roman Catholic 6%,  
Muslim 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Serb 83%, other 10%, Magyar 4%,  
Bosniak 2%, Roma 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Serbian dinar = 100 para



# Seychelles



Formerly a UK colony, the Seychelles comprises 115 islands in the Indian Ocean. After 14 years as a one-party state, multiparty elections were introduced in 1993.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly low-lying coral atolls, but 40, including the largest, Mahé, are mountainous and are the only granitic midocean islands in the world.



## CLIMATE

Tropical oceanic climate. Hot and humid. Rainy season December–May.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The islands were uninhabited when French settlers arrived in the 18th century. Today, the population is homogeneous – a result of intermarriage between ethnic groups. Almost 90% of people live on Mahé. Living standards are among Africa's highest. Poverty is rare and the welfare system caters to all.

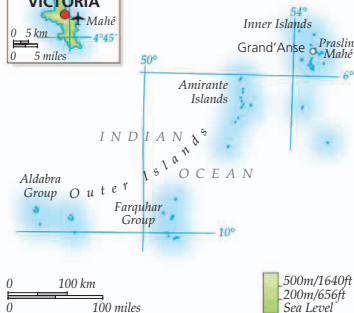


**INSIGHT:** *The Seychelles' unique species include the coco-de-mer palm, which produces the world's largest seeds*



## THE ECONOMY

Tourism is main sector, based on appeal of beaches and exotic wildlife. Tuna is fished and canned for export. Re-export trade. All domestic requirements are imported. Virtually no mineral resources. High debt-servicing burden. Lack of foreign exchange.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Seychelles

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1976

**CAPITAL:** Victoria

**POPULATION:** 90,846

**TOTAL AREA:** 176 sq. miles  
(455 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 874 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** French Creole\*, English\*, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 82%, Anglican 6%, other (including Muslim) 6%, other Christian 4%, Hindu 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Creole 89%, Indian 5%, other 4%, Chinese 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Seychelles rupee = 100 cents

# Sierra Leone



The west African state of Sierra Leone achieved independence from the UK in 1961. Today, trying to recover from ten years of devastating civil war, it is one of the world's poorest nations.



## GEOGRAPHY

Flat plain, running the length of the coast, stretches inland for 83 miles (133 km). Beyond, forests rise to highlands near neighboring Guinea in the northeast.



## CLIMATE

Hot tropical weather, with very high rainfall and humidity. The dusty, northeastern *harmattan* wind blows November–April.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Mende and Temne are the major ethnic groups. Freetown's citizens are largely descended from slaves freed from Britain and the US, resulting in a strongly Anglicized Creole culture in the capital. The countryside is less developed. A brutal civil war broke out in 1991 and was not properly resolved until a 2001 peace agreement. Two million people were displaced during the conflict. A deadly Ebola outbreak hit the country in 2014.



## THE ECONOMY

Aid is vital: reconstruction will take years. Diamond exports, though smuggling is rife. Rutile and bauxite also mined. Coffee and cocoa are cash crops, but most farming is subsistence.



**INSIGHT:** *The British philanthropist Granville Sharp set up a settlement for freed slaves in Freetown in 1787*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Sierra Leone

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1961

**CAPITAL:** Freetown

**POPULATION:** 6.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 27,698 sq. miles  
(71,740 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 221 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Mende, Temne, Krio, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 60%, Christian 30%, traditional beliefs 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Mende 35%, Temne 32%, other 21%, Limba 8%, Kuranko 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Leone = 100 cents



# Singapore



Linked to the southernmost tip of the Malay peninsula by a causeway, Singapore was established as a trading settlement in 1819. It is now one of Asia's most important commercial centers.



## GEOGRAPHY

Little remains of the original vegetation on Singapore Island. The other 54 much smaller islands are little more than swampy jungle.



## CLIMATE

Equatorial. Hot and humid, with heavy rainfall all year round.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Chinese majority includes old-established English-speaking Straits Chinese and more recent immigrants. Median income is highest in Indian households and lowest in Malay households. Significant expatriate workforce. Aging population: cash incentives, longer maternity leave aim to boost birth rate. Society is highly regulated; official campaigns aim to improve public behavior. Crime is low; punishment can be severe. Living standards are among world's highest.



## THE ECONOMY

Wealth from success as entrepôt and center of high-tech industries, such as electronics and pharmaceuticals. Leads research in new biotechnologies. All food, energy, and water imported. Worst-ever recession in 2008–2009.

**INSIGHT:** *Chewing gum was banned outright from 1992 to 2004*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Singapore

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1965

**CAPITAL:** Singapore

**POPULATION:** 5.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 250 sq. miles

(648 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 22,881 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Mandarin\*, Malay\*, Tamil\*, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist 55%, Taoist 22%, Muslim 16%, Hindu, Christian, and Sikh 7%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Chinese 74%, Malay 14%, Indian 9%, other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Singapore dollar = 100 cents

# Slovakia



Landlocked in central Europe, Slovakia became a separate state in 1993, splitting ex-communist Czechoslovakia in two. It joined the EU in 2004 and the eurozone five years later.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Tatra Mountains stretch along the northern border with Poland. Southern lowlands include the fertile Danube plain.



## CLIMATE

Continental. Moderately warm summers and steady rainfall. Cold winters with heavy snowfalls.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The majority Slovaks are the dominant group. The Magyars (Hungarians) seek protection of their language and culture, backed by Hungary. Magyar parties exist in the political mainstream, and on occasion form part of the ruling coalition. Ethnic Czechs have dual citizenship. Roma are unrepresented and face significant discrimination. Rural eastern regions are least developed.



## THE ECONOMY

Heavy industry, especially cars. Exports hit by 2007–2009 global downturn. Inexpensive workforce. Rising foreign investment. High unemployment, budget deficits. Successful privatizations.



**INSIGHT:** From 1526 to 1784 Bratislava, then known as Pozsony, served as the capital of Hungary



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Slovak Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1993

**CAPITAL:** Bratislava

**POPULATION:** 5.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 18,859 sq. miles  
(48,845 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 290 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Slovak\*, Hungarian (Magyar), Czech

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 69%, other 13%, nonreligious 13%, Greek Catholic (Uniate) 4%, Orthodox Christian 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Slovak 86%, Magyar 10%, Roma 2%, Czech 1%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents





# Slovenia



Lying at the junction of central Europe and the Balkans, Slovenia seceded from socialist Yugoslavia in 1991. In 2004, it became the first former Yugoslav state to join the EU.



## GEOGRAPHY

Alpine terrain with hills and mountains. Forests cover almost half the country's area. There is a short coastline on the Adriatic Sea.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean climate on the small coastal strip. The alpine interior has continental extremes.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Long historical association with western Europe, accounts for the "Alpine" rather than "Balkan" outlook of Slovenia's people, despite close similarities to other former Yugoslavs. The absence of sizable Serb or Croat minorities made for a relatively peaceful secession from Yugoslavia. There are small communities of Italians and Magyars (Hungarians) in the southwest and east respectively.



## THE ECONOMY

First new EU member to join eurozone (in 2007). Export-oriented, so vulnerable to global economic trends. Competitive manufacturing industry. Sizable state-owned sector remains.



**INSIGHT:** A wheel found in a marsh in 2003 is claimed to be the world's oldest, pre-dating 3000 BCE



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Slovenia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Ljubljana

**POPULATION:** 2.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 7820 sq. miles  
(20,253 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 269 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Slovenian\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 58%, other 28%,  
Atheist 10%, Orthodox Christian 2%,  
Muslim 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Slovene 83%, other 12%,  
Serb 2%, Croat 2%, Bosniak 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents

# Solomon Islands



The Solomons archipelago comprises several hundred coral reef islands scattered in the southwestern Pacific. Most of the population live on the six largest islands.



## GEOGRAPHY

The six largest islands are volcanic, mountainous, and thickly forested. Flat coastal plains provide the only cultivable land.



## CLIMATE

Northern islands are hot and humid all year round; farther south a cool season develops. November–April wet season brings cyclones.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Almost all Solomon Islanders are Melanesian. Animist beliefs exist alongside Christianity. Tensions are regional; Guadalcanal natives (Isatabu) fought against immigrant Malaitan workers in the 1998–2000 conflict, displacing thousands and ruining the economy. In 2003, Australian-led peacekeepers arrived. A new devolved "state system" has granted outlying islands more autonomy and brought a semblance of stability.

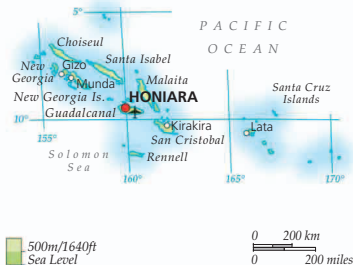


## THE ECONOMY

Subsistence farming and fishing sustain 75% of people. Cash crops are copra and cocoa. Gold deposits. Civil conflict bankrupted the government, closed the main gold mine, and cut trade links. Forests have been depleted.



**INSIGHT:** *The battle for Japanese-held Guadalcanal was the first major US offensive in the Pacific War during World War II*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Solomon Islands

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1978

**CAPITAL:** Honiara

**POPULATION:** 600,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 10,985 sq. miles (28,450 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 56 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Pidgin English,

Melanesian Pidgin, c. 120 others

**RELIGIONS:** Church of Melanesia (Anglican) 34%, Roman Catholic 19%, other 19%, South Seas Evangelical Church 17%, Methodist 11%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Melanesian 93%, Polynesian 4%, Micronesian 2%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Solomon Is. dollar = 100 cents



# Somalia



A semiarid state occupying the Horn of Africa, Somalia was formed from the Italian and British colonies of Somaliland. Conflict has left it without effective government since 1991.



## GEOGRAPHY

Highlands in the north, flatter scrub-covered land to the south. Coastal areas are more fertile.



## CLIMATE

Very dry, except for the north coast, which is hot and humid. The interior has among the world's highest average annual temperatures.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The clan system forms the basis of commercial, political, and social life. The minority Bantu are traditionally seen as socially inferior to Somalis. Since the 1991 coup, Somalia has lacked strong central authority. Somaliland claims independence, and Puntland autonomy. Islamist militias controlled rump Somalia by 2009, and al-Shabab still holds sway in the south. A new federal structure was formulated in 2012 ahead of the latest attempt to form a national government.

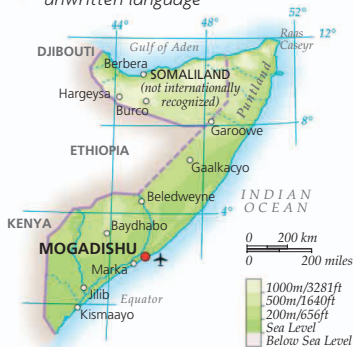


## THE ECONOMY

Ongoing war. All goods, except arms, are in short supply. Piracy, banditry. Few natural resources. Prone to drought; latest famine in 2011–2012 killed 260,000. Somaliland is more stable, but its trade is hampered by lack of global recognition.



**INSIGHT:** *Until 1973, Somali was an unwritten language*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Federal Republic of Somalia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Mogadishu

**POPULATION:** 10.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 246,199 sq. miles  
(637,657 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 43 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Somali\*, Arabic\*, English, Italian

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 99%, Christian 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Somali 85%, other 15%

**GOVERNMENT:** Nonparty system

**CURRENCY:** Somali shilin = 100 senti

# South Africa



After 80 years of white minority rule, South Africa held its first multiracial, multiparty elections in 1994. Victory for the blacks marked the symbolic overturning of long years of apartheid.



## GEOGRAPHY

Much of the interior is grassy *veld*. Desert in the west and far north. Mountains east, south, and west.



## CLIMATE

Warm, temperate, and dry. Cape Town has a Mediterranean climate. Semi-arid in the west.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The majority black population now dominates politically, but the minority white community still controls the economy. A small black middle class is growing, but unemployment among blacks remains high. Over five million people are HIV-positive, but the fight against AIDS is hampered by social attitudes. Violent crime is a problem.

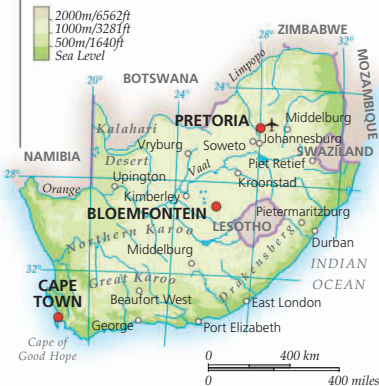


**INSIGHT:** *Over the last century, South Africa has produced over half of the world's gold*



## THE ECONOMY

Africa's largest, most developed economy. Leading mineral producer, notably metals, diamonds, coal. Tourism is also key. Wealth gap has widened: jobs, housing, and better access to basic services are needed to fight poverty.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of South Africa

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1934

**CAPITALS:** Pretoria; Cape Town; Bloemfontein

**POPULATION:** 52.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 471,008 sq. miles (1,219,912 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 112 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, isiZulu\*, isiXhosa\*, Afrikaans\*, 7 other official languages\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 68%, animist and traditional beliefs 29%, Muslim 2%, Hindu 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Black 80%, White 9%, Colored 9%, Asian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Rand = 100 cents



# South Sudan

A long civil war in Sudan led to independence in 2011 for the mainly Christian southern part. The landlocked new state is poor and lacks vital infrastructure, despite its oil reserves.



## GEOGRAPHY

The White Nile flows through South Sudan, from remote forest areas into the world's largest swamp, the Sudd.



## CLIMATE

Tropical South Sudan's long, heavy rains result in some areas getting cut off. January to March is drier.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most people are subsistence farmers. Village life is based on extended families; arranged marriages involve the payment of bride-price. There are over 60 language groups. The common cause of independence engendered ethnic unity. The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement, whose armed wing led the fighting, holds power in the new country, but in 2013 a fallout between president and vice president spiraled into civil war, exposing ethnic divisions between Dinka and Nuer.

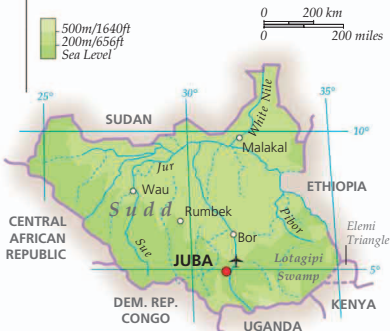


## THE ECONOMY

Needs foreign aid for humanitarian crisis and development. Issues over oil revenue and borders remain unresolved with Sudan, which controls sole oil export pipeline. Inherited foreign debt.



**INSIGHT:** Decades of fighting from 1983 left over four million internally displaced



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of South Sudan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 2011

**CAPITAL:** Juba

**POPULATION:** 11.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 248,777 sq. miles  
(644,329 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 45 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Arabic, Dinka, Nuer, Zande, Bari, Shilluk, Lotuko

**RELIGIONS:** Over half of the population follow Christian or traditional beliefs

**ETHNIC MIX:** Dinka 40%, Nuer 15%, Bari 10%, Azande 10%, Shilluk 10%, Arab 10%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** South Sudan pound = 100 piastres

# Spain



At its unification under Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492, Spain occupied a pivotal position between Europe, Africa, the North Atlantic, and the Mediterranean.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountain ranges in the north, center, and south, with a huge central plateau. Mediterranean lowlands. Verdant valleys in the northwest.



## CLIMATE

Maritime in north. Hotter and drier in south. The central plateau has an extreme climate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

A vigorous ethnic regionalism, suppressed under Franco's fascist regime, now flourishes. There are 17 autonomous regions. People remain churchgoing, though Roman Catholic teachings on social issues are often flouted. Spanish women are increasingly emancipated, with strong political representation.



**INSIGHT:** Over 3000 festivals and feasts take place each year in Spain



## THE ECONOMY

Exports food, wine. Few natural resources. Large fishing fleet. Tourism, motor industry hit by global downturn; soaring unemployment since abrupt end of construction boom. Austerity program aim to cut debt and deficits. A target for economic migrants from Africa.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Spain

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1492

**CAPITAL:** Madrid

**POPULATION:** 46.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 194,896 sq. miles  
(504,782 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 243 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Catalan\*, Galician\*, Basque\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 96%, other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Castilian Spanish 72%, Catalan 17%, Galician 6%, Basque 2%, Roma 1%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Sri Lanka



The teardrop-shaped island of Sri Lanka is separated from India by the Palk Strait. Ethnic Tamil rebels – the Tamil Tigers – were defeated in 2009, after a brutal 26-year civil war.



## GEOGRAPHY

The main island is dominated by rugged central highlands. Fertile northern plains are dissected by rivers. Much of the land is tropical jungle.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with breezes on the coast and cooler air in highlands. Northeast is driest and hottest.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Sinhalese are mostly Buddhist, while Tamils are mostly Hindu. Moors are the Muslim descendants of Arab traders. Tamils were the minority group favored by the British colonists. Majority-Sinhalese power since independence in 1948 fueled tensions, erupting into civil war in 1983. The eventual government victory in 2009 made this the only rebel insurgency ever defeated in modern times.



## THE ECONOMY

Garment industry. Remittances. Major tea exporter. End of costly civil war; return of foreign investment and tourists. Decade of strong GDP growth.



**INSIGHT:** Sri Lanka elected the world's first woman prime minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in 1960



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1948

**CAPITAL:** Colombo / Sri Jayewardenapura Kotte

**POPULATION:** 21.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 25,332 sq. miles (65,610 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 852 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Sinhala\*, Tamil\*, English  
**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist 69%, Hindu 15%, Muslim 8%, Christian 8%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Sinhalese 74%, Tamil 18%, Moor 7%, other 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential-parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Sri Lanka rupee = 100 cents

# Sudan



The secession of the black African south in 2011 left Sudan as Africa's third-largest country. Darfur in the west is suffering a terrible humanitarian crisis.



## GEOGRAPHY

Lies within the upper Nile basin. Mostly arid plains. Highlands border the Red Sea in the northeast.



## CLIMATE

North is hot, arid desert with constant dry winds. Rainy season lasting a few months in the south.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

About two million people are nomads. There are many ethnic groups. Islamic law, imposed by the Arab majority, restricts women's freedoms and alienated the non-Muslim south, which finally seceded in 2011 after prolonged conflict. Ethnic violence by Arab militias in Darfur since 2003 has killed 300,000 people and created a huge refugee crisis within Sudan and in neighboring Chad and CAR. President Bashir faces an international arrest warrant for crimes against humanity.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil reserves reduced by secession of South. Cotton, sesame, gum arabic. Violence and drought hamper farming. Millions of people displaced. Large debt.



**INSIGHT:** Sudan has more pyramids than Egypt: over 200 structures remain from ancient Nubian kingdoms on the Nile



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of the Sudan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1956

**CAPITAL:** Khartoum

**POPULATION:** 38 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 718,722 sq. miles  
(1,861,481 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 53 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Nubian, Beja, Fur

**RELIGIONS:** Nearly the whole population is Muslim (mainly Sunni)

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 60%, other 18%, Nubian 10%, Beja 8%, Fur 3%, Zaghawa 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New Sudanese pound

= 100 piastres





# Suriname

Suriname is a former Dutch colony on the north coast of South America. Democracy was restored in 1991, after almost 11 years of military rule. The Netherlands is still a major donor of aid.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly covered by tropical rainforest. Coastal plain rises to central plateaus and the Guiana Highlands.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Hot and humid, but cooled by trade winds. High rainfall, especially in the interior.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Dutch brought laborers from South Asia and Java. Independence saw mass emigration: around 350,000 Surinamese live in the Netherlands. Of those left, over 85% live near the coast, the rest in scattered rainforest communities. Indigenous Amerindians only number a few thousand. *Bosnegers* – descended from runaway African slaves – fought the military government in the late 1980s. Under civilian rule, each group has had a political party representing its interests.



## THE ECONOMY

Alumina and gold are the key exports. Rice and bananas are main cash crops. Oil production and tourism are growing. Excessive bureaucracy.



**INSIGHT:** *In a 1667 Anglo-Dutch deal, Holland gained Suriname but lost New Amsterdam (now New York)*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Suriname

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1975

**CAPITAL:** Paramaribo

**POPULATION:** 500,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 63,039 sq. miles (163,270 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 8 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Sranan (Creole), Dutch\*, Hindi,

Javanese, Sarnami, Saramaccan, Chinese, Carib

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 48%, Hindu 27%, Muslim 20%, traditional beliefs 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** E Indian 27%, Creole 18%, Black 15%, Javanese 15%, mixed race 13%, other 12%

**GOVERNMENT:** Mixed presidential–parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Surinamese dollar = 100 cents

# Swaziland



The tiny southern African kingdom of Swaziland is crippled with HIV/AIDS and economically dependent on South Africa. Vocal demands for multiparty democracy have been ignored.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly high plateaus and mountains. Rolling grasslands and low scrub plains to the east. Pine forests on western border.



## CLIMATE

Temperatures rise and rainfall declines as the land descends eastward, from high to low grassy veld.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

One of Africa's most conservative states, though there is pressure from urban-based modernizers. Political system promotes Swazi tradition and is dominated by powerful monarchy. Women face discrimination. Swaziland has the world's highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS: chastity is urged to combat its spread.

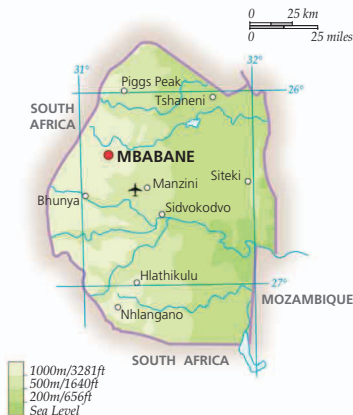


**INSIGHT:** Polygamy is practiced in Swaziland – when King Sobhuza died in 1982, he left 100 widows



## THE ECONOMY

Sugarcane is the main cash crop. Wood pulp and soft drink concentrates are also exported. Loss of workforce to HIV/AIDS, and high cost of health care.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Swaziland

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1968

**CAPITAL:** Mbabane

**POPULATION:** 1.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 6704 sq. miles  
(17,363 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 181 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, siSwati\*, isiZulu, Xitsonga

**RELIGIONS:** Traditional beliefs 40%, other 30%, Roman Catholic 20%, Muslim 10%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Swazi 97%, other 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Lilangeni = 100 cents



# Sweden



The largest Scandinavian country by both population and area, Sweden has one of the world's most extensive welfare systems and is among the leading proponents of equal rights for women.



## GEOGRAPHY

Heavily forested, with many lakes. Northern plateau extends beyond the Arctic Circle. Southern lowlands are widely cultivated.



## CLIMATE

Southern coasts warmed by Gulf Stream. Northern areas have more extreme continental climate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The nuclear family forms the basis of society, but the marriage rate is one of the lowest in the world, and cohabitation is now common. The model welfare system is paid for by a high tax burden. Women are well represented at all levels. A minority of 30,000 Sámi lives in the far north. Most industries and the bulk of population are based in and around the southern cities. An EU member since 1995, Sweden has voted not to join the euro.



## THE ECONOMY

Companies of global importance, including Volvo, Saab, SKF, Ericsson. Highly developed infrastructure. Up-to-date technology. Skilled workforce.



**INSIGHT:** Sweden has maintained a position of armed neutrality since 1815



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Sweden

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1523

**CAPITAL:** Stockholm

**POPULATION:** 9.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 173,731 sq. miles (449,964 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 60 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Swedish\*, Finnish, Sámi

**RELIGIONS:** Evangelical Lutheran 75%, other 13%, other Protestant 5%, Muslim 5%, Roman Catholic 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Swedish 86%, foreign-born or first-generation immigrant 12%, Finnish and Sámi 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Swedish krona = 100 öre

# Switzerland



One of the world's most prosperous countries, Switzerland sits at the center of Europe. It has retained its neutral status through every major European conflict since 1815.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly mountainous, with river valleys. The Alps cover 60% of its area; the Jura in the west cover 10%. Lowlands lie along the east–west axis.



## CLIMATE

Most rain falls in the warm summer months. Winters are snowy, but milder and foggy away from the mountains. Avalanches are a problem.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Switzerland is composed of distinct German-Swiss, French-Swiss, and Italian-Swiss linguistic groups. In the east, a 60,000-strong minority speaks Romansch. The country is divided into 26 autonomous cantons (states), each with control over health care, education, housing, and taxation. Public referenda are widely used to decide policy. Society is conservative; marriage is common but divorce is above the EU average rate.



## THE ECONOMY

Diversified economy relies on services – the banking sector manages over a quarter of the world's offshore private wealth – and specialized industries (engineering, watches, etc).



**INSIGHT:** *Famed for its neutrality, Switzerland only joined the UN in 2002, and remains outside the EU*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Swiss Confederation

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1291

**CAPITAL:** Bern

**POPULATION:** 8.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 15,942 sq. miles  
(41,290 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 528 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** German\*, Swiss-German, French\*, Italian\*, Romansch\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 42%, Protestant 35%, other and nonreligious 19%, Muslim 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** German 64%, French 20%, other 9%, Italian 6%, Romansch 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Swiss franc = 100 rappen/centimes



# Syria



Stretching from the eastern Mediterranean to the Tigris River, Syria's borders are regarded as an artificial creation of French colonial rule by many Syrians. Civil war erupted in 2011.



## GEOGRAPHY

A short stretch of coastal plain is backed by a low range of hills. The Euphrates River cuts through a vast interior desert plateau.



## CLIMATE

Mediterranean coastal climate. Inland areas are arid. In winter, snow is common on the mountains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Towns tend to lie within 60 miles (100 km) of the coast. Most Syrians are Sunni Muslim, but the Shi'a Alawis control politics. The authoritarian Assad regime, in power since 1970, fiercely repressed pro-democracy "Arab Spring" protests in 2011, and brutal conflict soon broke out. 200,000 have been killed and ten million are displaced, including many Palestinians and Iraqis formerly sheltering in Syrian refugee camps. Islamic State (IS) jihadists control the Euphrates valley.

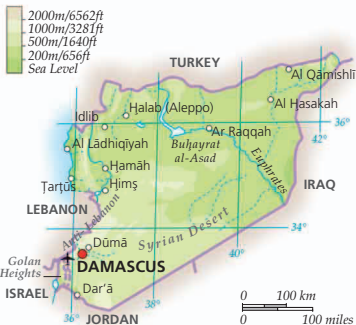


## THE ECONOMY

Conflict has destroyed economy. Oil fields held by rebels, production down. Sanctions limit exports. Lack of food, medicines. Infrastructure bombed.



**INSIGHT:** *Syria is an ancient land; there are at least 3500 as yet unexcavated archaeological sites*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Syrian Arab Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1941

**CAPITAL:** Damascus

**POPULATION:** 21.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 71,498 sq. miles  
(184,180 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 308 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, French, Kurdish, Armenian, Circassian, Assyrian, Aramaic

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 74%, Alawi (Shi'a sect) 12%, Christian 10%, Druze 3%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 90%, Kurdish 9%, Armenian, Turkmen, and Circassian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Syrian pound = 100 piastres

# Taiwan



The republic of Taiwan (formerly Formosa) is on an island 80 miles (130 km) off the southeast coast of mainland China, which still considers it to be a renegade province.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountain region covers two-thirds of the island. Highly fertile lowlands and coastal plains.



## CLIMATE

Tropical monsoon. Hot and humid. Typhoons July–September. Snow falls in mountains in winter.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Most Taiwanese are Han Chinese, descendants of the 1644 migration of the Ming dynasty from the mainland. The modern republic was created in 1949, when the nationalist Kuomintang was expelled from the mainland following Communist victory in the civil war. 100,000 emigrés established themselves as a ruling class. Initial resentment has subsided as a new Taiwan-born generation has taken over the reins of power. The aboriginal minority suffers discrimination.

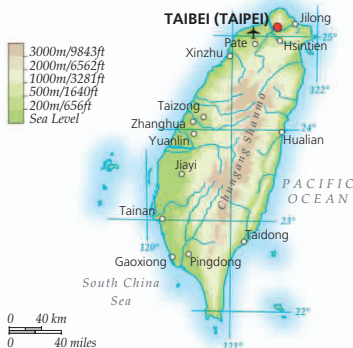


## THE ECONOMY

Successful economy of small, adaptable companies. High-tech goods: TVs, computers, and semiconductors. Rising trade, investment with China.



**INSIGHT:** *Taiwan lost its seat at the UN to Beijing in 1971: both claim to represent “China”*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of China (ROC)

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1949

**CAPITAL:** Taipei (Taipei)

**POPULATION:** 23.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 13,892 sq. miles (35,980 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1871 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Amoy Chinese,

Mandarin Chinese\*, Hakka Chinese

**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist, Confucianist, and Taoist 93%, Christian 5%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Han Chinese (pre-20th-century migration) 84%, Han Chinese (20th-century migration) 14%, Aboriginal 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Taiwan dollar = 100 cents



# Tajikistan

Tajikistan lies landlocked on the western slopes of the Pamirs in central Asia. Soon after the breakup of the USSR in 1991, civil war erupted between ruling communists and Islamists.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly mountainous: bare slopes of the Pamir ranges, with fast-flowing rivers, cover most of the country. Small but fertile Fergana Valley in northwest.



## CLIMATE

Continental extremes in the valleys. Bitterly cold winters in the mountains. Rainfall is low.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Unlike the other former Soviet republics of central Asia, Tajikistan is dominated by a people of Persian (Iranian) rather than Turkic origin. The main ethnic conflict is with the Turkic Uzbek minority. Russians are discriminated against; most fled in the 1992–1997 civil war, and standards of living fell dramatically. Islamist militants are active. Two million people work abroad, primarily in Russia.



## THE ECONOMY

Mass poverty. Declining cotton revenue. Also exports aluminum. Uranium deposits. Transit route for illicit Afghan opium. Corruption. Needs reforms to attract foreign investment.

**INSIGHT:** *Carpet-making, an ancient tradition learned from Persia, is still a major source of revenue*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Tajikistan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Dushanbe

**POPULATION:** 8.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 55,251 sq. miles  
(143,100 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 148 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Tajik\*, Uzbek, Russian

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 95%, Shi'a Muslim 3%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Tajik 80%, Uzbek 15%, other 3%, Kyrgyz 1%, Russian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Somoni = 100 diram

# Tanzania



The east African state of Tanzania was formed in 1964 by the union of Tanganyika and the Zanzibar islands. A third of its area is game reserve or national park.



## GEOGRAPHY

The mainland is mostly a high plateau lying to the east of the Great Rift Valley. Forested coastal plain. Highlands in the north and south.



## CLIMATE

Tropical on the coast and Zanzibar. Semiarid on central plateau, semitemperate in the highlands. March–May rains.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

99% of people belong to one of 120 small ethnic Bantu groups. Arabs, Asians, and Europeans make up the remaining population. Use of Kiswahili as the lingua franca has eliminated ethnic rivalries. The majority of Tanzanians are subsistence farmers.

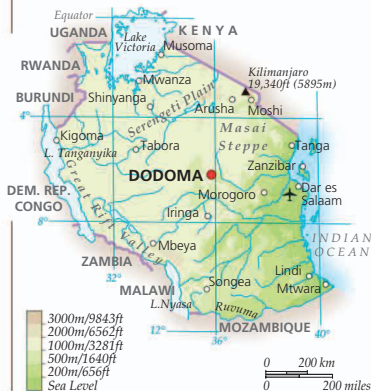


**INSIGHT:** At 19,340 ft (5895 m), Kilimanjaro in northeast Tanzania is Africa's highest mountain



## THE ECONOMY

Reliant on agriculture, including forestry and cattle. Coffee, cotton, tea, cashew nuts, sisal, and cloves are cash crops. Gold, diamonds, and gems mined. Safari and beach tourism. Debt relief.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** United Republic of Tanzania

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1964

**CAPITAL:** Dodoma

**POPULATION:** 49.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 364,898 sq. miles  
(945,087 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 144 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Kiswahili\*, Sukuma, Chagga, Nyamwezi, Hehe, Makonde, Yao, English\*  
**RELIGIONS:** Christian 63%, Muslim 35%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Native African (over 120 tribes) 99%, European, Asian, and Arab 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Tanzanian shilling = 100 cents





# Thailand



Thailand lies at the heart of mainland southeast Asia. Continuing rapid industrialization has resulted in massive congestion in the capital and a serious depletion of natural resources.



## GEOGRAPHY

One-third is low plateau, drained by tributaries of the Mekong River. Central plain is the most fertile area.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Hot, humid March–May; monsoon rains May–October; cooler season November–March.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Buddhism is a national binding force. 600,000 hill tribes-people live in the north and northeast. The Chinese minority is the most assimilated in the region. In the undeveloped far south, Malay Islamists are fighting for secession. Politics has been unstable since the 2006 fall of populist Prime Minister Thaksin; the military intervened again in 2014.



**INSIGHT:** *Thailand, meaning “land of the free,” is the only SE Asian nation never to have been colonized*



## THE ECONOMY

Successful manufacturing. Natural gas reserves. Leading exporter of rice, rubber. Political turmoil. Tourism, though sex industry harms image. Damage from natural disasters.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Thailand

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1238

**CAPITAL:** Bangkok

**POPULATION:** 67 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 198,455 sq. miles  
(514,000 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 340 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Thai\*, Chinese, Malay, Khmer, Mon, Karen, Miao

**RELIGIONS:** Buddhist 95%, Muslim 4%, other (including Christian) 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Thai 83%, Chinese 12%, Malay 3%, Khmer and other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** Baht = 100 satang

## Togo



Togo lies sandwiched between Ghana and Benin in west Africa. General Eyadema ruled from 1967–2005; his son succeeded him. Lomé port is an important entrepôt for regional trade.

**GEOGRAPHY**

Central forested region bounded by savanna lands to the north and south. Mountain range stretches southwest to northeast.

**CLIMATE**

Coast hot and humid; drier inland. Rainy season March–July, with heaviest falls in the west.

**PEOPLE & SOCIETY**

Harsh resentment between Ewe in the south and Kabye in the north. Kabye control the military, but the north is less developed than the south. Extended family is important. Tribalism and nepotism are key factors in everyday life. Some ethnic groups, such as the Mina, have matriarchal societies.



**INSIGHT:** *The “Nana Benz,” the entrepreneurial market-women of Lomé, control Togo’s retail trade*

**THE ECONOMY**

Most people are farmers. Self-sufficient in staple foods. Togo’s main cash crops are coffee and cocoa: cotton has declined. Its phosphate deposits are the most mineral-rich in the world, but easily extractable reserves are depleted and the sector needs investment.

**FACTFILE**

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Togolese Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1960

**CAPITAL:** Lomé

**POPULATION:** 6.8 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 21,924 sq. miles  
(56,785 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 324 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Ewe, Kabye, Gurma, French\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 47%, traditional beliefs 33%, Muslim 14%, other 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Ewe 46%, other African 41%, Kabye 12%, European 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** CFA franc = 100 centimes



# Tonga

Tonga is a South Pacific archipelago of 170 islands; only 45 of these islands are inhabited. The king retains significant powers though some democratic reforms were introduced in 2011.



## GEOGRAPHY

Easterly islands are generally low and fertile. Those in the west are higher and volcanic in origin.



## CLIMATE

Tropical oceanic. Temperatures range between 68°F (20°C) and 86°F (30°C) all year round. Heavy rainfall, especially February–March.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Tonga is the last remaining Polynesian monarchy. All land belongs to the crown, but is administered by nobles who allot it to the common people. Respect for traditional values is high, though younger, Westernized Tongans are starting to question some attitudes. The first elected commoner became prime minister in 2006.

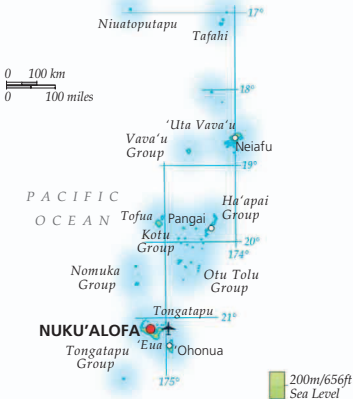


**INSIGHT:** *Unique in the Pacific, Tonga was never brought under foreign rule*



## THE ECONOMY

Squashes and vanilla exported. Remittances. Potential for tourism and fisheries. Large debt owed to China for rebuilding of capital's business district, destroyed in 2006 prodemocracy riots.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Kingdom of Tonga

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1970

**CAPITAL:** Nuku'alofa

**POPULATION:** 106,322

**TOTAL AREA:** 289 sq. miles (748 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 382 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Tongan\*

**RELIGIONS:** Free Wesleyan 41%, other 17%, Roman Catholic 16%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 14%, Free Church of Tonga 12%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Tongan 98%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** Pa'anga (Tongan dollar)

= 100 seniti

# Trinidad & Tobago



The two islands of the former UK colony of Trinidad and Tobago are the most southerly of the Caribbean Windward Islands, lying just 9 miles (15 km) off the coast of Venezuela.



## GEOGRAPHY

Both islands are hilly and wooded. Trinidad has a rugged mountain range in the north, and swamps on its east and west coasts.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with July–December wet season. Escapes the region's hurricanes, which pass to the north.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Trinidad's East Indian community is the Caribbean's largest and holds onto its Muslim and Hindu heritage. There are tensions with the mainly Christian blacks; political parties are divided along race lines. Blacks form the majority on Tobago. High rates of kidnapping and murder are an issue.



**INSIGHT:** *Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace of steel bands and Calypso music*



## THE ECONOMY

Oil and natural gas: major provider of liquefied natural gas to US, but reserves are declining fast. Associated industries: second-largest producer of methanol. Tourism on wildlife-rich Tobago.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Port-of-Spain

**POPULATION:** 1.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 1980 sq. miles (5128 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 656 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English Creole, English\*, Hindi, French, Spanish

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 26%, Hindu 23%, other 23%, Protestant 22%, Muslim 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** East Indian 40%, Black 38%, mixed race 20%, White, Chinese, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Trin. & Tob. dollar = 100 cents



# Tunisia



A French north African colony until 1956, Tunisia was relatively liberal in social terms, but in 2011 protesters ousted the dictatorial president, triggering the "Arab Spring" across the region.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountains in the north are surrounded by plains. Vast, low-lying salt pans in the center. To the south lies the Sahara Desert.



## CLIMATE

Summer temperatures are high. The north is often wet and windy in winter. Far south is arid.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The population is almost entirely of Arab-Berber descent, with Jewish and Christian minorities. Many still live in extended family groups of three or four generations. Women have better rights than in most other Arab countries and make up a quarter of the workforce. The low birth rate is a result of a long-standing family planning policy. The Islamist-led transitional government elected in 2011 was replaced by a consensus government in 2014.

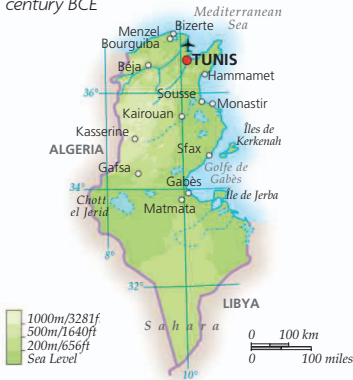


## THE ECONOMY

Competitive and diversified. Expanding manufacturing. Exports olives, dates, citrus fruit, phosphates. Instability, affecting tourism. Free trade with EU.



**INSIGHT:** Tunisia was the center of trading empires from the 9th century BCE



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Tunisian Republic

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1956

**CAPITAL:** Tunis

**POPULATION:** 11 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 63,169 sq. miles  
(163,610 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 183 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, French

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 98%,  
Christian 1%, Jewish 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab and Berber 98%, Jewish 1%,  
European 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** Tunisian dinar =  
1000 millimes

# Turkey



Lying partly in the region of eastern Thrace in Europe, but mostly in Asia, Turkey's position gives it significant influence in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Middle East.



## GEOGRAPHY

Asian Turkey (Anatolia) is dominated by two mountain ranges, separated by a high, semidesert plateau. Coastal regions are fertile.



## CLIMATE

Coast has a Mediterranean climate. Inland has cold, snowy winters and hot, dry summers.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Despite racial diversity, Turkey has a strong sense of national identity, and close links with other Turkic states. Kurds, the largest minority, based in the southeast, have waged a violent campaign for greater autonomy intermittently since 1984. The current political dominance of Islamists challenges Turkey's cherished identity as a secular state. It has applied to join the EU, but progress will be slow.



## THE ECONOMY

Liberalized economy, boosted by self-sufficient agriculture, and textiles, tourism, and manufacturing sectors. Route of Asian oil pipelines to Europe.



**INSIGHT:** Turkey had two of the seven wonders of the ancient world: the tomb of King Mausolus at Halicarnassus (now Bodrum), and the temple of Artemis at Ephesus



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Turkey

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1923

**CAPITAL:** Ankara

**POPULATION:** 74.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 301,382 sq. miles  
(780,580 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 252 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Turkish\*, Kurdish, Arabic, Circassian, Armenian, Greek, Georgian, Ladino  
**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 99%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Turkish 70%, Kurdish 20%, other 8%, Arab 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Turkish lira = 100 kuruş



# Turkmenistan

Stretching from the Caspian Sea into the central Asian desert, Turkmenistan has had less upheaval than most ex-Soviet states, under President Niyazov's dictatorial rule (1991–2006).



## GEOGRAPHY

Low Garagum Desert covers 80% of the country. Mountains on southern border with Iran. Fertile Amu Darya Valley in north.



## CLIMATE

Arid desert climate with extreme summer heat, but sub-freezing winter temperatures.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Turkmen were once largely nomadic, and the tribal unit remains strong, with population clustered around desert oases. "Turkmenization" of government, education, and religion has strained relations with Uzbek and Russian minorities. Political reform since Niyazov's sudden death in 2006 led to multiparty elections in 2013, though all seats were won by the former sole party and Niyazov's successor runs a similarly authoritarian regime.



## THE ECONOMY

State-controlled, though there is some private investment. Natural gas and oil are main resources. Overintensive farming of cotton. Black market.



**INSIGHT:** *President Niyazov created an elaborate personality cult, styling himself as Turkmenbashi – "head" of all Turkmen*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Turkmenistan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Ashgabat

**POPULATION:** 5.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 188,455 sq. miles  
(488,100 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 28 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Turkmen\*, Uzbek, Russian, Kazakh, Tatar

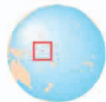
**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 89%, Orthodox Christian 9%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Turkmen 85%, other 6%, Uzbek 5%, Russian 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New manat = 100 tenge

# Tuvalu



One of the world's smallest, most isolated states, Tuvalu lies in the central Pacific. The nine islands were linked to the Gilbert Islands (Kiribati) as a UK colony until independence.



## GEOGRAPHY

A series of coral atolls, none more than 15 ft (4.6 m) above sea level. Poor soils restrict vegetation to bush, coconut palms, and breadfruit trees.



## CLIMATE

Hot all year round. Heavy annual rainfall. Hurricane season brings many violent storms.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

People are mostly Polynesian. Around half the population lives on Funafuti, where government jobs are based. Life is communal and traditional. Most people live by subsistence farming, digging pits out of the coral to grow crops. Fresh water is precious, due to frequent droughts.

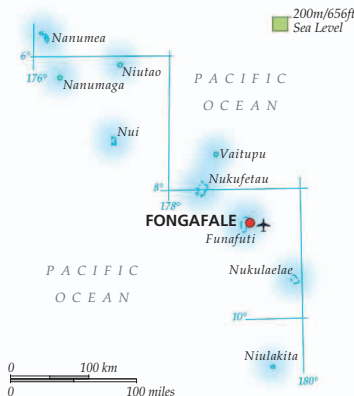


**INSIGHT:** Low-lying Tuvalu, like the Maldives, is set to disappear with rising sea levels



## THE ECONOMY

World's smallest economy. Remittances from Tuvaluan seafarers. Sale of fishing licenses. Copra, stamps, and coins exported. Income from trust fund and the lease of .tv Internet suffix.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Tuvalu

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1978

**CAPITAL:** Fongafale, on Funafuti Atoll

**POPULATION:** 10,698

**TOTAL AREA:** 10 sq. miles  
(26 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 1070 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Tuvaluan, Kiribati, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Church of Tuvalu 97%, Baha'i 1%, Seventh-day Adventist 1%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Polynesian 96%,  
Micronesian 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Nonparty system

**CURRENCY:** Australian dollar and  
Tuvaluan dollar = 100 cents each





# Uganda



Landlocked in east Africa, Uganda has a history of ethnic strife. Under President Museveni, steps have been taken to restore peace and to rebuild the economy and democracy.



## GEOGRAPHY

Predominantly a large plateau with the Ruwenzori mountain range and the Great Rift Valley in the west. Lake Victoria lies to the southeast. Vegetation is of savanna type.



## CLIMATE

Altitude and the influence of the lakes modify the equatorial climate. Rain falls throughout the year; spring is the wettest period.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Mostly rural population comprising 13 main ethnic groups. President Museveni has worked hard to break down ethnic animosities, but a noticeable north-south divide persists, with most development in the south. After two decades of brutal clashes (1987–2008), the Ugandan army is still pursuing remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army across the DRC, South Sudan, and the CAR.



## THE ECONOMY

Resource-rich, but undeveloped and poor. Exports coffee, fish, tea, and flowers. Oil exploration. Hydroelectric power is reducing oil imports. Great potential from mining. Debt relief.



**INSIGHT:** Lake Victoria is the world's third-largest lake



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Uganda

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1962

**CAPITAL:** Kampala

**POPULATION:** 37.6 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 91,135 sq. miles  
(236,040 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 488 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Luganda, Nkole, Chiga, Lango, Acholi, Teso, Lugbara, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 85%, Muslim (mainly Sunni) 12%, other 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Other 50%, Baganda 17%, Banyakole 10%, Basoga 9%, Iteso 7%, Bakiga 7%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Uganda shilling = 100 cents

# Ukraine



The former “breadbasket of the Soviet Union,” Ukraine lies on the Black Sea. Divisions between pro-Russian sentiments and pro-European nationalism erupted into civil war in 2014.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mainly fertile steppes and forests. Carpathian Mountains in west, Crimean chain in south. Pripet Marshes in northwest.



## CLIMATE

Mainly continental climate, with distinct seasons. Southern Crimea has Mediterranean climate.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Over 90% of people in the west are Ukrainian, but in cities in the east and south, and in Crimea, Russians form a majority. Tatars returned to Crimea after the Soviet Union's collapse and comprise around 12% of the population there. Pro-Russian president Yanukovich's refusal to sign an EU deal provoked protests that ousted him from power in 2014. Russia responded by backing eastern rebels and annexing Crimea.



## THE ECONOMY

Minerals: 5% of global reserves. Political instability, and conflict in the east. Slow reform of land laws, holding back agriculture. Oil/natural gas transit from Russia and the Caspian to Europe: natural gas price disputes with Russia.



**INSIGHT:** *Ukraine means “on the border,” referring to its position on the edge of the old Russian Empire*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Ukraine

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Kiev

**POPULATION:** 45.2 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 223,089 sq. miles  
(603,700 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 194 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Ukrainian\*, Russian, Tatar

**RELIGIONS:** Christian (mainly Orthodox) 95%, other 5%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Ukrainian 78%, Russian 17%, other 5%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Hryvna = 100 kopykyas



# United Arab Emirates

Bordering the Gulf on the northern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, the seven states of the UAE are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al Qaywayn, Ras al Khaymah, and Fujayrah.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mostly flat, semiarid desert with dunes, salt pans, and occasional oases. Cities are watered by extensive irrigation systems.



## CLIMATE

Summers are humid, despite minimal rainfall. Sand-laden *shamal* winds blow in winter and spring.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Emirians, who make up just a quarter of the population, are mostly Sunni Muslims of Bedouin descent, and largely city dwellers. In theory, women enjoy equal rights with men. Poverty is rare and there is no income tax. The 1970s oil boom encouraged the immigration of workers, mostly from Asia. Western expatriates are permitted a virtually unrestricted lifestyle. Islamism, however, is a growing force among the young.



## THE ECONOMY

Major oil and natural gas exporter; plentiful reserves. Dynamic Dubai: free trade zone, financial center (but 2008 global downturn caught overextended banks). Water is scarce. Imports most food. Some emirates are less developed.



**INSIGHT:** *Mina Jabal Ali, in Dubai, is the largest man-made port in the world*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** United Arab Emirates

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1971

**CAPITAL:** Abu Dhabi

**POPULATION:** 9.3 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 32,000 sq. miles  
(82,880 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 288 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*, Farsi, Indian and Pakistani languages, English

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim (mainly Sunni) 96%, Christian, Hindu, and other 4%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Asian 60%, Emirian 25%, other Arab 12%, European 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Monarchy

**CURRENCY:** UAE dirham = 100 fils

# United Kingdom



Separated from continental Europe by the English Channel, the UK consists of Great Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland), several smaller islands, and Northern Ireland.



## GEOGRAPHY

Rugged uplands dominate the landscape of Scotland, Wales, and northern England. All of the peaks in the United Kingdom over 4000 ft (1219 m) are in highland Scotland. The Pennine mountains, known as the “backbone of England,” run the length of northern England. Lowland England rises into several ranges of rolling hills, and there is an interconnected system of rivers and canals. Over 600 islands, many uninhabited, lie west and north of the Scottish mainland.



## CLIMATE

Generally mild, temperate, and highly changeable. Rain is fairly well distributed throughout the year. The west is generally wetter than the east, and the south warmer than the north. Winter snow is common in upland areas.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Scottish and Welsh people have a stronger sense of separate identity than the English; both Scotland and Wales have some self-government, as does Northern Ireland. In 2014 Scotland rejected independence in a referendum. Other ethnic minorities account for 5% of the population; more than half of them were born in the UK. Asian women in particular can be socially isolated. Asians and West Indians in most cities face deprivation and social stress, but white working-class youths were also evident when innercity rioting erupted in 2011. Income inequality is greater now than in 1884, when records began. In key areas such as policing, multiethnic recruitment has made little progress. Marriage is in decline. Over 40% of all births occur outside marriage, but most of them to cohabiting couples. Single-parent households account for just over a quarter of all families.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1707

**CAPITAL:** London

**POPULATION:** 63.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 94,525 sq. miles (244,820 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 676 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic

**RELIGIONS:** Anglican 45%, other and nonreligious 37%, Roman Catholic 9%, Presbyterian 4%, Muslim 3%, Methodist 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** English 80%, Scottish 9%, other 5%, Welsh 3%, Northern Irish 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

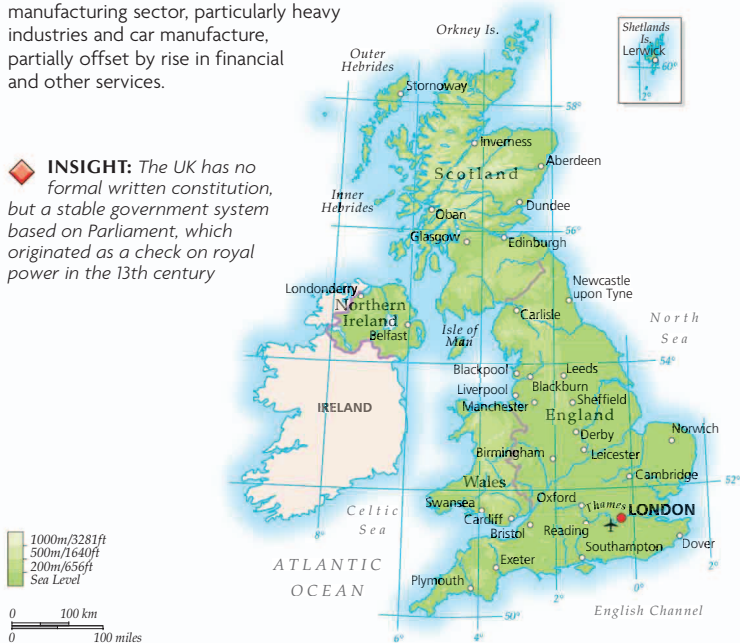
**CURRENCY:** Pound sterling = 100 pence

## THE ECONOMY

World leader in financial services, pharmaceuticals, and defense industries. Strong multinationals. Precision engineering and high-tech industries, including biotechnology and telecommunications. Energy sector based on declining North Sea oil and natural gas reserves. Innovative in computer software development. Flexible working practices. Long-term decline of manufacturing sector, particularly heavy industries and car manufacture, partially offset by rise in financial and other services.

**INSIGHT:** *The UK has no formal written constitution, but a stable government system based on Parliament, which originated as a check on royal power in the 13th century*

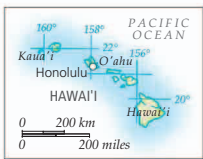
Nonparticipant in euro. High levels of government, corporate, and consumer debt: banks made major losses in 2007–2009 global downturn. Bailouts and stimulus packages pushed the government's finances further into the red. Tackling the deficit by cuts in spending puts pressure on growth strategy and social programs, with rising unemployment.



# United States of America



Stretching across the most temperate part of North America, and with many natural resources, the US is the world's leading economic power and third-largest country.



## GEOGRAPHY

The US has a varied topography. Forested mountains stretch from New England in the far northeast, giving way to lowlands and swamps in the extreme south. The central plains are dominated by the Mississippi–Missouri River system and the Great Lakes on the Canadian border. The Rocky Mountains in the west contain active volcanoes and drop to the coast across the earthquake-prone San Andreas Fault. The southwest is arid desert. Mountainous Alaska is mostly Arctic tundra.



## CLIMATE

There are four main climatic zones. The north and east are continental and temperate, with heavy rainfall, warm summers, and cold winters. Florida and the Deep South are tropical and prone to hurricanes. The southwest is arid desert, with searing summer heat and low rainfall. Southern California is Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters.

**INSIGHT:** The United States of America has the world's oldest constitution. Drafted in 1787, it has operated continuously ever since, albeit with numerous amendments



# United States of America



**INSIGHT:** *By law, the actual records collected in a United States census must remain confidential for 72 years*



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Although the demographic, economic, and cultural dominance of White Americans is firmly entrenched after over 400 years of settlement, the ethnic balance of the country is shifting. Barack Obama, whose father was African, became the first non-White US president in 2009. The African-American community, originally uprooted by the slave trade, has a strong consciousness. Less well organized socially but more numerous, and faster-growing, the Hispanic community is predicted to number over 30% of the population by 2050. Native Americans, dispossessed in the 19th century, are now among the poorest people. Constitutionally, state and religion are clearly separated. Conservative Christianity, however, is increasingly dominant politically. Living standards are high, but bad diet and insufficient exercise have left over a third of Americans obese.



## THE ECONOMY

World's largest economy; huge resource base; well-established high-tech, engineering, and entertainment industries; global spread of US culture. Decline of manufacturing as jobs lost to low-wage economies. The combination of the "war on terrorism" launched after 9/11, military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, and a drive to cut taxes sent government debt spiraling. Hurricane Katrina hit oil production in 2005. Then a "bubble" of excessive risky mortgage lending burst and the financial and stock market crisis went global after the Lehman Brothers bank crashed in 2008. An economic incentive programme, combining tax cuts with more public spending, helped lift the economy out of recession, but widened the gaping budget deficit. Obama's government has struggled with this ever since. Pressures to cut spending hurt its social agenda, while conservative opponents denounce tax increases as a threat to growth.

## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** United States of America

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1776

**CAPITAL:** Washington, D.C.

**POPULATION:** 320 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 3,717,792 sq. miles  
(9,626,091 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 90 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** English\*, Spanish, other

**RELIGIONS:** Protestant 52%, Roman Catholic 25%, other 20%, Jewish 2%, Muslim 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** White 60%, Hispanic 17%, African American 14%, Asian 6%, Native American 2%, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** US dollar = 100 cents





# Uruguay



Situated in southeastern South America, Uruguay returned to civilian government in 1985, after 12 years of military rule.

Most land is used for farming; Uruguay is a major wool exporter.



## GEOGRAPHY

Low, rolling grasslands cover 80% of the country. Narrow coastal plain. Alluvial floodplain in southwest. Five rivers flow westward and drain into the Uruguay River.



## CLIMATE

Temperate throughout the country. Warm summers, mild winters, and moderate rainfall.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Uruguayans are largely second- or third-generation Italians or Spaniards. Wealth derived from cattle ranching enabled the country to establish the first welfare state in South America. Waves of emigration occurred during the economic decline of the 1960s, the period of military rule, and the 1999–2002 economic crisis. Though a Roman Catholic country, Uruguay is liberal in its attitude to religion and all forms are tolerated.



## THE ECONOMY

Exports wool, meat, hides, rice, wood, soy. Well-educated workforce. Banking services. Mineral potential.



**INSIGHT:** *Uruguay's rich pastures are ideal for raising livestock; animal products bring in over 40% of export earnings*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Eastern Republic of Uruguay

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1828

**CAPITAL:** Montevideo

**POPULATION:** 3.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 68,039 sq. miles (176,220 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 50 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 66%, other and nonreligious 30%, Jewish 2%, Protestant 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** White 90%, *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian) 6%, Black 4%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Uruguayan peso = 100 centésimos

# Uzbekistan



Sharing what is left of the Aral Sea with neighboring Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan lies on the ancient Silk Road between Asia and Europe. It is the most populous central Asian republic.



## GEOGRAPHY

Arid and semiarid plains in much of the west. Fertile, irrigated farmland in the east lies below the peaks of the western Pamirs.



## CLIMATE

Harsh continental climate. Summers can be extremely hot and dry; winters are cold.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Complex ethnic makeup. Ex-Communists are in firm control, but traditional social patterns based on clan, religion, and region have reemerged. Constitutional measures aim to control the influence of Islam: activities against Islamists have drawn international condemnation. Most people live in the fertile east. Birth rates are high, and the status of women continues to be low.



## THE ECONOMY

Highly regulated. Reserves of natural gas, oil, coal, gold (has one of the world's largest gold mines), and other minerals. Cash crop is cotton: requires much irrigation. Grain imports necessary.



**INSIGHT:** *The Aral Sea holds just a tenth of its former volume of water, due to diversion of rivers for irrigation*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Uzbekistan

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1991

**CAPITAL:** Tashkent

**POPULATION:** 28.9 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 172,741 sq. miles  
(447,400 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 167 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Uzbek\*, Russian, Tajik, Kazakh

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 88%, Orthodox Christian 9%, other 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Uzbek 80%, other 6%, Russian 6%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Som = 100 tiyin



# Vanuatu

An archipelago of 82 islands and islets in the South Pacific, Vanuatu was ruled jointly by the UK and France from 1906 until independence in 1980. Politics is democratic but volatile.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountainous and volcanic, with coral beaches and dense rainforest. Cultivated land along the coasts.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Temperatures and rainfall decline from north to south.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Indigenous Melanesians form a majority. Ni-Vanuatu culture is traditional; local social and religious customs are strong, despite centuries of missionary influence. Subsistence farming and fishing are the main activities. 80% of the population lives on the 12 main islands. Women have lower social status than men and payment of bride-price is common.

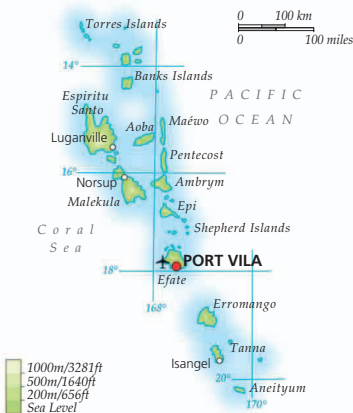


**INSIGHT:** With 112 indigenous tongues, Vanuatu has the world's highest per capita density of languages



## THE ECONOMY

Reliant on aid. Main exports are copra (dried coconut), kava, cocoa, and beef. Tourism. Offshore banking: rules tightened after international pressure.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Vanuatu

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1980

**CAPITAL:** Port Vila

**POPULATION:** 300,000

**TOTAL AREA:** 4710 sq. miles (12,200 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 64 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bislama (Melanesian pidgin)\*,

English\*, French\*, other indigenous languages

**RELIGIONS:** Presbyterian 37%, other 19%, Anglican 15%, Roman Catholic 15%, traditional beliefs 8%, Seventh-day Adventist 6%

**ETHNIC MIX:** ni-Vanuatu 94%, European 4%, other 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary system

**CURRENCY:** Vatu = 100 centimes

# Vatican City



The Vatican City, or Holy See, the seat of the Roman Catholic Church, is a walled enclave in the Italian city of Rome. It is the world's smallest fully independent state.



## GEOGRAPHY

The Vatican's territory includes 10 other buildings in Rome, plus the papal residence. The Vatican Gardens cover half the City's area.



## CLIMATE

Mild winters with regular rainfall. Hot, dry summers with occasional thunderstorms.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

The Vatican has about 800 permanent inhabitants, including over 100 lay persons. Thousands of lay staff are also employed. Citizenship can be acquired through long-term residence and holding a position within the City. The reigning pope has supreme legislative and judicial powers, and holds office for life. Though the Vatican City is officially neutral, papal opinion has a great influence on the world's 1.2 billion Roman Catholics.



## THE ECONOMY

Investments and voluntary contributions made by Catholics worldwide (known as Peter's Pence) are backed up by tourist revenue and the issue of Vatican stamps and coins.



**INSIGHT:** *The Vatican City is the spiritual center for one in six of the world's population*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of the Vatican City

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1929

**CAPITAL:** Vatican City

**POPULATION:** 839

**TOTAL AREA:** 0.17 sq. miles  
(0.44 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 4935 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Italian\*, Latin\*

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 100%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Cardinals are from many nationalities, but Italians form the largest group. Most resident lay persons are Italian. The current pope is from Argentina.

**GOVERNMENT:** Papal state

**CURRENCY:** Euro = 100 cents



# Venezuela



Lying on the southern shores of the Caribbean, Venezuela was the first of Spain's colonies to seek independence. Despite large oil revenues, many Venezuelans still live in poverty.



## GEOGRAPHY

Andes Mountains and the Maracaibo lowlands in the northwest. Central grassy plains are drained by the Orinoco River system. Forested Guiana Highlands in the southeast.



## CLIMATE

Tropical. Hot and humid. Uplands are cooler. Orinoco plains are alternately parched or flooded.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Venezuela is historically a "melting pot," with immigrants from Europe and all over Latin America. The few indigenous Amerindians live in remote areas. Venezuela has one of the most urbanized societies in the region, with most of its population living in the northern cities. The left-wing rhetoric of President Hugo Chávez (1999–2013) raised opposition within Venezuela from urban society, and from the US.



## THE ECONOMY

Oil accounts for 95% of exports; world's largest reserves. Coal, gold, other minerals. Nationalizations are enlarging the inefficient, corruption-prone state sector and deterring foreign investors.



**INSIGHT:** *Venezuela's Angel Falls is the world's tallest waterfall, with a total drop of 3210 ft (979 m)*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1830

**CAPITAL:** Caracas

**POPULATION:** 30.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 352,143 sq. miles (912,050 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 89 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Spanish\*, Amerindian languages

**RELIGIONS:** Roman Catholic 96%, Protestant 2%, other 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** *Mestizo* (European–Amerindian) 69%, White 20%, Black 9%, Amerindian 2%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** Bolívar fuerte = 100 céntimos

# Vietnam



French rule of Vietnam ended in 1954. Divided at 17°N, the US-backed South fought the Communist North. Reunified after the North's 1975 victory, it is run as a single-party state.



## GEOGRAPHY

A heavily forested mountain range separates the northern Red River delta lowlands from the Mekong Delta in the south.



## CLIMATE

Cool winters in north; south is tropical, with even temperatures.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Ethnic Vietnamese dominate; the Chinese minority was viewed as a corrupt bourgeoisie by the victorious Communists after the war. Mountain-based minorities (*montagnards*) were also sidelined; tensions persist over the settling of highlands by lowlanders. Women play an active role in society. There is no political or press freedom.



**INSIGHT:** Intense US bombing and defoliant spraying in the 1962–1975 Vietnam War has scarred the landscape



## THE ECONOMY

Liberal economic policy (*doi moi*) from 1986: now one of fastest-growing economies. Major rice exporter. Cheap labor. Strong manufacturing: textiles, electrical goods. Diverse resource base.



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Socialist Republic of Vietnam

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1976

**CAPITAL:** Hanoi

**POPULATION:** 91.7 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 127,243 sq. miles (329,560 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 730 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Vietnamese\*, Chinese, Thai, Khmer, Muong, Nung, Miao, Yao, Jarai

**RELIGIONS:** Other 74%, Buddhist 14%, Roman Catholic 7%, Cao Dai 3%, Protestant 2%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Vietnamese 86%, other 8%, Tay 2%, Thai 2%, Muong 2%

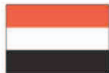
**GOVERNMENT:** One-party state

**CURRENCY:** Đồng = 10 hao = 100 xu



# Yemen

Located in southern Arabia, Yemen was formerly two countries: the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (south and east) and the Yemen Arab Republic (northwest) were united in 1990.



## GEOGRAPHY

Mountainous west with a fertile strip along the Red Sea. Arid desert and mountains elsewhere.



## CLIMATE

Desert climate, modified by altitude, which affects temperatures by as much as 54°F (30°C).



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Almost entirely of Arab and Bedouin descent, most Yemenis are Sunni Muslims, of the Shafi sect. In rural and northern areas, tribalism and Islamic orthodoxy are strong and most women wear the veil. Tension continues between cosmopolitan Aden and the more conservative north. Islamists have a growing political role. Popular protests that began in the 2011 "Arab Spring" ended President Saleh's 33-year rule. Foreigners are subject to attacks and kidnappings.

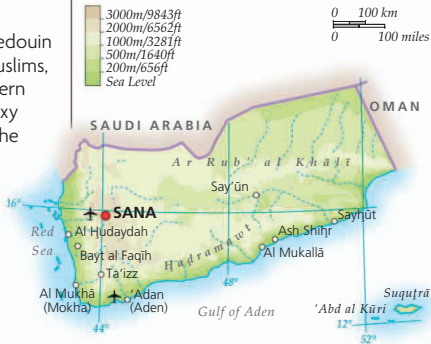


## THE ECONOMY

Instability deters investment. Considerable oil and natural gas reserves. Agriculture is the largest employer: qat (mild narcotic), coffee, and cotton.



**INSIGHT:** Mokha, on the Red Sea, gave its name to the first coffee beans exported to Europe in the 1600s



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Yemen

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1990

**CAPITAL:** Sana

**POPULATION:** 24.4 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 203,849 sq. miles  
(527,970 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 112 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Arabic\*

**RELIGIONS:** Sunni Muslim 55%,  
Shi'a Muslim 42%, Christian, Hindu,  
and Jewish 3%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Arab 99%, Afro-Arab, Indian,  
Somali, and European 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Transitional regime

**CURRENCY:** Yemeni rial = 100 fils

# Zambia



Bordered to the south by the Zambezi River, Zambia lies at the heart of southern Africa. In 1991, it made a peaceful transition from single-party rule to multiparty democracy.



## GEOGRAPHY

A high savanna plateau, broken by mountains in northeast. Vegetation mainly trees and scrub.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, with three seasons: cool and dry, hot and dry, and wet. Southwest is prone to drought.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

There are more than 70 different ethnic groups, but there are fewer tensions than in many African states. Major groups are the Bemba (in the northeast), Tonga (south), Nyanja (east), and Lozi (west). There are also thousands of refugees, mostly from the DRC and Angola. A National Gender Policy was issued in 2000 to redress inequalities between the sexes. The standard of living has fallen in real terms since independence. One in seven adults is infected with HIV/AIDS.



## THE ECONOMY

Copper: output has risen since 2000, when decades of falling global prices ended. New agricultural exports, notably flowers. Debt relief.



**INSIGHT:** *Spray from Musi-o-Tunya (Victoria Falls) can be seen up to 20 miles (35 km) away*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Zambia

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1964

**CAPITAL:** Lusaka

**POPULATION:** 14.5 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 290,584 sq. miles  
(752,614 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 51 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja, Lozi, Lala-Bisa, Nsenga, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Christian 63%, traditional beliefs 36%, Muslim and Hindu 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Bemba 34%, other African 26%, Tonga 16%, Nyanja 14%, Lozi 9%, European 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** New Zamb. kwacha = 100 ngwee





# Zimbabwe

Situated in southern Africa, Zimbabwe achieved independence from the UK in 1980. President Robert Mugabe, in power since then, has become increasingly authoritarian.



## GEOGRAPHY

High plateaus in center bordered by Zambezi River in the north and Limpopo in the south. Rivers crisscross central area.



## CLIMATE

Tropical, though moderated by the high altitude. Wet season November–March. Drought is common in the eastern highlands.



## PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Two main ethnic groups: Shona in the north and east, and Ndebele in the south. Shona outnumber Ndebele by four to one. Whites are generally far more affluent than blacks. Official efforts to redress this imbalance (such as land redistribution) have become increasingly aggressive. The political opposition to Mugabe joined him in a fractious unity government from 2009 to 2013 in an attempt to rebuild the country.

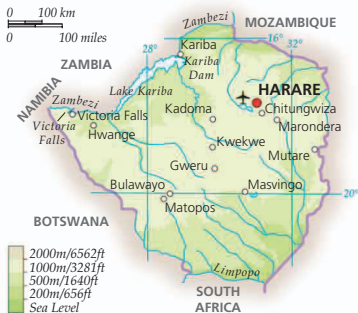


## THE ECONOMY

Undermined by mismanagement, corruption, and international isolation. High unemployment. Abandoned own currency in 2009 after hyperinflation.



**INSIGHT:** *The ruins of the 1000-year-old city of Great Zimbabwe, after which the country is named, are near modern-day Masvingo*



## FACTFILE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Zimbabwe

**DATE OF FORMATION:** 1980

**CAPITAL:** Harare

**POPULATION:** 14.1 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 150,803 sq. miles (390,580 sq. km)

**DENSITY:** 94 people per sq. mile

**LANGUAGES:** Shona, isiNdebele, English\*

**RELIGIONS:** Syncretic 50%, Christian 25%, traditional beliefs 24%, other 1%

**ETHNIC MIX:** Shona 71%, Ndebele 16%, other African 11%, White 1%, Asian 1%

**GOVERNMENT:** Presidential system

**CURRENCY:** US \$, S African rand, euro, UK £, Botswanan pula, Australian \$, Chinese yuan, Indian rupee, Japanese yen all legal tender

# Overseas territories

Despite the rapid process of global decolonization since World War II, around eight million people in more than 50 territories around the world continue to live under the protection of Australia, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the UK, or the USA. These remnants of former colonial empires may have persisted for economic, strategic, or political reasons and are administered by the protecting country in a variety of ways.

## AUSTRALIA

Australia's overseas territories have not been an issue since Papua New Guinea became independent in 1975. Consequently, there is no overriding policy toward them.

### Ashmore & Cartier Is. *Ref: 124 A3*

STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1931

POPULATION: None

AREA: 2 sq miles (5.2 sq km)

### Christmas Island *Ref: 123 E5*



STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1958

CAPITAL: The Settlement

POPULATION: 1530

AREA: 52 sq miles (135 sq km)

### Cocos Islands *Ref: 123 D5*

STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1955

CAPITAL: West Island

POPULATION: 596

AREA: 5.5 sq miles (14 sq km)

### Coral Sea Islands *Ref: 126 B4*

STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1969

POPULATION: 8 (Meteorologists)

AREA: 1.2 sq miles (3 sq km)

### Heard & McDonald Is. *Ref: 123 C7*

STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1947

POPULATION: None

AREA: 161 sq miles (417 sq km)

### Norfolk Island *Ref: 124 D4*



STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1774

CAPITAL: Kingston

POPULATION: 2210

AREA: 13 sq miles (34 sq km)

## DENMARK

The Faroes and Greenland have had home rule since 1948 and 1979 respectively.

### Faroe Islands *Ref: 65 F5*



STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1380

CAPITAL: Tórshavn

POPULATION: 49,469

AREA: 540 sq miles (1399 sq km)

### Greenland *Ref: 64 D3*



STATUS: External territory

CLAIMED: 1380

CAPITAL: Nuuk

POPULATION: 56,483

AREA: 836,109 sq miles (2,166,086 sq km)

# Overseas territories

## FRANCE

France's relations with *L'Outre-Mer* stress interdependence rather than independence. *Départements* have their own governments. *Collectivités* have some autonomy.

### Clipperton Island *Ref: 135 F3*

STATUS: Dependency of French Polynesia  
CLAIMED: 1935  
POPULATION: None  
AREA: 3.4 sq miles (9 sq km)

### French Guiana *Ref: 41 H3*

STATUS: Overseas department  
CLAIMED: 1817  
CAPITAL: Cayenne  
POPULATION: 250,109  
AREA: 35,135 sq miles (91,000 sq km)

### French Polynesia *Ref: 127 H4*

STATUS: Overseas collectivity  
CLAIMED: 1843  
CAPITAL: Papeete  
POPULATION: 276,831  
AREA: 1608 sq miles (4165 sq km)

### French Southern & Antarctic Lands

*Ref: 123 B6*

STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1772, 1840, 1843, 1924  
CAPITAL: Port-aux-Français  
POPULATION: 140  
AREA: 169,800 sq miles (439,781 sq km)

### Guadeloupe *Ref: 37 G4*

STATUS: Overseas department  
CLAIMED: 1635  
CAPITAL: Basse-Terre  
POPULATION: 405,739  
AREA: 629 sq miles (1628 sq km)

### Martinique *Ref: 37 G4*

STATUS: Overseas department  
CLAIMED: 1635  
CAPITAL: Fort-de-France  
POPULATION: 386,486  
AREA: 425 sq miles (1100 sq km)

### Mayotte *Ref: 61 G2*

STATUS: Overseas department  
CLAIMED: 1843  
CAPITAL: Mamoudzou  
POPULATION: 212,645  
AREA: 144 sq miles (374 sq km)

### New Caledonia *Ref: 126 D5*

STATUS: Special collectivity  
CLAIMED: 1853  
CAPITAL: Nouméa  
POPULATION: 262,000  
AREA: 7347 sq miles (19,100 sq km)

### Réunion *Ref: 61 H4*

STATUS: Overseas department  
CLAIMED: 1638  
CAPITAL: Saint-Denis  
POPULATION: 840,974  
AREA: 970 sq miles (2500 sq km)

### St Barthélemy *Ref: 37 G3*

STATUS: Overseas collectivity  
CLAIMED: 1878  
CAPITAL: Gustavia  
POPULATION: 7267  
AREA: 8 sq miles (21 sq km)

### St Martin *Ref: 37 E5*

STATUS: Overseas collectivity  
CLAIMED: 1648  
CAPITAL: Marigot  
POPULATION: 31,264  
AREA: 20 sq miles (53 sq km)

# Overseas territories

## St Pierre & Miquelon *Ref: 21 G4*

STATUS: Overseas collectivity

CLAIMED: 1604

CAPITAL: Saint-Pierre

POPULATION: 5716

AREA: 93 sq miles (242 sq km)

## Wallis & Futuna *Ref: 127 E4*

STATUS: Overseas collectivity

CLAIMED: 1842

CAPITAL: Mata'Utu

POPULATION: 15,561

AREA: 106 sq miles (274 sq km)

## NETHERLANDS

These islands were once part of the Dutch West Indies. They are now self-governing,

### Aruba *Ref: 37 E5*



STATUS: Constituent country

CLAIMED: 1636

CAPITAL: Oranjestad

POPULATION: 102,911

AREA: 75 sq miles (194 sq km)

### Bonaire *Ref: 37 E5*



STATUS: Special municipality

CLAIMED: 1816

CAPITAL: Kralendijk

POPULATION: 18,413

AREA: 113 sq miles (294 sq km)

### Curaçao *Ref: 37 E5*



STATUS: Constituent country

CLAIMED: 1815

CAPITAL: Willemstad

POPULATION: 153,500

AREA: 171 sq miles (444 sq km)

### Saba *Ref: 37 G3*

STATUS: Special municipality

CLAIMED: 1816

CAPITAL: The Bottom

POPULATION: 1846

AREA: 5 sq miles (13 sq km)

### Sint-Eustatius *Ref: 37 G3*

STATUS: Special municipality

CLAIMED: 1784

CAPITAL: Oranjestad

POPULATION: 4020

AREA: 8 sq miles (21 sq km)

### Sint-Maarten *Ref: 37 G3*

STATUS: Constituent country

CLAIMED: 1648

CAPITAL: Phillipsburg

POPULATION: 39,689

AREA: 13 sq miles (34 sq km)

## NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand remains responsible for its territories' foreign policy and defense.

### Cook Islands *Ref: 127 G4*



STATUS: Associated territory

CLAIMED: 1901

CAPITAL: Avarua

POPULATION: 13,700

AREA: 91 sq miles (235 sq km)

### Niue *Ref: 127 F5*



STATUS: Associated territory

CLAIMED: 1901

CAPITAL: Alofi

POPULATION: 1190

AREA: 102 sq miles (264 sq km)

# Overseas territories

## Tokelau *Ref: 127 F3*

STATUS: Dependent territory  
 CLAIMED: 1926  
 CAPITAL: None  
 POPULATION: 1337  
 AREA: 4 sq miles (10 sq km)

## NORWAY

There is a NATO base on Jan Mayen.  
 Bouvet Island is a nature reserve.

## Bouvet Island *Ref: 49 D7*

STATUS: Dependency  
 CLAIMED: 1928  
 POPULATION: None  
 AREA: 22 sq miles (58 sq km)

## Jan Mayen *Ref: 65 F3*

STATUS: Dependency  
 CLAIMED: 1929  
 POPULATION: 18 (Meteorologists)  
 AREA: 147 sq miles (381 sq km)

## Peter I. Island *Ref: 136 A3*

STATUS: Dependency  
 CLAIMED: 1931  
 POPULATION: None  
 AREA: 69 sq miles (180 sq km)

## Svalbard *Ref: 65 F2*

STATUS: Dependency  
 CLAIMED: 1920  
 CAPITAL: Longyearbyen  
 POPULATION: 1872  
 AREA: 24,289 sq miles (62,906 sq km)

## UNITED KINGDOM

The UK's dependencies are locally governed by a mix of elected and appointed officials.

## Anguilla *Ref: 37 G3*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
 CLAIMED: 1650  
 CAPITAL: The Valley  
 POPULATION: 16,086  
 AREA: 37 sq miles (96 sq km)

## Ascension Island *Ref: 49 C5*

STATUS: Overseas territory  
 CLAIMED: 1673  
 CAPITAL: Georgetown  
 POPULATION: 880  
 AREA: 34 sq miles (88 sq km)

## Bermuda *Ref: 17 E6*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
 CLAIMED: 1612  
 CAPITAL: Hamilton  
 POPULATION: 65,024  
 AREA: 20 sq miles (53 sq km)

## British Indian Ocean Territory

*Ref: 122 C4* STATUS: Overseas territory  
 CLAIMED: 1814  
 CAPITAL: Diego Garcia  
 POPULATION: 4000  
 AREA: 23 sq miles (60 sq km)



## British Virgin Islands *Ref: 37 F3*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
 CLAIMED: 1672  
 CAPITAL: Road Town  
 POPULATION: 32,680  
 AREA: 59 sq miles (153 sq km)

## Cayman Islands *Ref: 36 B3*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
 CLAIMED: 1670  
 CAPITAL: George Town  
 POPULATION: 58,435  
 AREA: 100 sq miles (259 sq km)

# Overseas territories

## Falkland Islands *Ref: 47 D7*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1832  
CAPITAL: Stanley

POPULATION: 2840  
AREA: 4699 sq miles (12,173 sq km)

## Gibraltar *Ref: 74 D5*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1713  
CAPITAL: Gibraltar

POPULATION: 29,185  
AREA: 2.5 sq miles (6.5 sq km)

## Guernsey *Ref: 71 D8*



STATUS: Crown Dependency  
CLAIMED: 1066  
CAPITAL: St. Peter Port

POPULATION: 65,849  
AREA: 25 sq miles (65 sq km)

## Isle of Man *Ref: 71 C5*



STATUS: Crown Dependency  
CLAIMED: 1765  
CAPITAL: Douglas

POPULATION: 85,888  
AREA: 221 sq miles (572 sq km)

## Jersey *Ref: 71 D8*



STATUS: Crown Dependency  
CLAIMED: 1066  
CAPITAL: St. Helier

POPULATION: 96,513  
AREA: 45 sq miles (116 sq km)

## Montserrat *Ref: 37 G4*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1632  
CAPITAL: Brades (*de facto*)

POPULATION: 5215  
AREA: 40 sq miles (102 sq km)

## Pitcairn Group of Is. *Ref: 125 G4*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1887  
CAPITAL: Adamstown

POPULATION: 48  
AREA: 18 sq miles (47 sq km)

## Saint Helena *Ref: 49 D5*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1673  
CAPITAL: Jamestown

POPULATION: 7776  
AREA: 47 sq miles (122 sq km)

## South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands *Ref: 49 C7*

STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1775  
POPULATION: None  
AREA: 1387 sq miles (3592 sq km)

## Tristan da Cunha *Ref: 49 D6*

STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1612  
CAPITAL: Edinburgh  
POPULATION: 264  
AREA: 38 sq miles (98 sq km)

## Turks & Caicos Islands *Ref: 37 E2*



STATUS: Overseas territory  
CLAIMED: 1766  
CAPITAL: Cockburn Town

POPULATION: 33,098  
AREA: 166 sq miles (430 sq km)

## UNITED STATES

Commonwealth territories are self-governing and an integral part of the US. Unincorporated territories have varying degrees of autonomy.

# Overseas territories

## American Samoa *Ref: 127 F4*



STATUS: Unincorp. territory

CLAIMED: 1900

CAPITAL: Pago Pago

POPULATION: 55,165

AREA: 75 sq miles (195 sq km)

## Baker & Howland Islands *Ref: 127 E2*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1856

POPULATION: None

AREA: 0.5 sq miles (1.4 sq km)

## Guam *Ref: 126 B1*



STATUS: Unincorp. territory

CLAIMED: 1898

CAPITAL: Hagåtña

POPULATION: 165,124

AREA: 212 sq miles (549 sq km)

## Jarvis Island *Ref: 127 G2*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1856

POPULATION: None

AREA: 1.7 sq miles (4.5 sq km)

## Johnston Atoll *Ref: 125 E1*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1858

POPULATION: None

AREA: 1 sq mile (2.8 sq km)

## Kingman Reef *Ref: 127 F2*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1856

POPULATION: None

AREA: 0.4 sq miles (1 sq km)

## Midway Islands *Ref: 134 D2*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1867

CAPITAL: None

POPULATION: 40

AREA: 2 sq miles (5.2 sq km)

## Navassa Island *Ref: 36 D3*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1856

POPULATION: None

AREA: 2 sq miles (5.2 sq km)

## Northern Mariana Islands *Ref: 124 C1*



STATUS: Comm. territory

CLAIMED: 1947

CAPITAL: Saipan

POPULATION: 53,855

AREA: 177 sq miles (457 sq km)

## Palmyra Atoll *Ref: 127 G2*

STATUS: Incorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1898

POPULATION: None

AREA: 5 sq miles (12 sq km)

## Puerto Rico *Ref: 37 F3*



STATUS: Comm. territory

CLAIMED: 1898

CAPITAL: San Juan

POPULATION: 3.62 million

AREA: 3515 sq miles (9104 sq km)

## Virgin Islands *Ref: 37 F3*



STATUS: Unincorp. territory

CLAIMED: 1917

CAPITAL: Charlotte Amalie

POPULATION: 104,737

AREA: 137 sq miles (355 sq km)

## Wake Island *Ref: 124 D1*

STATUS: Unincorporated territory

CLAIMED: 1898

CAPITAL: None

POPULATION: 150 (US air base)

AREA: 2.5 sq miles (6.5 sq km)

# International organizations

This listing provides acronym definitions for the main international organizations concerned with worldwide economics, trade, and defense, plus an indication of membership.

## ASEAN

*Association of Southeast Asian Nations*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1967

**MEMBERS:** Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

## CIS

*Commonwealth of Independent States*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1991

**MEMBERS:** Arm., Az., Belarus, Kaz., Kyrgy., Mold., Russia, Tajik., Turkmen.\*; Ukraine\*, Uzbek. \*Unofficial members

## COMM *The Commonwealth of Nations*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1931; evolved out of the British Empire. Formerly known as the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**MEMBERS:** 53 (*Fiji currently suspended*)

## EU *European Union*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1965; formerly known as EEC (European Economic Community) and EC (Economic Community)

**MEMBERS:** Austria, Belg., Bulg., Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Denmark, Est., Fin., Fr., Ger., Greece, Hung., Ireland, Italy, Lat., Lith., Lux., Malta, Neth., Pol., Port., Rom., Slvka., Slvna., Spain, Swed., UK

## G8 *Group of 8*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1994

**MEMBERS:** Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK, US

## IMF *International Monetary Fund* (UN agency)

**ESTABLISHED:** 1945

**MEMBERS:** 188

## NAFTA

*North American Free Trade Agreement*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1994

**MEMBERS:** Canada, Mexico, US

## NATO

*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1949

**MEMBERS:** Albania, Belg., Bulg., Canada, Croatia, Czech Rep., Denmark, Est., France, Ger., Greece, Hung., Iceland, Italy, Lat., Lith., Lux., Neth., Norway, Poland, Port., Rom., Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, UK, US

## OPEC *Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1960

**MEMBERS:** Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela

## UN *United Nations*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1945

**MEMBERS:** 193; all nations are represented, except Taiwan and Kosovo. The Vatican City has "observer status" only. In 2012, a UN resolution granted Palestine the status of "non-member observer state."

## WTO *World Trade Organization*

**ESTABLISHED:** 1995

**MEMBERS:** 160 (*including EU, Hong Kong, Macao*)



# Abbreviations

This glossary provides a comprehensive guide to the abbreviations used in this atlas.

- abbrev.** abbreviation  
**Afgh.** Afghanistan  
**Amh.** Amharic  
**anc.** ancient  
**Ar.** Arabic  
**Arm.** Armenia/Armenian  
**Aus.** Austria  
**Aust.** Australia  
**Az.** Azerbaijan
- Bas.** Basque  
**Bel.** Belorussian  
**Belg.** Belgium/Belgian  
**Bos. & Herz.** Bosnia & Herzegovina  
**Bul.** Bulgarian  
**Bulg.** Bulgaria  
**Bur.** Burmese
- C** Central  
**C.** Cape  
**Cam.** Cambodian  
**Cast.** Castilian  
**Chin.** Chinese  
**Comm.** Commonwealth  
**Cord.** Cordillera (Sp. mts.)  
**Cz.** Czech  
**Czech Rep.** Czech Republic
- D.C.** District of Columbia  
**Dan.** Danish  
**Dominican Rep.** Dominican Republic
- E** East  
**Emb.** Embalse  
**Eng.** English  
**Eq. Guinea** Equatorial Guinea  
**Est.** Estonia/Estonian
- Faer.** Faeroese  
**Fin.** Finland/Finnish  
**Flem.** Flemish
- Fr.** France/French  
**Geo.** Georgia  
**Geor.** Georgian  
**Ger.** Germany/German  
**Gk.** Greek
- Heb.** Hebrew  
**Hung.** Hungary/Hungarian
- I.** Island  
**Ind.** Indonesia, Indonesian  
**Is.** Islands  
**It.** Italian
- Kaz.** Kazakhstan/Kazakh  
**Kep.** Kepulauan (Ind. island group)  
**Kir.** Kirghiz  
**Kor.** Korean  
**Kos.** Kosovo  
**Kurd.** Kurdish  
**Kyrgy.** Kyrgyzstan
- L.** Lake, Lago  
**Lat.** Latvia  
**Latv.** Latvian  
**Leb.** Lebanon  
**Liech.** Liechtenstein  
**Lith.** Lithuania/Lithuanian  
**Lux.** Luxembourg
- Mac.** Macedonia  
**Med. Sea** Mediterranean Sea  
**Mon.** Montenegro  
**Mold.** Moldova  
**Mt.** Mount/Mountain  
**Mts.** Mountains
- N** North  
**N. Korea** North Korea  
**Neth.** Netherlands  
**NW** Northwest  
**NZ** New Zealand
- P.** Pulau (Ind. island)  
**Peg.** Pegunungan (Ind. mountain range)  
**Per.** Persian  
**Pol.** Poland/Polish  
**Port.** Portugal, Portuguese
- prev.** previously  
**R.** River, Rio, Río  
**Res.** Reservoir  
**Rom.** Romania/Romanian  
**Rus.** Russian  
**Russ. Fed.** Russian Federation
- S** South  
**S. Korea** South Korea  
**SA** South Africa  
**SCr.** Serbian and Croatian  
**Serb.** Serbia  
**Slvka.** Slovakia  
**Slvna.** Slovenia  
**Som.** Somali  
**Sp.** Spanish  
**St, St.** Saint  
**Str.** Strait  
**Swed.** Swedish  
**Switz.** Switzerland
- Tajik.** Tajikistan  
**Th.** Thai  
**Turk.** Turkish  
**Turkm.** Turkmen  
**Turkmen.** Turkmenistan
- U.A.E.** United Arab Emirates  
**UK** United Kingdom  
**Ukr.** Ukrainian  
**Uninhab.** Uninhabitable  
**Unincorp.** Unincorporated  
**Urug.** Uruguayan  
**US** United States of America  
**Uzb.** Uzbek  
**Uzbek.** Uzbekistan
- var.** variant  
**Vdkhr.** Vodokhranilishche (Rus. reservoir)  
**Vdskh.** Vodoshkovyshche (Ukr. reservoir)  
**Ven.** Venezuela
- W** West  
**W. Sahara** Western Sahara  
**Wel.** Welsh
- Yugo.** Yugoslavia  
**Zamb.** Zambian

## A

- Aabenraa** Denmark 67 A8  
**Aachen** Germany 76 A4  
**Aalborg** Denmark 67 B7  
**Aalst** Belgium 69 B5  
**Aba** Nigeria 57 G5  
**Ābādān** Iran 102 C4  
**Abadan** Turkmenistan *prev.*  
 Bezmeïn, Büzmeýin  
 104 B3  
**Abashiri** Japan 112 D2  
**Abéché** Chad 58 D3  
**Aberdeen** Scotland, UK 70 D3  
**Aberdeen** South Dakota, USA  
 25 E2  
**Aberdeen** Washington, USA  
 26 A2  
**Aberystwyth** Wales, UK 71 C6  
**Abhā** Saudi Arabia 103 B6  
**Abidjan** Côte d'Ivoire 56 D5  
**Abilene** Texas, USA 29 F3  
**Abomey** Benin 57 F4  
**Abu Dhabi** *capital of* United  
 Arab Emirates *var.* Abū Ḥaby  
 103 D5  
**Abuja** *capital of* Nigeria  
 57 G4  
**Abū Ḥaby** *see* Abu Dhabi  
**Acapulco** Mexico 33 E5  
**Acarai Mountains** *mountain*  
*range* Brazil/Guyana 41 F3  
**Acarigua** Venezuela 40 D1  
**Accra** *capital of* Ghana 57 E5  
**Acklins Island** *island*  
 The Bahamas 36 D2  
**Aconcagua, Cerro** *peak*  
 Argentina 46 B4  
**A Coruña** Spain *Cast. La*  
 Coruña 74 C1  
**ACT** *see* Australian Capital  
 Territory  
**Adalia** *see* Antalya  
**Adalia, Gulf of** *see* Antalya  
 Körfezi  
**\*Adan** Yemen *Eng.* Aden  
 103 B7  
**Adana** Turkey *var.* Seyhan  
 98 D4  
**Adapazarı** Turkey *var.* Sakarya  
 98 B2  
**Ad Dahnā'** *desert* Saudi Arabia  
 103 C5  
**Ad Dakhla** Western Sahara  
 52 A4  
**Ad Dawḥah** *see* Doha  
**Addis Ababa** *capital of* Ethiopia  
*Amh.* Adīs Ābeba 55 C5  
**Adelaide** Australia 131 B6  
**Adélie, Terre d'** *territory*  
 Antarctica 136 C4  
**Aden** *see* 'Adan  
**Aden, Gulf of** *sea feature*  
 Indian Ocean 122 A3  
**Adige** *river* Italy 78 C2  
**Ādis Ābeba** *see* Addis Ababa  
**Adiyaman** Turkey 99 E4  
**Adriatic Sea** Mediterranean  
 Sea 78 D4  
**Aegean Sea** Mediterranean  
 Sea *Gk.* Aigaío Pélagos, *Turk.*  
 Ege Denizi 87 D5  
**Aeolian Islands** *see* Isole Eolie  
**Afghanistan** *country* C Asia  
 104-105  
**Africa** 50-51  
**Africa, Horn of** *physical region*  
 Ethiopia/Somalia 122 A3  
**Afyon** Turkey *prev.*  
 Afyonkarahisar 98 B3  
**Afyonkarahisar** *see* Afyon  
**Agadez** Niger 57 G3  
**Agadir** Morocco 52 B2  
**Agassiz Fracture Zone** *tectonic*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean  
 135 E4  
**Agen** France 73 B6  
**Āgra** India 116 D3  
**Agrigento** Italy 79 C7  
**Agrinio** Greece 87 B5  
**Aguarico** *river* Ecuador/Peru  
 40 B4  
**Aguascalientes** Mexico 32 D4  
**Ahaggar** *mountains* Algeria  
*var.* Hoggar 53 E4  
**Ahmadābād** India 116 C4  
**Ahvāz** Iran 102 C4  
**Ahvenanmaa** *see* Åland  
**Aigaío Pélagos** *see* Aegean Sea  
**Aintab** *see* Gaziantep  
**Air, Massif de l'** *region* Niger  
 57 G2  
**Aix-en-Provence** France  
 73 D6  
**Ajaccio** Corse, France 73 E7  
**Ajdābiyā** Libya 53 G2  
**Ajmer** India 116 D3  
**Akaba** *see* Al 'Aqabah  
**Akchār** *desert* Mauritania  
 56 C2  
**Akimiski Island** *island* Canada  
 20 C3  
**Akita** Japan 112 D3  
**Akjoujt** Mauritania 56 C2  
**Akmola** *see* Astana  
**Akrolinsk** *see* Astana  
**Akpatok Island** *island* Canada  
 21 E1  
**Akra Kanestron** *see* Paliouíri,  
 Akrotíri  
**Akron** Ohio, USA 22 D3  
**Aksai Chin** *disputed region*  
 China/India 108 B4  
**Aktau** Kazakhstan *prev.*  
 Shevchenko 96 A4  
**Akureyri** Iceland 65 E4  
**Akyab** *see* Sittwe  
**Alabama state** USA 30 D3  
**Alacant** *see* Alicante  
**Alajuela** Costa Rica 34 D4  
**Alamogordo** New Mexico, USA  
 28 D3  
**Åland** *island group* Finland *Fin.*  
 Ahvenanmaa 67 D6  
**Al 'Aqabah** Jordan *var.* Akaba  
 101 B7  
**Alaska state** USA 18  
**Alaska, Gulf of** *sea feature*  
 Pacific Ocean 16 C3  
**Alaska Range** *mountain range*  
 Alaska, USA 18 C3  
**Albacete** Spain 75 E3  
**Alba Iulia** Romania 90 B4  
**Albania** *country* SE Europe 83  
**Albany** Australia 129 B7  
**Albany** Georgia, USA 31 E3  
**Albany** New York, USA  
 23 F3  
**Albany** Oregon, USA 26 A3  
**Albany** *river* Canada 20 B3

- Al Başrah** Iraq var. Basra 102 C4
- Al Bayḍā'** Libya 53 G2
- Albert, Lake** lake Uganda/Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E5
- Alberta province** Canada 19 E4
- Albi** France 73 C6
- Albuquerque** New Mexico, USA 28 D2
- Alcácer do Sal** Portugal 74 C4
- Aldabra Group** *island group* Seychelles 61 G2
- Aleg** Mauritania 56 C3
- Aleksandriya** see Oleksandriya
- Aleksandropol'** see Gyumri
- Aleksinac** Serbia 82 E4
- Alençon** France 72 B3
- Alessandria** Italy 78 B2
- Ålesund** Norway 67 A5
- Aleutian Basin** *undersea feature* Bering Sea 134 D1
- Aleutian Islands** *islands* Alaska, USA 18 A3
- Aleutian Trench** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 134 D1
- Alexander Island** *island* Antarctica 136 A3
- Alexandra** New Zealand 133 B7
- Alexandretta** see Iskenderun
- Alexandria** see Al Iskandariyah
- Alexandria** Louisiana, USA 30 B3
- Alexandroupoli** Greece 86 D3
- Al Fāshir** see El Fasher
- Alföld** see Great Hungarian Plain
- Algarve** *region* Portugal 74 C4
- Algeciras** Spain 74 D5
- Algeria** *country* N Africa 52-53
- Alghero** Italy 79 A5
- Algiers** *capital of* Algeria 52 D1
- Al Ḥasakah** Syria 100 D2
- Al Ḥudaydah** Yemen 103 B7
- Al Hufūf** Saudi Arabia 103 C5
- Alicante** Spain Cat. Alacant 75 F4
- Alice Springs** Australia 130 A4
- Al Iskandariyah** Egypt *Eng.* Alexandria 54 B1
- Al Ismā'īliya** Egypt *Eng.* Ismalia 54 B1
- Al Jawf** Saudi Arabia 102 B4
- Al Jazīrah** *region* Iraq/Syria 100 E2
- Al Jizah** Egypt var. El Gīza 54 B1
- Al Karak** Jordan 101 B6
- Al Khalīl** see Hebron
- Al Khārijah** Egypt var. El Khārga 54 B2
- Al Khums** Libya 53 F2
- Al Khurṭūm** see Khartoum
- Alkmaar** Netherlands 68 C2
- Al Kufrah** Libya 53 H4
- Al Lādhiqiyyah** Syria *Eng.* Latakia 100 B3
- Allahābād** India 117 E4
- Allenstein** see Olsztyn
- Allentown** Pennsylvania, USA 23 F4
- Alma-Ata** *capital of* Kazakhstan *Rus./Kaz.* Almaty 96 C5
- Al Madīnah** Saudi Arabia *Eng.* Medina 102 A5
- Al Mafrāq** Jordan 101 B5
- Almalyk** Uzbekistan *Uzb.* Olmaliq 105 E2
- Al Manāmah** see Manama
- Al Marj** Libya 53 G2
- Almaty** see Alma-Ata
- Al Mawṣil** Iraq *Eng.* Mosul 102 B3
- Almelo** Netherlands 68 E3
- Almeria** Spain 75 E5
- Al Minyā** Egypt 54 B2
- Al Mukallā** Yemen 103 C7
- Alofi** *capital of* Niue 127 F5
- Alor, Kepulauan** *Indonesia group* Indonesia 121 E5
- Alps** *mountain range* C Europe 62 D4
- Al Qāhirah** see Cairo
- Al Qāmishlī** Syria var. Kamishli 100 E1
- Al Qunayṭirah** Syria 100 B4
- Altai Mountains** *mountain range* C Asia 108 C2
- Altamura** Italy 79 E5
- Altar, Desierto de** *Desert* Mexico/USA var. Sonoran Desert 32 A1
- Altay** China 108 C2
- Altay** Mongolia 108 D2
- Altun Shan** *mountain range* China 108 C3
- Alturas** California, USA 26 B4
- Al Uḡsur** Egypt *Eng.* Luxor 54 B2
- Alytus** Lithuania *Pol.* Olita 89 B5
- Amadeus, Lake** *seasonal lake* Australia 129 E5
- Amakusa-nada** *island group* Japan 113 A6
- Amami-Ōshima** *island* Japan 113 A8
- Amarillo** Texas, USA 29 E2
- Amazon** *river* South America 38 C3
- Amazon Basin** *region* C South America 42 D2
- Ambanja** Madagascar 61 G2
- Ambarchik** Russian Federation 97 G2
- Ambato** Ecuador 40 A4
- Amboasary** Madagascar 61 F4
- Ambon** Indonesia 121 F4
- Ambositra** Madagascar 61 G3
- Ambriz** Angola 60 B1
- Amdo** China 108 C4
- Ameland** *island* Netherlands 68 D1
- American Falls Reservoir** *Reservoir* Idaho, USA 26 E4
- American Samoa** *unincorporated territory* USA, Pacific Ocean 127 F4
- Amersfoort** Netherlands 68 D3
- Amga** *river* Russian Federation 95 F2
- Amiens** France 72 C3
- Amindivi Islands** *island group* India 114 C2
- Amirante Islands** *island group* Seychelles 61 H1
- Amman** *capital of* Jordan 101 B5
- Ammassalik** Greenland var. Angmagssalik 64 D4

## Amochostos — Arad

- Amochostos** see Gazimağusa
- Āmol** Iran 102 C3
- Amorgós island** Greece 87 D6
- Amritsar** India 116 D2
- Amsterdam** *capital of* Netherlands 68 C3
- Amsterdam Island** *island* French Southern and Antarctic Lands 123 C6
- Am Timan** Chad 58 C3
- Amu Darya river** C Asia 104 D3
- Amundsen Gulf** *sea feature* Canada 19 E2
- Amundsen Plain** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 136 B4
- Amundsen Sea** Antarctica 97 G4
- Amur river** E Asia 97 G4 107 E1
- Anabar river** Russian Federation 95 E2
- Anadolu Dağları** see Doğu Karadeniz Dağları
- Anadyr'** Russian Federation 97 H1
- Anápolis** Brazil 43 F4
- Anatolia region** SE Europe 85 G3
- Anchorage** Alaska, USA 18 C3
- Ancona** Italy 78 C3
- Andalucía region** Spain 74 D4
- Andaman Islands** *island group* India 115 H2 119 A5
- Andaman Sea** Indian Ocean 122 D3
- Andes mountain range** South America 39 B6
- Andijon** Uzbekistan *Rus.* Andizhan 105 F2
- Andhra Pradesh** *state* India 115 E1
- Andizhan** see Andijon
- Andorra** *country* SW Europe 73 B6
- Andorra la Vella** *capital of* Andorra 73 B6
- Ándros island** Greece 87 D5
- Andros Island** *island* The Bahamas 36 C1
- Angara river** C Asia 95 D3
- Ángel de la Guarda, Isla** *island* Mexico 32 B2
- Angel Falls** see Salto Ángel
- Angeles** Philippines 121 E1
- Ángel, Salto** *waterfall* Venezuela *Eng.* Angel Falls 41 F2
- Ångermanälven river** Sweden 66 C4
- Angers** France 72 B4
- Anglesey** *island* Wales, UK 71 C5
- Angmagsalik** see Ammassalik
- Angola** *country* C Africa 60
- Angola Basin** *undersea feature* Atlantic Ocean 49 D6
- Angora** see Ankara
- Angoulême** France 73 B5
- Angren** Uzbekistan 105 E2
- Anguilla** *overseas territory* UK, West Indies 37
- Anhui province** China *var.* Anhwei, Wan 111 C5
- Anhwei** see Anhui
- Anjouan island** Comoros 61 F2
- Ankara** *capital of* Turkey *prev.* Angora 98 C3
- Annaba** Algeria 53 E1
- An Nafūd** *desert region* Saudi Arabia 102 B4
- An Najaf** Iraq *var.* Najaf 102 B4
- Annapolis** Maryland, USA 23 F4
- Ann Arbor** Michigan, USA 22 C3
- Annecy** France 73 D5
- Anshan** China 110 D4
- Ansongo** Mali 57 E3
- Antakya** Turkey *var.* Hatay 98 D4
- Antalaha** Madagascar 61 G2
- Antalya** Turkey *prev.* Adalia 98 B4
- Antalya, Gulf of** see Antalya Körfezi
- Antalya Körfezi** *sea feature* Mediterranean Sea *Eng.* Gulf of Antalya, *var.* Gulf of Adalia 98 B4
- Antananarivo** *capital of* Madagascar *prev.* Tananarive 61 G3
- Antarctica** 136
- Antarctic Peninsula** *peninsula* Antarctica 136 A2
- Antequera** Spain 74 D5
- Anticosti, Île d'** *island* Canada 21 F3
- Antigua** *island* Antigua & Barbuda 37 G3
- Antigua & Barbuda** *country* West Indies 37
- Anti-Lebanon mountains** Lebanon/Syria 100 B4
- Antipodes Islands** *island group* New Zealand 124 D5
- Antofagasta** Chile 46 B2
- Antsirañana** Madagascar 61 G2
- Antsohihy** Madagascar 61 G2
- Antwerp** see Antwerpen
- Antwerpen** Belgium *Eng.* Antwerp 69 C5
- Anyang** China 110 C4
- Aoga-shima** *island* Japan 113 D6
- Aomori** Japan 112 D3
- Aoraki peak** New Zealand *var.* Cook, Mount 133 B6
- Aosta** Italy 78 A2
- Aoukâr Plateau** Mauritania 56 D3
- Apeldoorn** Netherlands 68 D3
- Apennines** see Appennino
- Apia** *capital of* Samoa 127 F4
- Appalachian Mountains** *mountain range* E USA 17 D5
- Appennino** *mountain range* Italy *Eng.* Apennines 78 C4
- Apure river** Venezuela 40 D2
- Aqabah** see Al 'Aqabah
- Aqaba, Gulf of** *sea feature* Red Sea *Ar.* Khalij al 'Aqabah 101 A8
- 'Aqabah, Khalij al** see Aqaba, Gulf of
- Āqchah** Afghanistan *var.* Āqcheh 104 D3
- Āqcheh** see Āqchah
- Arabian Basin** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 122 B3
- Arabian Peninsula** *peninsula* Asia 85 H5 94 B5 103 C5
- Arabian Sea** Indian Ocean 122 B3
- Aracaju** Brazil 43 H3
- Arad** Romania 90 B4

- Arafura Sea** Asia/Australasia 126 A4
- Araguaia river** Brazil 43 F3
- Arāk** Iran 102 C3
- Araks** see Aras
- Arak's** see Aras
- Aral Sea inland sea** Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan 94 C3
- Araouane** Mali 57 E2
- Ararat, Mount peak** Turkey var. Great Ararat, *Turk.* Büyükağrı Dağı 94 F3
- Aras river** SW Asia *Arm.* Arak's, *Per.* Rūd-e Aras, *Rus.* Araks, *Turk.* Aras Nehri 99 G3
- Aras Nehri** see Aras
- Arauca** Colombia 40 C2
- Arauca river** Colombia/Venezuela 40 C2
- Arbil** Iraq *Kurd.* Hawlēr 102 B3
- Arctic Ocean** 18-19 137
- Arda river** Bulgaria/Greece 86 C3
- Ardabil** Iran 102 C3
- Ardennes region** W Europe 69 D7
- Arendal** Norway 67 A6
- Arensburg** see Kuressaare
- Arequipa** Peru 42 B4
- Arezzo** Italy 78 C3
- Argentina country** S South America 46-47
- Argentine Basin undersea feature** Atlantic Ocean 49 B7
- Argun river** China/Russian Federation 95 E3
- Århus** Denmark 67 A7
- Arica** Chile 46 B1
- Arizona state** USA 28 B2
- Arkansas state** USA 30 B1
- Arkansas river** C USA 17 C5
- Arkhangel'sk** Russian Federation 92 C3 96 C2
- Arles** France 73 D6
- Arlington** Texas, USA 29 G3
- Arlington** Virginia, USA 23 E4
- Arlon** Belgium 69 D8
- Armenia country** SW Asia 99 G2
- Armenia** Colombia 40 B3
- Armidade** Australia 131 D5
- Arnhem** Netherlands 68 D4
- Arnhem Land region** Australia 128 E2
- Arno river** Italy 78 B3
- Arran island** Scotland, UK 70 C4
- Ar Raqqah** Syria 100 C2
- Arras** France 72 C3
- Ar Riyāḍ** see Riyadh
- Ar Rub 'al Khālī desert** Asia *Eng.* Empty Quarter, Great Sandy Desert 103 C6
- Ar Rustāq** Oman var. Rostak 103 D5
- Artesia** New Mexico, USA 28 D3
- Artigas** Uruguay 44 B4
- Aru, Kepulauan island group** Indonesia 121 G5
- Arua** Uganda 55 B6
- Aruba constituent country** Netherlands, West Indies 37 E5
- Arusha** Tanzania 55 C7
- Asad, Buḥayrat al Lake** Syria *Eng.* Lake Assad 100 C2
- Asadābād** Afghanistan 105 E4
- Asahikawa** Japan 112 D2
- Asamankese** Ghana 57 E5
- Ascension Island overseas territory** UK, Atlantic Ocean 49 C5
- Ascoli Piceno** Italy 78 C4
- 'Aseb** Eritrea var. Assab 54 D4
- Ashburton** New Zealand 133 C6
- Asheville** North Carolina, USA 131 E1
- Aşgabat capital of** Turkmenistan prev. Ashkhabad, Poltoratsk 104 C3
- Ashkhabad** see Aşgabat
- Ashmore and Cartier Islands** Australian external territory Indian Ocean 124 A3
- Ash Shāriqah** United Arab Emirates *Eng.* Sharjah 103 D5
- Asia** 94-95 106-107
- Asmara capital of** Eritrea *Amh.* Asmera 54 C4
- Asmera** see Asmara
- Assab** see 'Aseb
- As Salt** Jordan var. Salt 101 B5
- Assamakka** Niger 57 F2
- Assen** Netherlands 68 E2
- Assad, Lake** see Asad, Buḥayrat al
- As Sulayyil** Saudi Arabia 103 B6
- As Suwaydā'** Syria 101 B5
- As Suways** Egypt *Eng.* Suez 54 B1
- Astana country capital** Kazakhstan prev. Akmola, Akmolinsk, Tselinograd, Kaz. Aqmola. 96 C4
- Astoria** Oregon, USA 26 A2
- Astrakhan'** Russian Federation 93 B7
- Astypálaia island** Greece 87 D6
- Asunción capital of** Paraguay 44 B3
- Aswān** Egypt 54 B2
- Asyūṭ** Egypt 54 B2
- Atacama Desert desert** Chile 46 B2
- Atamyrat** prev. Kerki. Turkmenistan 104 D3
- Aṭār** Mauritania 56 C2
- Atbara** Sudan 54 C3
- Athabasca, Lake lake** Canada 19 F4
- Athens capital of** Greece *Gk.* Athina, prev. Athinai 87 C5
- Athens** Georgia, USA 31 E2
- Athina** see Athens
- Athinai** see Athens
- Athlone** Ireland 71 B5
- Ati** Chad 58 C3
- Atlanta** Georgia, USA 30 D2
- Atlantic City** New Jersey, USA 23 F4
- Atlantic Ocean** 48-49
- Atlantic-Indian Basin undersea feature** Indian Ocean 136 B1
- Atlantic-Indian Ridge undersea feature** Atlantic Ocean 49 D7
- Atlas Mountains mountain range** Morocco 52 C2
- Aṭ Ṭalfilah** Jordan 101 B6

## Aṭ Ṭā'if — Balabac Strait

- Aṭ Ṭā'if** Saudi Arabia 102 B6  
**Attapu** Laos 119 E5  
**Attawapiskat** Canada 20 C3  
**Attawapiskat river** Canada 20 B3  
**Attu Island** *island* Alaska, USA 18 A2  
**Auch** France 73 B6  
**Auckland** New Zealand 132 D3  
**Auckland Islands** *island group* New Zealand 124 D5  
**Augsburg** Germany 77 C6  
**Augusta** Australia 129 B7  
**Augusta** Georgia, USA 31 E2  
**Augusta** Maine, USA 23 G2  
**Aurillac** France 73 C5  
**Aurora** Colorado, USA 24 D4  
**Aurora** Illinois, USA 22 B3  
**Aussig** see *Ústí nad Labem*  
**Austin** Texas, USA 29 G4  
**Australasia** 124-125  
**Australes, Îles** *island group* French Polynesia 125 F4  
**Austral Fracture Zone** *tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean 125 H4  
**Australia** *country* Pacific Ocean 124  
**Australian Alps** Australia 131 D7  
**Australian Capital Territory** *territory* Australia *abbrev.* A.C.T. 131 D6  
**Austria** *country* C Europe 77  
**Auxerre** France 72 C4  
**Avarua** *capital of* Cook Islands 127 G5  
**Aveiro** Portugal 74 C2  
**Avignon** France 73 D6  
**Ávila** Spain 74 D2  
**Avilés** Spain 74 D1  
**Awbārī** Libya 53 F3  
**Axel Heiberg Island** *island* Canada 19 F1  
**Axios** see *Vardar*  
**Ayacucho** Peru 42 B4  
**Aydarko'l Ko'li** *lake* Uzbekistan *var.* *Aydarkül* 104 D2  
**Aydarkül** see *Aydarko'l Ko'li*  
**Aydın** Turkey 98 A3  
**Ayer's Rock** see *Uluru*  
**Ayr** Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**Ayutthaya** Thailand 119 C5  
**Ayvalık** Turkey 98 A3  
**Azouaù** *desert* Mali 57 E2  
**A'zāz** Syria 100 B2  
**Azerbaijan** *country* SW Asia 99 G2  
**Azores** *islands* Portugal, Atlantic Ocean 48 C3  
**Azov, Sea of Black Sea** *Ukr.* *Azovs'ke More*, *Rus.* *Azovskoye More* 93 A6 91 G4  
**Azovs'ke More** see *Azov, Sea of*  
**Azovskoye More** see *Azov, Sea of*  
**Azul** Argentina 46 D4  
**Azur, Côte d'** *coastal region* France 73 E6  
**Az Zarqā'** Jordan 101 B5  
**Az Zāwiyah** Libya 53 F2
- 
- B**
- 
- Baalbek** Lebanon *var.* Ba'labakk 100 B4  
**Babeldaob** *Island* Palau 124 B2  
**Babruysk/Bobruysk** Belarus *Rus.* *Bobruysk* 89 D6  
**Babuyan Channel** *channel* Philippines 121 E1  
**Bacan, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 121 F4  
**Bačka Topola** Serbia 82 D3  
**Bacău** Romania 90 C4  
**Badajoz** Spain 74 C4  
**Baden** Switzerland 77 E6  
**Bādiyat ash Shām** see *Syrian Desert*  
**Baffin Bay** *sea feature* Atlantic Ocean 48 B1  
**Baffin Island** *island* Canada 19 G2  
**Bafing** *river* Africa 56 C3  
**Bafoussam** Cameroon 58 B4  
**Bagdad** see *Baghdad*  
**Bagé** Brazil 44 C4  
**Baghdad** *capital of* Iraq *var.* *Bagdad*, *Ar.* *Baghdād* 102 B3  
**Baghdād** see *Baghdad*  
**Baghlān** Afghanistan 105 E3  
**Bago** Myanmar *prev.* *Pegu* 118 B4  
**Bagoé** *river* Côte d'Ivoire/Mali 56 D4  
**Baguio** Philippines 121 E1  
**Bahamas, The** *country* West Indies, Atlantic Ocean 36  
**Baharden** see *Baharly*  
**Baharly** Turkmenistan *prev.* *Baharden*, *Bäherden*, *Bakharden*, *Bakherden* 104 B3  
**Bahāwalpur** Pakistan 116 C3  
**Bäherden** see *Baharly*  
**Bahía Blanca** Argentina 47 C5  
**Bahía, Islas de la** *islands* Honduras 34 D2  
**Bahir Dar** Ethiopia 54 C4  
**Bahrain** *country* SW Asia 103 C5  
**Baia Mare** Romania 90 B3  
**Baikal, Lake** see *Baykal*, *Ozero*  
**Bairiki** *capital of* Kiribati 127 E2  
**Baishan** China 110 E3  
**Baja** Hungary 81 C7  
**Baja California peninsula** *Mexico Eng.* *Lower California* 32 B2  
**Bajo Nuevo** *island* Colombia 35 F2  
**Baker** Oregon, USA 26 C3  
**Baker & Howland Islands** *unincorporated territory* USA, Pacific Ocean 125 E2  
**Bakersfield** California, USA 27 C7  
**Bakharden** see *Baharly*  
**Bakherden** see *Baharly*  
**Bäkhtrarän** see *Kermānshāh*  
**Bakı** see *Baku*  
**Baku** *capital of* Azerbaijan *Az.* *Bakı*, *var.* *Baky* 99 H2  
**Baky** see *Baku*  
**Balabac Strait** *sea feature* South China Sea/Sulu Sea 120 D2

- Ba'labakk** see Baalbek
- Balakovo** Russian Federation 93 C6
- Bälä Murghāb** Afghanistan 104 D4
- Balaton** *lake* Hungary var. Lake Balaton, Ger. Plattensee 81 C7
- Balaton, Lake** see Balaton
- Balbina, Represa Reservoir** Brazil 42 D2
- Baleares, Islas** *island group* Spain Eng. Balearic Islands 75 H3
- Balearic Islands** see Baleares, Islas
- Bali** *island* Indonesia 120 D5
- Balikesir** Turkey 98 A3
- Balikpapan** Indonesia 120 D4
- Balkanabat** Turkmenistan prev. Nebitdag 104 B2
- Balkan Mountains** *mountain range* Bulgaria Bul. Stara Planina 86 C2
- Balkhash** Kazakhstan 96 C5
- Balkhash, Lake** see Balkhash, Ozero
- Balkhash, Ozero** *lake* Kazakhstan Eng. Lake Balkhash 94 C3
- Ballarat** Australia 131 C7
- Balsas** *river* Mexico 33 E5
- Bălți** Moldova 90 D3
- Baltic Port** see Paldiski
- Baltic Sea** Atlantic Ocean 67 C7
- Baltimore** Maryland, USA 23 F4
- Baltischport** see Paldiski
- Baltiski** see Paldiski
- Bamako** *capital of* Mali 56 D3
- Bambari** Central African Republic 58 D4
- Bamenda** Cameroon 58 B4
- Banaba** *island* Kiribati prev. Ocean Island 127 E2
- Bandaaceh** Indonesia 120 A3
- Banda, Laut** see Banda Sea
- Banda Sea** *sea feature* Pacific Ocean Ind. Laut Banda 121 F4
- Bandar-e 'Abbās** Iran 102 D4
- Bandar-e Büshehr** Iran 102 C4
- Bandar Lampung** Indonesia prev. Tanjungkarang 120 C4
- Bandar Seri Begawan** *capital of* Brunei 120 D3
- Bandon** Oregon, USA 26 A3
- Bandundu** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 C6
- Bandung** Indonesia 120 C5
- Bangalore** India 114 D2
- Banggai, Kepulauan** *island group* Indonesia 121 E4
- Banghāzī** Libya Eng. Benghazi 53 G2
- Bangka, Palau** *island* Indonesia 120 C4
- Bangkok** *capital of* Thailand Th. Krung Thep 119 C5
- Bangladesh** *country* S Asia 117
- Bangor** Northern Ireland, UK 71 B5
- Bangor** Maine, USA 23 G2
- Bangui** *capital of* Central African Republic 59 C5
- Bani** *river* Mali 56 D3
- Bani Suwayf** Egypt var. Beni Suef 54 B1
- Banja Luka** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 B3
- Banjarmasin** Indonesia 120 D4
- Banjul** *capital of* Gambia 56 B3
- Banks Island** *island* Canada 19 E2
- Banks Islands** *island group* Vanuatu, Pacific Ocean 126 D4
- Banks Peninsula** *peninsula* New Zealand 133 C6
- Banks Strait** *sea feature* Tasman Sea 131 C7
- Banská Bystrica** Slovakia Ger. Neusohl, Hung. Besztercebánya 81 C6
- Bantry Bay** *sea feature* Ireland 71 A6
- Banyo** Cameroon 58 B4
- Banzare Seamounts** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 C7
- Baotou** China 109 F3
- Baranavichy/Baranovichi** Belarus Rus. Baranovichi, Pol. Baranowicze 89 C6
- Baranovichi** see Baranavichy/Baranovichi
- Baranowicze** see Baranavichy/Baranovichi
- Barbados** *country* West Indies 37 H4
- Barbuda** *island* Antigua & Barbuda 37 G3
- Barcaldine** Australia 130 C4
- Barcelona** Spain 75 G2
- Barcelona** Venezuela 41 E1
- Barcelo** *City* Philippines 121 E2
- Bareilly** India 117 E3
- Barentsburg** Svalbard 65 F2
- Barentsøya** *island* Svalbard 65 G2
- Barents Sea** Arctic Ocean 137 H5
- Bari** Italy 79 E5
- Barinas** Venezuela 40 D2
- Barisan, Pegunungan** *mountains* Indonesia 120 B4
- Barkly Tableland** *plateau* Australia 130 B3
- Barlavento, Ilhas de** *island group* Cape Verde var. Windward Islands 56 A2
- Bar-le-Duc** France 72 D3
- Barlee, Lake** *lake* Australia 129 B 5
- Barlee Range** *mountain range* Australia 128 B4
- Barnaul** Russian Federation 96 D4
- Barnstaple** England, UK 71 C7
- Barquisimeto** Venezuela 40 D1
- Barra** *island* Scotland, UK 70 B3
- Barranquilla** Colombia 40 B1
- Barrier Range** *mountain range* Australia 131 C5
- Barrow** *river* Ireland 71 B6
- Barstow** California, USA 27 C7
- Bartang** *river* Tajikistan 105 F3
- Bartica** Guyana 41 G2
- Baruun-Urt** Mongolia 109 F2
- Barwon River** *river* Australia 131 D5
- Barysaw** Belarus Rus. Borisov 89 D5
- Basarabeasca** Moldova 90 D4
- Basel** Switzerland 77 B6

- Basra** see Al Başrah
- Bassin** see Pathein
- Basse-Terre** *capital of*  
Guadeloupe 37 G4
- Basseterre** *capital of* St Kitts &  
Nevis 37 G3
- Bass Strait** *sea feature*  
Australia 131 C7
- Bastia** Corse, France 73 E7
- Bastogne** Belgium 69 D7
- Bata** Equatorial Guinea 58 A5
- Batangas** Philippines 121 E2
- Bătdămbâng** Cambodia 119 D5
- Bath** England, UK 71 D6
- Bathurst** Canada 21 F4
- Bathurst Island** *island* Australia  
128 D2
- Bathurst Island** *island* Canada  
19 F2
- Bāṭin, Wādī al** *dry watercourse*  
Asia 102 C4
- Batman** Turkey *var.* İluh 99 E4
- Batna** Algeria 53 E1
- Baton Rouge** Louisiana, USA  
30 B3
- Batticaloa** Sri Lanka 115 E3
- Batumi** Georgia 99 F2
- Bauru** Brazil 44 D2
- Bavarian Alps** *mountains*  
Austria/Germany  
77 C6
- Bayamo** Cuba 36 C2
- Bayan Har Shan** *mountain*  
*range* China 108 D4
- Bayanhongor** Mongolia 108 D2
- Bay City** Michigan, USA 22 C3
- Baydhabo** Somalia 55 D6
- Baykal, Ozero** *lake* Russian  
Federation *Eng.* Lake Baikal  
95 E3
- Bayonne** France 73 A6
- Başramaly** Turkmenistan  
104 C3
- Bayrūt** see Beirut
- Beaufort Sea** Arctic Ocean  
137 F2
- Beaufort West** South Africa  
60 D5
- Beaumont** Texas, USA 29 H4
- Beauvais** France 72 C3
- Béchar** Algeria 52 C2
- Be'er Sheva'** Israel 101 A6
- Beijing** *capital of* China *var.*  
Peking 110 C4
- Beira** Mozambique 61 E3
- Beirut** *capital of* Lebanon  
*var.* Beyrouth, Bayrūt 100 B4
- Beja** Portugal 74 C4
- Béjaïa** Algeria 53 E1
- Bek-Budi** see Karshi
- Békéscsaba** Hungary 81 D7
- Belarus** *country* E Europe *var.*  
Belorusia 89
- Belau** see Palau
- Belcher Islands** *islands* Canada  
20 C2
- Beledweyne** Somalia 55 D5
- Belém** Brazil 43 F2
- Belfast** Northern Ireland, UK  
71 B5
- Belfort** France 72 E4
- Belgaum** India 114 C1
- Belgium** *country* W Europe 69
- Belgorod** Russian Federation  
93 A5
- Belgrade** *capital of* Serbia *SCR.*  
Beograd 82 D3
- Belitung, Pulau** *island*  
Indonesia 120 C4
- Belize** *country* Central America  
34
- Belize City** Belize 34 C1
- Belle Île** *island* France 72 A4
- Belle Isle, Strait of** *sea feature*  
Canada 21 G3
- Bellevue** Washington, USA  
26 B2
- Bellingham** Washington, USA  
26 B1
- Bellingshausen Sea** Antarctica  
136 A3
- Bello** Colombia 40 B2
- Bellville** South Africa 60 C5
- Belmopan** *capital of* Belize  
34 C1
- Belo Horizonte** Brazil  
45 F1
- Belorussia** see Belarus
- Belostok** see Białystok
- Belove More** Arctic Ocean  
*Eng.* White Sea 63 F1
- Belyy, Ostrov** *island* Russian  
Federation 137 H4
- Bend** Oregon, USA 26 B3
- Bendery** see Tighina
- Bendigo** Australia 131 C7
- Benevento** Italy 79 D5
- Bengal, Bay of** *sea feature*  
Indian Ocean 122 D3
- Bengbu** China 111 D5
- Benghazi** see Banghāzī
- Bengkulu** Indonesia 120 B4
- Benguela** Angola 60 B2
- Beni** *river* Bolivia 42 C4
- Benidorm** Spain 75 F4
- Beni-Mellel** Morocco 52 C2
- Benin** *country* N Africa *prev.*  
Dahomey 57
- Benin, Bight of** *sea feature* W  
Africa 57 F5
- Benin City** Nigeria 57 F5
- Beni Suef** see Banī Suwayf
- Ben Nevis** *mountain* Scotland,  
UK 70 C3
- Benue** *river* Cameroon/Nigeria  
57 G4
- Beograd** see Belgrade
- Berat** Albania 83 D6
- Berbera** Somalia 54 D4
- Berbéрати** Central African  
Republic 58 C5
- Berdians'k** Ukraine 91 G4
- Bereket** Turkmenistan *prev.*  
*Gazandzhyk, var.*  
Kazandzhik, *Turkm.*  
Gazanjik 104 B2
- Berezina** see Byerazino
- Bergamo** Italy 78 B2
- Bergen** Norway 67 A5
- Bergse Maas** *river* Netherlands  
68 D4
- Bering Sea** Pacific Ocean 134 D1
- Bering Strait** *sea feature*  
Bering Sea/Chukchi Sea  
134 D1
- Berkeley** California, USA 27 B6
- Berlin** *capital of* Germany  
76 D3
- Bermejo** *river* Argentina 46 D2
- Bermuda** *overseas territory* UK,  
Atlantic Ocean 48 B3
- Bern** *capital of* Switzerland *Fr.*  
Berne 77 B7



- Berne** see Bern
- Berner Alpen** *mountain range* Switzerland 77 B7
- Bertoua** Cameroon 59 B5
- Besançon** France 72 D4
- Besztercebánya** see Banská Bystrica
- Bethlehem** West Bank 101 A5
- Beyrouth** see Beirut
- Béziers** France 73 C6
- Bezmejn** see Abadan
- Bhamo** Myanmar 118 B2
- Bhāvnagar** India 116 C4
- Bhōpāl** India 116 D4
- Bhutan** *country* S Asia 117
- Biak, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 121 G4
- Białystok** Poland *Rus.* Belostok 80 E3
- Biel** Switzerland 77 B7
- Bielefeld** Germany 76 B4
- Bielitz-Biala** see Bielsko-Biala
- Bielsko-Biala** Poland *Ger.* Bielitz-Biala 81 C5
- Bié Plateau** *upland* Angola 51 C6
- Bighorn Mountains** *mountains* C USA 24 C2
- Bignona** Senegal 56 B3
- Big Spring** Texas, USA 29 E3
- Bihać** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 B3
- Bihār** state India 117 F3
- Bijelo Polje** Montenegro 82 D4
- Bikāner** India 116 C3
- Bila Tserkva** Ukraine 91 E2
- Bilbao** Spain 75 E1
- Billings** Montana, USA 24 C2
- Bilma, Grand Erg de** *desert* Niger 57 G3
- Biloela** Australia 130 D4
- Biloxi** Mississippi, USA 30 C3
- Biltine** Chad 58 D3
- Binghamton** New York, USA 23 F3
- Birāk** Libya 53 F3
- Birātnagar** Nepal 117 F3
- Birmingham** England, UK 71 D6
- Birmingham** Alabama, USA 30 D2
- Bir Mogreïn** Mauritania 56 C1
- Birsens** see Biržai
- Biržai** Lithuania *Ger.* Birsens 88 C4
- Biscay, Bay of** *sea feature* Atlantic Ocean 62 C4
- Bishkek** *capital* of Kyrgyzstan *prev.* Frunze, Pishpek 105 F2
- Bishop** California, USA 27 C6
- Biskra** Algeria 53 E2
- Bismarck** North Dakota, USA 25 E2
- Bismarck Archipelago** *island group* Papua New Guinea 126 B3
- Bismarck Sea** *sea* Pacific Ocean 124 B2
- Bissau** *capital* of Guinea-Bissau 56 B4
- Bitola** Macedonia 83 E6
- Bitterroot Range** *mountains* NW USA 26 D2
- Biwa-ko lake** Japan 113 C5
- Bizerte** Tunisia 53 E1
- Bjelovar** Croatia 82 B2
- Bjørnøya Island** N Norway *Eng.* Bear Island 65 G3
- Black Drin river** Albania/Macedonia 83 D5
- Black Forest** see Schwarzwald
- Black Hills** *mountains* C USA 24 D3
- Blackpool** England, UK 71 D5
- Black River** *river* China/Vietnam 118 D3
- Black Sea** Asia/Europe 63 F4
- Black Volta river** Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire 57 E4
- Blackwater river** Ireland 71 A6
- Blagoevgrad** Bulgaria 86 C3
- Blagoveshchensk** Russian Federation 97 G4
- Blanca, Bahía** *sea feature* Argentina 39 D5
- Blanche, Lake** *lake* Australia 131 B5
- Blantyre** Malawi 61 E2
- Blenheim** New Zealand 133 D5
- Blida** Algeria 52 D1
- Bloemfontein** *financial capital* of South Africa 60 D4
- Blois** France 72 C4
- Bloomington** Indiana, USA 22 C4
- Bluefields** Nicaragua 35 E3
- Blue Mountains** *mountains* W USA 26 C2
- Blue Nile river** Ethiopia/Sudan 54 C4
- Blumenau** Brazil 44 D3
- Bo Sierra Leone** 56 C4
- Boa Vista** Brazil 42 D1
- Boa Vista** *island* Cape Verde 56 A3
- Bobo-Dioulasso** Burkina Faso 56 D4
- Bobruysk** see Babruysk/Bobruysk
- Boca de la Serpiente** see Serpent's Mouth, The
- Bochum** Germany 76 B4
- Bodø** Norway 66 C3
- Bodrum** Turkey 98 A4
- Bogor** Indonesia 120 C5
- Bogotá** *capital* of Colombia 40 B3
- Bo Hai** *sea feature* Yellow Sea 110 D4
- Bohemian Forest** *region* Germany 77 D5
- Bohol Sea** *Sea* Philippines 121 E2
- Boise** Idaho, USA 26 D3
- Boké** Guinea 56 C4
- Bokhara** see Buxoro
- Bol Chad** 58 B3
- Bolivia** *country* C South America 42-43
- Bologna** Italy 78 C3
- Bolton** England, UK 71 D5
- Bolzano** Italy *Ger.* Bozen 78 C2
- Boma** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 B7
- Bombay** see Mumbai
- Bomu river** Central African Republic/Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D5
- Bonaire** *special municipality* Netherlands, West Indies 37 E5

## Bongo, Massif des — Bryan

- Bongo, Massif des** *upland*  
Central African Republic  
58 D4
- Bongor** Chad 58 C3
- Bonn** Germany 76 B4
- Boosaaso** Somalia 54 E2
- Borås** Sweden 67 B7
- Bordeaux** France 73 B5
- Borger** Texas, USA 29 E2
- Borisor** see Barysaw
- Borlänge** Sweden 67 C6
- Borneo** *island* SE Asia 120-121
- Bornholm** *island* Denmark  
67 C8
- Bosanski Šamac** Bosnia &  
Herzegovina 82 C3
- Bosna** *river* Bosnia &  
Herzegovina 82 C3
- Bosna I Hercegovina**,  
**Federacija** Admin. region  
*republic* Bosnia and  
Herzegovina 82 C4
- Bosnia & Herzegovina** *country*  
SE Europe 82-83
- Bosporus** *sea feature* Turkey  
*Turk.* İstanbul Boğazi 98 B2
- Bossangoa** Central African  
Republic 58 C4
- Bosten** *Hu Lake* China  
108 C3
- Boston** Massachusetts, USA  
23 G3
- Bothnia**, **Gulf of sea feature**  
Baltic Sea 67 C5
- Botoșani** Romania 90 C3
- Botswana** *country* southern  
Africa 60
- Bouar** Central African Republic  
58 C4
- Bougainville Island** *island*  
Papua New Guinea 126 C3
- Bougouni** Mali 56 D4
- Boulder** Colorado, USA 24 C4
- Boulogne-sur-Mer** France  
72 C2
- Bourges** France 72 C4
- Bourgogne** *region* France *Eng.*  
Burgundy 72 D4
- Bourke** Australia 131 C5
- Bournemouth** England, UK  
71 D7
- Bouvet Island** *external territory*  
Norway, Atlantic Ocean 49 D7
- Bowen** Australia 130 D3
- Bowling Green** Kentucky, USA  
22 C5
- Bozeman** Montana, USA 24 B2
- Bozen** see Bolzano
- Brač** *island* Croatia 82 B4
- Bradford** England, UK 71 D5
- Braga** Portugal 74 C2
- Bragança** Portugal 74 C2
- Brahmaputra** *river* Asia 117 G3
- Brăila** Romania 90 D4
- Brainerd** Minnesota, USA 25 F2
- Brandon** Canada 19 F5
- Brasília** *capital of* Brazil 43 F4
- Brașov** Romania 90 C4
- Bratislava** *capital of* Slovakia  
*Ger.* Pressburg, *Hung.*  
Pozsony 81 C6
- Bratsk** Russian Federation  
97 E4
- Braunau am Inn** Austria 77 D6
- Braunschweig** Germany *Eng.*  
Brunswick 76 C4
- Brazil** *country* South America  
42-43
- Brazil Basin** *undersea feature*  
Atlantic Ocean 49 C5
- Brazilian Highlands** *upland*  
Brazil 43 G4
- Brazos** *river* SW USA 29 G3
- Brazzaville** *capital of* Congo  
59 B6
- Brecon Beacons** *hills* Wales,  
UK 71 C6
- Breda** Netherlands 68 C4
- Bregenz** Austria 77 B7
- Bremen** Germany 76 B3
- Bremerhaven** Germany 76 B3
- Brescia** Italy 78 B2
- Breslau** see Wrocław
- Brest** Belarus *Pol.* Brześć nad  
Bugiem, *prev.* Brześć  
Litewski, *Rus.* Brest-Litovsk  
89 B6
- Brest** France 72 A3
- Brest-Litovsk** see Brest
- Bretagne** *region* France *Eng.*  
Brittany 72 A3
- Brezhnev** see Naberezhnyye  
Chelny
- Bria** Central African Republic  
58 D4
- Bridgetown** *capital of*  
Barbados 37 H4
- Brig** Switzerland 77 B5
- Brighton** England, UK 71 E7
- Brindisi** Italy 79 E5
- Brisbane** Australia 131 E5
- Bristol** England, UK 71 D6
- British Columbia** *province*  
Canada 18-19
- British Indian Ocean Territory**  
*overseas territory* UK, Indian  
Ocean 122 C4
- British Isles** *islands* W Europe  
70-71
- British Virgin Islands** *overseas*  
*territory* UK, West Indies 37
- Brittany** see Bretagne  
*Ger.* Brunn 81 B5
- Broken Arrow** Oklahoma, USA  
29 G1
- Broken Hill** Australia 131 B6
- Broken Ridge** *undersea feature*  
Indian Ocean 123 D6
- Bromberg** see Bydgoszcz
- Brooks Range** *mountains*  
Alaska, USA 18 D2
- Brookton** Australia 129 B6
- Broome** Australia 128 C3
- Brownfield** Texas, USA 29 E2
- Brownsville** Texas, USA 29 G5
- Bruges** see Brugge
- Brugge** Belgium *Fr.* Bruges  
69 A5
- Brunei** *country* E Asia 120 D3
- Brünn** see Brno
- Brunswick** Georgia, USA 31 E3
- Brunswick** see Braunschweig
- Bursa** see Bursa
- Brussel** see Brussels
- Brussels** *capital of* Belgium *Fr.*  
Bruxelles, *Flem.* Brussel  
69 C6
- Brux** see Most
- Bruxelles** see Brussels
- Bryan** Texas, USA 29 G3

**Bryansk** Russian Federation 93 A5 96 A2  
**Brześć Litewski** see Brest  
**Brześć nad Bugiem** see Brest  
**Bucaramanga** Colombia 40 C2  
**Buchanan** Liberia 56 C5  
**Bucharest** *capital of Romania* 90 C5  
**Budapest** *capital of Hungary* 81 C6  
**Budweis** see České Budějovice  
**Buenaventura** Colombia 40 B3  
**Buenos Aires** *capital of Argentina* 46 D4  
**Buenos Aires, Lago lake** Argentina/Chile 47 B6  
**Buffalo** New York, USA 23 E3  
**Bug** *river* E Europe 90 C1  
**Bujumbura** *capital of Burundi* *prev.* Usumbura 55 B7  
**Bukavu** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E6  
**Bukhara** see Buxoro  
**Bulawayo** Zimbabwe 60 D3  
**Bulgan** Mongolia 109 E2  
**Bulgaria** *country* E Europe 86  
**Bumba** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D5  
**Bunbury** Australia 129 B6  
**Bundaberg** Australia 130 E4  
**Bunia** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E5  
**Buraydah** Saudi Arabia 103 B5  
**Burē** Ethiopia 54 C4  
**Burgas** Bulgaria 86 E2  
**Burgos** Spain 75 E2  
**Burgundy** see Bourgogne  
**Burketown** Australia 130 B3  
**Burkina Faso** *country* W Africa 57  
**Burlington** Iowa, USA 25 G4  
**Burlington** Vermont, USA 23 F2  
**Burma** see Myanmar  
**Burnie** Tasmania 131 C8  
**Burns** Oregon, USA 26 C3  
**Bursa** Turkey *prev.* Brusa 98 B3  
**BūrSa'id** Egypt *Eng.* Port Said 54 B1  
**Burtnieku Ezers lake** Latvia 88 C3  
**Buru, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 121 E4

**Burundi** *country* C Africa 55  
**Busan** South Korea *prev.* Pusan 110 E4  
**Busselton** Australia 129 B7  
**Butembo** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E5  
**Buton, Pulau** *Island* Indonesia 121 E4  
**Butte** Montana, USA 24 B2  
**Butuan** Philippines 121 F2  
**Buxoro** Uzbekistan *var.* Bokhara, *Rus.* Bukhara 104 D2  
**Büyükağrı Dağı** see Ararat, Mount  
**Buzău** Romania 90 C4  
**Büzmeýin** see Abadan  
**Byarezina** *river* Belarus *Rus.* Berezina 89 D6  
**Bydgoszcz** Poland *Ger.* Bromberg 80 C3  
**Byzantium** see İstanbul

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## C

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**Caazapá** Paraguay 44 C3  
**Cabanatuan** Philippines 121 E1  
**Cabimas** Venezuela 40 C1  
**Cabinda** *exclave* Angola 60 B1  
**Cabot Strait** *sea feature* Atlantic Ocean 21 G4  
**Čačak** Serbia 82 D4  
**Cáceres** Spain 74 D3  
**Cachoeiro de Itapemirim** Brazil 45 F1  
**Cádiz** Philippines 121 E2  
**Cádiz** Spain 74 D5  
**Caen** France 72 B3  
**Cagayan de Oro** Philippines 121 F2  
**Cagliari** Italy 79 A5  
**Cahors** France 73 B5  
**Cairns** Australia 130 D3  
**Cairo** *capital of Egypt* Ar. Al Qāhira, *var.* El Qāhira 54 B1  
**Čakovec** Croatia 82 B2  
**Calabar** Nigeria 57 G5  
**Calabria** *region* Italy 79 D6  
**Calafate** see El Calafate  
**Calais** France 72 C2  
**Calais** Maine, USA 23 H1  
**Calama** Chile 46 B2  
**Calbayog** Philippines 121 F2  
**Calcutta** see Kolkata  
**Caldas da Rainha** Portugal 74 B3  
**Caldwell** Idaho, USA 27 C3  
**Caleta Olivia** Argentina 47 C6  
**Calgary** Canada 19 E5  
**Cali** Colombia 40 A3  
**Calicut** India see Kozhikode 114 D2  
**California** *state* USA 26-27  
**California, Golfo de** *sea feature* Pacific Ocean *Eng.* California, Gulf of 32 B2 123 F2  
**Callabonna, Lake lake** Australia 131 B5  
**Callao** Peru 42 A3  
**Caltanissetta** Italy 79 C7  
**Camagüey** Cuba 36 C2  
**Cambodia** *country* SE Asia *Cam.* Kampuchea 119  
**Cambridge** England, UK 71 E6  
**Cambridge** New Zealand 132 D2  
**Cameroon** *country* W Africa 58-59  
**Campbell Plateau** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 134 C5  
**Campeche** Mexico 33 G4  
**Campeche, Bahía de** *sea feature* Mexico *Eng.* Gulf of Campeche 33 G4  
**Campina Grande** Brazil 43 H3  
**Campinas** Brazil 45 E2  
**Campo Grande** Brazil 44 C1  
**Campos** Brazil 45 F2  
**Canada** *country* North America 16-17  
**Canada Basin** *undersea feature* Arctic Ocean *var.* Laurentian Basin 137 F2  
**Canadian River** *river* SW USA 29 E2  
**Çanakkale** Turkey 98 A3  
**Çanakkale Boğazı** see Dardanelles  
**Canarias, Islas** *islands* Spain *Eng.* Canary Islands 50 A2

## Canary Basin — Ceuta

- Canary Basin** *undersea feature* Atlantic Ocean 48 C4
- Canary Islands** *see* Canarias, Islas
- Canaveral, Cape** *coastal feature* Florida, USA 31 F4
- Canberra** *capital of* Australia 131 D6
- Cancún** Mexico 33 H3
- Caniapiscaw river** Canada 21 E2
- Caniapiscaw, Réservoir** *Reservoir* Canada 21 E3
- Canik Dağları mountains** Turkey 98 D2
- Çankırı** Turkey 98 C2
- Cannes** France 73 D6
- Canoas** Brazil 44 D4
- Canterbury** England, UK 71 E6
- Canterbury Bight** *sea feature* Pacific Ocean 133 C6
- Canterbury Plains** *plain* New Zealand 133 B6
- Cần Thơ** Vietnam 119 D6
- Canton** Ohio, USA 22 D4
- Canton** *see* Guangzhou
- Cape Basin** *undersea feature* Atlantic Ocean 49 D6
- Cape Town** *legislative capital of* South Africa 60 C5
- Cape Verde** *country* Atlantic Ocean 56 A2
- Cape Verde Basin** *undersea feature* Atlantic Ocean 48 C4
- Cape York Peninsula** *peninsula* Australia 124 B3
- Cap-Haïtien** Haiti 36 D3
- Capri, Isola di** *island* Italy 79 D5
- Caquetá river** Colombia 40 C4
- CAR** *see* Central African Republic
- Caracas** *capital of* Venezuela 40 D1
- Carazinho** Brazil 44 C3
- Carbondale** Illinois, USA 22 B5
- Carcassonne** France 73 C6
- Cardiff** Wales, UK 71 C6
- Cardigan Bay** *sea feature* Wales, UK 71 C6
- Carey, Lake** *lake* Australia 129 C5
- Caribbean Sea** Atlantic Ocean 36-37
- Carlisle** England, UK 70 D4
- Carlsbad** New Mexico, USA 28 D3
- Carlsberg Ridge** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 122 B4
- Carnavon** Australia 128 A5
- Carnegie, Lake** *lake* Australia 129 C5
- Carolina** Brazil 43 F3
- Caroline Island** *see* Millennium Island
- Caroline Islands** *island group* Micronesia 126 B1
- Caroní river** Venezuela 41 F2
- Carpathian Mountains** *mountain range* E Europe *var.* Carpathians 63 E4
- Carpathians** *see* Carpathian Mountains
- Carpații Meridionali** *mountain range* Romania *Eng.* South Carpathians, Transylvanian Alps 90 B4
- Carpentaria, Gulf of** *sea feature* Australia 130 B2
- Carson City** Nevada, USA 27 B5
- Cartagena** Colombia 40 B1
- Cartagena** Spain 75 F4
- Cartago** Costa Rica 35 E4
- Cartwright** Canada 21 G2
- Carúpano** Venezuela 41 E1
- Casablanca** Morocco 52 C2
- Casa Grande** Arizona, USA 28 B3
- Cascade Range** *mountain range* Canada/USA 26 B2
- Cascais** Portugal 74 B3
- Casper** Wyoming, USA 24 C3
- Caspian Sea** *inland sea* Asia/Europe 94 B4
- Castellón de la Plana** Spain 75 F3
- Castelo Branco** Portugal 74 C3
- Castries** *capital of* St Lucia 37 G4
- Castro** Chile 47 B6
- Cat Island** *island* The Bahamas 36 D1
- Catania** Italy 79 D7
- Catanzaro** Italy 79 D6
- Cauca river** Colombia 40 B2
- Caucasus mountains** Asia/Europe 93 A7
- Caura river** Venezuela 41 E2
- Caviana, Ilha** *island* Brazil 43 F1
- Cawnpore** *see* Kānpur
- Caxias do Sul** Brazil 44 D4
- Cayenne** *capital of* French Guiana 41 H3
- Cayman Islands** *overseas territory* UK, West Indies 36
- Cebu** Philippines 121 E2
- Cedar Rapids** Iowa, USA 25 G3
- Cedros, Isla** *island* Mexico 32 A2
- Ceduna** Australia 131 A6
- Cefalù** Italy 79 C6
- Celebes** *see* Sulawesi
- Celebes Sea** Pacific Ocean *Ind.* Laut Sulawesi 134 B3
- Celje** Slovenia 77 E7
- Central African Republic** *country* C Africa *abbrev.* CAR 58-59
- Central, Cordillera** *mountain range* Philippines 121 E1
- Central Makrán Range** *mountains* Pakistan 116 A3
- Central Pacific Basin** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 125 E1
- Central Russian Upland** *upland* Russian Federation 94 B3
- Central Siberian Plateau** *see* Srednesibirskoye Ploskogor'ye
- Central Siberian Uplands** *see* Srednesibirskoye Ploskogor'ye
- Central, Sistema** *mountain range* Spain 74 D3
- Cephalonia** *see* Kefalloniá
- Ceram Sea** Sea Indonesia 121 F4
- Cernáuți** *see* Chernivtsi
- Češis** Latvia *Ger.* Wenden 88 C3
- České Budějovice** Czech Republic *Ger.* Budweis 81 B5
- Ceuta** *external territory* Spain, N Africa 52 C1

- Cévennes mountains** France  
73 C6
- Ceylon** see Sri Lanka
- Ceylon Plain undersea feature**  
Indian Ocean 122 C4
- Chad country** C Africa 58
- Chad, Lake lake** C Africa  
58 B3
- Chāgai Hills mountains**  
Pakistan 116 A2
- Chagos-Laccadive Plateau undersea feature** Indian Ocean 122 C4
- Chagos Trench undersea feature** Indian Ocean 122 C4
- Chalkída** Greece 87 C5
- Challenger Deep undersea feature** Pacific Ocean 134 B3
- Châlons-en-Champagne** France  
72 D3
- Chambéry** France 73 D5
- Champaign** Illinois, USA 22 B4
- Chañaral** Chile 46 B2
- Chandīgarh** India 116 D2
- Chang, Ko island** Thailand  
119 C5
- Changchun** China 110 D3
- Chang Jiang river** China var.  
Yangtze 111 B6
- Changsha** China 111 C6
- Chaniá** Greece 87 C7
- Channel Islands island group**  
California, USA 27 B8
- Channel Islands island group**  
UK 71 D8
- Channel-Port-aux-Basques**  
Canada 21 G4
- Channel Tunnel** France/UK 71 E7
- Chapala, Lago de lake** Mexico  
32 D4
- Chardzhev** see Türkmenabat
- Chardzhou** see Türkmenabat
- Chari river** C Africa 58 C3
- Chārīkār** Afghanistan 105 E4
- Chārjew** see Türkmenabat
- Charleroi** Belgium 69 C6
- Charleston** South Carolina,  
USA 31 F2
- Charleston** West Virginia, USA  
22 D5
- Charleville** Australia 130 C4
- Charlotte** North Carolina, USA  
31 F1
- Charlotte Amalie capital of**  
Virgin Islands 37 F3
- Charlottesville** Virginia, USA  
23 E5
- Charlottetown** Canada 21 G4
- Charters Towers** Australia  
130 D3
- Chartres** France 72 C3
- Châteauroux** France 72 C4
- Chatham Islands islands** New Zealand 134 D4
- Chattanooga** Tennessee, USA  
30 D1
- Chauk** Myanmar 118 A3
- Chaves** Portugal 74 C2
- Cheboksary** Russian Federation  
93 C5
- Cheboygan** Michigan, USA  
22 C2
- Chech, Erg desert** Algeria/  
Mali 56 D1
- Che-chiang** see Zhejiang
- Cheju-do** see Jeju-do
- Cheju Strait** see Jeju Strait
- Chekiang** see Zhejiang
- Cheleken** see Hazar
- Chelyabinsk** Russian Federation  
96 C3
- Chemnitz** Germany prev.  
Karl-Marx-Stadt 76 D4
- Chenāb river** Pakistan  
116 C2
- Chengdu** China 111 B5
- Chennai** India prev. Madras  
115 E2
- Cherbourg** France 72 B3
- Cherepovets** Russian Federation 92 B4
- Cherkasy** Ukraine 91 E2
- Cherkessk** Russian Federation  
93 A7
- Chernigov** see Chernihiv
- Chernihiv** Ukraine *Rus.*  
Chernigov 91 E1
- Chernivtsi** Ukraine *Rus.*  
Chernovtsy, *Rom.* Cernăuți  
90 C3
- Chernobyl'** see Chornobyl'
- Chernovtsy** see Chernivtsi
- Chernyakhovsk** Kaliningrad,  
Russian Federation 88 B4
- Chesapeake Bay sea feature**  
USA 23 F5
- Chester** England, UK 71 D5
- Cheyenne** Wyoming, USA  
24 D4
- Chiang-hsi** see Jiangxi
- Chiang Mai** Thailand 118 B4
- Chiang-su** see Jiangsu
- Chiba** Japan 113 D5
- Chicago** Illinois, USA 22 B3
- Chiclayo** Peru 42 A3
- Chico** California, USA 27 B5
- Chicoutimi** Canada 21 E4
- Chifeng** China var. Ulanhad  
109 F2
- Chihli** see Hebei
- Chihuahua** Mexico 32 C2
- Chile country** S South America  
46-47
- Chile Basin undersea feature**  
Pacific Ocean 135 G4
- Chile Chico** Chile 47 B6
- Chile Rise undersea feature**  
Pacific Ocean 135 G4
- Chi-lin** see Jilin
- Chillán** Chile 46 B4
- Chiloé, Isla de island** Chile  
47 B6
- Chimborazo peak** Ecuador  
38 A3
- Chimbote** Peru 42 A3
- Chimkent** see Shymkent
- Chimoio** Mozambique 61 E3
- China country** E Asia 108-109
- Chinandega** Nicaragua 34 C3
- Chindwinn river** Myanmar  
118 A2
- Chinghai** see Qinghai
- Chingola** Zambia 60 D2
- Chinook Trough undersea feature** Pacific Ocean 134 D1
- Chíos** Greece 87 D5
- Chíos island** Greece prev. Khíos  
87 D5
- Chirchik** Uzbekistan *Uzb.*  
Chirchiq 105 E2
- Chirchiq** see Chirchik
- Chiriquí, Golfo de sea feature**  
Panama 35 E5

## Chişinău — Comayagua

- Chişinău** *capital of Moldova*, var. Kishinev 90 D3
- Chita** Russian Federation 97 F4
- Chitré** Panama 35 F5
- Chittagong** Bangladesh 117 G4
- Chitungwiza** Zimbabwe 60 D3
- Choluteca** Honduras 34 C3
- Choma** Zambia 60 D3
- Chona** *river* Russian Federation 95 E2
- Chon Buri** Thailand 119 C5
- Ch'ŏngjin** North Korea 110 E3
- Chongqing** *province* China var. Chungking 111 B5
- Chonos, Archipiélago de los** *island group* Chile 47 B6
- Chornobyl'** Ukraine *Rus. Chernobyl'* 91 E1
- Choûm** Mauritania 56 C2
- Chôybalsan** Mongolia 109 F2
- Christchurch** New Zealand 133 C6
- Christmas Island** *external territory* Australia, Indian Ocean 122 D5
- Christmas Island** see Kiritimati
- Christmas Ridge** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 125 F1
- Chuan** see Sichuan
- Chubut** *river* Argentina 47 B6
- Chudskoye Ozero** see Peipus, Lake
- Chui** see Chuy
- Chukchi Plain** *undersea feature* Arctic Ocean 137 G2
- Chukchi Sea** Arctic Ocean *Rus.* Chukotskoye More 137 F1
- Chukotskoye More** see Chukchi Sea
- Chula Vista** California, USA 27 C8
- Chulym** *river* Russian Federation 94 D3
- Chumphon** Thailand 119 C6
- Chungking** see Chongqing
- Chuquicamata** Chile 46 B2
- Chur** Switzerland 77 B7
- Churchill** Canada 19 G4
- Chuuk Islands** *island group* Micronesia 126 B1
- Chuy** Brazil var. Chui 44 C5
- Cienfuegos** Cuba 36 B2
- Cieza** Spain 75 F4
- Cilacap** Indonesia 120 C5
- Cincinnati** Ohio, USA 22 C4
- Ciudad Bolívar** Venezuela 41 E2
- Ciudad del Este** Paraguay 44 C3
- Ciudad de México** see Mexico City
- Ciudad Guayana** Venezuela 41 E2
- Ciudad Juárez** Mexico 32 C1
- Ciudad Obregón** Mexico 32 B2
- Ciudad Ojeda** Venezuela 40 C1
- Ciudad Real** Spain 75 E3
- Ciudad Valles** Mexico 33 E3
- Ciudad Victoria** Mexico 33 E3
- Clarence** *river* New Zealand 133 C5
- Clarion Fracture Zone** *tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean 125 G1
- Clarksville** Tennessee, USA 30 D1
- Clearwater** Florida, USA 31 E4
- Clermont** Australia 130 D4
- Clermont-Ferrand** France 73 C5
- Cleveland** Ohio, USA 22 D3
- Clipperton Fracture Zone** *tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean 125 G2
- Clipperton Island** *external territory* France, Pacific Ocean 135 F3
- Cloncurry** Australia 130 C3
- Clovis** New Mexico, USA 29 E2
- Cluj-Napoca** Romania 90 B3
- Clutha** *river* New Zealand 133 B7
- Coast Ranges** *mountain range* W USA 26 A5
- Coats Island** *island* Canada 20 C1
- Coats Land** *physical region* Antarctica 136 B2
- Coatzacoalcos** Mexico 33 G4
- Cobán** Guatemala 34 B2
- Cochabamba** Bolivia 42 C4
- Cochin** India see Kochi 114 D3
- Cochrane** Canada 20 C4
- Cochrane** Chile 47 B6
- Coco** *river* Honduras/Nicaragua 34 D2
- Cocos Basin** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 122 D4
- Cocos Islands** *external territory* Australia, Indian Ocean 122 D5
- Cod**, Cape *coastal feature* NE USA 23 G3
- Coeur d'Alene** Idaho, USA 26 C2
- Coffs Harbour** Australia 131 E6
- Coihaique** Chile 47 B6
- Coimbatore** India 114 D3
- Coimbra** Portugal 74 C3
- Colchester** England, UK 71 E6
- Colmar** France 72 E4
- Cologne** see Köln
- Colombia** *country* N South America 40-41
- Colombo** *administrative capital of* Sri Lanka 115 E4
- Colón** Panama 35 F4
- Colón, Archipiélago de** see Galapagos Islands
- Colorado** *state* USA 24 C4
- Colorado** *river* USA 16 B5
- Colorado** *river* Argentina 47 C5
- Colorado Plateau** *upland region* S USA 28 B1
- Colorado Springs** Colorado, USA 24 D4
- Columbia** South Carolina, USA 31 F2
- Columbia** *river* NW USA 26 C1
- Columbus** Georgia, USA 30 D3
- Columbus** Mississippi, USA 30 C2
- Columbus** Nebraska, USA 25 E4
- Columbus** Ohio, USA 22 D4
- Comayagua** Honduras 34 C2

- Comilla** Bangladesh 117 G4  
**Communism Peak peak**  
 Tajikistan *Rus. Pik*  
 Kommunizma, *prev. Stalin*  
 Peak, Garmo Peak 105 F3
- Como, Lago di lake** Italy  
 78 B2
- Comodoro Rivadavia** Argentina  
 47 C6
- Comoros country** Indian Ocean  
 61
- Conakry capital of** Guinea  
 56 C4
- Concepción** Chile 47 B5
- Concepción** Paraguay 44 B2
- Conchos river** Mexico 32 C2
- Concord** New Hampshire, USA  
 22 G2
- Concordia** E Argentina 46 D3
- Congo country** C Africa 59
- Congo river** C Africa *var. Zaire*  
 51 C5
- Congo Basin drainage basin** C  
 Africa 59 C5
- Congo, Democratic Republic of**  
*country* C Africa 59
- Connecticut state** USA 23 G3
- Constance, Lake river** C Europe  
 77 B6
- Constantine** Algeria 53 E1
- Constantinople** see *Istanbul*
- Constanța** Romania 90 D5
- Cooper Pedy** Australia 131 A5
- Cook, Mount** see *Aoraki*
- Cook Islands associated**  
*territory* New Zealand,  
 Pacific Ocean 127 G4
- Cook Strait sea feature** New  
 Zealand 133 D5
- Cooktown** Australia 130 D2
- Cooma** Australia 131 D7
- Coos Bay** Oregon, USA 26 A3
- Cootamundra** Australia  
 131 D6
- Copenhagen capital of**  
 Denmark 67 B7
- Copiapó** Chile 46 B3
- Coppermine** see *Kugluktuk*
- Coquimbo** Chile 46 B3
- Corabia** Romania 90 B5
- Coral Sea** Pacific Ocean 130 E3
- Coral Sea Islands external**  
*territory* Australia, Coral Sea  
 130 E3
- Corantijn** see *Courantyne*
- Cordillera Cantábrica mountain**  
*range* Spain 74 D1
- Córdoba** Argentina 46 C3
- Córdoba** Spain 74 D4
- Cordova** Alaska, USA  
 18 D3
- Corfu** see *Kérkyra*
- Corinth** see *Kórinthos*
- Corinth, Gulf of** see  
*Korinthiakós Kólpos*
- Corinto** Nicaragua 34 C3
- Cork** Ireland 71 B6
- Corner Brook** Canada 21 G3
- Coro** Venezuela 40 D1
- Coronel Oviedo** Paraguay  
 44 C2
- Corpus Christi** Texas, USA  
 29 G5
- Corrib, Lough lake** Ireland  
 71 A5
- Corrientes** Argentina 46 D3
- Corse island** France *Eng.*  
*Corsica* 73 E7 84 D2
- Corsica** see *Corse*
- Çorum** Turkey 98 D2
- Corvallis** Oregon, USA  
 26 A3
- Costena** Italy 79 D6
- Costa Blanca coastal region**  
 Spain 75 F4
- Costa Brava coastal region**  
 Spain 75 H2
- Costa Rica country** Central  
 America 34-35
- Côte d'Ivoire country** W Africa  
*Eng. Ivory Coast* 56 D4
- Cottbus** Germany 76 D4
- Council Bluffs** Iowa, USA  
 25 F4
- Courantyne river** Guyana /  
 Suriname *var. Corantijn* 41 G3
- Courland Lagoon sea feature**  
 Baltic Sea 88 B4
- Coventry** England, UK 71 D6
- Covilhã** Portugal 74 C3
- Cowan, Lake lake** Australia  
 129 C6
- Cozumel, Isla de island** Mexico  
 33 H3
- Cracow** see *Kraków*
- Craiova** Romania 90 B5
- Cremona** Italy 78 B2
- Cres island** Croatia 82 A3
- Crescent City** California, USA  
 26 A4
- Crete** see *Kriti*
- Crete, Sea of** Mediterranean  
*Sea Gk. Kritikó Pélagos*  
 87 D7
- Crimea** see *Krym*
- Cristóbal** Panama 48 A4
- Croatia country** SE Europe 82
- Croker Island island** Australia  
 128 E2
- Crotone** Italy 79 E6
- Crozet Basin undersea feature**  
 Indian Ocean 123 B6
- Crozet Islands island group**  
 Indian Ocean 123 B7
- Crystal Brook** Australia  
 131 B6
- Cuanza river** Angola 60 B2
- Cuba country** West Indies 36
- Cubango** see *Okavango*
- Cúcuta** Colombia 40 C2
- Cuenca** Ecuador 40 A5
- Cuenca** Spain 75 E3
- Cuernavaca** Mexico 33 E4
- Cuiabá** Brazil 43 E4
- Culiacán** Mexico 32 C3
- Cumaná** Venezuela 41 E1
- Cumberland** Maryland, USA  
 23 E4
- Cunene river** Angola/Namibia  
 60 B3
- Cunnamulla** Australia 131 C5
- Curaçao constituent country**  
 Netherlands, West Indies  
 37 E5
- Curicó** Chile 46 B4
- Curitiba** Brazil 44 D3
- Cusco** Peru *prev. Cuzco* 42 B4
- Cuttack** India 117 F5
- Cuxhaven** Germany 76 B3
- Cuyuni river** Guyana/Venezuela  
 41 F2
- Cuzco** see *Cusco*

## Cyclades — Des Moines

- Cyclades** see *Kykládes*  
**Cymru** see *Wales*  
**Cyprus** *country* Mediterranean  
 Sea 98 C5  
**Czechoslovakia** see *Czech Republic* or *Slovakia*  
**Czech Republic** *country* C  
 Europe 80-81  
**Częstochowa** Poland *Ger.*  
*Tschenstochau* 80 C4  
**Człuchów** Poland 80 C3
- 
- D**
- 
- Dacca** see *Dhaka*  
**Daegu** South Korea *prev.*  
*Taegu* 110 E4  
**Daejeon** South Korea *prev.*  
*Taejŏn* 110 E4  
**Dagden** see *Hiiumaa*  
**Dagō** see *Hiiumaa*  
**Dagupan** Philippines 121 E1  
**Da Hinggan Ling** *mountain*  
*range* China *Eng.* *Great*  
*Khingang Range* 109 G1  
**Dahomey** see *Benin*  
**Dakar** *capital of* Senegal  
 56 B3  
**Đakovo** Croatia 82 C3  
**Dalain Hob** China 108 D3  
**Dalaman** Turkey 98 B4  
**Dalandzadgad** Mongolia  
 109 E3  
**Đa Lat** Vietnam 119 E5  
**Dalby** Australia 131 D5  
**Dalian** China 110 D4  
**Dallas** Texas, USA 29 G3  
**Dalmacija** *region* Croatia 82 B4  
**Daly Waters** Australia 128 E3  
**Damān** India 116 C5  
**Damas** see *Damascus*  
**Damascus** *Syria* *var.* *Esh Sham*,  
*Fr.* *Damas*, *Ar.* *Dimashq*  
 100 B4  
**Dampier** Australia 128 B4  
**Damxung** China 108 C5  
**Đa Nāng** Vietnam 119 E4  
**Dandong** China 110 D4  
**Daneborg** Greenland 65 E3  
**Danghara** Tajikistan 105 E3  
**Danmarksstraedet** see  
*Denmark Strait*  
**Danube** *river* C Europe  
 63 E4  
**Danville** Virginia, USA 23 E5  
**Danzig** see *Gdańsk*  
**Danzig, Gulf of 76 C2** *Gulf*  
 Poland 80 C2  
**Dar'ā** Syria 101 B5  
**Dardanelles** *sea* *feature* Turkey  
*Turk.* *Çanakkale Boğazı*  
 98 A2  
**Dar es Salaam** Tanzania 55 C7  
**Darfur** *Cultural region* Sudan  
 54 A4  
**Darhan** Mongolia 109 E2  
**Darien, Gulf of** *sea* *feature*  
*Caribbean Sea* 35 G5  
**Darling** *river* Australia 131 C6  
**Darmstadt** Germany 77 B5  
**Darnah** Libya 53 H2  
**Dartmoor** *region* England,  
 UK 71 C7  
**Dartmouth** Canada 21 F4  
**Darwin** Australia 128 D2  
**Dashhowuz** see *Daşoguz*  
**Daşoguz** Turkmenistan *prev.*  
*Tashauz, Turk.* *Dashhowuz*  
 104 C2  
**Datong** China 110 C4  
**Daugava** see *Western Dvina*  
**Daugavpils** Latvia *Ger.*  
*Dünaburg, Rus.* *Dvinsk*  
 88 D4  
**Dāvāngere** India 114 D2  
**Davao** Philippines 121 F3  
**Davao Gulf** *gulf* Philippines  
 121 F3  
**Davenport** Iowa, USA 25 G3  
**David** Panama 35 E5  
**Davie Ridge** *undersea* *feature*  
*Indian Ocean* 123 A5  
**Davis Sea** *Indian Ocean* 136 D3  
**Davis Strait** *sea* *feature*  
*Atlantic Ocean* 64 C3  
**Dawei** Myanmar *prev.* *Tavoy*  
 119 B5  
**Dayr az Zawr** Syria 100 D3  
**Dayton** Ohio, USA 22 C4  
**Daytona Beach** Florida, USA  
 31 F4  
**Dead Sea** *salt lake* SW Asia *Ar.*  
*Al Baḥr al Mayyit, Baḥrat Lūt,*  
*Heb.* *Yam HaMelah* 101 B5  
**Death Valley** *valley* W USA  
 27 C6  
**Deatnu** *river* Finland/Norway  
 66 D2  
**Debrecen** Hungary *prev.*  
*Debreczen, Ger.* *Debreczin*  
 81 D6  
**Debrecen** see *Debrecen*  
**Debreczin** see *Debrecen*  
**Decatur** Illinois, USA 22 B4  
**Deccan** *plateau* India  
 106 B3 115 D1  
**Dečín** Czech Republic  
*Ger.* *Tetschen* 80 B4  
**Dej** Romania 90 B3  
**Delaware** *state* USA 23 F4  
**Delémont** Switzerland 77 A7  
**Delft** Netherlands 68 C4  
**Delfzijl** Netherlands 68 E1  
**Delhi** India 116 D3  
**Del Rio** Texas, USA 29 F4  
**Demchok** *disputed* *region*  
 China/India *var.* *Dēm̄qog*  
 108 B4  
**Demopolis** Alabama, USA  
 30 C2  
**Dēm̄qog** see *Demchok*  
**Denali** see *Mount McKinley*  
**Denham** Australia 129 A5  
**Den Helder** Netherlands 68 C2  
**Denizli** Turkey 98 B4  
**Denmark** *country* NW Europe  
 67  
**Denmark Strait** *sea* *feature*  
*Greenland/Iceland* *var.*  
*Danmarksstraedet* 65 D4  
**Denpasar** Indonesia 120 D5  
**Denton** Texas, USA 29 G2  
**Denver** Colorado, USA 24 D4  
**Dera Ghāzi Khān** Pakistan  
 116 C2  
**Derby** England, UK 71 D6  
**Derg, Lough** *lake* Ireland  
 71 B6  
**Desē** Ethiopia 54 C4  
**Deseado** *river* Argentina  
 47 C6  
**Des Moines** Iowa, USA 25 F3



- Despoto Planina** see Rhodope Mountains
- Dessau** Germany 76 D4
- Detroit** Michigan, USA 22 D3
- Deutschendorf** see Poprad
- Deva** Romania 90 B4
- Deventer** Netherlands 68 D3
- Devollit, Lumi i** *river* Albania 83 D6
- Devon Island** *island* Canada 19 F2
- Devonport** Tasmania, Australia 131 C8
- Dezful** Iran 102 C3
- Dhaka** *capital of* Bangladesh *var.* Dacca 117 G4
- Dhanbād** India 117 F4
- Dhrepanon, Ākra** see Drépano, Akrotirio
- Diamantina Fracture Zone** *tectonic feature* Indian Ocean 123 E6
- Dickinson** North Dakota, USA 24 D2
- Diekirch** Luxembourg 69 D7
- Dieppe** France 72 C3
- Digul River** Indonesia 121 H5
- Dijon** France 72 D4
- Dikson** Taymyrskiy (Dolganonenetskiy) Russian Federation 137 H4
- Dili** *capital of* East Timor 121 F5
- Dilling** Sudan 54 B4
- Dilolo** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D8
- Dimashq** see Damascus
- Dimitrovo** see Pernik
- Dinant** Belgium 69 C7
- Dinaric Alps** *mountains* Bosnia & Herzegovina/Croatia 82 B4
- Diourbel** Senegal 56 B3
- Dirē Dawa** Ethiopia 55 D5
- Dirk Hartog Island** *island* Australia 129 A5
- Disappointment, Lake** *salt lake* Australia 128 C4
- Dispur** India 117 G3
- Divinópolis** Brazil 45 F1
- Diyarbakır** Turkey 99 E4
- Dkaraganda** see Zhezqazan
- Djambala** Congo 59 B6
- Djibouti** *country* E Africa 54
- Djibouti** *capital of* Djibouti *var.* Jibuti 54 D4
- Dnepr** see Dnieper
- Dnieper river** E Europe *Bel.* Dynapro, *Rus.* Dnepr 63 F4
- Dniester river** Moldova/Ukraine 90 D3
- Dnipropetrovs'k** Ukraine 91 F3
- Dobele** Latvia *Ger.* Doblen 88 C3
- Doberai, Jazirah Peninsula** Indonesia 121 G4
- Doblen** see Dobele
- Doboj** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C3
- Dobrich** Bulgaria 86 E1
- Dodecanese** see Dodekánisa
- Dodekánisa islands** Greece *Eng.* Dodecanese 87 E6
- Dodge City** Kansas, USA 25 E5
- Dodoma** *capital of* Tanzania 55 C7
- Doğu Karadeniz Dağları** *mountains* Turkey *var.* Anadolu Dağları 99 E2
- Doha** *capital of* Qatar *Ar.* Ad Dawḥah 103 C5
- Dolisie** Congo 59 B6
- Dolomites** see Dolomitiche, Alpi
- Dolomitiche, Alpi** *mountains* Italy *Eng.* Dolomites 78 C2
- Dolores** Argentina 46 D4
- Dolores Hidalgo** Mexico 33 E4
- Dominica** *country* West Indies 37
- Dominican Republic** *country* West Indies 37
- Don river** Russian Federation 93 B6 96 A3
- Donegal Bay** *sea feature* Ireland 71 A5
- Donets river** Russian Federation/Ukraine 93 A6
- Donets'k** Ukraine 91 G3
- Dongguan** China 111 C6
- Dongola** Sudan 54 B3
- Donostia/San Sebastián** Spain *Sp.* San Sebastián 75 E1
- Dordogne river** France 73 B5
- Dordrecht** Netherlands 68 C4
- Dorpat** see Tartu
- Dortmund** Germany 76 B4
- Dothan** Alabama, USA 30 D3
- Douai** France 72 D3
- Douala** Cameroon 59 A5
- Douglas** UK 71 C5
- Douglas** Arizona, USA 28 C3
- Dourados** Brazil 44 C2
- Douro river** Portugal/Spain *Sp.* Duero 74 C2
- Dover** England, UK 71 E7
- Dover** Delaware, USA 23 F4
- Drakensberg** *mountain range* Lesotho/South Africa 60 D5
- Drake Passage** *sea feature* Atlantic Ocean/Pacific Ocean 39 C8
- Dráma** Greece 86 C3
- Drammen** Norway 67 B6
- Drau river** C Europe *var.* Drava 77 D7 82 C3
- Drava river** C Europe *var.* Drau 81 C7
- Drépano, Akrotirio** *coastal feature* Greece *var.* Dhrepanon Ākra 86 C4
- Dresden** Germany 76 D4
- Drina river** Bosnia & Herzegovina/Serbia 82 D4
- Dröbeta-Turnu Severin** *Romania prev.* Turnu Severin 90 B4
- Dronning Maud Land** *region* Antarctica 137 B1
- Druskieniki** see Druskininkai
- Druskininkai** Lithuania *Pol.* Druskiniki 89 B5
- Dubayy** United Arab Emirates 103 D5
- Dubăsari** Moldova 90 D3
- Dubawnt river** Canada 19 F4
- Dubbo** Australia 131 D6
- Dublin** *capital of* Ireland 71 B5
- Dubrovnik** Croatia 83 C5
- Dubuque** Iowa, USA 25 G3
- Duero river** Portugal/Spain *Port.* Douro 74 D2
- Dugi Otok** *island* Croatia 82 A4
- Dulsburg** Germany 76 A4
- Duan** China 108 D4
- Duluth** Minnesota, USA 25 F2

## Dumfries — El Tigre

- Dumfries** Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**Düna** see Western Dvina  
**Dünaburg** see Daugavpils  
**Dundalk** Ireland 71 B5  
**Dundee** Scotland, UK 70 D3  
**Dunedin** New Zealand 133 B7  
**Dunkerque** France *Eng.*  
 Dunkirk 72 C2  
**Dunkirk** see Dunkerque  
**Duqm** Oman 103 E6  
**Durango** Mexico 32 D3  
**Durango** Colorado, USA 24 C5  
**Durazno** Uruguay 44 C5  
**Durban** South Africa 60 E4  
**Durham** North Carolina, USA  
 31 F1  
**Durrës** Albania 83 C5  
**Dushanbe** *capital of Tajikistan*  
 var. Dyushambe, *prev.*  
 Stalinabad 105 E3  
**Düsseldorf** Germany 76 A4  
**Dutch Harbor** Alaska, USA  
 18 B3  
**Dvinsk** see Daugavpils  
**Dynapro** see Dnieper  
**Dyushambe** see Dushanbe  
**Dzadzzhikau** see Vladikavkaz  
**Dzhaldal-Abad** Kyrgyzstan *Kir.*  
 Jalal-Abad 105 F2  
**Dzhambul** see Taraz  
**Dzhezkazgan** see Zhezkazgan  
**Dzvina** see Western Dvina
- 
- E**
- 
- Eagle Pass** Texas, USA  
 29 F4  
**East Antarctica** *region*  
 Antarctica 136 C3  
**East Cape** *coastal feature* New  
 Zealand 132 E2  
**East China Sea** Pacific Ocean  
 111 E5  
**Easter Fracture Zone** *tectonic*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean  
 135 G4  
**Easter Island** *island* Pacific  
 Ocean 135 F4  
**Eastern Ghats** *mountain range*  
 India 117 B5  
**Eastern Sierra Madre** see Sierra  
 Madre Oriental  
**East Falkland** *island* Falkland  
 Islands 47 D7  
**East Indiaman Ridge** *undersea*  
*feature* Indian Ocean  
 23 D5  
**East Indies** *island group* Asia  
 122 E4  
**East London** South Africa  
 60 D5  
**Eastmain** *river* Canada 20 D3  
**East Pacific Rise** *undersea*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean  
 135 F4  
**East Siberian Sea** see  
 Vostochno-Sibirskoye More  
**East St Louis** Illinois, USA  
 22 B4  
**East Timor** *country* SE Asia  
 121  
**East Novaya Zemlya Trench**  
*var.* Novaya Zemlya Trench.  
*Undersea feature* Kara Sea  
 137 H4  
**Eau Claire** Wisconsin, USA  
 22 A2  
**Ebolowa** Cameroon 59 B5  
**Ebro** *river* Spain 75 F2  
**Ecuador** *country* NW South  
 America 40  
**Ede** Netherlands 68 D3  
**Ede** Nigeria 57 F4  
**Edgeoya** *island* Svalbard 65 G2  
**Edinburgh** Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**Edirne** Turkey 98 A2  
**Edmonton** Canada 19 E5  
**Edward, Lake** *lake* Uganda/  
 Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E6  
**Edwards Plateau** *upland* S USA  
 29 F4  
**Efate** *Island* Vanuatu *prev.*  
 Sandwich Island 124 D4  
**Effingham** Illinois, USA 22 B4  
**Eforie-Sud** Romania 90 D5  
**Egadi, Isole** *island group* Italy  
 79 B6  
**Ege Denizi** see Aegean Sea  
**Eger** see Ohře  
**Egypt** *country* NE Africa 54  
**Eighty Mile Beach** *beach*  
 Australia 128 C3  
**Eindhoven** Netherlands 69 D5  
**Eisenstadt** Austria 77 E6  
**Eivissa** see Ibiza  
**Elat** Israel 101 A7  
**Elazığ** Turkey 99 E3  
**Elba, Isola d'** *island* Italy 78 B4  
**Elbasan** Albania 83 D6  
**Elbe** *river* Czech Republic/  
 Germany 81 B5  
**Elbing** see Elbląg  
**Elbląg** Poland *Ger.* Elbing  
 80 D2  
**El'brus** *peak* Russian  
 Federation 93 A7  
**El Calafate** Argentina *var.*  
 Calafate 47 B7  
**Elche** Spain *Cat.* Elx 75 F4  
**Elda** Spain 75 F4  
**Elboret** Kenya 55 C6  
**Eleuthera** *island* The Bahamas  
 36 C1  
**El Fasher** Sudan *var.* Al Fāshir  
 54 A4  
**El Geneina** Sudan 54 A4  
**Elgin** Scotland, UK 70 C3  
**El Giza** see Al Jizah  
**El Hank** *cliff* Mauritania 56 D1  
**Elista** Russian Federation 93 B6  
**El Khalil** see Hebron  
**El Khârga** see Al Khâriyah  
**Elko** Nevada, USA 27 D5  
**Ellensburg** Washington, USA  
 26 B2  
**Ellesmere Island** *island* Canada  
 19 F1  
**Ellsworth Land** *region*  
 Antarctica 136 A3  
**Elmira** New York, USA 23 E3  
**El Mreyyè** *desert* Mauritania  
 56 D2  
**El Obeid** Sudan 54 B4  
**El Paso** Texas, USA 28 D3  
**El Puerto de Santa María** Spain  
 74 D5  
**El Qâhira** see Cairo  
**El Salvador** *country* Central  
 America 34  
**Eltanin Fracture Zone** *tectonic*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean  
 135 E5  
**El Tigre** Venezuela 41 E2

Elx see Elche  
 Ely Nevada USA 27 D5  
 Emden Germany 76 B3  
 Emerald Australia 130 D4  
 Emmen Netherlands 68 E2  
 Empty Quarter see Ar Rub' al Khali  
 Ems river Germany/Netherlands 76 B3  
 Encarnación Paraguay 44 C3  
 Enderbury Island atoll Kiribati 136 C2  
 Enderby Land region Antarctica 136 C2  
 Enderby Plain undersea feature Indian Ocean 123 B7  
 England national region UK 70-71  
 English Channel sea feature Atlantic Ocean 71 D7  
 Enguri river Georgia Rus. Inguri 99 F1  
 Enid Oklahoma, USA 29 F1  
 Ennedi plateau Chad 58 D2  
 Enns river Austria 77 D6  
 Enschede Netherlands 68 E3  
 Ensenada Mexico 32 A1  
 Entebbe Uganda 55 B6  
 Enugu Nigeria 57 G5  
 Eolie, Isole island group Italy Eng. Lipari Islands, var. Aeolian Islands 79 D6  
 Eperies see Prešov  
 Eperjes see Prešov  
 Épinal France 72 E4  
 Equatorial Guinea country W Africa 59  
 Erdenet Mongolia 109 E2  
 Erechim Brazil 44 D3  
 Erenhot China 109 F2  
 Erivan see Yerevan  
 Ereğli Turkey 98 C4  
 Erfurt Germany 76 C4  
 Erie Pennsylvania, USA 22 D3  
 Erie, Lake lake Canada/USA 17 D5  
 Eritrea country E Africa 54  
 Erivan see Yerevan  
 Erlangen Germany 77 C5

Ernākulam India 114 D3  
 Er Rachidia Morocco 52 C2  
 Erzurum see Erzurum  
 Erzgebirge mountain range Czech Republic/Germany var Krušné Hory 77 D5  
 Erzincan Turkey 99 E3  
 Erzurum Turkey prev. Erzerum 99 F3  
 Esbjerg Denmark 67 A7  
 Esch-sur-Alzette Luxembourg 69 D8  
 Escuintla Guatemala 34 B2  
 Eşfahān Iran 102 C3  
 Esh Sham see Damascus  
 Eskisehir Turkey 98 B3  
 Esmeraldas Ecuador 40 A4  
 Esperance Australia 129 C6  
 Espiritu Santo Island Vanuatu 124 D3  
 Espoo Finland 67 D6  
 Esquel Argentina 47 B6  
 Essaouira Morocco 52 B2  
 Essen Germany 76 A4  
 Essequebo river Guyana 41 G3  
 Estelí Nicaragua 34 D3  
 Estevan Canada 19 F5  
 Estonia country E Europe 88 D2  
 Ethiopia country E Africa 54-55  
 Ethiopian Highlands upland E Africa 50 D4  
 Etna, Mount peak Sicily, Italy 79 D7  
 Etosha Pan salt basin Namibia 60 C3  
 Eucla Australia 129 D6  
 Eugene Oregon, USA 26 A3  
 Eugene Washington, USA 26 B1  
 Euphrates river SW Asia 102 C4  
 Europe 62-63  
 Evansville Indiana, USA 22 B5  
 Everest, Mount peak China/Nepal 108 B5  
 Everett Washington, USA 26 B1  
 Everglades, The wetlands Florida, USA 31 F5  
 Évvoia island Greece 87 C5  
 Exeter England, UK 71 C7

Exmoor region England, UK 71 C7  
 Exmouth Australia 128 A4  
 Exmouth Gulf gulf Australia 128 A4  
 Exmouth Plateau undersea feature Indian Ocean 123 E5  
 Eyre North, Lake salt lake Australia 131 B5  
 Eyre Peninsula peninsula Australia 131 A6  
 Eyre South, Lake salt lake Australia 131 B5

---

## F

---

Fada-N'gourma Burkina Faso 57 E4  
 Faroe Islands external territory Denmark, Atlantic Ocean Far. Føroyar, Dan. Færøerne, var. Faeroe Islands 65 F5  
 Færøerne see Faroe Islands  
 Faguibine, Lac lake Mali 57 E3  
 Fairbanks Alaska, USA 18 D3  
 Fairlie New Zealand 133 B6  
 Faisalābād Pakistan 116 C2  
 Faizābād Afghanistan prev. Feyzābād 105 E3  
 Falkland Islands overseas territory UK, Atlantic Ocean 47 D7  
 Fallon Nevada, USA 27 C5  
 Falun Sweden 67 C6  
 Famagusta see Gazimağusa  
 Farafangana Madagascar 61 G4  
 Farāh Afghanistan 104 C5  
 Farasān, Jazā'ir island group Saudi Arabia 103 B6  
 Farewell, Cape headland New Zealand 132 C4  
 Farewell, Cape see Nunap Isua  
 Farghona see Farg'ona  
 Farg'ona Uzbekistan prev. Novyy Margilan, Uzb. Farghona 105 F2  
 Fargo North Dakota, USA 25 E2  
 Farkhor Tajikistan 105 E3  
 Farmington New Mexico, USA 28 C1

## Faro — Franz Josef Land

- Faro Portugal 74 C4  
**Farquhar Group** *island group*  
 Seychelles 61 G2  
**Farvel, Cap** see Nunap Isua  
**Faxaflói bay** Iceland 64 D5  
**Faya** Chad 58 C2  
**Fayetteville** Arkansas, USA  
 30 A1  
**Fayetteville** North Carolina,  
 USA 31 F1  
**Fdèrik** Mauritania 56 C1  
**Fear, Cape** *coastal feature*  
 North Carolina, USA 31 G2  
**Fehmarn island** Germany 76 C2  
**Fehmarn Belt sea feature**  
 Germany 76 C2  
**Feira de Santana** Brazil 43 G3  
**Fellin** see Viljandi  
**Fengtien** see Liaoning  
**Fenoarivo** see Fenoarivo  
 Atsinanana  
**Fenoarivo Atsinanana**  
 Madagascar *prev.* Fenoarivo  
 61 G3  
**Fens, The** *wetland* England, UK  
 71 E6  
**Fergana** see Farg'ona  
**Ferizaj/Uroševac** Kosovo *Serb.*  
 Uroševac 83 D5  
**Ferrara** Italy 78 C3  
**Ferrol** Spain 74 C1  
**Fès** Morocco *Eng.* Fez 52 C2  
**Feyzābād** see Faizābād  
**Fez** see Fès  
**Fianarantsoa** Madagascar 61 G3  
**Fier** Albania 83 D6  
**Figueira da Foz** Portugal 74 C3  
**Figueres** Spain 75 G2  
**Figui** Morocco 52 D2  
**Fiji** *country* Pacific Ocean 127  
**Finland** *country* N Europe  
 66-67  
**Finland, Gulf of sea feature**  
 Baltic Sea 67 E6  
**Fiordland** *physical region* New  
 Zealand 133 A7  
**Firenze** Italy *Eng.* Florence  
 78 C3  
**Fishguard** Wales, UK 71 C6  
**Fitzroy river** Australia 128 C3  
**Fitzroy Crossing** Australia  
 128 D3  
**Fiume** see Rijeka  
**Flagstaff** Arizona, USA 28 B2  
**Flanders region** Belgium 69 A5  
**Flensburg** Germany 76 B2  
**Flinders Island** *island* Australia  
 131 C7  
**Flinders Ranges** *mountain*  
*range* Australia 131 B6  
**Flinders River** *river* Australia  
 130 C3  
**Flin Flon** Canada 19 F5  
**Flint** Michigan, USA 22 C3  
**Flint Island** *island* Kiribati  
 127 H4  
**Florence** Alabama, USA 30 C2  
**Florence** South Carolina, USA  
 31 F2  
**Florence** see Firenze  
**Florencia** Colombia 40 B3  
**Flores** Guatemala 34 B1  
**Flores island** Indonesia 121 E5  
**Flores, Laut** see Flores Sea  
**Flores Sea** Pacific Ocean *Ind.*  
 Laut Flores 121 E5  
**Florianópolis** Brazil 44 D3  
**Florida** *state* USA 31 E4  
**Florida, Straits of sea feature**  
 The Bahamas/USA 31 F5 36 B1  
**Florida Keys** *island chain*  
 Florida, USA 31 F5  
**Flórina** Greece 86 B3  
**Flushing** see Vlissingen  
**Foča** Bosnia & Herzegovina  
 82 C4  
**Foçşani** Romania 90 C4  
**Foggia** Italy 79 D5  
**Fogo island** Cape Verde 56 A3  
**Foligno** Italy 78 C4  
**Fongafale** *capital of* Tuvalu  
 127 E3  
**Fonseca, Gulf of sea feature**  
 El Salvador/Honduras 34 C3  
**Forlì** Italy 78 C3  
**Formentera** *island* Spain 75 G4  
**Former Yugoslav Republic of**  
**Macedonia** see Macedonia  
**Formosa** Argentina 46 D2  
**Formosa** see Taiwan  
**Formosa Strait** see  
 Taiwan Strait  
**Fóroyar** see Faroe Islands  
**Fortaleza** Brazil 43 H2  
**Fortescue River** *river* Australia  
 128 B4  
**Fort Collins** Colorado, USA  
 24 D4  
**Fort-de-France** *capital of*  
 Martinique 37 G4  
**Forth** *river* Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**Forth, Firth of inlet** Scotland,  
 UK 70 D4  
**Fort Lauderdale** Florida, USA  
 31 F5  
**Fort McMurray** Canada 19 F4  
**Fort Myers** Florida, USA 31 E4  
**Fort Peck Lake** *lake* Montana,  
 USA 24 C1  
**Fort Saint John** Canada 19 E4  
**Fort Smith** Canada 19 E4  
**Fort Smith** Arkansas, USA  
 30 A1  
**Fort Wayne** Indiana, USA  
 22 C4  
**Fort William** Scotland, UK  
 70 C3  
**Fort Worth** Texas, USA 29 G3  
**Foveaux Strait** *sea feature* New  
 Zealand 133 A7  
**Fox Glacier** New Zealand  
 133 B6  
**Franca** Brazil 45 E1  
**France** *country* W Europe  
 72-73  
**Francistown** Botswana 60 D3  
**Frankfort** Kentucky, USA  
 22 C5  
**Frankfurt** see Frankfurt am  
 Main  
**Frankfurt am Main** Germany  
*Eng.* Frankfurt 77 B5  
**Frankfurt an der Oder**  
 Germany 76 D5  
**Fränkische Alb** *mountains*  
 Germany 77 C6  
**Frantsa-losifa, Zemlya** *islands*  
 Russian Federation *Eng.*  
 Franz Josef Land 137 G4  
**Franz Josef Land** see Frantsa-  
 losifa, Zemlya

**Fraser Island** *island* Australia  
130 E4

**Frauenburg** *see* Saldus

**Fray Bentos** Uruguay 44 B5

**Fredericksburg** Virginia, USA  
23 E4

**Fredericton** Canada 21 F4

**Frederikshavn** Denmark  
67 B7

**Fredrikstad** Norway 67 B6

**Freeport** The Bahamas 36 C1

**Freeport** Texas, USA 29 G4

**Freetown** *capital of*  
Sierra Leone 56 C4

**Freiburg im Breisgau** Germany  
77 B6

**Fremantle** Australia 129 B6

**French Guiana** *overseas*  
*department* France, N South  
America 41

**French Polynesia** *overseas*  
*collectivity* France, Pacific  
Ocean 135 E3

**French Southern and**

**Antarctic Lands** *French*  
*overseas territory* Indian  
Ocean *Fr. Terres Australes*  
*et Antarctiques Françaises*  
123 C7

**Fresnillo** Mexico 32 D1

**Fresno** California, USA 27 B6

**Fobisher Bay** *see* Iqaluit

**Frome, Lake** *salt lake* Australia  
131 B5

**Frunze** *see* Bishkek

**Fu-chien** *see* Fujian

**Fuerte Olimpo** Paraguay  
44 B1

**Fuerteventura** *island* Spain  
52 A3

**Fuhkien** *see* Fujian

**Fujian** *province* China *var.*  
Fu-chien, Fuhkien, Fukien,  
Min 111 D6

**Fukien** *see* Fujian

**Fukui** Japan 113 C5

**Fukuoka** Japan 113 A6

**Fukushima** Japan 112 D4

**Fulda** Germany 77 C5

**Fünfkirchen** *see* Pécs

**Fushun** China 110 D3

**Furnas, Represa de** *Reservoir*  
Brazil 45 E1

**Fuxin** China 110 D3

**Fujian** China *prev.* Linchuan  
111 D6

**FYR Macedonia** *see* Macedonia

## G

**Gaalkacyo** Somalia 55 E5

**Gabès** Tunisia 53 E2

**Gabon** *country* W Africa 59

**Gaborone** *capital of* Botswana  
60 D4

**Gabrovo** Bulgaria 86 D2

**Gadsden** Alabama, USA 30 D2

**Gaeta, Golfo di** *sea feature*  
Italy 79 C5

**Gafsa** Tunisia 53 E2

**Gagnoa** Côte d'Ivoire 56 D5

**Gagra** Georgia 99 E1

**Gairdner, Lake** *lake* Australia  
131 B6

**Galapagos Fracture Zone**  
*tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean  
135 F3

**Galapagos Islands** *islands*  
Ecuador, Pacific Ocean  
*var.* Tortoise Islands, *Sp.*  
Archipiélago de Colón  
135 G3

**Galapagos Rise** *undersea*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean  
135 G3

**Galați** Romania 90 D4

**Galesburg** Illinois, USA 22 B4

**Galicia** *region* Spain 74 C1

**Galilee, Sea of** *see* Tiberias, Lake

**Galle** Sri Lanka 115 E4

**Gallego Rise** *undersea feature*  
Pacific Ocean 135 F3

**Gallipoli** Italy 79 E5

**Gällivare** Sweden 66 D3

**Gallup** New Mexico, USA  
28 C2

**Galveston** Texas, USA 29 G4

**Galway** Ireland 71 A5

**Gambia** *country* W Africa 56

**Gambia River** Africa 56 C3

**Gambier, Îles** *island group*  
French Polynesia 135 E4

**Gan** *see* Gansu

**Gan** *see* Jiangxi

**Gāncā** Azerbaijan *Rus.*  
Gyandzha, *prev.* Kirovabad,  
Yelisavetpol 99 G2

**Gand** *see* Gent

**Gander** Canada 21 H3

**Gandia** Spain 75 F3

**Ganges river** S Asia 116 F4

**Ganges Fan** *Undersea feature*  
Bay of Bengal 122 D3

**Ganges, Mouths of the**  
*wetlands* Bangladesh/India  
117 G4

**Gangtok** India 117 G3

**Gansu** *province* China *var.* Gan,  
Kansu 111 B5

**Gao** Mali 57 E3

**Gaoual** Guinea 56 C4

**Gaoxiong** Taiwan *prev.*  
Kaohsiung 111 D7

**Gar** China *var.* Shiquanhe  
108 A4

**Garagum Kanaly canal**  
*Turkmenistan prev.*  
Karakumskiy Kanal 104 C3

**Garagum desert** Turkmenistan  
*var.* Kara Kum, Karakumy  
104 C2

**Garda, Lago di** *lake* Italy  
78 B2

**Gardēz** Afghanistan *prev.*  
Gardiz 105 E4

**Gardiz** *see* Gardēz

**Garissa** Kenya 55 C6

**Garmo Peak** *see* Communism  
Peak

**Garonne river** France 73 B5

**Garouwe** Somalia 55 E5

**Garoua** Cameroon 58 B4

**Gary** Indiana, USA 22 B3

**Gaspé** Canada 21 F4

**Gastonia** North Carolina, USA  
31 E1

**Gävle** Sweden 67 C5

**Gaya** India 117 F4

**Gaza** Gaza Strip 101 A6

**Gazandzhyk** *see* Bereket

**Gazanjyk** *see* Bereket

**Gaza Strip** *disputed territory*  
SW Asia 101 A6

## Gaziantep — Grampian Mountains

- Gaziantep** Turkey *prev.* Aintab 98 D4
- Gazimağusa** Cyprus *var.* Famagusta *Gk.* Ammochostos 98 C5
- Gdańsk** Poland *Ger.* Danzig 80 C2
- Gdingen** see Gdynia
- Gdynia** Poland *Ger.* Gdingen 80 C2
- Gedaref** Sudan 54 C4
- Geelong** Australia 131 C7
- Gëkdepe** see Gökdepe
- Gemena** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 C5
- General Eugenio A. Garay** Paraguay 44 A1
- General Santos** Philippines 121 F3
- Geneva** see Genève
- Geneva, Lake** *lake France/* Switzerland *Fr.* Lac Léman, *var.* Le Léman, *Ger.* Genfer See 77 A7
- Genève** Switzerland *Eng.* Geneva 77 A7
- Genfer** See see Geneva, Lake
- Genzer Gol** China 109 F1
- Genk** Belgium 69 D5
- Genoa** see Genova
- Genova** Italy see Genoa 78 B3
- Genova, Golfo di** *sea feature* Italy 78 B3
- Gent** Belgium *Fr.* Gand, *Eng.* Ghent 69 B5
- Geok-Tepe** see Gökdepe
- George** South Africa 60 D5
- George V Land** *physical region* Antarctica 136 C4
- Georgenburg** see Jurbarkas
- George Town** *capital of* Cayman Islands 36 B3
- Georgetown** *capital of* Guyana 41 G2
- George Town** Malaysia 120 B3
- Georgia** *country* SW Asia 99 F2
- Georgia state** USA 31 E3
- Gera** Germany 76 C4
- Geraldton** Australia 129 A5
- Gereshk** Afghanistan 104 D5
- Germany** *country* W Europe 76-77
- Gerona** see Girona
- Getafe** Spain 75 E3
- Gettysburg** Pennsylvania, USA 23 E4
- Gevgelija** Macedonia 83 E6
- Ghana** *country* W Africa 57
- Ghanzi** Botswana 60 C3
- Ghardaïa** Algeria 52 D2
- Gharyān** Libya 53 F2
- Ghazni** Afghanistan 105 E4
- Ghent** see Gent
- Gibraltar** *overseas territory* UK, SW Europe 74 D5
- Gibson Desert** *desert region* Australia 128 C4
- Gijón** Spain *var.* Xixón 74 D1
- Gilbert Islands** see Tungaru
- Gilbert River** *river* Australia 130 C3
- Gillette** Wyoming, USA 24 C3
- Gingin** Australia 129 B6
- Girin** see Jilin
- Girne** Cyprus *var.* Kyrenia 98 C5
- Girona** Spain *var.* Gerona 75 G2
- Gisborne** New Zealand 132 E3
- Giurgiu** Romania 90 C5
- Gjirokastrë** Albania 83 D6
- Gjøvik** Norway 67 B5
- Glasgow** Scotland, UK 70 C4
- Gleiwitz** see Gliwice
- Glendale** Arizona, USA 28 B2
- Glendive** Montana, USA 24 D2
- Gliwice** Poland *Ger.* Gleiwitz 81 C5
- Gloucester** England, UK 71 D6
- Glubokoye** see Hlybokaye
- Gobi** *desert* China/Mongolia 108 D3
- Godāveri** *river* India 106 B3 115 E1
- Godoy Cruz** Argentina 46 B4
- Godthåb** see Nuuk
- Godwin Austin, Mount** see K2
- Goiania** Brazil 43 F4
- Gökdepe** Turkmenistan *prev.* Geok-Tepe, *prev.* Gëkdepe 104 B3
- Golan Heights** *disputed territory* SW Asia 100 B4
- Gold Coast** *coastal region* Australia 131 E5
- Goldingen** see Kuldīga
- Goldmud** China 108 D4
- Goma** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E6
- Gomel'** see Homyel'/Gomel'
- Gómez Palacio** Mexico 32 D2
- Gonaïves** Haiti 36 D3
- Gonder** Ethiopia 54 C4
- Gongola** *river* Nigeria 57 G4
- Good Hope, Cape of** *coastal feature* South Africa 60 C5
- Goondiwindi** Australia 131 D5
- Goose Lake** *lake* W USA 26 B4
- Goré** Chad 58 C4
- Gorë** Ethiopia 55 C5
- Gore** New Zealand 133 B7
- Gorgān** Iran 102 D3
- Gorki** see Horki
- Gor'kiy** see Nizhniy Novgorod
- Gorlovka** see Horlivka
- Gorontalo** Indonesia 121 E4
- Goźów Wielkopolski** Poland *Ger.* Landsberg 80 B3
- Gospić** Croatia 82 B3
- Gosford** Australia 131 D6
- Gostivar** Macedonia 83 D5
- Göteborg** Sweden 67 B7
- Gotel Mountains** *mountain range* Nigeria 57 G4
- Gotland** *island* Sweden 67 C7
- Gotō-rettō** *island group* Japan 113 A6
- Göttingen** Germany 76 C4
- Gouda** Netherlands 68 C4
- Gough Island** *overseas territory* UK, Atlantic Ocean 49 D7
- Gouin, Réservoir** *Reservoir* Canada 20 D4
- Gouré** Niger 57 G3
- Governador Valadares** Brazil 43 G4 45 F1
- Govi Altayn Nuruu** *mountain range* Mongolia 109 E3
- Gozo** *island* Malta 79 C7
- Grafton** Australia 131 E5
- Grampian Mountains** *mountains* Scotland, UK 70 C3

- Granada** Nicaragua 34 D3  
**Granada** Spain 75 E4  
**Gran Canaria island** Spain 52 A3  
**Gran Chaco region** C South America 38 C4 44 A2 46 D2  
**Grand Bahama island** The Bahamas 36 C1  
**Grand Banks undersea feature** Atlantic Ocean 48 B3  
**Grand Canyon valley** SW USA 28 B1  
**Grande, Rio river** Brazil 45 E1  
**Grande, Rio River** Mexico/USA 17 B6  
**Grande Comore island** Comoros 61 F2  
**Grande Prairie** Canada 19 E4  
**Grand Erg Occidental desert region** Algeria 52 D2  
**Grand Erg Oriental desert region** Algeria/Tunisia 53 E3  
**Grand Falls** Canada 21 G3  
**Grand Forks** North Dakota, USA 25 E1  
**Grand Junction** Colorado, USA 24 C4  
**Grand Rapids** Michigan, USA 22 C3  
**Graudenz** see Grudziądz  
**Graz** Austria 77 E7  
**Great Abaco island** The Bahamas 36 C1  
**Great Ararat** see Ararat, Mount  
**Great Australian Bight sea feature** Australia 129 D6  
**Great Barrier Island** NZ 132 D2  
**Great Barrier Reef coral reef** Coral Sea 130 C4  
**Great Basin region** USA 26 D4  
**Great Bear Lake lake** Canada 19 E3  
**Great Dividing Range mountain range** Australia 130-131  
**Great Exhibition Bay inlet** New Zealand 132 C1  
**Great Wall of China ancient monument** China 110 C4  
**Greater Antilles island group** West Indies 36 C3  
**Great Exuma Island island** The Bahamas 36 C2  
**Great Falls** Montana, USA 24 B1  
**Great Hungarian Plain plain** SE Europe *Hung.* Alföld 81 D7  
**Great Inagua island** The Bahamas 36 D2  
**Great Khingan Range** see Da Hinggan Ling  
**Great Lakes, The lakes** N America see Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario, Superior 17 C5  
**Great Nicobar island** India 115 H3  
**Great Plain of China region** China 106 E2  
**Great Plains region** N America 16-17 C5  
**Great Rift Valley valley** E Africa/SW Asia 55 C6  
**Great Salt Desert** see Kavir, Dasht-e  
**Great Salt Lake salt lake** Utah, USA 24 B3  
**Great Sand Sea desert region** Egypt/Libya 53 H3  
**Great Sandy Desert desert** Australia 128 C4  
**Great Sandy Desert** see Ar Rub' al Khali  
**Great Slave Lake lake** Canada 19 E4  
**Great Victoria Desert desert** Australia 129 C5  
**Greece country** SE Europe 86-87  
**Green Bay** Wisconsin, USA 22 B2  
**Greenland external territory** Denmark, Atlantic Ocean var. Grønland 64  
**Greenland Sea** Atlantic Ocean 65 F2  
**Greenock** Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**Greensboro** North Carolina, USA 31 F1  
**Greenville** South Carolina, USA 31 E2  
**Greifswald** Germany 76 D2  
**Gregory Range mountain range** Australia 130 C3  
**Grenada country** West Indies 37 G5  
**Grenoble** France 73 D5  
**Greymouth** New Zealand 133 B5  
**Grey Range mountain range** Australia 124 B4  
**Grimsby** England, UK 71 E5  
**Grodno** see Hrodna/Grodno  
**Groningen** Netherlands 68 E1  
**Grønland** see Greenland  
**Groote Eylandt island** Australia 130 B2  
**Grootfontein** Namibia 60 C3  
**Grosseto** Italy 78 B4  
**Grosskanizsa** see Nagykanizsa  
**Groznyy** Russian Federation 93 B7 96 A4  
**Grudziądz** Poland *Ger.* Graudenz 80 C3  
**Grünberg in Schlesien** see Zielona Góra  
**Guadalajara** Mexico 32 D4  
**Guadalcanal island** Solomon Islands 124 C3  
**Guadalquivir river** Spain 74 D4  
**Guadeloupe overseas department** France, West Indies 37 G4  
**Guadiana river** Portugal/Spain 74 C4  
**Guaileguaychú** Argentina 46 D4  
**Guam unincorporated territory** USA, Pacific Ocean 126 B1  
**Guanare** Venezuela 40 D1  
**Guanare river** Venezuela 40 D2  
**Guangdong province** China var. Kuang-tung, Kwangtung, Yue 111 C6  
**Guangxi autonomous region** China var. Kwangsi 111 B6  
**Guangzhou** China *Eng.* Canton 111 C6  
**Guantánamo** Cuba 36 D3  
**Guaporé River** Bolivia/Brazil 32 D3  
**Guarapuava** Brazil 44 D3  
**Guatemala country** Central America 34  
**Guatemala Basin undersea feature** Pacific Ocean 135 G3  
**Guatemala City capital of** Guatemala 34 B2

**Guaviare** *river* Colombia 40 D3

**Guayaquil** Ecuador 40 A4

**Guayaquil, Golfo do sea**  
feature Ecuador/Peru 40 A5

**Guernsey** *British Crown*

*Dependency* Channel Islands  
71 D8

**Güney Dogu Toroslar mountain**  
range SE Turkey 99 F3

**Guiana Highlands** *upland*  
N South America 38 C2

**Guider** Cameroon 58 B4

**Guimarães** Portugal 74 C2

**Guinea** *country* W Africa 56

**Guinea, Gulf of sea** *feature*  
Atlantic Ocean 49 D5

**Guinea-Bissau** *country*  
W Africa 56

**Guiyang** China 111 B6

**Guizhou** *province* China *var.*  
Kuei-chou, Kweichow, Qian  
111 B6

**Gujarāt** *state* India 116 C4

**Gujrānwāla** Pakistan  
116 C2

**Gujrāt** Pakistan 116 C2

**Gulf, The sea** *feature* Arabian  
Sea *var.* Persian Gulf  
122 B2

**Gulfport** Mississippi, USA 30 C3

**Gulu** Uganda 55 B6

**Gumbinnen** *see* Gusev

**Gunnbjörn Fjeld**  
*mountain* Greenland 64 D4

**Guri, Embalse de** *Reservoir*  
Venezuela 41 E2

**Gusau** Nigeria 57 F3

**Gusev** Kaliningrad, Russian  
Federation *prev.* Gumbinnen  
88 B4

**Gushgy** *see* Serhetabat

**Guwāhātī** India 117 G3

**Guyana** *country* NE South  
America 41

**Gwalior** India 116 D3

**Gwangju** South Korea *prev.*  
Kwangju 111 E4

**Gyandzha** *see* Gāncā

**Gyangzê** China 108 C5

**Győr** Hungary *Ger.* Raab  
81 C6

**Gyumri** Armenia *Rus.* Kumayri,  
*prev.* Leninakan,  
Aleksandropol'99 F2

**Gyzylarbat** *see* Serdar

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## H

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**Ha'apai Group** *islands* Tonga  
127 F5

**Haapsalu** Estonia *Ger.* Hapsal  
88 C2

**Haarlem** Netherlands  
68 C3

**Haast** New Zealand 133 B6

**Hachijō-jima** *island* Japan  
113 D5

**Hachinohe** Japan 112 D3

**Hadejia** *river* Nigeria  
57 G3

**Ḥaḍramawt** *Mountain range*  
Yemen 103 C7

**Hagåtña** Guam 126 B1

**Hague, The** *see* 's-Gravenhage

**Haibowan** *see* Wuhai

**Haicheng** China 110 D4

**Haifa** *see* Hefa

**Ḥā'il** Saudi Arabia 102 B4

**Hailar** *see* Hulun Buir

**Hainan** *island* China *var.*  
Hainan Dao 106 D3 111 C8

**Hainan** *province* China *var.*  
Qiong 111 C7

**Hainan Dao** *see* Hainan Dao

**Hai Phong** Vietnam 118 D3

**Haiti** *country* West Indies 36

**Hajdarken** *see* Khaydarkan

**Hakodate** Japan 112 D3

**Ḥalab** Syria 100 B2

**Hala'ib Triangle** *disputed*  
*region* NE Africa 54 C3

**Ḥalāniyāt, Juzur al** *Island*  
*group* Oman 103 D6

**Halden** Norway 67 B6

**Halfmoon Bay** New Zealand  
133 A7

**Halifax** Canada 21 F4

**Halle** Germany 76 C4

**Hallein** Austria 77 D7

**Halls Creek** Australia 128 D3

**Halmahera, Pulau** *island*  
Indonesia 121 F3

**Halmahera Sea** Sea Indonesia  
121 F4

**Halmstad** Sweden 67 B7

**Ha Long** Vietnam *prev.* Hồng  
Gai 118 E3

**Hamada** Japan 113 B5

**Hamadān** Iran 102 C3

**Ḥamāh** Syria 100 B3

**Hamamatsu** Japan 113 C5

**Hamar** Norway 67 B5

**Hamburg** Germany 76 C3

**Hämeenlinna** Finland 67 D5

**HaMelah, Yam** *see* Dead Sea

**Hamersley Range** *mountain*  
*range* Australia 128 B4

**Hamhŭng** North Korea 110 E4

**Hami** China 108 C3

**Hamilton** Canada 20 D5

**Hamilton** New Zealand 132 D3

**Hamm** Germany 76 B4

**Hammerfest** Norway 66 D2

**Handan** China 110 C4

**HaNegev** *desert region* Israel  
*Eng.* Negev 101 A6

**Hangayn Nuruu** *mountain*  
*range* Mongolia 108 D2

**Hangzhou** China 111 D5

**Hannover** Germany *Eng.*  
Hanover 76 B4

**Hanoi** *capital of* Vietnam  
118 D3

**Hanover** *see* Hannover

**Hanzhong** China 111 B5

**Hapsal** *see* Haapsalu

**Ḥarāḍ** Yemen 103 C5

**Harare** *capital of* Zimbabwe  
61 E3

**Harbin** China 110 E3

**Hargeysa** Somalia 55 D5

**Hari** *river* Indonesia 120 B4

**Harirūd** *river* C Asia 104 D4

**Harper** Liberia 56 D5

**Harrisburg** Pennsylvania, USA  
23 E4

**Harstad** Norway 66 C2

**Hartford** Connecticut, USA  
23 G3

**Har Us Nuur** *lake* Mongolia  
108 C2



- Hasselt** Belgium 69 D5  
**Hastings** New Zealand 132 E4  
**Hastings** Nebraska, USA 24 E4  
**Hatay** see Antakya  
**Hatteras, Cape** *coastal feature* North Carolina, USA 31 G1  
**Hattiesburg** Mississippi, USA 30 C3  
**Hat Yai** Thailand 119 C7  
**Haugesund** Norway 67 A6  
**Hauraki Gulf** *gulf* New Zealand 132 D2  
**Havana** *capital of Cuba* Sp. La Habana 36 B2  
**Havelock** North Carolina, USA 31 G1  
**Havre** Montana, USA 24 C1  
**Havre-Saint-Pierre** Canada 21 F3  
**Hawaii state** USA 135 E2  
**Hawai'ian Islands** *islands* USA 125 F1  
**Hawai'ian Ridge** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 134 D2  
**Hawera** New Zealand 132 D4  
**Hawke Bay** *bay* New Zealand 132 E4  
**Hawlr̥er** see Arbil  
**Hawthorne** Nevada, USA 27 C6  
**Hay River** Canada 19 E4  
**Hays** Kansas, USA 25 E4  
**Hazar** Turkmenistan *prev.* Cheleken 104 A2  
**Heard & McDonald Islands** *islands* Indian Ocean 123 C7  
**Hebei** *province* China *var.* Hopeh, Hopei, Ji; *prev.* Chihli 110 C4  
**Hebron** West Bank *var.* Al Khalil, El Khalil, *Heb.* Hebron 101 D7  
**Heerenveen** Netherlands 68 D2  
**Heerlen** Netherlands 69 D6  
**Hefa** Israel *prev.* Haifa 101 A5  
**Hefei** China 111 D5  
**Hei** see Heilongjiang  
**Heidelberg** Germany 77 B5  
**Heilbronn** Germany 77 B5  
**Heilongjiang** *province* China *var.* Hei, Hei-lung-chiang 110 E3  
**Hei-lung-chiang** see Heilongjiang  
**Helena** Montana, USA 24 B2  
**Hells Canyon** *valley* Idaho/Oregon USA 26 C3  
**Helmand** *river* Afghanistan 104 C5  
**Helmond** Netherlands 69 D5  
**Helsingborg** Sweden 67 B7  
**Helsinki** *capital of* Finland 67 D6  
**Henan** *province* China *var.* Honan, Yu 111 C5  
**Hengduan Shan** *mountain range* China 111 A6  
**Hengelo** Netherlands 68 E3  
**Hengyang** China 111 C6  
**Henzada** see Hinthada  
**Herāt** Afghanistan 104 C4  
**Hermansverk** Norway 67 A5  
**Hermosillo** Mexico 32 B2  
**Herning** Denmark 67 A7  
**Heywood Islands** *mountain group* Australia 128 C3  
**Hiiumaa** *island* Estonia *Ger.* Dagden, *Swed.* Dagö 88 C2  
**Hildesheim** Germany 76 C4  
**Hilversum** Netherlands 68 C3  
**Himalayas** *mountain range* S Asia 106 B2  
**Himora** Ethiopia 54 C4  
**Himş** Syria 100 B3  
**Hinchinbrook Island** *island* Australia 130 D3  
**Hindu Kush** *mountain range* C Asia 105 E4  
**Hinthada** Myanmar *prev.* Henzada 118 A4  
**Hiroshima** Japan 113 B5  
**Hitachi** Japan 112 D4  
**Hjørring** Denmark 67 A7  
**Hlybokaye** Belarus *Rus.* Glubokoye 89 D5  
**Hobart** Tasmania 131 C8  
**Hobbs** New Mexico, USA 29 E3  
**Hô Chi Minh** Vietnam *var.* Ho Chi Minh City, *prev.* Saigon 119 E6  
**Ho Chi Minh City** see Hô Chi Minh  
**Hodeida** see Al Ḥudaydah  
**Hoek van Holland** Netherlands 68 B4  
**Hoggar** see Ahaggar  
**Hohe Tauern** *mountain range* Austria 77 C7  
**Hohhot** China 109 F3  
**Hokitika** New Zealand 133 B5  
**Hokkaidō** *island* Japan 112 D2  
**Holguín** Cuba 36 C2  
**Holland** see Netherlands  
**Hollabrunn** Austria 77 E6  
**Holon** Israel 101 A5  
**Holyhead** Wales, UK 71 C5  
**Hombori** Gopti, Mali 57 E3  
**Homyel'/'Gomel'** Belarus *Rus.* Gomel' 89 E7  
**Honan** see Henan  
**Honduras** *country* Central America 34-35  
**Honduras, Gulf of sea** *feature* Caribbean Sea 34 C2  
**Honefoss** Norway 67 B6  
**Hông Gai** see Ha Long  
**Hong Kong** *special administrative region* China, E Asia 111 C6  
**Honiara** *capital of* Solomon Islands 126 C3  
**Honshū** *island* Japan 112 D3  
**Hoorn** Netherlands 68 C2  
**Hopa** Turkey 99 E2  
**Hopedale** Canada 21 F2  
**Hopeh** see Hebei  
**Hopei** see Hebei  
**Hopkinsville** Kentucky, USA 22 B5  
**Horki** Belarus *Rus.* Gorki 89 E5  
**Horlivka** Ukraine *Rus.* Gorlovka 90 G3  
**Horn, Cape** see Hornos, Cabo  
**Hornos, Cabo** *Eng* Cape Horn *coastal feature* Chile 47 C8  
**Horsham** Australia 131 C7  
**Hospitalet** see L'Hospitalet de Llobregat  
**Hot Springs** Arkansas, USA 30 B2  
**Houston** Texas, USA 29 G4  
**Hovd** Mongolia 108 C2  
**Hövsgöl Nuur** *lake* Mongolia 108 D1

- Hradec Králové** Czech Republic  
Ger. Königgrätz 81 B5
- Hrodna/Grodno** Belarus *Rus.*  
Grodno 89 B5
- Huacho** Peru 42 A3
- Huainan** China 111 D5
- Huambo** Angola 60 B2
- Huancayo** Peru 42 B3
- Huang He river** China *Eng.*  
Yellow River 110 C4
- Huánuco** Peru 42 B3
- Huaraz** Peru 42 B3
- Hubei province** China 111 C5
- Hubli** India 114 C2
- Hudson river** NE USA 23 F3
- Hudson Bay sea feature**  
Canada 16 C4
- Hudson Strait sea feature**  
Canada 19 H3
- Huê** Vietnam 118 E4
- Huehuetenango** Guatemala  
34 B2
- Huelva** Spain 74 C4
- Huesca** Spain 75 F2
- Hughenden** Australia 130 C4
- Hull** see Kingston upon Hull
- Hulun Buir** China *var.* Hailar  
109 F1
- Hulun Nur lake** China 109 F1
- Humboldt river** W USA 27 C5
- Hunan province** China *var.*  
Xiang 111 C6
- Hungarian Plain plain** C Europe  
85 E2
- Hungary country** C Europe 81
- Huntington Beach** California,  
USA 27 C8
- Huntington** West Virginia, USA  
22 D5
- Huntsville** Alabama, USA 30 D2
- Hurghada** Egypt 54 B2
- Huron, Lake lake** Canada/USA  
22 D2
- Hurunui river** New Zealand  
133 C5
- Húsavík** Iceland 65 E4
- Huvadhu Atoll island** Maldives  
114 C5
- Hvar island** Croatia 82 B4
- Hyargas Nuur lake** Mongolia  
108 D2
- Hyderābād** India 114 D1,  
116 B3
- Hyères, Îles d' islands** France  
73 D6
- 
- I**
- 
- Iași** Romania 90 D3
- Ibadan** Nigeria 57 F4
- Ibagué** Colombia 40 B3
- Ibarra** Ecuador 40 A4
- Iberian Peninsula peninsula**  
SW Europe 84 B3
- Ibérico, Sistema Mountain**  
*range* Spain 75 F2
- Ibiza island** Spain *Cat.* Eivissa  
75 G4
- Ica** Peru 42 B4
- İçel** see Mersin
- Iceland country** Atlantic Ocean  
65 E4
- Idaho state** USA 26
- Idaho Falls** Idaho, USA 26 E3
- İdfü** Egypt 54 B2
- İdlib** Syria 100 B2
- Ieper** Belgium *Fr.* Ypres 69 A6
- Ifôghas, Adrar des upland** Mali  
*var.* Adrar des Iforas 57 F2
- Iforas, Adrar des** see Ifôghas,  
Adrar des
- Iglau** see Jihlava
- Iglesias** Italy 79 A5
- Iguaçu River** Argentina/Brazil  
44 C3
- Iguidi, 'Erg desert** Algeria/  
Mauritania 56 D1
- Ihavananthapuram island**  
Maldives 114 C4
- Ihosalu** Madagascar 61 G4
- Iisalmi** Finland 66 E4
- IJssel river** Netherlands 68 D3
- IJsselmeer lake** Netherlands  
*prev.* Zuider Zee 68 D2
- Ikaria island** Greece 87 D5
- Iki island** Japan 113 A6
- Ilagan** Philippines 121 E1
- Ilebo** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 C6
- Ili River** China/Kazakhstan  
94 D3
- Iligan** Philippines 121 F2
- Illapel** Chile 46 B3
- Illinois state** USA 22 B4
- Iloilo** Philippines 121 E2
- Ilorin** Nigeria 57 F4
- İlüh** see Batman
- Imatra** Finland 67 E5
- Imperatriz** Brazil 43 F2
- Impfondo** Congo 59 C5
- İmphāl** India 117 H4
- Independence** Missouri, USA  
25 F4
- India country** S Asia 114-115,  
116-117
- Indian Ocean** 122-123
- Indian state** USA 22 C4
- Indianapolis** Indiana, USA  
22 C4
- İndigirka river** Russian  
Federation 95 F2
- Indonesia country** SE Asia  
120-121
- Indonesian Borneo** see  
Kalimantan
- İndore** India 116 D4
- İndus river** S Asia 116 C1
- İndus Cone** see. Indus Fan
- İndus Fan** *var.* Indus Cone.  
*Undersea feature* Arabian  
Sea 122 B3
- İndus, Mouths of the wetlands**  
Pakistan 116 B4
- İngolstadt** Germany 77 C6
- İnguri** see Enguri
- İnhambane** Mozambique 61 E4
- Inn river** C Europe 77 D6
- İnnaanganeq headland**  
Greenland 64 C1
- İnner Islands islands** Seychelles  
61 H1
- İnner Mongolia autonomous**  
*region* China 109 F3
- İnnsbruck** Austria 77 C7
- İ-n-Sākāne, Erg Desert** Mali  
57 E2
- İ-n-Salah** Algeria 52 D3
- İnsein** Myanmar 118 B4
- İnukjuak** Canada *prev.* Port  
Harrison 20 D2
- İnuvik** Canada 19 E3
- Invercargill** New Zealand 133 A7

**Inverness** Scotland, UK 70 C3  
**Investigator Ridge** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 122 D4  
**Ioánnina** Greece 86 A4  
**Iónia Nisiá** *island group* Greece *Eng.* Ionian Islands 87 A5  
**Ionian Islands** *see* Iónia Nisiá  
**Ionian Sea** Mediterranean Sea 87 A6  
**Íos** *island* Greece 87 D6  
**Iowa state** USA 25 F3  
**Ipoh** Malaysia 120 B3  
**Ipswich** England, UK 71 E6  
**Iqaluit** Canada *prev.* Frobisher Bay 19 H3  
**Iquique** Chile 46 B1  
**Iquitos** Peru 42 B2  
**Irákleio** Greece 87 D7  
**Iran** *country* SW Asia 102-103  
**Iranian Plateau** *upland* Iran 102 D4  
**Iraq** *country* SW Asia 102  
**Irbid** Jordan 101 B5  
**Ireland** *country* W Europe 70-71  
**Irian Jaya** *see* Papua  
**Irish Sea** British Isles 71 C5  
**Irkutsk** Russian Federation 97 E4  
**Iron Mountain** Michigan, USA 22 B2  
**Ironwood** Michigan, USA 22 B1  
**Irrawaddy** *river* Myanmar 118 B2  
**Irrawaddy, Mouths of the** *wetlands* Myanmar 118 A4  
**Irtysk** *River* Asia 94 C3  
**Iruña** *see* Pamplona  
**Ishim** *River* Kazakhstan/Russian Federation 94 C3  
**Isiro** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E5  
**Ískenderun** Turkey *Eng.* Alexandretta 98 D4  
**Iskür** *river* Bulgaria 86 C1  
**Iskür, Yazovir Reservoir** Bulgaria 86 C2  
**Islay** *island* Scotland, UK 70 B4  
**Islāmābād** *capital of* Pakistan 116 C1  
**Ismaïla** *see* Al Ismā'īliya  
**Isnā** Egypt 54 B2

**İsparta** Turkey 98 B4  
**Israel** *country* SW Asia 100-101  
**Issyk-Kul, Ozero** *lake* Kyrgyzstan 105 G2  
**İstanbul** Turkey *var.* Stambul, *prev.* Constantinople, Byzantium, *Bul.* Tsarigrad 98 B2  
**İstanbul Boğazi** *see* Bosphorus  
**Itabuna** Brazil 43 G4  
**Itagüi** Colombia 40 B2  
**Italy** *country* S Europe 78-79  
**Ittoqqortoormiit** Greenland 65 E3  
**Iturup** *island* Japan/Russian Federation (disputed) 112 E1  
**Ivanhoe** Australia 131 C6  
**Ivano-Frankiv's'k** Ukraine 90 C2  
**Ivanovo** Russian Federation 92 B4  
**Ivittuut** Greenland 64 B4  
**Ivory Coast** *see* Côte d'Ivoire  
**Ivujivik** Canada 20 D1  
**Iwaki** Japan 112 D4  
**Izabal, Lago de** *lake* Guatemala 34 C2  
**Izhevsk** Russian Federation 93 C5 96 B3  
**İzmir** Turkey *prev.* Smyrna 98 A3  
**İzmit** Turkey *var.* Kocaeli 98 B2  
**Izu-shotō** *island group* Japan 113 D6

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## J

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**Jabal ash Shifā** *desert* Saudi Arabia 102 A4  
**Jabalpur** India 116 E4  
**Jackson** Mississippi, USA 30 C2  
**Jacksonville** Florida, USA 31 E3  
**Jacksonville** Texas, USA 29 G3  
**Jacmel** Haiti 36 D3  
**Jaén** Spain 75 E4  
**Jaffna** Sri Lanka 115 E3  
**Jagdaqi** China 109 G1  
**Jiangxi** *province* China 111 C6  
**Jaipur** India 116 D3  
**Jajce** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C4  
**Jakarta** *capital of* Indonesia 120 C5  
**Jakobstad** Finland 66 D4  
**Jakobstadt** *see* Jēkabpils  
**Jalālābād** Afghanistan 105 E4  
**Jalal-Abad** *see* Dzhalal-Abad  
**Jalandhar** India 116 D2  
**Jalapa** *see* Xalapa  
**Jamaame** Somalia 55 D6  
**Jamaica** *country* West Indies 36  
**Jamālpur** Bangladesh 117 G4  
**Jambi** Indonesia 120 B4  
**James Bay** *sea feature* Canada 20 C4  
**Jammu & Kashmir** *disputed region* India/Pakistan 116 D2  
**Jännagar** India 116 B4  
**Jan Mayen** *external territory* Norway, Arctic Ocean 65 F3  
**Japan** *country* E Asia 112-113  
**Japan, Sea of** Pacific Ocean 112 B3  
**Jarvis Island** *unincorporated territory* USA, Pacific Ocean 125 F2  
**Java** *see* Jawa  
**Java Sea** Pacific Ocean *var.* Laut Jawa 122 D4  
**Java Trench** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 122 D4  
**Jawa** *island* Indonesia *var.* Java 120 C5  
**Jawa, Laut** *see* Java Sea  
**Jayapura** Indonesia 121 H4  
**Jaz Mūriān, Hāmūn-e** *lake* Iran 102 E4  
**Jedda** *see* Jiddah  
**Jefferson City** Missouri, USA 25 G4  
**Jeju-do** *island* South Korea *prev.* Cheju-do 111 E5  
**Jeju Strait** *sea feature* South Korea *prev.* Cheju Strait 111 E5  
**Jēkabpils** Latvia *Ger.* Jēkabstadt 88 C4  
**Jelgava** Latvia *Ger.* Mitau 88 C3  
**Jember** Indonesia 120 D5  
**Jena** Germany 76 C4

- Jenīn** var. Janīn, Jinīn; *anc.*  
Engannim. West Bank 101 D6
- Jérémie** Haiti 36 D3
- Jerevan** see Yerevan
- Jericho** West Bank 101 B5
- Jerid, Chott el salt lake** Africa  
84 D4
- Jersey** *British Crown*  
*Dependency* Channel Islands  
71 D8
- Jerusalem** *capital of Israel*  
101 B5
- Jhelum** Pakistan 116 C2
- Ji** see Hebei
- Ji** see Jilin
- Jiangsu** *province* China var.  
Chiang-su, Kiangsu, Su  
111 D5
- Jiangxi** *province* China var.  
Chiang-hsi, Gan, Kiangsi  
111 C6
- Jiaxing** Zhejiang, China 111 D5
- Jibuti** see Djibouti
- Jiddah** Saudi Arabia *Eng.* Jeddah  
103 A5
- Jiftlik Post** West Bank 101 D7
- Jihlava** Czech Republic *Ger.*  
Iglau 81 B5
- Jilin** *province* China var. Chi-lin,  
Girin, Ji, Kirin 110 E3
- Jilin** China 110 E3
- Jima** Ethiopia 55 C5
- Jin** see Shanxi
- Jinan** China 111 C4
- Jingdezhen** China 111 D5
- Jinhua** China 111 D5
- Jining** see Ulan Qab
- Jinotega** Nicaragua 34 D3
- Jinsha Jiang river** China 108 D5
- Jinzhou** China 110 D4
- Jizān** Saudi Arabia 103 B6
- João Pessoa** Brazil 43 H3
- Jodhpur** India 116 C3
- Joensuu** Finland 67 E5
- Johannesburg** South Africa  
60 D4
- Johnston Atoll** *US*  
*unincorporated territory*  
Pacific Ocean 125 E1
- Johor Bahru** Malaysia 120 C3
- Joinville** Brazil 44 D3
- Joliet** Illinois, USA 22 B3
- Jönköping** Sweden 67 B7
- Jonquiére** Canada 21 E4
- Jordan** *country* SW Asia  
100-101
- Jordan river** SW Asia 101 B5
- Joseph Bonaparte** *Gulf gulf*  
Australia 128 D2
- Jos Plateau** *upland* Nigeria  
57 G4
- Juan Fernandez, Islas** *islands*  
Chile 46 A4
- Juazeiro** Brazil 43 G3
- Juazeiro do Norte** Brazil 43 G3
- Juba** *capital of* South Sudan  
55 B5
- Júcar river** Spain 75 E3
- Judenburg** Austria 77 D7
- Juigalpa** Nicaragua 34 D3
- Juiz de Fora** Brazil 43 G5 45 F2
- Juneau** Alaska, USA 18 D4
- Junggar Pendi** *desert* China  
108 C2
- Junin** Argentina 46 D4
- Jura** *mountains* France/  
Switzerland 77 A7
- Jura** *island* Scotland, UK 70 B4
- Jurbarkas** Lithuania *Ger.*  
Jurburg, var. Gorgenburg,  
88 B4
- Jurburg** see Jurbarkas
- Juruá river** Brazil/Peru 42 C2
- Juticalpa** Honduras 34 D2
- Jutland** see Jylland
- Juventud, Isla de la** *island*  
Cuba 36 B2
- Jylland** *peninsula* Denmark  
*Eng.* Jutland 67 A7
- Jyväskylä** Finland 67 D5
- 
- K**
- 
- K2 peak** China/Pakistan  
*Eng.* Mount Godwin Austen  
116 D1
- Kaachka** see Kaka
- Kaakhka** see Kaka
- Kabale** Uganda 55 B6
- Kabinda** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D7
- Kābol** see Kabul
- Kabul** *capital of* Afghanistan  
*Per.* Kabul 105 E4
- Kachch, Gulf of** *sea feature*  
Arabian Sea 116 B4
- Kachch, Rann of** *wetland* India/  
Pakistan var. Rann of Kutch  
116 B4
- Kadugli** Sudan 54 B4
- Kaduna** Nigeria 57 G4
- Kaédi** Mauritania 56 C3
- Kāghet** *Physical region*  
Mauritania 56 D1
- Kagoshima** Japan 113 A6
- Kahramanmaraş** Turkey var.  
Marash, Maraş 98 D4
- Kai, Kepulauan** *island group*  
Indonesia 121 G4
- Kaifeng** China 111 C5
- Kaikōhe** New Zealand 132 C2
- Kaikoura** New Zealand 133 C5
- Kainji Reservoir** *Reservoir*  
Nigeria 57 F4
- Kairouan** Tunisia 53 E1
- Kaiserslautern** Germany 77 B5
- Kaitaia** New Zealand 132 C2
- Kajaani** Finland 66 E4
- Kaka** Turkmenistan *prev.*  
Kaakhka, var. Kaachka 104 C3
- Kakhovka** Ukraine 91 F4
- Kakhov'ska Vodoshkovyshche**  
*Reservoir* Ukraine 91 F3
- Kalahari Desert** *desert*  
southern Africa 60 C4
- Kalamariá** Greece 86 C3
- Kalámata** Greece 87 B6
- Kalát** see Qalát
- Kalbarri** Australia 129 A5
- Kalemie** Dem. Rep. Congo  
59 E7
- Kalgoorlie** Australia 129 C6
- Kalimantan** *geopolitical region*  
Indonesia *Eng.* Indonesian  
Borneo 120 D4
- Kaliningrad** *external territory*  
Russian Federation 96 A2
- Kaliningrad** Kaliningrad,  
Russian Federation *prev.*  
Königsberg 88 A4
- Kalinkavichy** Belarus *Rus.*  
Kalinkovichy 89 D7

- Kalinkovichi** see Kalinkavichy  
**Kalisch** see Kalisz  
**Kalispell** Montana, USA 24 B1  
**Kalisz** Poland *Ger.* Kalisch 80 C4  
**Kalmar** Sweden 67 C7  
**Kalpeni Island** *island* India 114 C3  
**Kama river** Russian Federation 92 D4  
**Kamchatka peninsula** Russian Federation 97 H3  
**Kamchiya river** Bulgaria 86 E2  
**Kamina** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D7  
**Kamishli** see Al Qāmişli  
**Kamloops** Canada 19 E5  
**Kampala** *capital of* Uganda 55 B6  
**Kämpóng** Cham Cambodia 119 D6  
**Kämpóng Chhnāng** Cambodia 119 D5  
**Kämpóng Saôm** see Sihanoukville  
**Kämpôt** Cambodia 119 D6  
**Kampuchea** see Cambodia  
**Kam"yanets'-Podil's'kyi** Ukraine 90 C3  
**Kananga** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D7  
**Kanazawa** Japan 112 C4  
**Kandahār** Afghanistan *var.* Qandahār 104 D5  
**Kandi** Benin 57 F4  
**Kanivs'ke Vodokhovyshe** *Reservoir* Ukraine 91 E2  
**Kandy** Sri Lanka 115 E3  
**Kanestron, Ákra** see Palióúri, Akrotírio  
**Kangaroo Island** *island* Australia 131 B7  
**Kangerittivaq** *region* Greenland 64 E3  
**Kangikajik** *headland* Greenland 65 E4  
**Kanjža** Serbia 82 D2  
**Kankan** Guinea 56 D4  
**Kano** Nigeria 57 G4  
**Kānpur** India *prev.* Cawnpore 117 E3  
**Kansas state** USA 24-25  
**Kansas City** Kansas, USA 25 F4  
**Kansas City** Missouri, USA 25 F4  
**Kansk** Russian Federation 97 E4  
**Kansu** see Gansu  
**Kaohsiung** see Gaoxiong  
**Kaolack** Senegal 56 B3  
**Kapfenberg** Austria 77 E7  
**Kaposvár** Hungary 81 C7  
**Kapsukas** see Marijampolė  
**Kapuas river** Indonesia 120 D4  
**Kara-Balta** Kyrgyzstan 105 F2  
**Karabük** Turkey 98 C2  
**Karāchi** Pakistan 116 B4  
**Karaganda** see Karagandy  
**Karagandy** Kazakhstan *prev.* Karaganda 96 C4  
**Karakol** Kyrgyzstan *prev.* Przheval'sk 105 G2  
**Kara Kum** see Garagum  
**Karakumskiy Kanal** see Garagum Kanaly  
**Karakumy** see Garagum  
**Karamay** China 108 C2  
**Karamea Bight** *gulf* New Zealand 133 C5  
**Karasburg** Namibia 60 C4  
**Kara Sea** see Karskoye More  
**Karditsa** Greece 86 B4  
**Kariba, Lake** *lake* Zambia/ Zimbabwe 60 D3  
**Karimata, Selat** *strait* Indonesia 120 C4  
**Karkinit's'ka Zatoka** *sea feature* Black Sea 91 E4  
**Karl-Marx-Stadt** see Chemnitz  
**Karlovac** Croatia 82 B3  
**Karlovy Vary** Czech Republic *Ger.* Karlsbad 81 A5  
**Karlsbad** see Karlovy Vary  
**Karlskrona** Sweden 67 C7  
**Karlsruhe** Germany 77 B5  
**Karlstad** Sweden 67 B6  
**Karnātaka state** India 114 D1  
**Kárpáthos** *island* Greece 87 E7  
**Kars** Turkey 99 F2  
**Karshi** Uzbekistan *prev.* Bek-Budi, *Uzb.* Qarshi 104 D3  
**Karskoye More** Arctic Ocean *Eng.* Kara Sea 137 H3  
**Kasai river** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 C6  
**Kasama** Zambia 61 E2  
**Kaschau** see Košice  
**Kāshān** Iran 102 C3  
**Kashi** China 108 A3  
**Kasongo** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E6  
**Kassa** see Košice  
**Kassala** Sudan 54 C4  
**Kassel** Germany 76 B4  
**Kastamonu** Turkey 98 C2  
**Katanning** Australia 129 B6  
**Katerini** Greece 86 B4  
**Katha** Myanmar 118 B2  
**Katherine** Australia 128 E2  
**Kathmandu** *capital of* Nepal 117 F3  
**Katsina** Nigeria 57 G3  
**Katowice** Poland 81 C5  
**Kauen** see Kaunas  
**Kaunas** Lithuania *Ger.* Kauen, *Pol.* Kowno, *Rus.* Kovno 88 B4  
**Kavadarci** Macedonia 82 E5  
**Kavála** Greece 86 C3  
**Kavaratti Island** *island* India 114 C3  
**Kavir, Dasht-e** *Salt pan* Iran 102 D3  
**Kawasaki** Japan 113 D5  
**Kayan river** Indonesia 120 D3  
**Kayes** Mali 56 C3  
**Kayseri** Turkey 98 D3  
**Kazakhstan** *country* C Asia 96  
**Kazan'** Russian Federation 96 B3  
**Kazandzhik** see Bereket  
**Kazanlık** Bulgaria 86 D2  
**Kecskemét** Hungary 81 D7  
**Kediri** Indonesia 120 D5  
**Keetmanshoop** Namibia 60 C4  
**Kefalloniá** *island* Greece *Eng.* Cephalonia 87 A5  
**Keá** see Tziá  
**Kelang** see Klang  
**Kelmė** Lithuania 88 B4  
**Kelowna** Canada 19 E5  
**Kemerovo** Russian Federation 96 D4  
**Kemi** Finland 66 D4

## Kemi — Kizyl-Arvat

- Kemi river** Finland 66 D3  
**Kemijärvi** Finland 66 D3  
**Kendari** Indonesia 121 E4  
**Këneurgench** see Köneürgench  
**Kénitra** Morocco 52 C2  
**Kennewick** Washington, USA 26 C2  
**Kenora** Canada 20 A3  
**Kentucky state** USA 22 C5  
**Kenya country** E Africa 55  
**Kerala state** India 114 D3  
**Kerch** Ukraine 91 G4  
**Kerguelen island group** Indian Ocean 123 C7  
**Kerguelen Plateau** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 C7  
**Kerki** see Atamyrat  
**Kérkira** see Kérkyra  
**Kérkyra** Greece 86 A4  
**Kérkyra island** Greece *prev.* Kérkira, *Eng.* Corfu 86 A4  
**Kermadec Islands island group** Pacific Ocean 125 E4  
**Kermadec Trench** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 125 E4  
**Kermān** Iran *var.* Kirman 102 D4  
**Kermānshāh** Iran *prev.* Bākhtarān 102 C3  
**Kerulen river** China/Mongolia 109 E2  
**Ketchikan** Alaska, USA 18 D4  
**Key West** Florida, USA 31 E5  
**Khabarovsk** Russian Federation 97 G4  
**Khanka, Lake lake** China/Russian Federation 110 E3  
**Khankendy** see Xankändi  
**Kharkiv** Ukraine *Rus.* Khar'kov 91 G2  
**Khar'kov** see Kharkiv  
**Khartoum capital** of Sudan *var.* Al Khurṭūm 54 B4  
**Khāsh** Iran 102 E4  
**Khaskovo** Bulgaria 86 D2  
**Khaydarkan** Kyrgyzstan *var.* Khaydarken, Hajdarken 105 E2  
**Khaydarken** see Khaydarkan  
**Kherson** Ukraine 91 E4  
**Kheta river** Russian Federation 94 D2  
**Khíos** see Chíos  
**Khirbet el 'Aujā et Tahtā** West Bank 101 D6  
**Khmel 'nyts'kyy** Ukraine 90 D2  
**Khodzhent** see Khūjand  
**Khojend** see Khūjand  
**Khokand** see Qo'qon  
**Kholm** see Khulm  
**Khon Kaen** Thailand 118 C4  
**Khorog** see Khorugh  
**Khorugh** Tajikistan *Rus.* Khorog 105 F3  
**Khouribga** Morocco 52 C2  
**Khudzhand** see Khūjand  
**Khūjand** Tajikistan *var.* Khodzheut, Khojend, *Rus.* Khudzhand *prev.* Leninabad 105 E2  
**Khulna** Bangladesh 117 G4  
**Khulm** Afghanistan *prev.* Kholm 105 E3  
**Khvoy** Iran 102 B3  
**Kiangsi** see Jiangxi  
**Kiangsu** see Jiangsu  
**Kičevo** Macedonia 83 D5  
**Kiel** Germany 76 C2  
**Kielce** Poland 80 D4  
**Kiev capital** of Ukraine *Ukr.* Kyjiv 91 E2  
**Kiffa** Mauritania 56 C3  
**Kigali capital** of Rwanda 55 B6  
**Kigoma** Tanzania 55 B7  
**Kikládhes** see Kyklades  
**Kikwit** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 C6  
**Kilimanjaro peak** Tanzania 55 C7  
**Kilkis** Greece 86 B3  
**Killarney** Ireland 71 A6  
**Kimberley** South Africa 60 D4  
**Kimberley Plateau upland** Australia 128 D3  
**Kindia** Guinea 56 C4  
**Kindu** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D6  
**King Island island** Australia 131 C7  
**Kingissepp** see Kuressaare  
**Kingman Reef unincorporated territory** USA, Pacific Ocean 125 F2  
**King Sound sound** Australia 128 C3  
**Kingsport** Tennessee, USA 31 E1  
**Kingsville** Texas, USA 29 G5  
**Kingston** Canada 20 C5  
**Kingston capital** of Jamaica 36 C3  
**Kingston upon Hull** England, UK *var.* Hull 71 E5  
**Kingstown** St Vincent & The Grenadines 36 G4  
**King William Island island** Canada 19 F3  
**Kinneret, Yam** see Tiberius, Lake  
**Kinshasa capital** of Dem. Rep. Congo *prev.* Léopoldville 59 B6  
**Kirghizia** see Kyrgyzstan  
**Kiribati country** Pacific Ocean 127  
**Kirin** see Jilin  
**Kiritimati island** Kiribati *var.* Christmas Island 127 G2  
**Kirkenes** Norway 66 E2  
**Kirklareli** Turkey 98 A2  
**Kirkville** Missouri, USA 25 F4  
**Kirkūk** Iraq 102 B3  
**Kirkwall** Scotland, UK 70 C2  
**Kirman** see Kermān  
**Kirov** Russian Federation 92 C4 96 B3  
**Kirovabad** see Gāncā  
**Kirovakan** see Vanadzor  
**Kirovohrad** Ukraine 91 E3  
**Kiruna** Sweden 66 C3  
**Kisangani** Dem. Rep. Congo *prev.* Stanleyville 59 D5  
**Kishinev** see Chişinău  
**Kismaayo** Somalia 55 D6  
**Kisumu** Kenya 55 C6  
**Kitakyūshū** Japan 113 A5  
**Kitami** Japan 112 D2  
**Kitchener** Canada 20 C5  
**Kitwe** Zambia 60 D2  
**Kivu, Lake lake** Rwanda/Dem. Rep. Congo 55 B6 59 E6  
**Kızıl İrmak river** Turkey 98 C2  
**Kizyl-Arvat** see Serdar

- Kladno** Czech Republic 81 A5  
**Klagenfurt** Austria 77 D7  
**Klaipėda** Lithuania *Ger.* Memel 88 B4  
**Klamath Falls** Oregon, USA 26 B4  
**Khang** Malaysia *var.* Kelang 120 B2  
**Ključ** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 B3  
**Knin** Croatia 82 B4  
**Knoxville** Tennessee, USA 31 E1  
**Knud Rasmussen Land region** Greenland 64 D1  
**Kōbe** Japan 113 C5  
**Koblenz** Germany 77 B5  
**Kobryn** Belarus 89 B6  
**Kocaeli** see İzmit  
**Kočani** Macedonia 83 E5  
**Kōchi** Japan 113 B6  
**Kochi** India see Cochin 114 D3  
**Kodiak** Alaska, USA 18 C3  
**Kodiak Island** *island* Alaska, USA 18 C3  
**Koedoes** see Kudus  
**Kohima** India 117 H3  
**Kohtla-Järve** Estonia 88 D2  
**Kokand** see Qo'qon  
**Kokchetav** Kazakhstan 96 C4  
**Kokkola** Finland 66 D4  
**Koko Nor** see Qinghai  
**Koko Nor** see Qinghai Hu  
**Kokshaal-Tau** *mountain range* Kyrgyzstan 105 G2  
**Kola Peninsula** see Kol'skiy Poluostrov  
**Kolguyev, Ostrov** *island* Russian Federation 92 D2  
**Kolhumadulu Atoll** *island* Maldives 114 C5  
**Kolka** Latvia 88 C3  
**Kolkata** India *var.* Calcutta 117 F4  
**Köln** Germany *Eng.* Cologne 76 B4  
**Kol'skiy Poluostrov** *peninsula* Russian Federation  
*Eng.* Kola Peninsula 63 F1 92 C2  
**Kolwezi** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D8  
**Kolyma river** Russian Federation 95 G2  
**Kommunizma, Pik** see Communism Peak  
**Komoé river** Côte d'Ivoire 57 E4  
**Komotini** Greece 86 D3  
**Komsomol'sk-na-Amure** Russian Federation 97 G4  
**Kondoz** see Kunduz  
**Konduz** see Kunduz  
**Köneürgenç** Turkmenistan *prev.* Kunya-Urgench, *prev.* Këneurgench 104 C2  
**Kong Christian IX Land region** Greenland 64 D4  
**Kong Christian X Land region** Greenland 64 E3  
**Kong Frederik VI Kyst region** Greenland 64 C4  
**Kong Frederik VIII Land region** Greenland 64 E2  
**Kong Frederik IX Land region** Greenland 64 C3  
**Kong Karls Land** *island group* Svalbard 65 G2  
**Kong Oscar Fjord** *fjord* Greenland 65 E3  
**Konia** see Konya  
**Königrätz** see Hradec Králové  
**Königsberg** see Kaliningrad  
**Konispol** Albania 83 D7  
**Konjic** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C4  
**Konya** Turkey *prev.* Konia 98 C4  
**Kopaonik** *mountains* Serbia 83 D4  
**Koper** Slovenia 77 D8  
**Koprivnica** Croatia 82 B2  
**Korçë** Albania 83 D6  
**Korčula** *island* Croatia 82 B4  
**Korea Bay** *bay* China/North Korea 110 D4  
**Korea Strait** *sea feature* Japan/South Korea 110-111 E5  
**Korinthiakós Kólpos** *sea feature* Greece *Eng.* Gulf of Corinth 87 B5  
**Kórinthos** Greece *Eng.* Corinth 87 B5  
**Kōriyama** Japan 113 D4  
**Korla** China 108 C3  
**Korosten'** Ukraine 90 D1  
**Kortrijk** Belgium 69 A6  
**Kos island** Greece 87 E6  
**Kosciusko, Mount** *peak* Australia 131 D7  
**Košice** Slovakia *Ger.* Kaschau, *Hung.* Kassa 81 D6  
**Köslin** see Koszalin  
**Kosovo country** SE Europe 83 D5  
**Kosovska Mitrovica** see Mitrovicë/Mitrovica  
**Kosrae island** Micronesia 126 C2  
**Kossou, Lac de lake** Côte d'Ivoire 56 D4  
**Kostanay** Kazakhstan *var.* Kustanay 96 C4  
**Kostyantynivka** Ukraine 91 G3  
**Koszalin** Poland *Ger.* Köslin 80 B2  
**Kota** India 116 D4  
**Kota Bharu** Malaysia 120 B3  
**Kota Kinabalu** Malaysia 120 D3  
**Kotka** Finland 67 E5  
**Kotlas** NW Russia 92 C4  
**Kotuy river** Russian Federation 95 E2  
**Koudougou** Burkina Faso 57 E4  
**Kourou** French Guiana 41 H2  
**Kousséri** Cameroon 58 B3  
**Kouvola** Finland 67 E5  
**Kovel'** Ukraine 90 C1  
**Kovno** see Kaunas  
**Kowno** see Kaunas  
**Kozáni** Greece 86 B4  
**Kozhikode** India see Calicut 114 D2  
**Kra, Isthmus of coastal feature** Myanmar/Thailand 119 B6  
**Kragujevac** Serbia 82 D4  
**Krakau** see Kraków  
**Kraków** Poland *Eng.* Cracow, *Ger.* Krakau 81 D5  
**Kralendijk** Bonaire 37 E5  
**Kraljevo** Serbia 82 D4  
**Kranj** Slovenia 77 D7  
**Krasnodar** Russian Federation 93 A6

- Krasnovodsk** see Türkmenbaşy  
**Krasnoyarsk** Russian Federation 96 D4  
**Krasnyy Luch** Ukraine 91 H3  
**Kremenchuk** Ukraine 91 F2  
**Kremenchuts'ke Vodokhovyshche Reservoir** Ukraine 91 E2  
**Krems an der Donau** Austria 77 E6  
**Kretinga** Lithuania *Ger.* Krottingen 88 B3  
**Krichev** see Krychaw  
**Krishna river** India 114 C1  
**Kristiansand** Norway 67 A6  
**Kristianstad** Sweden 67 B7  
**Kriti island** Greece *Eng.* Crete 87 C7  
**Kritikó Pélagos** see Crete, Sea of  
**Krivoy Rog** see Kryvyy Rih  
**Krk island** Croatia 82 A3  
**Kroonstad** South Africa 60 D4  
**Krottingen** see Kretinga  
**Krung Thep** see Bangkok  
**Kruševac** Serbia 83 E4  
**Krušné Hory** see Erzgebirge  
**Krychaw** Belarus *Rus.* Krichev 89 E6  
**Kryms'kyy Pivostriv peninsula** Ukraine *var.* Crimea 90 F4  
**Kryvyy Rih** Ukraine *Rus.* Krivoy Rog 91 E3  
**Kuala Lumpur** capital of Malaysia 120 B3  
**Kuala Terengganu** Malaysia 120 B3  
**Kuang-tung** see Guangdong  
**Kuantan** Malaysia 120 C3  
**Kuba** see Quba  
**Kuching** Malaysia 120 C3  
**Kuçovë** Albania *prev.* Qyteti Stalin 83 D6  
**Kudus** Indonesia *prev.* Koedoes 120 D5  
**Kuei-chou** see China Guizhou  
**Kugluktuk** Canada *prev.* Coppermine 19 E3  
**Kuito** Angola 60 C2  
**Kuldīga** Latvia *Ger.* Goldingen 88 B3  
**Kullorsuaq** Greenland 64 C2  
**Külöb** Tajikistan *Rus.* Kulyab 105 E3  
**Kulyab** see Külöb  
**Kum** see Qom  
**Kuma river** Russian Federation 93 B7  
**Kumamoto** Japan 113 B6  
**Kumanovo** Macedonia 83 E5  
**Kumasi** Ghana 57 E5  
**Kumayri** see Gyumri 99 F2  
**Kumo** Nigeria 57 G4  
**Kumon Range** mountain range Myanmar 118 B1  
**Kunashir island** Japan/Russian Federation (disputed) 112 E1  
**Kunduz** Afghanistan *var.* Kondoz, Kunduz, Qondüz 105 E3  
**Kunja-Urgenç** see Köneürgenç  
**Kunlun Mountains** see Kunlun Shan  
**Kunlun Shan** mountain range China *Eng.* Kunlun Mountains 106 B4  
**Kunming** China 111 B6  
**Kununurra** Australia 128 D3  
**Kupang** Indonesia 120 E5  
**Kür** see Kura  
**Kura river** Azerbaijan/Georgia *Az.* Kür 99 G2  
**Kurashiki** Japan 113 B5  
**Kurdistan** region Turkey 99 F4  
**Küre Dağları** mountains Turkey 98 C2  
**Kuressaare** Estonia *prev.* Kingissepp, *Ger.* Arensburg 88 C2  
**Kurgan-Tyube** see Qırghontepa  
**Kuril Islands** islands *var.* Kurile Islands Pacific Ocean 112 E1  
**Kuril Islands** see Kuril Islands  
**Kuril Trench** undersea feature Pacific Ocean 134 C2  
**Kurnool** India 114 D2  
**Kushiro** Japan 112 E2  
**Kushka** see Serhetabat  
**Kustanay** see Kostanay  
**Kütahya** Turkey *prev.* Kütaiha 98 B3  
**Kutaiah** see Kütahya  
**Kutaisi** Georgia 99 F2  
**Kutch, Rann of** see Kachch, Rann of  
**Kuujuaq** Canada 21 E2  
**Kuujuarapik** Canada *prev.* Poste-de-la-Baleine 20 D2  
**Kuusamo** Finland 66 E3  
**Kuwait** country SW Asia 102 C4  
**Kuwait City** capital of Kuwait 102 C4  
**Kuytun** China 108 C2  
**Kvitøya** island Svalbard 65 G1  
**Kwangju** see Gwangju  
**Kwango river** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 C7  
**Kwangtung** see Guangdong  
**Kweichow** see Guizhou  
**Kykládes island group** Greece *prev.* Kikládhes, *Eng.* Cyclades 87 D6  
**Kyrenia** see Girne  
**Kyrgyzstan** country C Asia *var.* Kirghizia 105  
**Kýthira** island Greece 87 B6  
**Kyushu-Palau Ridge** undersea feature Pacific Ocean 124 B1  
**Kyyiv** see Kiev  
**Kyyivis'ke Vodokhovyshche Reservoir** Ukraine 91 E1  
**Kyôto** Japan 113 C5  
**Kyûshû** island Japan 113 B6  
**Kyzylorda** Kazakhstan 96 B5
- 
- L**
- 
- Laäyoune** Western Sahara 52 B3  
**Labé** Guinea 56 C4  
**Laborca** see Laborec  
**Laborec** river Slovakia *Hung.* Laborca 81 E5  
**Labrador** region Canada 21 F2  
**Labrador Sea** Atlantic Ocean 64 B5  
**Laccadive Islands** see Lakshadweep  
**La Ceiba** Honduras 34 D2  
**Lachlan River** river Australia 131 C6  
**La Coruña** see A Coruña



- La Crosse** Wisconsin, USA  
22 A2
- Ladoga, Lake** see Ladozhskoye Ozero
- Ladzhskoye Ozero lake**  
Russian Federation *Eng.* Lake Ladoga 92 B3
- Ladysmith** Wisconsin, USA  
22 A2
- Lae** Papua New Guinea 126 B3
- La Esperanza** Honduras 34 C2
- Lafayette** Louisiana, USA 30 B3
- Laghouat** Algeria 52 D2
- Lagos** Nigeria 57 F5
- Lagos** Portugal 74 C4
- Lagouira** Western Sahara 52 A4
- La Grande** Oregon, USA 26 C3
- La Habana** see Havana
- Lahore** Pakistan 116 C2
- Laï** Chad 58 C4
- Laila** see Laylá
- Lajes** Brazil 44 D3
- Lake Charles** Louisiana, USA  
30 B3
- Lake District region** England, UK 71 C5
- Lakewood** Colorado, USA  
24 D4
- Lakshadweep island group**  
India *Eng.* Laccadive Islands  
114 B2
- La Ligua** Chile 46 B4
- La Louvière** Belgium 69 B6
- Lambaré** Paraguay 44 B3
- Lambaréné** Gabon 59 B6
- Lamia** Greece 86 B4
- Lancaster** England, UK 71 D5
- Lancaster** California, USA 27 C7
- Lancaster Sound sea feature**  
Canada 19 F2
- Landsberg** see Gorzów Wielkopolski
- Land's End coastal feature**  
England, UK 71 C7
- Landshut** Germany 77 D6
- Lang Son** Vietnam 118 D3
- Länkärän** Azerbaijan *Rus.*  
Lenkoran' 99 H3
- Lansing** Michigan, USA 22 C3
- Lanzarote island** Spain 52 B3
- Lanzhou** China 110 B4
- Laon** France 72 D3
- La Oroya** Peru 42 B3
- Laos country** SE Asia 118
- La Palma island** Spain 52 A3
- La Paz legislative & administrative capital of**  
Bolivia 42 C4
- La Paz** Mexico 32 B3
- La Pérouse Strait sea feature**  
Japan 112 D1
- Lapland region** N Europe 66 C3
- La Plata** Argentina 46 D4
- Lappeenranta** Finland 67 E5
- Laptevo Sea** see Laptevykh, More
- Laptevykh, More** Arctic Ocean  
*Eng.* Laptev Sea 97 F2
- L'Aquila** Italy 78 C4
- Laramie** Wyoming, USA 24 C4
- Laredo** Texas, USA 29 F5
- La Rioja** Argentina 46 C3
- Lárisa** Greece 86 B4
- Lärkäna** Pakistan 116 B3
- Larnaca** Cyprus *var.* Larnaka, Larnax 98 C5
- Larnaka** see Larnaca
- Larnax** see Larnaca
- La Rochelle** France 72 B4
- La Roche-sur-Yon** France 72 B4
- La Romana** Dominican Republic  
36 E3
- Las Cruces** New Mexico, USA  
28 D3
- Las Piedras** Uruguay 44 C5
- La Serena** Chile 46 B3
- La Spezia** Italy 78 B3
- Las Tablas** Panama 35 F5
- Las Vegas** Nevada, USA 27 D7
- Latakia** see Al Lādhiqiyah
- Latvia country** NE Europe 88
- Launceston** Tasmania 131 C8
- Laurentian Basin** see Canada Basin
- Laurentian Mountains upland**  
Canada 16 D4
- Lausanne** Switzerland 77 A7
- Laut, Pulau** *prev.* Laoet. *Island*  
Indonesia 120 D4
- Laval** France 72 B4
- Lawton** Oklahoma, USA 29 F2
- Laylá** Saudi Arabia 103 C5
- Lazarev Sea sea** Antarctica  
136 B2
- Lebanon country** SW Asia  
100-101
- Lebu** Chile 47 B5
- Lecce** Italy 79 E5
- Leduc** Canada 19 E5
- Leeds** England, UK 71 D5
- Leeuwarden** Netherlands 68 D1
- Leeward Islands** see Sotavento, Ilhas de
- Lefkáda island** Greece *prev.*  
Levkás 87 A5
- Lefkosia** see Nicosia
- Lefkosia** see Nicosia
- Legaspi** see Legazpi City
- Legazpi City** Philippines *var.*  
Legaspi 120 E2
- Legnica** Poland *Ger.* Liegnitz  
80 B4
- Le Havre** France 72 B3
- Leicester** England, UK 71 D6
- Leiden** Netherlands 68 C3
- Leipzig** Germany 76 D4
- Lek river** Netherlands 68 C4
- Le Lémán** see Geneva, Lake
- Lelystad** Netherlands 68 D3
- Lémán, Lac** see Geneva, Lake
- Le Mans** France 72 B4
- Lemesos** see Limassol
- Lemnos** see Limnos
- Lena river** Russian Federation  
97 F3
- Leninabad** see Khújand
- Leninakan** see Gyumri
- Leningrad** see St Petersburg
- Leninsk** see Türkmenabat
- Lenkoran'** see Länkärän
- León** Mexico 33 E4
- León** Nicaragua 34 C3
- León** Spain 74 D1
- Léopoldville** see Kinshasa
- Lepel'** see Lyepyel'
- Le Puy** France 73 C5
- Lérica** see Lleida
- Lerwick** Scotland, UK 70 D1
- Lesbos** see Lésvos
- Leshan** China 111 B5

## Leskovic — Lord Howe Rise

- Leskovic** Serbia 82 E4  
**Lesotho** *country* southern Africa 60  
**Lesser Antilles** *island group* West Indies 37 G4  
**Lésvos** *island* Greece *Eng.* Lesbos 86 D4  
**Lethbridge** Canada 19 E5  
**Leti, Kepulauan** *island group* Indonesia 121 F5  
**Leuven** Belgium 69 C6  
**Leverkusen** Germany 76 A4  
**Levin** New Zealand 132 D4  
**Levkás** *see* Lefkáda  
**Lewis** *island* Scotland, UK 70 B2  
**Lewiston** Idaho, USA 26 C2  
**Lewiston** Maine, USA 23 G2  
**Lexington** Kentucky, USA 22 C5  
**Lezhë** Albania 83 D5  
**Lhasa** China 108 C5  
**Lhazè** China 108 C4  
**L'Hospitalet de Llobregat** *var.* Hospitalet. Spain 75 G2  
**Liao** *see* Liaoning  
**Liaoning** *province* China *var.* Liao, Shengking; *hist.* Fengtien, Shenking. Admin. region 110 D3  
**Libau** *see* Liepāja  
**Liberec** Czech Republic *Ger.* Reichenberg 80 B4  
**Liberia** *country* W Africa 56  
**Liberia** Costa Rica 34 D4  
**Libreville** *capital of* Gabon 59 A5  
**Libya** *country* N Africa 53  
**Libyan Desert** *desert* N Africa 50 C3  
**Lichuan** China 111 B5  
**Liechtenstein** *country* C Europe 77 B7  
**Liège** Belgium 69 D6  
**Liegnitz** *see* Legnica  
**Lienz** Austria 77 D7  
**Linz** Austria 77 D7  
**Liepāja** Latvia *Ger.* Libau 88 B3  
**Liffey** *river* Ireland 71 B5  
**Ligurian Sea** Mediterranean Sea 78 A3  
**Likasi** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E8  
**Lille** France 72 D2  
**Lillehammer** Norway 67 B5  
**Lilongwe** *capital of* Malawi 61 E2  
**Lima** *capital of* Peru 42 B4  
**Limassol** Cyprus *var.* Lemesos 98 C5  
**Limerick** Ireland 71 A6  
**Limnos** *island* Greece *var.* Lemnos 86 D4  
**Limoges** France 72 C5  
**Limón** Costa Rica 35 E4  
**Limpopo** *river* southern Africa 60 D3  
**Linares** Chile 46 B4  
**Linares** Spain 75 E4  
**Linchuan** *see* Fuzhou  
**Lincoln** England, UK 71 D5  
**Lincoln** Nebraska, USA 25 F4  
**Lincoln Sea** Arctic Ocean 64 E1  
**Linden** Guyana 41 G2  
**Lindi** Tanzania 55 C8  
**Line Islands** *island group* Kiribati 127 G2  
**Linköping** Sweden 67 C6  
**Linz** Austria 77 D6  
**Lion, Golfe du** *sea feature* Mediterranean Sea 73 D6  
**Lipari, Isola** *island* Italy 79 D6  
**Lipari Islands** *see* Isole Eolie  
**Lira** Uganda 55 B6  
**Lisbon** *capital of* Portugal *Port.* Lisboa 74 B3  
**Litani** *river* SW Asia 91 B4  
**Lithuania** *country* E Europe 88-89  
**Little Andaman** *island* India 115 G2  
**Little Minch** *sea feature* Scotland, UK 70 B3  
**Little Rock** Arkansas, USA 30 B2  
**Liuzhou** China 111 C6  
**Liverpool** England, UK 71 D5  
**Livingstone** Zambia 60 D3  
**Livno** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 B4  
**Livorno** Italy 78 B3  
**Ljubljana** *capital of* Slovenia 77 D7  
**Ljusnan** *river* Sweden 67 B5  
**Llanos** *region* Colombia/Venezuela 41 E2  
**Lleida** Spain Cast. Lérida 75 F2  
**Lobatse** Botswana 60 D4  
**Lobito** Angola 60 B2  
**Locarno** Switzerland 77 B7  
**Lodja** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D6  
**Łódź** Poland *Rus.* Lodz 80 D4  
**Lofoten** *island group* Norway 66 B3  
**Logroño** Spain 75 E2  
**Loire** *river* France 72 B4  
**Loja** Ecuador 40 A5  
**Lokitaung** Kenya 55 C5  
**Loksa** Estonia *Ger.* Loxa 88 D2  
**Lombok, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 120 D5  
**Lomé** *capital of* Togo 57 E5  
**Lomond, Loch** *lake* Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**London** Canada 20 C5  
**London** *capital of* UK 71 E6  
**Londonderry** Northern Ireland, UK 70 B4  
**Londonderry, Cape** *coastal feature* Australia 128 D2  
**Londrina** Brazil 44 D2  
**Long Beach** California, USA 27 C8  
**Long Island** *island* The Bahamas 34 D2  
**Long Island** *island* NE USA 23 G3  
**Longreach** Australia 130 C4  
**Long Strait** *Strait* Russian Federation 95 H2  
**Longview** Texas, USA 29 G3  
**Longview** Washington, USA 26 B2  
**Longyearbyen** Svalbard 65 F2  
**Lop Nur** *lake* China 108 C3  
**Lorca** Spain 75 E4  
**Lord Howe Island** *island* Australia 124 C4  
**Lord Howe Rise** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 124 D4

**Lorient** France 72 A4  
**Los Alamos** New Mexico, USA 28 D1  
**Los Angeles** California, USA 27 C7  
**Loslau** see Wodzisław Śląski  
**Los Mochis** Mexico 32 C3  
**Losonc** see Lučenec  
**Losontz** see Lučenec  
**Lot river** France 73 B5  
**Louangphrabang** Laos 118 C3  
**Loubomo** Congo 59 B6  
**Louisiana state** USA 30 B3  
**Louisville** Kentucky, USA 22 C5  
**Louisville Ridge** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 125 E4  
**Lovech** Bulgaria 86 C2  
**Lower California** see Baja California  
**Lower Hutt** New Zealand  
**Loxa** see Loksa  
**Loyauté, Îles island group** New Caledonia 126 D5  
**Loznica** Serbia 82 C3  
**Lu** see Shandong  
**Luanda** *capital of* Angola 60 B1  
**Luanshya** Zambia 60 D2  
**Lubango** Angola 60 B2  
**Lubbock** Texas, USA 29 E2  
**Lübeck** Germany 76 C3  
**Lublin** Poland *Rus.* Lyublin 80 E4  
**Lubny** Ukraine 91 F2  
**Lubumbashi** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E8  
**Lucapa** Angola 60 C1  
**Lucena** Philippines 120 E2  
**Lučenec** Slovakia *Hung.* Losonc, *Ger.* Losontz 81 D6  
**Lucerne** see Luzern  
**Lucknow** India 117 E3  
**Lüderitz** Namibia 60 C4  
**Ludhiāna** India 116 D2  
**Lugano** Switzerland 77 B7  
**Lugo** Spain 74 C1  
**Luhans'k** Ukraine 91 H3  
**Luleå** Sweden 66 D4  
**Lumsden** New Zealand 133 A7  
**Lüneburg** Germany 76 C3

**Luninyets** Belarus 89 C6  
**Luoyang** *var.* Honan, Lo-yang. China 110 C4  
**Lusaka** *capital of* Zambia 60 D2  
**Lushnjë** Albania 83 D6  
**Lüt, Bahrat** see Dead Sea  
**Luts'k** Ukraine 90 C1  
**Luxembourg** *country* W Europe 69 D8  
**Luxembourg** *capital of* Luxembourg 69 D8  
**Luxor** see Al Uqşur  
**Luzern** Switzerland *Fr.* Lucerne 77 B7  
**Luzon** *island* Philippines 121 E1  
**Luzon Strait** *sea feature* Philippines/Taiwan 107 E3  
**L'viv** Ukraine *Rus.* L'vov 90 C2  
**L'vov** see L'viv  
**Lyepyel'** Belarus *Rus.* Lepel' 89 D5  
**Lyon** France 73 D5  
**Lyublin** see Lublin

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## M

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**Ma'an** Jordan 101 B6  
**Maas** see Meuse  
**Maastricht** Netherlands 69 D6  
**Macao** *special administrative region* China, *E Asia var.* Macau 111 C7  
**Macapá** Brazil 43 F1  
**Macau** see Macao  
**Macdonnell Ranges** *mountains* Australia 130 A4  
**Macedonia** *country* SE Europe officially Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, *abbrev.* FYR Macedonia 83  
**Maceió** Brazil 43 H3  
**Machala** Ecuador 40 A5  
**Mackay** Australia 130 D4  
**Mackay, Lake lake** Australia 128 D4  
**Mackenzie river** Canada 19 E4  
**Mackenzie Bay** *sea feature* Atlantic Ocean 136 D3  
**Macleod, Lake lake** Australia 128 A4  
**Mâcon** France 72 D5  
**Macon** Georgia, USA 31 E2  
**Madagascar** *country* Indian Ocean 61  
**Madagascar Basin** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 B5  
**Madagascar Plateau** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 A6  
**Madang** Papua New Guinea 126 B3  
**Madeira river** Bolivia/Brazil 42 D2  
**Madeira island group** Portugal 52 A2  
**Madhya Pradesh** *state* India 117 E4  
**Madison** Wisconsin, USA 22 B3  
**Madiun** *prev.* Madioen. Indonesia 120 D5  
**Madona** Latvia *Ger.* Modohn 88 D3  
**Madras** see Chennai  
**Madre de Dios river** Bolivia/Peru 42 C3  
**Madrid** *capital of* Spain 75 E3  
**Madurai** India 114 D3  
**Magadan** Russian Fed. 97 G3  
**Magallanes** see Punta Arenas  
**Magallanes, Estrecho** *de* see Magellan, Strait of  
**Magdalena river** Colombia 40 B2  
**Magdeburg** Germany 76 C4  
**Magelang** Indonesia 120 C5  
**Magellan, Strait of** *sea feature* S South America *Sp.* Estrecho de Magallanes 47 B8  
**Maggiore, Lake lake** Italy/Switzerland 78 B2  
**Mahajanga** Madagascar 61 G3  
**Mahalapye** Botswana 60 D4  
**Mahanādi river** India 117 F5  
**Mahārāshtra** *state* India 116 D5  
**Mahé** *island* Seychelles 61 H1  
**Mahilyov/Mogilëv** Belarus *Rus.* Mogilëv 89 E6  
**Mährisch-Ostrau** see Ostrava

## Maicao — Marias, Islas

- Maicao** Colombia 40 C1  
**Maiduguri** Nigeria 57 H4  
**Maimanah** Afghanistan *prev.*  
 Meymaneh 104 D4  
**Maine state** USA 23 G1  
**Maine, Gulf of gulf** USA 23 G2  
**Mainz** Germany 77 B5  
**Maio Island** Cape Verde 56 A3  
**Maiz, Islas del islands**  
 Nicaragua 35 E3  
**Majorca** see Mallorca  
**Majuro island** Marshall Islands  
 126 D1  
**Makarska** Croatia 82 B4  
**Makarov Basin undersea  
 feature** Arctic Ocean 137 G3  
**Makassar** Indonesia *prev.*  
 Ujungpandang 121 E4  
**Makassar Strait strait** Indonesia  
 120 D4  
**Makeyevka** see Makiyivka  
**Makhachkala** Russian  
 Federation 93 B7 96 A4  
**Makiyivka** Ukraine *Rus.*  
 Makeyevka 91 G5  
**Makkah** Saudi Arabia *Eng.*  
 Mecca 103 A5  
**Makkovik** Canada 21 F2  
**Malabo capital** of Equatorial  
 Guinea 59 A5  
**Malacca, Strait of sea feature**  
 Indonesia/ Malaysia  
 106 C4 119 C8 120 B3  
**Maladzyechna** Belarus *Rus.*  
 Molodechno, *Pol.*  
 Molodeczno 89 C5  
**Málaga** Spain 74 D5  
**Malakal** South Sudan 55 B5  
**Malang** Indonesia 120 D5  
**Malanje** Angola 60 C2  
**Malatya** Turkey 99 E3  
**Malawi country** southern  
 Africa 61  
**Malay Peninsula peninsula**  
 Malaysia/Thailand 119 D8  
**Malaysia country** Asia 120  
**Malden Island atoll** Kiribati  
 125 F2  
**Maldives country** Indian Ocean  
 114 C4  
**Male capital** of Maldives  
 114 C4  
**Malekula island** Vanuatu 124 D3  
**Mali country** W Africa 57  
**Malindi** Kenya 55 C7  
**Mallorca island** Spain *Eng.*  
 Majorca 75 H3  
**Malmö** Sweden 67 B7  
**Malta country** Mediterranean  
 Sea 79 C8  
**Malta Montana, USA** 24 C1  
**Malta Channel sea feature**  
 Mediterranean Sea 79 C7  
**Maluku island group**  
 Indonesia *var.* Moluccas  
 107 E4 121 F4  
**Maluku, Laut** Pacific Ocean  
*Eng.* Molucca Sea 121 F4  
**Mamberamo river** Indonesia  
 121 H4  
**Mamoudzou capital** of  
 Mayotte 61 G2  
**Man, Isle of British Crown  
 Dependency** UK 71 C5  
**Manado** Indonesia 121 F3  
**Managua capital** of Nicaragua  
 34 D3  
**Manama capital** of Bahrain *Ar.*  
 Al Manāmah 103 C5  
**Mananjary** Madagascar 61 G3  
**Manaus** Brazil 42 D2  
**Manchester** England, UK  
 71 D5  
**Manchester** New Hampshire,  
 USA 23 G2  
**Manchurian Plain plain** E Asia  
 107 E1  
**Mandalay** Myanmar 118 B3  
**Mangalia** Romania 90 D5  
**Mangalore** India 114 C2  
**Manicouagan, Réservoir**  
*Reservoir* Canada 21 E3  
**Manihiki atoll** Cook Islands  
 125 F3  
**Maniitsoq** Greenland 64 C3  
**Manila capital** of Philippines  
 121 E1  
**Manisa** Turkey *prev.* Saruhan  
 98 A3  
**Manitoba province** Canada  
 19 G4  
**Manizales** Colombia 40 B3  
**Manjimup** Australia 129 B7  
**Mannar** Sri Lanka 115 E3  
**Mannar, Gulf of sea feature**  
 Indian Ocean 114 D3  
**Mannheim** Germany 77 B5  
**Manono** Dem. Rep. Congo  
 59 E7  
**Mansel Island island** Canada  
 20 C1  
**Mansfield** Ohio, USA 22 D4  
**Manta** Ecuador 40 A4  
**Mantes-la-Jolie** France 72 C3  
**Mantova** Italy *Eng.* Mantua  
 78 B2  
**Mantua** see Mantova  
**Manurewa** New Zealand  
 132 D3  
**Manzhouli** China 109 F1  
**Mao** Chad 58 B3  
**Maoke, Pegunungan  
 mountains** Indonesia  
 121 H4  
**Maputo capital** of  
 Mozambique 61 E4  
**Mar, Serra do mountains** Brazil  
 38 D4  
**Maracaibo** Venezuela 40 C1  
**Maracaibo, Lago de inlet**  
 Venezuela 40 C1  
**Maracay** Venezuela 40 D1  
**Maradi** Niger 57 F3  
**Marāgheh** Iran 102 C3  
**Marajó, Ilha de island** Brazil  
 43 F2  
**Marañón river** Peru 42 B2  
**Marash** see Kahramanmaraş  
**Marbella** Spain 74 D5  
**Marble Bar** Australia 128 B4  
**Mar Chiquita, Laguna salt lake**  
 Argentina 46 C3  
**Mardān** Pakistan 116 C1  
**Mar del Plata** Argentina 47 D5  
**Mardin** Turkey 99 E4  
**Margarita, Isla de island**  
 Venezuela 41 E1  
**Mārgow, Dasht-e desert**  
 Afghanistan 104 C5  
**Mariana Trench undersea  
 feature** Pacific Ocean  
 124 B1 126 B1  
**Mariás, Islas islands** Mexico  
 32 C4

## Maribor — Melanesian Basin

- Maribor** Slovenia 77 E7
- Marie Byrd Land** *region*  
Antarctica 136 B4
- Mariehamn** Finland 67 D6
- Marijampolė** Lithuania *prev.*  
Kapsukas 88 B4
- Marília** Brazil 44 D2
- Maringá** Brazil 44 D2
- Marion, Lake** *lake* South  
Carolina, USA 31 F2
- Mariscal Estigarribia** Paraguay  
44 B2
- Maritsa** *river* SE Europe 86 D3
- Mariupol'** Ukraine *prev.*  
Shdanov 91 G3
- Marka** Somalia 55 D6
- Marmara, Sea of** see Marmara  
Denizi
- Marmara Denizi** Turkey *Eng.*  
Sea of Marmara 98 B2
- Marne** *river* France 72 D3
- Marotiri** *Island group* French  
Polynesia 125 F4
- Maroua** Cameroon 58 B3
- Marowijne** *river* French  
Guiana/Suriname 41 H3
- Marquesas Fracture Zone**  
*tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean  
125 G3
- Marquesas Islands** *island group*  
French Polynesia *Fr.* Îles  
Marquises 125 G3
- Marquette** Michigan, USA  
22 B1
- Marquisas, Îles** see Marquesas  
Islands
- Marrakech** Morocco *Eng.*  
Marrakesh 52 C2
- Marrawah** Australia 131 C8
- Marree** Australia 131 B5
- Marsala** Italy 79 C6
- Marseille** France 73 D6
- Marshall Islands** *country* Pacific  
Ocean 126-127
- Martin** Slovakia *prev.*  
Turčianský Svätý Martin, *Ger.*  
Sankt Martin, *Hung.*  
Turócszentmárton 81 C5
- Martinique** *overseas*  
*department* France, West  
Indies 37
- Mary** Turkmenistan *prev.* Merv  
104 C3
- Maryborough** Australia 131 E5
- Maryland** *state* USA 23 F4
- Masai Steppe** *grassland*  
Tanzania 55 C7
- Mascarene Basin** *undersea*  
*feature* Indian Ocean 123 B5
- Mascarene Islands** *island group*  
Indian Ocean 61 H4
- Mascarene Plain** *undersea*  
*feature* Indian Ocean 123 B5
- Mascarene Plateau** *undersea*  
*feature* Indian Ocean 123 B5
- Maseru** *capital* of Lesotho  
60 D4
- Mas-ha** Bank 101 D6
- Mashhad** Iran *var.* Meshed  
100 E3
- Masindi** Uganda 55 B6
- Maşīrah, Jazīrat** *Island* Oman  
103 E6
- Maşīrah, Khalīj** *bay* Oman  
103 E6
- Mason City** Iowa, USA 25 F3
- Masqaţ** see Muscat
- Massachusetts** *state* USA  
23 G3
- Massawa** see Mits'iwa
- Massif Central** *upland* France  
73 C5
- Massoukou** Gabon 59 B6
- Masterton** New Zealand  
133 D5
- Matadi** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 B7
- Matagalpa** Nicaragua 34 D3
- Matamoros** Mexico 33 E2
- Matanzas** Cuba 36 B2
- Matarua** Sri Lanka 115 E4
- Mataram** Indonesia 120 D5
- Mataró** Spain 75 G2
- Mato Grosso** *upland* Brazil  
43 E3
- Matosinhos** Portugal 74 C2
- Matsue** Japan 113 B5
- Matsuyama** Japan 113 B5
- Matterhorn** *peak* Italy/  
Switzerland 77 B7
- Maturin** Venezuela 41 E1
- Maun** Botswana 60 D3
- Mauritania** *country* W Africa 52
- Mauritius** *country* Indian  
Ocean 61 H4 123 B5
- Mawlamyine** Myanmar *prev.*  
Moulmein 118 B4
- Mayaguana** *island*  
The Bahamas 36 D2
- Mayfield** New Zealand 133 C6
- Mayotte** *overseas department*  
France, Indian Ocean 61 G2
- Mayyit, Al Baḥr al** see Dead  
Sea
- Mazār-e Sharīf** Afghanistan  
104 D3
- Mazatlán** Mexico 32 C3
- Mazeikiiai** Lithuania 88 B3
- Mazury** *region* Poland 80 D3
- Mazyr** Belarus *Rus.* Mozyr'  
89 D7
- Mbabane** *capital* of Swaziland  
61 E4
- Mbaké** Senegal 56 B3
- Mbala** Zambia 61 E1
- Mbale** Uganda 55 C6
- Mbandaka** Dem. Rep. Congo  
59 C5
- Mbeya** Tanzania 55 B8
- Mbujji-Mayi** Dem. Rep. Congo  
59 D7
- McKinley, Mount** *peak* Alaska,  
USA *var.* Denali 18 C3
- Mead, Lake** *lake* SW USA 28 A1
- Mecca** see Makkah
- Mechelen** Belgium 69 C5
- Mecklenburger Bucht** *bay*  
Germany 76 C2
- Medan** Indonesia 120 B3
- Medellín** Colombia 40 B2
- Médenine** Tunisia 53 F2
- Medford** Oregon, USA 26 A4
- Medina** see Al Madīnah
- Mediterranean Sea** Atlantic  
Ocean 84-85
- Meekatharra** Australia  
129 B5
- Meerut** India 116 D3
- Megisti** *island* Greece 98 B4
- Mek'elē** Ethiopia 54 C4
- Mekong** *river* SE Asia 106 D3
- Mekong, Mouths of** the  
*wetlands* Vietnam 119 D6
- Melanesia** *region* Pacific Ocean  
126 C3
- Melanesian Basin** *undersea*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean 134 C3

## Melbourne — Minto, Lake

- Melbourne** Australia 131 C7  
**Melbourne** Florida, USA 31 F4  
**Melghir, Chott Salt lake** Algeria 53 E2  
**Melilla external territory** Spain, N Africa 52 C1  
**Melitopol'** Ukraine 91 F4  
**Melo** Uruguay 44 C4  
**Melville Island island** Australia 128 E2  
**Melville Island island** Canada 19 E2  
**Memel** see Klaipėda  
**Memel** see Neman  
**Memphis** Tennessee, USA 30 C1  
**Mendaña Fracture Zone**  
*tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean 135 G3  
**Mende** France 73 C6  
**Mendeleyev Ridge undersea feature** Arctic Ocean 137 G2  
**Mendocino Fracture Zone**  
*tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean 134 D2  
**Mendoza** Argentina 46 B4  
**Menengiyin Tal plain** Mongolia 109 F2  
**Menongue** Angola 60 C2  
**Menorca island** Spain *Eng.* Minorca 75 H3  
**Metairie** Louisiana, USA 30 C3  
**Mentawai, Kepulauan island group** Indonesia 120 B4  
**Meppel** Netherlands 68 D2  
**Merced** California, USA 27 B6  
**Mercedes** Uruguay 44 B5  
**Mergui** see Myeik  
**Mergui Archipelago island chain** Myanmar 119 B6  
**Mérida** Mexico 33 H3  
**Mérida** Spain 74 D3  
**Mérida** Venezuela 40 C2  
**Meridian** Mississippi, USA 30 C2  
**Merredin** Australia 129 B6  
**Mersin** Turkey *var.* İçel 98 C4  
**Meru** Kenya 55 C6  
**Merv** see Mary  
**Mesa** Arizona, USA 28 B2  
**Meshed** see Mashhad  
**Messina** Italy 79 D6  
**Messina, Stretto di sea feature** Ionian Sea/Tyrrhenian Sea 79 D7  
**Mestre** Italy 78 C2  
**Meta river** Colombia/Venezuela 40 C2  
**Metković** Croatia 82 C4  
**Metz** France 72 E3  
**Meuse river** W Europe *var.* Maas 72 D3  
**Mexicali** Mexico 32 A1  
**Mexico country** North America 32-33  
**México, Golfo de** see Mexico, Gulf of  
**Mexico, Gulf of sea feature** Atlantic Ocean/Caribbean Sea 48 A4  
**Mexico City capital of Mexico** *Sp.* Ciudad de México 33 E4  
**Meymaneh** see Maimanah  
**Mezen' river** Russian Federation 92 D3  
**Miami** Florida, USA 31 F5  
**Miami Beach** Florida, USA 31 F5  
**Mianyang** China 111 B5  
**Michigan state** USA 22 C2  
**Michigan, Lake lake** USA 17 C5  
**Micronesia country** Pacific Ocean 126 B2  
**Micronesia region** Pacific Ocean 126  
**Mid-Indian Basin undersea feature** Atlantic Ocean 48 B4  
**Middelburg** South Africa 60 D5  
**Middle Andaman island** India 115 G2  
**Middlesbrough** England, UK 71 D5  
**Mid-Indian Basin undersea feature** Indian Ocean 122 C4  
**Mid-Indian Ridge undersea feature** Indian Ocean 123 C5  
**Midland** Texas, USA 29 E3  
**Mid-Pacific Mountains var.** Mid-Pacific Seamounts. *Undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 124 C1  
**Mid-Pacific Seamounts** see Mid-Pacific Mountains  
**Midway Islands US territory** Pacific Ocean 134 D2  
**Mikhaylovka** Russian Federation 93 B6  
**Milagro** Ecuador 40 A4  
**Milan** see Milano  
**Milano** Italy *Eng.* Milan 78 B2  
**Mildura** Australia 131 C6  
**Millennium Island island** Kiribati *prev.* Caroline Island 127 H3  
**Miles** Australia 131 D5  
**Miles City** Montana, USA 24 C2  
**Milford Haven** Wales, UK 71 C6  
**Milford Sound** New Zealand 133 E6  
**Milford Sound inlet** New Zealand 133 A6  
**Milos island** Greece 87 C6  
**Milwaukee** Wisconsin, USA 22 B3  
**Min** see Fujian  
**Minatitlán** Mexico 33 G4  
**Minch, The Strait** Scotland, UK 70 C3  
**Mindanao island** Philippines 121 F2  
**Mindoro island** Philippines 121 E2  
**Mindoro Strait sea feature** South China Sea/Sulu Sea 121 E2  
**Mingäçevir** Azerbaijan *Rus.* Mingechaur 99 G2  
**Mingechaur** see Mingäçevir  
**Minho river** Portugal/Spain *Sp.* Miño 74 C2  
**Minicoy Island island** India 114 C3  
**Minneapolis** Minnesota, USA 23 F2  
**Minnesota state** USA 25 F2  
**Miño river** Portugal/Spain *Port.* Miño 74 C1  
**Minorca** see Menorca  
**Minot** North Dakota, USA 24 D1  
**Minā' Qābūs** Oman 122 B3  
**Minsk capital of Belarus** 89 C5  
**Minto, Lake lake** Canada 20 D2

- Miranda de Ebro** Spain 75 E1
- Mirim, Lake** see Mirim Lagoon
- Mirim Lagoon** lagoon Brazil/Uruguay var. Mirim, Lake 44 C5
- Mirtóo Pelagos sea feature** Mediterranean Sea 87 C6
- Miskitos Cayos islands** Nicaragua 35 E2
- Miskolc** Hungary 81 D6
- Miṣrātah** Libya 53 F2
- Mississippi state** USA 30 C2
- Mississippi river** USA 16 C5
- Mississippi Delta wetlands** USA 30 C4
- Missoula** Montana, USA 24 B2
- Missouri state** USA 25 G4
- Missouri river** USA 17 C5
- Mistassini, Lake lake** Canada 20 D3
- Mitau** see Jelgava
- Mitchell S** Dakota, USA 25 E3
- Mitchell River river** Australia 130 C3
- Mitilini** Greece 86 D4
- Mito** Japan 112 D4
- Mitrovica** see Mitrovicë/  
Mitrovica
- Mitrovicë/Mitrovica** Kosovo  
Serb. Mitrovica, prev.  
Kosovska Mitrovica 83 D5
- Mits'awa** Eritrea var. Massawa 54 C4
- Mitumba, Monts Mountain range** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 E7
- Miyazaki** Japan 113 B6
- Mjøsa lake** Norway 67 B5
- Mljet island** Croatia 83 C5
- Mlabatho** South Africa 60 D4
- Mo** Norway 66 C3
- Mobile** Alabama, USA 30 C3
- Moçambique** Mozambique 61 F2
- Mocimboa da Praia** Mozambique 61 F2
- Mocóa** Colombia 40 B4
- Mocuba** Mozambique 61 E3
- Modena** Italy 78 B3
- Modesto** California, USA 27 B6
- Modohn** see Madona
- Modriča** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C3
- Mogadiscio** see Mogadishu
- Mogadishu** capital of Somalia  
Som. Muqdisho, It.  
Mogadiscio 55 D6
- Mogilëv** see Mahilyow/Mogilëv
- Mo i Rana** Norway 66 C3
- Mojave** California, USA 27 C7
- Mojave Desert** desert W USA 27 C7
- Moldavia** see Moldova
- Molde** Norway 67 A5
- Moldova** country E Europe var.  
Moldavia 90
- Molodechno** see Maladzyechna
- Molodeczno** see Maladzyechna
- Molotov** see Perm'
- Moluccas** see Maluku
- Molucca Sea** see Maluku, Laut
- Mombasa** Kenya 55 C7
- Monaco** country W Europe 73 E6
- Monclova** Mexico 33 E2
- Moncton** Canada 21 F4
- Mongo** Chad 58 C3
- Mongolia** country NE Asia 108-109
- Monroe** Louisiana, USA 30 B2
- Monrovia** capital of Liberia 56 C5
- Mons** Belgium 69 B6
- Montague Seamount** undersea  
feature Atlantic Ocean 45 H1
- Montana** state USA 24 C2
- Montauban** France 73 C6
- Mont Blanc peak** France/Italy 62 D4
- Mont-de-Marsan** France 72 B6
- Monte Cristi** Dominican  
Republic 37 E3
- Montego Bay** Jamaica 36 C3
- Montenegro** Country  
SE Europe 83 D5
- Monterey** California, USA 27 B6
- Montería** Colombia 40 B2
- Montero** Bolivia 42 D4
- Monterrey** Mexico 33 E2
- Montes Claros** Brazil 43 G4
- Montevideo** capital of Uruguay 44 C5
- Montgomery** Alabama, USA 30 D2
- Monthey** Switzerland 77 A7
- Montpelier** Vermont, USA 23 F2
- Montpellier** France 73 C6
- Montréal** Canada 21 E4
- Montserrat** overseas territory  
UK, West Indies 37
- Monya** Myanmar 118 A3
- Monza** Italy 78 B2
- Moor** Australia 129 B6
- Moore, Lake lake** Australia 129 B6
- Moorhead** Minnesota, USA 25 E2
- Moosonee** Canada 20 C3
- Mopti** Mali 57 E3
- Morava river** C Europe 82 E4
- Moravská Ostrava** see Ostrava
- Moray Firth inlet** Scotland, UK 70 C3
- Moree** Australia 131 D5
- Morelia** Mexico 33 E4
- Morena, Sierra** mountain  
range Spain 74 D4
- Murghāb, Daryā-ye river**  
Afghanistan/Turkmenistan 104 D4
- Morioka** Japan 112 D3
- Mornington Abyssal Plain**  
undersea feature Pacific  
Ocean 135 G5
- Morocco** country N Africa 52
- Morogoro** Tanzania 55 C7
- Mörön** Mongolia 108 D2
- Morondava** Madagascar 61 F3
- Moroni** capital of Comoros 61 F2
- Morotai, Pulau island** Indonesia 121 F3
- Morova river** Poland 80 C6
- Morris Jesup, Kap headland**  
Greenland 65 E1
- Moscow** capital of Russian  
Federation Rus. Moskva 92 B4 96 B2
- Mosel river** W Europe Fr.  
Moselle 77 A5

- Moselle** *river* W Europe *Ger.* Mosel 72 E4
- Mosgiel** New Zealand 133 B7
- Moshi** Tanzania 55 C7
- Moskva** *see* Moscow
- Mosquito Coast** *coastal region* Nicaragua 35 E3
- Moss** Norway 67 B6
- Mossendjo** Congo 59 B6
- Mossoró** Brazil 43 H2
- Most** Czech Republic *Ger.* Brűx 80 A4
- Mostaganem** Algeria 52 D1
- Mostar** Bosnia & Herz. 82 C4
- Mosul** *see* Al Mawşil
- Motril** Spain 75 E5
- Motueka** New Zealand 133 C5
- Moulins** France 72 C4
- Moulmein** *see* Mawlamyine
- Moundou** Chad 58 C4
- Mount Gambier** Australia 131 B7
- Mount Isa** Australia 130 B4
- Mount Magnet** Australia 129 B5
- Mount Vernon** Illinois, USA 22 B5
- Mouscron** Belgium 69 A6
- Moyobamba** Peru 42 B2
- Moyu** China 108 B2
- Mozambique country** SE Africa 61
- Mozambique Channel** *sea* *feature* Indian Ocean 61 F3
- Mozyr'** *see* Mazyr
- Mpika** Zambia 61 E2
- Mtwara** Tanzania 55 C8
- Muang Khōng** Laos 119 D5
- Muang Xaignabouri** *see* Xaignabouri
- Mudanjiang** China 110 E3
- Mufulira** Zambia 60 D2
- Muğla** Turkey 98 A4
- Mulhouse** France 72 E4
- Mull island** Scotland, UK 70 B3
- Muller, Pegunungan** *mountains* Indonesia 120 C3
- Multān** Pakistan 116 C2
- Mumbai** India *var.* Bombay 117 C5
- München** Germany *Eng.* Munich 77 C6
- Muncie** Indiana, USA 22 C4
- Munich** *see* München
- Münster** Germany 76 B4
- Muqdisho** *see* Mogadishu
- Mur river** C Europe 77 E7
- Murchison River** *river* Australia 129 B5
- Murcia** Spain 75 F4
- Mures river** Hungary/Romania 81 D7
- Murfreesboro** Tennessee, USA 30 D1
- Murgab** Tajikistan 105 F3
- Murgap river** Turkmenistan *var.* Murghab 104 C3
- Murghab** *see* Murgap
- Müritz lake** Germany 76 D3
- Murmansk** Russian Federation 92 C2 96 C1
- Murray river** Australia 131 B6
- Murray Fracture Zone** *tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean 135 E2
- Murray Ridge** *Undersea feature* Arabian Sea 122 B3
- Murwillumbah** Australia 131 E5
- Murzuq** Libya 53 F3
- Muş** Turkey 99 F3
- Muscat** *capital of* Oman *Ar.* Masqaţ 103 E5
- Musgrave Ranges** *mountain range* Australia 129 D5
- Musters, Lago lake** Argentina 46 C6
- Mu Us Shadi** *Desert* China 109 E3
- Mvonioälv river** Finland/Sweden 66 D3
- Mwali island** Comoros 61 F2
- Mwanza** Tanzania 55 B6
- Mwene-Ditu** Dem. Rep. Congo 59 D7
- Mweru, Lake lake** Dem. Rep. Congo/Zambia 59 D7
- Myanmar country** SE Asia *var.* Myanmar 118-119
- Myeik** Myanmar *prev.* Mergui 119 B5
- Mykolajiv** Ukraine *Rus.* Nikolajev 91 E4
- Mykonos island** Greece 87 D5
- Mysore** India 114 D2
- Mzuzu** Malawi 61 E2

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## N

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- Naberezhnyye Chelny** Russian Federation *prev.* Brezhnev 93 C5
- Nablus** West Bank *var.* Näbulus, *Heb.* Shekhem 101 D6
- Näbulus** *see* Nablus
- Nacala** Mozambique 61 F2
- Naga** Philippines 120 E2
- Nagano** Japan 112 C4
- Nagasaki** Japan 113 A6
- Nägercoil** India 114 D3
- Nagorno-Karabakh region** Azerbaijan 99 G2
- Nagoya** Japan 113 C5
- Nāgpur** India 116 D4
- Nagqu** China 108 C5
- Nagykanizsa** Hungary *Ger.* Grosskanizsa 81 C7
- Nagyszombat** *see* Trnava
- Naha** Japan 113 A8
- Nain** Canada 21 F2
- Nairobi** *capital of* Kenya 55 C6
- Najaf** *see* An Najaf
- Najrān** Saudi Arabia 103 B6
- Nakamura** Japan 113 B6
- Nakhichevan'** *see* Naẖçıvan
- Nakhon Ratchasima** Thailand 119 C5
- Nakhon Sawan** Thailand 119 C5
- Nakhon Si Thammarat** Thailand 119 C6
- Nakuru** Kenya 55 C6
- Nal'chik** Russian Federation 96 A4
- Namangan** Uzbekistan 105 E2
- Nam Co lake** China 108 C4
- Nam Đinh** Vietnam 118 D3
- Namib Desert** *desert* Namibia 60 B3
- Namibe** Angola 60 B2
- Namibia country** southern Africa 60
- Nampa** Idaho, USA 26 C3



## Namp'o — New Haven

- Namp'o** North Korea 110 E4  
**Nampula** Mozambique 61 F2  
**Namur** Belgium 69 C6  
**Nanchang** China 111 C5  
**Nancy** France 72 D3  
**Nānded** India 116 D5 114 D1  
**Nanjing** China 111 D5  
**Nanning** China 111 B6  
**Nanortalik** Greenland 64 C5  
**Nansen Basin** *undersea feature*  
 Arctic Ocean 137 G4  
**Nantes** France 72 B4  
**Napier** New Zealand 132 E4  
**Naples** *see* Napoli  
**Napo** *river* Ecuador/Peru 42 B2  
**Napoli** Italy *Eng.* Naples 79 D5  
**Narbonne** France 73 C6  
**Nares Strait** *sea feature*  
 Canada/Greenland 64 C1  
**Narew** *river* Poland 80 E3  
**Narmada** *river* India 116 D4  
**Narva** Estonia 88 E2  
**Narva** *river* Estonia/Russian  
 Federation 88 E2  
**Narva Bay** *sea feature* Gulf of  
 Finland *Est.* Narva Laht, *Rus.*  
 Narvskiy Zaliv 88 E2  
**Narva Laht** *see* Narva Bay  
**Narvik** Norway 66 C3  
**Narvskiy Zaliv** *see* Narva Bay  
**Naryn** Kyrgyzstan 105 G2  
**Nāshik** India 116 C5  
**Nashville** Tennessee, USA 30 D1  
**Nāšir, Buḥeiret** *see* Nasser, Lake  
**Nassau** *capital of* The Bahamas  
 36 C1  
**Nasser, Lake** *reservoir* Egypt  
*var.* Nāšir, Buḥeiret 54 B2  
**Natal** Brazil 43 H3  
**Natal Basin** *Undersea feature*  
 Indian Ocean 123 A5  
**Natitingou** Benin 57 E4  
**Naturaliste Plateau** *undersea*  
*feature* Indian Ocean 123 E6  
**Natzrat** Israel *Eng.* Nazareth  
 101 A5  
**Nauru** *country* Pacific Ocean  
 126 D3  
**Navapolatsk/Novopolotsk**  
 Belarus *Rus.* Novopolotsk  
 89 D5  
**Navassa Island** *unincorporated*  
*territory* USA, West Indies  
 36 D3  
**Navoiy** Uzbekistan  
*Uzb.* Nawoly 104 D2  
**Nawābshāh** Pakistan 116 B3  
**Nawoly** *see* Navoiy  
**Naxçıvan** Azerbaijan *Rus.*  
 Nakhichevan' 99 G3  
**Náxos** *island* Greece 87 D6  
**Nay Pyi Taw** *capital of*  
 Myanmar 118 B3  
**Nazareth** *see* Natzrat  
**Nazca** Peru 42 B4  
**Nazrēt** Ethiopia 55 C5  
**Nazwá** Oman 103 E5  
**N'Dalatando** Angola 60 B2  
**Ndélé** Central African Republic  
 58 C4  
**N'Djaména** *capital of* Chad  
 58 B3  
**Ndola** Zambia 60 D2  
**Nebitdag** *see* Balkanabat  
**Nebraska** *state* USA 24-25 E3  
**Neches** *river* S USA 29 H3  
**Neckar** *river* Germany  
 77 B5  
**Necochea** Argentina 47 D5  
**Neftzavodsk** *see* Seydi  
**Neḡelē** Ethiopia 55 C5  
**Negev** *see* HaNegev  
**Negro, Río** *river* Argentina  
 47 C5  
**Negro, Río** *river* Brazil/Uruguay  
 44 C4  
**Negro, Río** *river* N South  
 America 40 C1  
**Neiva** Colombia 40 B3  
**Nellore** India 115 E2  
**Neman** *river* NE Europe *Bel.*  
 Nyoman, *Lith.* Nemunas, *Ger.*  
 Memel, *Pol.* Niemen 88 B4  
**Nemunas** *see* Neman  
**Nemuro** Japan 112 E2  
**Nepal** *country* S Asia 117  
**Neris** *river* Belarus/Lithuania  
*Bel.* Viliya, *Pol.* Wilja 88 C4  
**Ness, Loch** *lake* Scotland, UK  
 70 C3  
**Netherlands** *country* W Europe  
*var.* Holland 68-69  
**Netze** *see* Noteč  
**Neubrandenburg** Germany  
 76 D3  
**Neuchâtel, Lac de** *lake*  
 Switzerland 77 A7  
**Neumünster** Germany 76 C2  
**Neuquén** Argentina 47 C5  
**Neusiedler** *See lake* Austria/  
 Hungary 77 E6  
**Neusohl** *see* Banská Bystrica  
**Neutra** *see* Nitra  
**Nevada** *state* USA 26-27  
**Nevers** France 72 C4  
**Nevşehir** Turkey 98 C3  
**New Amsterdam** Guyana 41 G2  
**Newark** New Jersey, USA 23 F3  
**New Britain** *island* Papua New  
 Guinea 126 B3  
**New Brunswick** *province*  
 Canada 21 F4  
**New Caledonia** *special*  
*collectivity* France, Pacific  
 Ocean 126 C5  
**New Caledonia** *island* Pacific  
 Ocean 124 D3  
**New Caledonia Basin** *undersea*  
*feature* Pacific Ocean  
 124 D4  
**Newcastle** Australia 131 D6  
**Newcastle upon Tyne**  
 England, UK 70 D4  
**New Delhi** *capital of* India  
 116 D3  
**Newfoundland & Labrador**  
*province* Canada 21 F2  
**Newfoundland** *island* Canada  
 21 G3  
**Newfoundland Basin** *undersea*  
*feature* Atlantic Ocean  
 48 B3  
**New Georgia Islands** *island*  
*group* Solomon Is 126 C3  
**New Guinea** *island* Pacific  
 Ocean 126 B3  
**New Hampshire** *state* USA  
 23 G2  
**New Haven** Connecticut, USA  
 23 G3

## New Ireland — North Korea

- New Ireland** *island* Papua New Guinea 126 C3
- New Jersey** *state* USA 23 F4
- Newman** Australia 128 B4
- New Mexico** *state* USA 28-29
- New Orleans** Louisiana, USA 30 C3
- New Plymouth** New Zealand 132 D3
- Newport** Oregon, USA 26 A3
- Newport News** Virginia, USA 23 F5
- New Providence** *island* The Bahamas 36 C1
- Newry** Northern Ireland, UK 71 B5
- New Siberian Islands** *see* Novosibirskiye Ostrova
- New South Wales** *state* Australia 131 C6
- New York** *state* USA 23 F3
- New York** New York, USA 23 F3
- New Zealand** *country* Pacific Ocean 132-133
- Neyshābūr** Iran 102 D3
- Ngaoundéré** Cameroon 58 B4
- Ngerulmud** *capital of* Palau 126 A1
- N'Giva** Angola 60 C3
- N'Guigmi** Niger 57 H3
- Nha Trang** Vietnam 119 E5
- Niagara Falls** *waterfall* Canada/USA 23 E3
- Niamey** *capital of* Niger 57 F3
- Niangay, Lac** *lake* Mali 56 E3
- Nias, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 120 B3
- Nicaragua** *country* Central America 34-35
- Nicaragua, Lago de** *lake* Nicaragua 34 D3
- Nice** France 73 E6
- Nicobar Islands** *island group* India 115 H3
- Nicosia** *capital of* Cyprus *var.* Lefkosia, *Turk.* Lefkoşa 98 C5
- Nicoya, Peninsula de** *peninsula* Costa Rica 34 D4
- Niemen** *see* Neman
- Nieuw Amsterdam** Suriname 41 H2
- Niğde** Turkey 98 D4
- Niger** *country* W Africa 57
- Niger** *river* W Africa 56-57 D3
- Niger, Mouths of the** *delta* Nigeria 57 F5
- Nigeria** *country* W Africa 57
- Niigata** Japan 112 C4
- Nijmegen** Netherlands 68 D4
- Nikolayev** *see* Mykolayiv
- Nikopol'** Ukraine 91 F3
- Nile** *river* N Africa 54 B3
- Nile Delta** *wetlands* Egypt 54 B1
- Nîmes** France 73 D6
- Ninetyeast Ridge** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 C5
- Ningbo** China 111 D5
- Ningxia** *autonomous region* China 110-111 B4
- Nioro** Mali 56 D3
- Nipigon, Lake** *lake* Canada 20 B4
- Niš** Serbia 82 E4
- Nitra** Slovakia *Ger.* Neutra, *Hung.* Nyitra 81 C6
- Nitra** *river* Slovakia *Ger.* Neutra, *Hung.* Nyitra 81 C6
- Niue** *associated territory* New Zealand, Pacific Ocean 127 F4
- Nizāmābād** India 114 D1
- Nizhnevartovsk** Russian Federation 96 D3
- Nizhniy Novgorod** Russian Federation *prev.* Gor'kiy 93 C5 96 B3
- Nkongssamba** Cameroon 58 B4
- Norak** Tajikistan 105 E3
- Nord** Greenland 65 E2
- Nordauslandet** *island* Svalbard 65 G1
- Norfolk** Virginia, USA 23 F5
- Norfolk Island** *external territory* Australia, Pacific Ocean 124 D4
- Nori'Isk** Russian Federation 96 D3
- Norfolk Ridge** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 124 D4
- Norman** Oklahoma, USA 28 F2
- Normandie** *region* France *Eng.* Normandy 72 B3
- Normandy** *see* Normandie
- Normanton** Australia 130 C3
- Norrköping** Sweden 67 C6
- Norseman** Australia 129 C6
- North Albanian Alps** *mountains* Albania/Montenegro 83 D5
- North America** 16-17
- North Andaman** *island* India 115 G2
- North Atlantic Ocean** 64-65
- North Australian Basin** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 124 A2 128 A2
- North Bay** Canada 20 D4
- North Cape** *coastal feature* New Zealand 132 C1
- North Cape** *coastal feature* Norway 66 D2
- North Carolina** *state* USA 31 F1
- North Dakota** *state* USA 24-25 D2
- North Fiji Basin** *undersea feature* Coral Sea 124 D3
- Northern Cook Islands** *islands* Cook Islands 127 G4
- Northern Cyprus, Turkish Republic of** *disputed region* Cyprus 98 C5
- Northern Dvina** *river* Russian Federation *see* Severnaya Dvina 63 G2
- Northern Ireland** *province* UK 70-71
- Northern Mariana Islands** *commonwealth territory* USA, Pacific Ocean 124 C1
- Northern Sporades** *see* Vóreies Sporádes
- Northern Territory** *territory* Australia 130 A3
- North European Plain** *region* N Europe 62 E3
- North Frisian Islands** *islands* Denmark/Germany 76 B2
- North Island** *island* New Zealand 132 G2
- North Korea** *country* E Asia 110

- North Little Rock** Arkansas, USA 30 B1
- North Platte** Nebraska, USA 25 E4
- North Platte** *river* C USA 24 D3
- North Pole** *ice feature* Arctic Ocean 137 G3
- North Sea** Atlantic Ocean 70 E2
- North Siberian Lowland** *lowlands* Russian Federation 94-95
- North Taranaki Bight** *gulf* New Zealand 132 D3
- North Uist** *island* Scotland, UK 70 B3
- Northwest Territories** *territory* Canada 19 E3
- Norway** *country* N Europe 66-67
- Norwegian Sea** Arctic Ocean 137 G5
- Norwich** England, UK 71 E6
- Noteć** *river* Poland *Ger.* Netze 80 C3
- Nottingham** England, UK 71 D6
- Nottingham Island** *island* Hudson Strait 20 D1
- Nouâdhibou** Mauritania 56 B2
- Nouakchott** *capital of* Mauritania 56 B2
- Nouméa** *capital of* New Caledonia 126 D5
- Nova Gradiška** Croatia 82 C3
- Nova Iguaçu** Brazil 43 F5 45 F2
- Novara** Italy 78 B2
- Nova Scotia** *province* Canada 21 F4
- Novaya Zemlya** *islands* Russian Federation 137 H4
- Novaya Zemlya Trench** *see* East Novaya Zemlya Trench
- Novi Sad** Serbia 82 D3
- Novokuznetsk** Russian Federation *prev.* Stalinsk 96 D4
- Novopolotsk** *see* Navapolatsk/Novopolotsk
- Novosibirsk** Russian Federation 96 D4
- Novosibirskiy Ostrova** *islands* Russian Federation *Eng.* New Siberian Islands 95 F1
- Novo Urgench** *see* Urgench
- Novyy Margilan** *see* Farg'ona
- Nsanje** Malawi 61 E3
- Nsawam** Ghana 57 E5
- Nubian Desert** *desert* Sudan 54 B3
- Nu'eima** West Bank 101 D7
- Nuevo Laredo** Mexico 33 E2
- Nuku'alofa** *capital of* Tonga 127 F5
- Nukus** Uzbekistan 104 C2
- Nullarbor Plain** *region* Australia 129 D6
- Nunap Isua Island** *coastal region* Greenland *var.* Uummannaruaq *Dan.* Kap Farvel 64 C5
- Nunavut** *Territory* Canada 19 F3
- Nunivak Island** *island* Alaska, USA 18 B2
- Nuoro** Italy 79 A5
- Nuremberg** *see* Nürnberg
- Nürnberg** Germany *Eng.* Nuremberg 77 C5
- Nusa Tenggara** *islands* East Timor / Indonesia 120 E5
- Nuuk** Greenland *var.* Godthåb 64 C4
- Nyainqêntanglha** *Shan mountain range* China 108 D5
- Nyala** Sudan 54 A4
- Nyasa, Lake** *lake* E Africa 51 D5
- Nyeri** Kenya 55 C6
- Nyima** China 108 C4
- Nyíregyháza** Hungary 81 E6
- Nyitra** *see* Nitra
- Nyköbing** Denmark 67 B8
- Nyköping** Sweden 67 C6
- Nyngan** Australia 131 D6
- Nyoman** *see* Neman
- Oban** Scotland, UK 70 C4
- Obihiro** Japan 112 D2
- Obo** Central African Republic 58 D4
- Oceania** 124-125
- Ocean Island** *see* Banaba
- Oceanside** California, USA 27 C8
- Ochamchira** *see* Och'amch'ire
- Ochamchire** Georgia *prev.* Och'amch'ire, *Rus.* Ochamchira 99 E1
- Och'amch'ire** *see* Ochamchire
- Ödenburg** *see* Sopron
- Odense** Denmark 67 B7
- Oder** *river* C Europe 80 C4
- Odesa** Ukraine *Rus.* Odessa 91 E4
- Odesa** *see* Odesa
- Odesa** Texas, USA 29 E3
- Odienné** Côte d'Ivoire 56 D4
- Oesel** *see* Saaremaa
- Ofanto** *river* Italy 79 D5
- Offenbach** Germany 77 B5
- Ogaden** *plateau* Ethiopia 55 D5
- Ogallala** Nebraska, USA 24 D4
- Ogbomoshó** Nigeria 57 F4
- Ogden** Utah, USA 24 B3
- Ogdensburg** New York, USA 23 F2
- Oger** *see* Ogre
- Ogre** Latvia *Ger.* Oger 88 C3
- Ogulin** Croatia 82 B3
- Ohio** *state* USA 22 D4
- Ohio** *river* N USA 22 B5
- Ohrid** Macedonia 83 D6
- Ohrid, Lake** *lake* Albania/ Macedonia 83 D6
- Ohře** *river* Czech Republic/ Germany *Ger.* Eger 81 A5
- Ōita** Japan 113 B6
- Okavango** *river* *var.* Cubango southern Africa 60 C3
- Okavango Delta** *wetland* Botswana 60 C3
- Okayama** Japan 113 B5
- Okazaki** Japan 113 C5
- Okeechobee, Lake** *lake* Florida, USA 31 F4
- Okhotsk** Russian Federation 97 G3

## O

- Oakland** California, USA 27 B6
- Oakley** Kansas, USA 25 E4
- Oamaru** New Zealand 133 B7
- Oaxaca** Mexico 33 F5
- Ob'** *river* Russian Federation 96 D4

## Okhotsk, Sea of — Owensboro

- Okhotsk, Sea of** Pacific Ocean 134 C1
- Okinawa island** Japan 113 A8
- Oki-shotō island group** Japan 113 B5
- Oklahoma state** USA 29 F1
- Oklahoma City** Oklahoma, USA 29 F2
- Okushiri-tō island** Japan 112 C2
- Okāra** Pakistan 116 C2
- Öland island** Sweden 67 C7
- Olavarría** Argentina 46 D4
- Olbia** Italy 79 B5
- Oldenburg** Germany 76 B3
- Oleksandriya** Ukraine *Rus.* Aleksandriya 91 E3
- Oleněk** Russian Federation 97 E3
- Ölgiy** Mongolia 108 C2
- Olhão** Portugal 74 C4
- Olita** see Alytus
- Olmaliq** see Almylak
- Olmütz** see Olomouc
- Olomouc** Czech Republic *Ger.* Olmütz 81 C5
- Olsztyn** Poland *Ger.* Allenstein 80 D2
- Olt river** Romania 90 B5
- Olympia** Washington, USA 26 B2
- Omaha** Nebraska, USA 25 F4
- Oman country** SW Asia 103 D6
- Oman, Gulf of sea feature** Indian Ocean 103 E5, 122 B3
- Omdurman** Sudan 54 B4
- Omsk** Russian Federation 96 C4
- Onega river** Russian Federation 92 C4
- Onega, Lake** see Onezhskoye Ozero
- Onezhskoye Ozero lake** Russian Federation *Eng.* Lake Onega 92 B3
- Ongele** India 115 E2
- Onitsha** Nigeria 57 F5
- Onslow** Australia 128 A4
- Ontario province** Canada 18 B3
- Ontario, Lake lake** Canada/USA 17 D5
- Oostende** Belgium *Eng.* Ostend 69 A5
- Opole** Poland *Ger.* Oppeln 80 C4
- Oporto** see Porto
- Oppeln** see Opole
- Oradea** Romania 90 B3
- Oran** Algeria 52 D1
- Orange River river** southern Africa 60 C4
- Oranjestad** Aruba 37 E5
- Orantes River** Asia 100 B3
- Ordu** Turkey 98 D2
- Ordzhonikidze** see Vladikavkaz
- Örebro** Sweden 67 C6
- Oregon state** USA 26
- Orël** Russian Federation 83 A5
- Orem** Utah, USA 24 B4
- Orenburg** Russian Federation 93 C6 96 B4
- Orense** see Ourense
- Orestiada** Greece 86 D3
- Orinoco river** Colombia/*Venezuela* 41 E3
- Oristano** Italy 79 A5
- Orkney islands** Scotland, UK 70 C2
- Orlando** Florida, USA 31 E4
- Orléans** France 72 C4
- Örnköldsvik** Sweden 67 C5
- Orantes river** SW Asia 100 B3
- Orosirá Rodópis** see Rhodope Mountains
- Orsha** Belarus 89 E5
- Orsk** Russian Federation 93 D6 96 B4
- Oruro** Bolivia 42 C4
- Ōsaka** Japan 113 C5
- Osborn Plateau undersea feature** Indian Ocean 123 C5
- Ösel** see Saaremaa
- Osh** Kyrgyzstan 105 F2
- Oshawa** Canada 20 D5
- Oshkosh** Wisconsin, USA 22 B2
- Osijek** Croatia 82 C3
- Oslo capital of** Norway 67 B6
- Osmaniye** Turkey 98 D4
- Osnabrück** Germany 76 B3
- Osorno** Chile 47 B5
- Oss** Netherlands 68 D4
- Ossora** Russian Federation 97 H2
- Ostend** see Oostende
- Östersund** Sweden 67 C5
- Ostrava** Czech Republic *Eng.* Mährisch-Ostrau, *prev.* Moravská Ostrava 81 C5
- Ostrołęka** Poland 80 D3
- Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski** Poland 80 D4
- Ōsumi-shotō island group** Japan 113 A7
- Otago Peninsula peninsula** New Zealand 133 B7
- Otaru** Japan 112 D2
- Oti river** Africa 57 E4
- Otranto, Strait of sea feature** Albania/Italy 79 E5
- Ottawa capital of** Canada 20 D4
- Ottawa river** Canada 20 D4
- Ou river** Laos 118 C3
- Ouachita river** SE USA 30 B2
- Ouagadougou capital of** Burkina Faso 57 E3
- Ouarâne desert** Mauritania 56 D2
- Ouargla** Algeria 53 E2
- Ouessant, île d' island** France 72 A3
- Ouéso** Congo 59 C5
- Oujda** Morocco 52 D2
- Oulu** Finland 66 D4
- Oulu river** Finland 66 D4
- Oulujärvi lake** Finland 66 E4
- Ounasjoki river** Finland 66 D3
- Our river** W Europe 69 E7
- Ourense** Spain *Cast.* Orense 74 C2
- Ourinhos** Brazil 44 D2
- Ourthe river** Belgium 69 D6
- Outer Hebrides island group** UK *var.* Western Isles 70 B3
- Outer Islands island group** Seychelles 11 H2
- Ouyen** Australia 131 C6
- Oviedo** Spain 74 D1
- Owando** Congo 59 C6
- Owen Fracture Zone tectonic feature** Arabian Sea 122 B3
- Owensboro** Kentucky, USA 22 B5

**Oxford** England, UK 71 D6  
**Oxnard** California, USA 29 C7  
**Oyem** Gabon 59 B5  
**Oyo** Nigeria 57 F4  
**Ozark Plateau plain** Arkansas/  
 Missouri, USA 25 G5  
**Ózd** Hungary 81 D6

---

**P**


---

- Paamiut** Greenland 64 B4  
**Pachuca** Mexico 33 E4  
**Pacific-Antarctic Ridge**  
*undersea feature* Pacific  
 Ocean 136 B5  
**Pacific Ocean** 134-135  
**Padang** Indonesia 120 B4  
**Paderborn** Germany 76 B4  
**Padova** Italy *Eng.* Padua 78 C2  
**Padre Island** *island* Texas, USA  
 29 G5  
**Padua** see Padova  
**Paducah** Kentucky, USA 22 B5  
**Paeroa** Waikato, New Zealand  
 132 D3  
**Pafos** see Paphos  
**Pag** *island* Croatia 82 A3  
**Pago Pago** *capital of* American  
 Samoa 127 F4  
**Paide** Estonia *Ger.* Weissenstein  
 88 D2  
**Paihia** New Zealand 132 D2  
**Painted Desert** *desert* SW USA  
 28 C1  
**Pais Valenciano** *cultural region*  
 Spain 75 F3  
**Pakistan** *country* S Asia 116  
**Pakokku** Myanmar 118 A3  
**Palagruza** *island* Croatia 83 B5  
**Palau** *country* Pacific Ocean  
*var.* Belau 124 B2 126  
**Palawan** *island* Philippines  
 121 E2  
**Palawan Passage** *passage*  
 Philippines 121 E2  
**Paldiski** Estonia *prev.* Baltiski,  
*Eng.* Baltic Port, *Ger.*  
 Baltischport 88 C2  
**Palembang** Indonesia 120 C4  
**Palencia** Spain 74 D2  
**Palermo** Italy 79 C6  
**Palikir** *capital of* Micronesia  
 126 C2  
**Paliouíri, Akrotirio** *coastal*  
*feature* Greece *var.* Akra  
 Kanestron 86 C4  
**Palk Strait** *sea feature*  
 India/Sri Lanka 115 E3  
**Palliser, Cape** *headland* New  
 Zealand 133 D5  
**Palm Springs** California, USA  
 27 D8  
**Palma** Spain 75 G3  
**Palmer Land** *physical region*  
 Antarctica 136 A3  
**Palmerston North** New Zealand  
 132 D4  
**Palmyra** see Tudmur  
**Palmyra Atoll** *incorporated*  
*territory* USA, Pacific Ocean  
 125 F2  
**Palu** Indonesia 121 E4  
**Pamir river** Afghanistan/  
 Tajikistan 105 F3  
**Pamirs** *mountains* Tajikistan  
 105 F3  
**Pampa** Texas, USA 29 E2  
**Pampas** *region* South America  
 46 C4  
**Pamplona** Spain *var.* Iruña 75 F1  
**Pānāji** India 114 C2  
**Panama** *country* Central  
 America 35  
**Panamá, Golfo de** *sea feature*  
 Panama 35 F5  
**Panama Canal** *canal* Panama  
 35 F4  
**Panama City** *capital of* Panama  
 35 F5  
**Panama City** Florida, USA  
 30 D3  
**Pancevo** Serbia 82 D3  
**Panevėžys** Lithuania 88 C4  
**Pantanal** *region* Brazil 38 C4  
**Pantelleria** *island* Italy 79 B7  
**Papeete** *capital of* French  
 Polynesia 127 H4  
**Paphos** Cyprus *var.* Pafos 98 C5  
**Papua** *province* Indonesia *prev.*  
 Irian Jaya 121 H4  
**Papua New Guinea** *country*  
 Pacific Ocean 126  
**Paracel Islands** *disputed*  
*territory* Asia 120 D1  
**Paragua river** Venezuela 41 E3  
**Paraguay** *country* South  
 America 44  
**Paraguay river** C South  
 America 38 C4 44 B2  
**Parakou** Benin 57 F4  
**Paramaribo** *capital of* Suriname  
 41 G2  
**Paraná** Argentina 46 D4  
**Paraná river** C South America  
 46 D3  
**Paranaíba** Brazil 43 G2  
**Paraparaumu** New Zealand  
 132 D4  
**Pardubice** Czech Republic *Ger.*  
 Pardubitz 81 B5  
**Pardubitz** see Pardubice  
**Parepare** Indonesia 121 E4  
**Paris** *capital of* France 72 C3  
**Paris** Texas, USA 29 G2  
**Parma** Italy 78 B3  
**Pärnu** Estonia *Rus.* Pyarnu,  
*prev.* Pernov, *Ger.* Pernau  
 88 C2  
**Páros** *island* Greece 87 D6  
**Pasadena** California, USA 27 C7  
**Pasadena** Texas, USA 29 G4  
**Passo Fundo** Brazil 44 D3  
**Pasto** Colombia 40 B4  
**Patagonia** *region* S South  
 America 47 C6  
**Patheín** Myanmar *prev.* Bassein  
 118 A4  
**Patna** India 117 F3  
**Patos, Lagoa dos lagoons** Brazil  
 44 D4  
**Pátra** Greece 87 B5  
**Pattani** Thailand 119 C7  
**Pattaya** Thailand 119 C5  
**Patuca river** Honduras 34 D2  
**Pau** France 73 B6  
**Pavlodar** Kazakhstan 96 C4  
**Pavlograd** see Pavlohrad  
**Pavlohrad** Ukraine *Rus.*  
 Pavlograd 91 G3  
**Paysandú** Uruguay 44 B4

- Pazardzhik Bulgaria** *prev.* Tatar Pazardzhik 86 C2
- Pearl river** SE USA 30 C3
- Peawanuck** Canada 20 C2
- Peč** see Pejë/Peč
- Pechora river** Russian Federation 92 D3
- Pecos** Texas, USA 29 E3
- Pecos river** SW USA 28 D2
- Pécs** Hungary *Ger.* Fünfkirchen 81 C7
- Pegasus Bay** bay New Zealand 133 C5
- Pegu** see Bago
- Peipsi Järv** see Peipus, Lake
- Peipus, Lake** *lake* Estonia/  
Russian Federation *Est.* Peipsi Järv, *Rus.* Chudskoye Ozero 88 D2
- Peiraias** Greece *var.* Piraiévs, *Eng.* Piraeus 87 C5
- Pejë/Peč** Kosovo *Serb.* Peč 83 D5
- Pekalongan** Jawa, Indonesia 120 C4
- Pekanbaru** Indonesia 120 B3
- Peking** see Beijing
- Pelagie, Isola** *island* Italy 79 B8
- Peloponnese** see Pelopónnisos
- Pelopónnisos** *peninsula* Greece *Eng.* Peloponnese 87 B5
- Pelotas** Brazil 44 C4
- Pelotas river** Brazil 44 C3
- Pematangsiantar** Indonesia 120 B3
- Pemba** *island* Tanzania 51 E5
- Pendleton** Oregon, USA 26 C2
- Pennines** hills England, UK 70 D4
- Pennsylvania state** USA 23 E3
- Penong** Australia 131 A6
- Penonomé** Panama 35 F5
- Penrhyn atoll** Cook Islands 125 F3
- Penrhyn Basin** *undersea* *feature* Pacific Ocean 135 E2
- Pensacola** Florida, USA 30 D3
- Penza** Russian Federation 93 B5
- Penzance** England, UK 71 C7
- Peoria** Illinois, USA 22 B4
- Percival Lakes** *lakes* Australia 128 C4
- Pereira** Colombia 40 B3
- Périgueux** France 73 B5
- Perm'** Russian Federation *prev.* Molotov 93 D5 96 B3
- Pernau** see Pärnu
- Pernik** Bulgaria *prev.* Dimitrovo 86 C2
- Pernov** see Pärnu
- Perpignan** France 73 C6
- Persian Gulf** *sea* *feature* Arabian Sea *var.* The Gulf 122 B2
- Perth** Australia 129 B6
- Perth** Scotland, UK 70 C3
- Perth Basin** *undersea* *feature* Indian Ocean 123 E6
- Peru** C South America 42
- Peru-Chile Trench** *undersea* *feature* Pacific Ocean 135 G3
- Perugia** Italy 78 C4
- Pescara** Italy 78 D4
- Peshāwar** Pakistan 116 C1
- Petah Tikva** Israel 101 A5
- Peterborough** England, UK 71 E6
- Peterborough** Canada 20 D5
- Peter the First Island** *island* Antarctica 136 A4
- Petra** see Wādī Mūsā
- Petrich** Bulgaria 86 C3
- Petroaleksandrovsk** see To'rtko'l
- Petrograd** see St Petersburg
- Petropavlovsk** Russian Federation 96 C4
- Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy** Russian Federation 97 H3
- Petrozavodsk** Russian Federation 92 B3
- Pevek** Russian Federation 97 G1
- Pforzheim** Germany 77 B6
- Phangan, Ko** *island* Thailand 119 C6
- Philadelphia** Pennsylvania, USA 23 F4
- Philippine Basin** *undersea* *feature* Pacific Ocean 124 B1
- Philippine Trench** *undersea* *feature* Philippine Sea 124 A2
- Philippines** *country* Asia 121
- Philippine Sea** Pacific Ocean 121 F1 124 A1
- Philippopolis** see Plovdiv
- Phnom Penh** *capital of* Cambodia 119 D6
- Phoenix** Arizona, USA 28 B2
- Phoenix Islands** *island group* Kiribati 127 F3
- Phôngsali** Laos 118 C3
- Phuket** Thailand 119 B7
- Phuket, Ko** *island* Thailand 119 B7
- Phum' Sámraoŋg** Cambodia 119 D5
- Piacenza** Italy 78 B2
- Piatra-Neamț** Romania 90 C3
- Piave** *river* Italy 78 C2
- Picton** New Zealand 133 C5
- Pielinen** *lake* Finland 66 E4
- Pierre** South Dakota, USA 25 E3
- Piešťany** Slovakia *Ger.* Píšťan, *Hung.* Póstyén 81 C6
- Pietermaritzburg** South Africa 60 D4
- Pihkva Järv** see Pskov, Lake
- Piła** Poland *Ger.* Schneidemühl 80 C3
- Pilar** Paraguay 44 B3
- Pilchilemu** Chile 46 B4
- Pilcomayo** *river* C South America 44 B2 46 D2
- Pilsen** see Plzeň
- Pinar del Río** Cuba 36 A2
- Pindos** *mountain range* Greece *Eng.* Pindus Mountains 86 A4
- Pindus Mountains** see Pindos
- Pine Bluff** Arkansas, USA 30 B2
- Pine Creek** Australia 128 E2
- Pinega** *river* Russian Federation 92 C3
- Pineiós** *river* Greece 86 B4
- Pines, Akrotirio** *coastal* *feature* Greece 86 C4
- Ping, Mae Nam** *river* Thailand 118 C4
- Pinsk** Belarus *Pol.* Pińsk 89 B4
- Piraeus** see Peiraías
- Piraiévs** see Peiraías

- Pisa** Italy 78 B3  
**Pisco** Peru 42 B4  
**Pishpek** see Bishkek  
**Pistyan** see Piešťany  
**Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie & Oeno Islands** *overseas territory* UK, Pacific Ocean 125 G4  
**Piteå** Sweden 66 D4  
**Pitești** Romania 90 C4  
**Pittsburgh** Pennsylvania, USA 23 E4  
**Piura** Peru 42 A2  
**Pivdenny Bug** *river* Ukraine 91 E3  
**Plasencia** Spain 74 D3  
**Plata, Rio de la** *river* Argentina/Uruguay *var.* River Plate 44 B5 46 D4  
**Plate, River** see **Plata, Rio de la**  
**Platte** *river* C USA 25 E4  
**Plattensee** see **Balaton**  
**Plenty, Bay of** *bay* New Zealand 132 E3  
**Pleven** Bulgaria 86 C1  
**Płock** Poland 80 D3  
**Ploiești** Romania 90 C4  
**Plodiv** Bulgaria *Gk.* Philippopolis 86 C2  
**Plungė** Lithuania 88 B4  
**Plymouth** *capital of* Montserrat 37 G3  
**Plymouth** England, UK 71 C7  
**Plzeň** Czech Republic *Ger.* Pilsen 81 A5  
**Po** *river* Italy 78 B2  
**Pocatello** Idaho, USA 26 E4  
**Po Delta** *wetland* Italy 78 C3  
**Podgorica** *capital of* Montenegro 83 C5  
**Pohnpei Island** *island* Micronesia 126 C2  
**Pointe-Noire** Congo 59 B6  
**Poitiers** France 72 B4  
**Poland** *country* E Europe 80-81  
**Polatsk** Belarus 89 D5  
**Pol-e Khomrī** see **Pul-e Khumrī**  
**Poltava** Ukraine 91 F2  
**Poltoratsk** see **Aşgabat**  
**Polynesia** *region* Pacific Ocean 127
- Pomeranian Bay** *bay* Germany/Poland 80 B2  
**Pompano Beach** Florida, USA 31 F5  
**Ponca City** Oklahoma, USA 29 G1  
**Pondicherry** India 115 E2  
**Ponta Grossa** Brazil 44 D2  
**Pontevedra** Spain 74 C1  
**Pontianak** Indonesia 120 C4  
**Poona** see **Pune**  
**Poopó, Lake** *lake* Bolivia 42 C5  
**Popayán** Colombia 40 B3  
**Poprad** Slovakia *Ger.* Deutschendorf 81 D5  
**Porbandar** India 116 B4  
**Pori** Finland 67 D5  
**Porsgrunn** Norway 67 B6  
**Portalegre** Portugal 74 C3  
**Port Angeles** Washington, USA 26 A1  
**Port Arthur** Texas, USA 29 H4  
**Port Augusta** Australia 131 B6  
**Port-au-Prince** *capital of* Haiti 36 D3  
**Port Blair** India 115 G2  
**Port Douglas** Australia 130 D3  
**Port Elizabeth** South Africa 60 D5  
**Port-Gentil** Gabon 59 A6  
**Port Harcourt** Nigeria 57 F5  
**Port Hardy** Canada 18 D5  
**Port Harrison** see **Inukjuak**  
**Port Hedland** Australia 128 B4  
**Portland** Australia 131 B7  
**Portland** Maine, USA 23 G2  
**Portland** Oregon, USA 26 B2  
**Port Lincoln** Australia 131 A6  
**Port Louis** *capital of* Mauritius 61 H4  
**Port Macquarie** Australia 131 E6  
**Port Moresby** *capital of* Papua New Guinea 126 B3  
**Porto** Portugal *Eng.* Oporto 74 C2  
**Porto Alegre** Sao Tome and Principe 44 D4
- Port-of-Spain** *capital of* Trinidad & Tobago 37 G5  
**Porto-Novo** *capital of* Benin 57 F5  
**Porto Velho** Brazil 42 C3  
**Portoviejo** Ecuador 40 A4  
**Port Said** see **Būr Sa'īd**  
**Portsmouth** England, UK 71 D7  
**Port Sudan** Sudan 54 C3  
**Portugal** *country* SW Europe 74  
**Port-Vila** *capital of* Vanuatu 126 D5  
**Porvenir** Chile 47 B7  
**Posadas** Argentina 46 E3  
**Posen** see **Poznań**  
**Poste-de-la-Baleine** see **Kuujujarapik**  
**Pöstyén** see **Piešťany**  
**Potenza** S Italy 79 D5  
**Poti** Georgia 99 E2  
**Potosí** Bolivia 42 C5  
**Potsdam** Germany 76 D4  
**Póvoa de Varzim** Portugal 74 C2  
**Powder** *river* N USA 24 C2  
**Powell, Lake** *lake* SW USA 24 B5  
**Poza Rica** Mexico 33 F4  
**Poznań** Poland *Ger.* Posen 80 C3  
**Pozo Colorado** Paraguay 44 B2  
**Pozsony** see **Bratislava**  
**Prag** see **Prague**  
**Prague** *capital of* Czech Republic *Cz.* Praha, *Ger.* Prag 81 B5  
**Praha** see **Prague**  
**Praia** *capital of* Cape Verde 56 A3  
**Prato** Italy 78 B3  
**Pratt** Kansas, USA 25 E5  
**Preschau** see **Prešov**  
**Prescott** Arizona, USA 28 B2  
**Presidente Prudente** Brazil 44 D2  
**Prešov** Slovakia *Ger.* Eperies, *var.* Preschau, *Hung.* Eperjes 81 D5  
**Prespa, Lake** *lake* SE Europe 83 D6 86 A3  
**Presque Isle** Maine, USA 23 G1

**Pressburg** see Bratislava  
**Preston** England, UK 71 D5  
**Pretoria** *judicial capital of* South Africa 60 D4  
**Préveza** Greece 86 A4  
**Prijedor** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 B3  
**Prilep** Macedonia 83 E5  
**Prince Albert** Canada 19 F5  
**Prince Edward Island** *province* Canada 21 F4  
**Prince Edward Islands** *island group* South Africa 123 A7  
**Prince George** Canada 19 E5  
**Prince of Wales Island** *island* Canada 19 F2  
**Prince Rupert** Canada 18 D4  
**Princess Charlotte Bay** *bay* Australia 130 C2  
**Princess Elizabeth Land** *region* Antarctica 136 C3  
**Principe** *island* Sao Tome & Principe 59 A5  
**Pripet** *river* Belarus/Ukraine 90 C1  
**Pripet Marshes** *wetlands* Belarus/Ukraine 90 C1  
**Prishtinë** *capital of* Kosovo 83 D5  
**Prizren** Kosovo 83 D5  
**Prome** see Pyay  
**Prossnitz** see Prostějov  
**Prostějov** Czech Republic *Ger.* Prossnitz 81 C5  
**Provence** *region* France 73 D6  
**Providence** Rhode Island, USA 23 G3  
**Providencia, Isla de** *island* Colombia 35 E3  
**Provo** Utah, USA 24 B4  
**Prudhoe Bay** Alaska, USA 18 D2  
**Przheval'sk** see Karakol  
**Pskov** Russian Federation 92 A4  
**Pskov, Lake** *lake* Estonia/*Russian Federation Est.* Pihkva Järv, Rus. Pskovskoye Ozero 88 D3  
**Pskovskoye Ozero** see Pskov, Lake  
**Ptich'** see Ptsich  
**Ptsich** *river* Belarus *Rus.* Ptich' 89 D6  
**Pucallpa** Peru 42 B3  
**Puebla** Mexico 33 F4  
**Pueblo** Colorado, USA 22 D4  
**Puerto Aisén** Chile 47 B6  
**Puerto Barrios** Guatemala 34 C2  
**Puerto Carreño** Colombia 40 D2  
**Puerto Cortés** Honduras 34 C2  
**Puerto Deseado** Argentina 47 C6  
**Puerto Maldonado** Peru 42 C4  
**Puerto Montt** Chile 47 B5  
**Puerto Natales** Chile 47 B7  
**Puerto Plata** Dominican Republic 37 E3  
**Puerto Princesa** Philippines 120 E2  
**Puerto Rico** *commonwealth territory* USA, West Indies 37 F3  
**Puerto San Julián** Argentina 47 C7  
**Puerto Suárez** Bolivia 42 D4  
**Puerto Vallarta** Mexico 32 D4  
**Pula** Croatia 82 A3  
**Pul-e Khumri** Afghanistan *prev.* Pol-e Khomri 105 E4  
**Pune** India *prev.* Poona 114 C1  
**Puno** Peru 42 C4  
**Punta Arenas** Chile *prev.* Magallanes 47 B7  
**Puntarenas** Costa Rica 34 D4  
**Purmerend** Netherlands 68 C3  
**Purus** *river* Brazil/Peru 42 C3  
**Pusan** see Busan  
**Putrajaya** *administrative capital of* Malaysia 120 B3  
**Putumayo** *river* NW South America 38 B3  
**Pyapon** Myanmar 118 B4  
**Pyarnu** see Pärnu  
**Pyay** Myanmar *prev.* Prome 118 A4  
**Pyongyang** *capital of* North Korea 110 E4

**Pyramid Lake** *lake* Nevada, USA 27 C5  
**Pyrenees** *mountain range* SW Europe 62 C4

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## Q

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**Qaanaaq** Greenland *var.* Thule 64 D1  
**Qābatiya** West Bank 101 D7  
**Qaidam Pendi** *basin* China 108 D4  
**Qalāt** Afghanistan *prev.* Kalāt 104 D5  
**Qalqilya** West Bank 101 D7  
**Qamdo** China 108 D5  
**Qandahār** see Kandahār  
**Qaqortoq** Greenland 64 C4  
**Qara Qum** see Karakumy  
**Qarshi** see Karshi  
**Qasigiannqit** Greenland 64 C3  
**Qatar** *country* SW Asia 103 D5  
**Qattara Depression** see Qattārah, Munkhafad al  
**Qattārah, Munkhafad al** *desert basin* Egypt *Eng.* Qattara Depression 54 A1  
**Qausuittuq** see Resolute  
**Qeqertarsuaq** Greenland 64 B3  
**Qeqertarsuaq** *island* Greenland 64 B3  
**Qian** see Guizhou  
**Qilian Shan** *mountain range* China 108 A4  
**Qimussersarsuaq** *bay* Greenland 64 C2  
**Qinā** Egypt 54 B2  
**Qingdao** China 110 D4  
**Qinghai** *province* China *var.* Chinghai, Koko Nor, Qing, Tsinghai 108 D4  
**Qinghai Hu** *lake* China *var.* Koko Nor 108 D4  
**Qingzang** *Goayuan plateau* China *Eng.* Plateau of Tibet 110 A4  
**Qiong** see Hainan  
**Qiqihar** China 110 D3  
**Qira** China 108 B4  
**Qitai** China 108 C3



- Qom Iran** *var.* Kum 102 C3  
**Qondūz river** Afghanistan 105 E4  
**Qondūz** *see* Kunduz  
**Qo'qon** Uzbekistan *prev.* Kokand, *var.* Khokand, 105 E2  
**Quba** Azerbaijan *Rus.* Kuba 99 H2  
**Québec** Canada 21 E4  
**Québec province** Canada 20 D3  
**Queen Charlotte Islands** *islands* Canada 18 D4  
**Queen Charlotte Sound** *sea feature* Canada 18 D5  
**Queen Elizabeth Islands** *islands* Canada 19 F1  
**Queensland state** Australia 130 C4  
**Queenstown** New Zealand 133 B6  
**Quelimane** Mozambique 61 E3  
**Querétaro** Mexico 33 E4  
**Quetta** Pakistan 116 B2  
**Quezaltenango** Guatemala 34 B2  
**Quibdó** Colombia 40 B2  
**Quimper** France 72 A3  
**Quy Nhon** Vietnam 119 E5  
**Qing** *see* Qinghai  
**Quito** *capital of* Ecuador 40 A4  
**Qūrhontepa** Tajikistan *Rus.* Kurgan–Tynbe 105 E3  
**Qyteti Stalin** *see* Kuçovë
- 
- R**
- 
- Raab** *see* Győr  
**Raab** *see* Rába  
**Rába river** Austria/Hungary *Ger.* Raab 81 C7  
**Rabat** *capital of* Morocco 52 C2  
**Race, Cape** *coastal feature* Canada 21 H4  
**Rach Gia** Vietnam 119 D6  
**Radom** Poland 80 D4  
**Radviliškis** Lithuania 88 C4  
**Ragusa** Italy 79 D7  
**Rahimiyār Khān** Pakistan 116 C3  
**Raipur** India 117 E5  
**Rājahmundry** India 115 E1  
**Rājasthān state** India 116 C3  
**Rājkot** India 116 C4  
**Rājshāhi** Bangladesh 117 G4  
**Rakaia river** New Zealand 133 C6  
**Rakvere** Estonia *Ger.* Wesenberg 88 D2  
**Raleigh** North Carolina, USA 31 F1  
**Ralik Chain** *islands* Marshall Islands 126 D1  
**Râmnicu Vâlcea** Romania *prev.* Rimnicu Vilcea 90 B4  
**Ramallah** West Bank 101 D7  
**Ramree Island** *island* Myanmar 118 A3  
**Rancagua** Chile 46 B4  
**Rānchi** India 117 F4  
**Randers** Denmark 67 A7  
**Rangiora** New Zealand 133 C6  
**Rangitikei river** New Zealand 132 D4  
**Rangoon** *see* Yangon  
**Rankin Inlet** Canada 19 G3  
**Rapid City** South Dakota, USA 24 D3  
**Rarotonga** *island* Cook Islands 127 G5  
**Rasht** Iran 102 C3  
**Ratak Chain** *islands* Marshall Islands 126 D1  
**Ratchaburi** Thailand 119 C5  
**Rat Islands** *island group* Alaska, USA 18 A2  
**Raukumara Range** *mountain range* New Zealand 132 E3  
**Rauma** Finland 67 D5  
**Ravenna** Italy 78 C3  
**Rāwālpindi** Pakistan 116 C1  
**Rawson** Argentina 47 C6  
**Razgrad** Bulgaria 86 D1  
**Reading** England, UK 71 D6  
**Rebecca, Lake** *lake* Australia 129 C6  
**Rebun-tō** *island* Japan 112 D1  
**Rechytsa** Belarus 89 D7  
**Recife** Brazil 43 H3  
**Recklinghausen** Germany 76 G4  
**Red Deer** Canada 19 E5  
**Redding** California, USA 27 B5  
**Red River river** S USA 30 B3  
**Red River river** China/ Vietnam 118  
**Red Sea** Indian Ocean 122 A3  
**Reefton** New Zealand 133 C5  
**Regensburg** Germany 77 C5  
**Reggane** Algeria 52 D3  
**Reggio di Calabria** Italy 79 D6  
**Reggio nell' Emilia** Italy 78 B3  
**Regina** Canada 19 F5  
**Rehoboth** Namibia 60 C4  
**Reichenberg** *see* Liberec  
**Reid** Australia 129 D6  
**Reims** France *Eng.* Rheims 72 D3  
**Reindeer Lake** *lake* Canada 17 C4  
**Reni** Ukraine 90 D4  
**Rennes** France 72 B3  
**Reno** Nevada, USA 27 B5  
**Resistencia** Argentina 46 D3  
**Reșița** Romania 90 B4  
**Resolute** Canada *Var.* Qausuittq 19 F2  
**Réunion overseas department** France, Indian Ocean 123 B5  
**Reus** Spain 75 G2  
**Reutlingen** Germany 77 B6  
**Reval** *see* Tallinn  
**Revel** *see* Tallinn  
**Revillagigedo, Islas** *island* Mexico 32 B4  
**Rey, Isla del** *island* Panama 35 F5  
**Reykjavik** *capital of* Iceland 65 E5  
**Reynosa** Mexico 33 E2  
**Rēzekne** Latvia *Ger.* Rositten, *Rus.* Rezhitsa 88 D4  
**Rezhitsa** *see* Rēzekne  
**Rheims** *see* Reims  
**Rhine river** W Europe 62 D3  
**Rhode Island** *state* USA 23 G3

## Rhodes — Ryūkyū-rettō

- Rhodes** see Ródos
- Rhodope Mountains** *mountain range* Bulgaria/Greece *Gk.* Orosirá Rodópis, *Bul.* Despotó Planina 86 C3
- Rhône river** France/Switzerland 62 C4
- Ribeirão Preto** Brazil 45 E1
- Riberalta** Bolivia 42 C3
- Rîbnița** Moldova 90 D3
- Richfield** Utah, USA 24 B4
- Richland** Washington, USA 24 C2
- Richmond** Kentucky, USA 22 C5
- Richmond** New Zealand 133 C5
- Richmond** Virginia, USA 23 E5
- Richmond Range** *mountain range* New Zealand 133 C5
- Ricobayo, Embalse de** *reservoir* Spain 74 D2
- Riga** *capital of Latvia* *Latv.* Rīga 88 C3
- Riga, Gulf of** *sea feature* Baltic Sea 88 C3
- Riihimäki** Finland 67 D5
- Rijeka** Croatia *It.* Fiume 82 A3
- Rimah, Wādī ar dry** *watercourse* Saudi Arabia 103 B5
- Rimini** Italy 78 C3
- Rîmnicu Vâlcea** see Râmnicu Vâlcea
- Riobamba** Ecuador 40 A4
- Río Branco** Brazil 42 C3
- Río Cuarto** Argentina 46 C4
- Río de Janeiro** Brazil 45 F2
- Río Gallegos** Argentina 47 C7
- Río Grande** Brazil 44 D4
- Río Grande** *river* N America 16 B6
- Río Grande Rise** *undersea feature* Atlantic Ocean 49 C6
- Río Verde** Mexico 33 E3
- Rishiri-tō** *island* Japan 112 D1
- Rivas** Nicaragua 34 D3
- Rivera** Uruguay 44 C4
- Riverside** California, USA 27 C8
- Riverton** New Zealand 133 A7
- Rivne** Ukraine *Rus.* Rovno 90 C2
- Riyadh** *capital of Saudi Arabia* *Ar.* Ar Riyāḍ 103 C5
- Rize** Turkey 99 E2
- Rkíz** Mauritania 56 C3
- Road Town** *capital of British Virgin Islands* 37 F3
- Roanne** France 73 D5
- Roanoke** Virginia, USA 23 E5
- Roanoke** *river* SE USA 31 G1
- Robinson Range** *mountain range* Australia 129 B5
- Rochester** Minnesota, USA 25 F3
- Rochester** New York, USA 23 E3
- Rockford** Illinois, USA 22 B3
- Rockhampton** Australia 130 D4
- Rock Island** Illinois, USA 22 B3
- Rock Springs** Wyoming, USA 24 C3
- Rockstone** Guyana 41 G2
- Rocky Mountains** *mountain range* Canada/USA 18-19 D4
- Rodez** France 73 C6
- Ródhos** see Ródos
- Ródos** *island* Greece *var.* Ródhos, *Eng.* Rhodes 87 E6
- Ródos** Greece *Eng.* Rhodes 87 E6
- Rodosto** see Tekirdağ
- Roeselare** Belgium 69 A5
- Roma** Australia 131 D5
- Roma** see Rome
- Romania** *country* SE Europe 90
- Rome** *capital of Italy* *It.* Roma 78 C4
- Rome** Georgia, USA 30 D2
- Rønne** Denmark 67 B8
- Ronne Ice Shelf** *ice feature* Antarctica 136 B3
- Roosendaal** Netherlands 68 C4
- Rosario** Argentina 46 D4
- Roseau** *capital of Dominica* 37 G4
- Rosenau** see Rožňava
- Rositten** see Rēzekne
- Ross Ice Shelf** *ice feature* Antarctica 136 B4
- Ross Sea** Antarctica 136 B4
- Rostak** see Ar Rustāq
- Rostock** Germany 76 C2
- Rostov-na-Donu** Russian Federation 96 A3
- Roswell** New Mexico, USA 28 D2
- Rotorua** New Zealand 132 D3
- Rotorua, Lake** *lake* New Zealand 132 D3
- Rotterdam** Netherlands 68 C4
- Rouen** France 72 C3
- Rovaniemi** Finland 66 D3
- Rovno** see Rivne
- Rovuma** *river* Mozambique/Tanzania 61 F2
- Roxas City** Philippines 121 E2
- Rožňava** Slovakia *Ger.* Rosenaus, *Hung.* Rozsnyó 81 D6
- Rozsnyó** see Rožňava
- Ruatoria** New Zealand 132 E3
- Ruawai** New Zealand 132 D2
- Rudnyy** Kazakhstan 96 C4
- Rudolf, Lake** see Lake Turkana
- Rügen** *headland* Germany 76 D2
- Rukwa, Lake** *lake* Tanzania 55 B7
- Rumbek** South Sudan 55 B5
- Rundu** Namibia 60 C3
- Ruoqiang** China 108 C3
- Ruse** Bulgaria 86 D1
- Russian Federation** *country* Europe/Asia 92-93 96-97
- Rustavi** Georgia 99 F2
- Rutland** Vermont, USA 23 F2
- Rutog** China 108 B4
- Rwanda** *country* C Africa 55
- Ryazan'** Russian Federation 93 B5 96 B3
- Rybinskoye Vodokhranilishche** *Reservoir* Russian Federation *Eng.* Rybinsk Reservoir 92 B4
- Rybník** Poland 81 C5
- Ryūkyū-rettō** *island group* Japan 113 A8

**Ryukyu Trench** *Undersea feature* East China Sea 134 B2

**Rzeszów** Poland 81 E5Saale  
*river* Germany 76 C4

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**Saarbrücken** Germany 77 A5

**Saare** see Saaremaa

**Saaremaa** *island* Estonia *var.* Saare, Sarema, *Ger.* Osel, *var.* Oesel 88 C2

**Šabac** Serbia 82 C3

**Sabadell** Spain 75 G2

**Sabah** *cultural region* Borneo 120 D3

**Sab'atayn, Ramlat as desert** Yemen 103 C7

**Sabhā** Libya 53 F3

**Sabzevār** Iran 102 D3

**Sacramento** California, USA 27 B6

**Ša'dah** Yemen 103 B6

**Sado** *island* Japan 112 C4

**Safi** Morocco 52 B2

**Saginaw** Michigan, USA 22 C3

**Sahara** *desert* N Africa 50 B3

**Sahel** *region* W Africa 50 B3

**Saïda** Lebanon *anc.* Sidon 100 B4

**Saidpur** Bangladesh 117 G3

**Saigon** see Hồ Chi Minh

**Saimaa** *lake* Finland 67 E5

**Saint-Brieuc** France 72 A3

**Saint Catherines** Canada 20 D5

**Saint-Chamond** France 73 D5

**St Christopher & Nevis** see St Kitts & Nevis

**St Cloud** Minnesota, USA 25 F2

**St-Denis** *capital of* Réunion 61 H4

**Saintes** France 72 B5

**Saint-Étienne** France 73 D5

**Saint George** Australia 131 D5

**St. George's** *capital of* Grenada 37 G5

**St Helena** *overseas territory* UK, Atlantic Ocean 49 D5

**St Helier** *capital* Jersey 71 D8

**Saint-Jean, Lake** *lake* Canada 21 E4

**Saint John** Canada 21 F4

**St John's** *country capital* Antigua and Barbuda 37 G3

**Saint John's** Canada 21 H3

**St Joseph** Missouri, USA 25 F4

**St Kitts & Nevis** *country* West Indies *var.* St Christopher & Nevis 37

**St-Laurent-du-Maroni** French Guiana 41 H2

**Saint Lawrence** *river* Canada 21 E4

**Saint Lawrence, Gulf of** *sea feature* Canada 21 F3

**St. Lawrence Island** *island* Alaska, USA 18 C2

**Saint-Lô** France 73 B3

**Saint Louis** Senegal 56 B3

**St Louis** Missouri, USA 25 G4

**St Lucia** *country* West Indies 37

**Saint-Malo** France 72 B3

**Saint-Nazaire** France 72 B4

**Saint Paul** Minnesota, USA 25 F2

**St-Paul, Île** *island* French Southern and Antarctic Lands 123 C6

**St Peter Port** *capital of* Guernsey 71 D8

**St Petersburg** Russian Federation *Rus.* Sankt-Peterburg, *prev.* Leningrad, Petrograd 92 B3 96 B2

**St Petersburg** Florida, USA 31 E4

**Saint Pierre & Miquelon** *overseas collectivity* France, Atlantic Ocean 21 G4

**St Vincent, Cape** see São Vicente, Cabo de

**St Vincent & The Grenadines** *country* West Indies 37

**Saipan** *island country capital* Northern Mariana Islands 124 B1

**Sakākah** Saudi Arabia 102 B4

**Sakakawea, Lake** *lake* North Dakota, USA 24 D2

**Sakarya** see Adapazarı

**Sakhalin** *island* Russian Federation 97 H4

**Sal** *island* Cape Verde 56 A2

**Salado** *river* Argentina 46 C3

**Šalālah** Oman 103 D6

**Salamanca** Spain 74 D2

**Sala y Gómez** *island* Chile, Pacific Ocean 135 F4

**Saldus** Latvia *Ger.* Frauenburg 88 B3

**Salekhard** Russian Federation 96 D3

**Salem** India 114 D2

**Salem** Oregon, USA 26 A3

**Salerno** Italy 79 D5

**Salerno, Golfo di** *sea feature* Italy 79 D5

**Salihorsk** Belarus *Rus.* Soligorsk 89 C6

**Salima** Malawi 61 E2

**Salinas** California, USA 27 B6

**Salisbury** England, UK 71 D7

**Salisbury Island** *island* Canada 20 D1

**Salonica** see Thessaloniki

**Salso** *river* Italy 79 C7

**Salt** see As Salt

**Salta** Argentina 46 C2

**Saltillo** Mexico 33 E2

**Salt Lake City** Utah, USA 24 B4

**Salto** Uruguay 44 B4

**Salton** *Sea lake* California, USA 27 D8

**Salvador** Brazil 43 G4

**Salween** *river* SE Asia 111 A6

**Salzburg** Austria 77 D6

**Salzgitter** Germany 76 C4

**Samara** Russian Federation 93 C6 96 B3

**Samarinda** Indonesia 121 E4

**Samarkand** Uzbekistan 104 D2

**Sambre** *river* Belgium 69 B7

**Samoa** *country* Pacific Ocean 127 F4

**Samobor** Croatia 82 B3

**Sámos** *island* Greece 87 D5

**Samothrace** see Samothráki

**Samothráki** *island* Greece *Eng.*

Samothrace 86 D3

**Samsun** Turkey 98 D2

## Samui, Ko — Saragossa

- Samui, Ko** *island group*  
Thailand 119 C6
- San river** Poland 81 E5
- Saña** Peru 42 A3
- Sana** *capital of Yemen* var.  
Şan'ä' 103 B7
- Sanandaj** Sinneh. Iran 102 C3
- San Andrés, Isla de** *island*  
Colombia 35 E3
- San Angelo** Texas, USA 29 F3
- San Antonio** Chile 46 B4
- San Antonio** Texas, USA 29 F4
- San Antonio river** S USA 29 G4
- San Antonio Oeste** Argentina  
47 C5
- Sanāw** Yemen 103 C6
- San Bernardino** California, USA  
27 C7
- San Carlos** Uruguay 44 C5
- San Carlos de Bariloche**  
Argentina 47 B5
- San Clemente Island** *island W*  
USA 27 C8
- San Cristóbal** Venezuela 40 C2
- San Diego** California, USA  
27 C8
- Sandwich Island** see Efate
- San Fernando** Trinidad &  
Tobago 37 G5
- San Fernando** Venezuela 40 D2
- San Fernando de Noronha**  
*island* Brazil 43 H2
- San Francisco** California, USA  
27 B6
- Sangir, Kepulauan** *island group*  
Indonesia 121 F3
- San Ignacio** Belize 34 C1
- San Joaquin Valley** *valley W*  
USA 27 B6
- San José** *capital of Costa Rica*  
34 D4
- San Jose** California, USA 27 B6
- San José del Guaviare**  
Colombia 40 C3
- San Juan** Argentina 46 B3
- San Juan river** Costa Rica/  
Nicaragua 34 D4
- San Juan** *capital of Puerto Rico*  
37 F3
- San Juan Bautista** Paraguay  
44 B3
- San Juan de los Morros**  
Venezuela 40 D1
- Sankt Martin** see Martin
- Sankt-Peterburg** see St  
Petersburg
- Sankt Pölten** Austria 77 E6
- Şanlıurfa** Turkey *prev.* Urfa  
98 E4
- San Lorenzo** Honduras 34 C3
- San Luis Potosí** Mexico 33 E3
- San Marino** *country S Europe*  
78 C3
- San Matías, Golfo** *sea feature*  
Argentina 39 C6
- San Miguel** El Salvador 34 C3
- San Miguel de Tucumán**  
Argentina 46 C3
- San Nicolas Island** *island W*  
USA 27 B8
- San Pedro Sula** Honduras  
34 C2
- San Remo** Italy 78 A3
- San Salvador** *capital of El*  
Salvador 34 C3
- San Salvador de Jujuy**  
Argentina 46 C2
- San Sebastián** see Donostia/  
San Sebastián
- Santa Ana** El Salvador 34 B2
- Santa Ana** California, USA 27 C8
- Santa Barbara** California, USA  
27 B7
- Santa Catalina Island** *island W*  
USA 27 C8
- Santa Clara** Cuba 36 B2
- Santa Cruz** Bolivia 42 D4
- Santa Cruz** California, USA  
27 B6
- Santa Cruz Islands** *island group*  
Solomon Islands 126 C4
- Santa Fe** Argentina 46 D3
- Santa Fe** New Mexico, USA  
28 D2
- Santa Maria** Brazil 44 C4
- Santa Marta** Colombia 40 C1
- Santander** Spain 75 E1
- Santanilla, Islas** *islands*  
Honduras 35 E1
- Santarém** Brazil 43 E2
- Santarém** Portugal 74 C3
- Santaren Channel** *Channel*  
The Bahamas 36 C2
- Santa Rosa** Argentina 47 C4
- Santa Rosa** California, USA  
27 A6
- Santa Rosa de Copán** Honduras  
34 C2
- Santa Rosa Island** *island W*  
USA 27 B8
- Santiago** *island* Cape Verde  
56 A3
- Santiago** *capital of Chile* 46 B4
- Santiago** Dominican Republic  
37 E3
- Santiago** Panama 35 F5
- Santiago de Compostela** Spain  
74 C1
- Santiago de Cuba** Cuba 36 C3
- Santiago del Estero** Argentina  
46 C3
- Santo Antão** *island* Cape Verde  
56 A2
- Santo Domingo** *capital of*  
Dominican Republic 37 E3
- Santo Domingo de los**  
Colorados Ecuador 40 A4
- Santorini** *island* Greece  
87 D6
- Santos** Brazil 45 E2
- São Borja** Brazil 44 C3
- São Francisco** *river* Brazil  
43 G3
- São José do Rio Preto** Brazil  
44 D1
- São Luís** Brazil 43 G2
- São Nicolau** *island* Cape Verde  
56 A2
- Saône** *river* France 72 D4
- São Paulo** Brazil 43 F5 45 E2
- São Tomé** *capital of Sao Tome*  
& Príncipe 59 A5
- São Tomé** *island* Sao Tome &  
Príncipe 59 A5
- Sao Tome & Principe** *country*  
W Africa 59
- São Vicente** *island* Cape  
Verde 56 A2
- São Vicente, Cabo de** *coastal*  
*feature* Portugal Eng. Cape  
St Vincent 74 B4
- Sapele** Nigeria 57 F5
- Sapporo** Japan 112 D2
- Saragossa** see Zaragoza

- Sarajevo** *capital of Bosnia & Herzegovina* 82 C4
- Sarandë** Albania 83 D6
- Saransk** Russian Federation 93 B5
- Saratov** Russian Federation 93 B6
- Sarawak** *state* Malaysia 120 D3
- Sardegna** *island* Italy *Eng.* Sardinia 79 A5
- Sardinia** *see* Sardegna
- Sarema** *see* Saaremaa
- Sargasso Sea** Atlantic Ocean 48 B4
- Sargodha** Pakistan 116 C2
- Sarh** Chad 58 C4
- Sāri** Iran 102 D3
- Saruhan** *see* Manisa
- Sasebo** Japan 113 A6
- Saskatchewan** *province* Canada 19 F5
- Saskatchewan** *river* Canada 19 F5
- Saskatoon** Canada 19 F5
- Sassandra** *River* Côte d'Ivoire 56 D5
- Sassari** Italy 79 A5
- Satu Mare** Romania 90 B3
- Saudi Arabia** *country* SW Asia 102-103
- Sault Sainte Marie** Canada 20 C4
- Sault Sainte Marie** Michigan, USA 22 C1
- Saurimo** Angola 60 C2
- Sava** *river* SE Europe 82 C3
- Savannah** Georgia, USA 31 F3
- Savannah** *river* SE USA 31 E2
- Savissivik** Greenland 64 C2
- Savona** Italy 78 A3
- Savu Sea** *sea* Indonesia 120 E5
- Sawhāj** Egypt *var.* Sohāg 54 B2
- Şawqirah** Oman 103 D6
- Saýat** Turkmenistan 104 D3
- Sayhūt** Yemen 103 D7
- Saynshand** Mongolia 109 E2
- Say** 'ün Yemen 103 C6
- Scandinavia** *geophysical region* Europe 48 D2
- Schaffhausen** Switzerland 77 B6
- Schaulen** *see* Šiauliai
- Schefferville** Canada 21 E2
- Scheldt** *river* W Europe 69 B5
- Schiermonnikoog** *island* Netherlands 68 D1
- Schneidemühl** *see* Pila
- Schwäbische Alb** *mountains* Germany 77 B6
- Schwarzwald** *Forested mountain region* Germany *Eng.* Black Forest 77 B6
- Schwerin** Germany 76 C3
- Scilly, Isles of** *islands* UK 71 B7
- Scotia Sea** Atlantic Ocean 136 A1
- Scotland** *national region* UK 70
- Scottsbluff** Nebraska, USA 24 D3
- Scottsdale** Arizona, USA 28 B2
- Scranton** Pennsylvania, USA 23 F3
- Scutari, Lake** *lake* Albania/Montenegro 83 C5
- Seddon** New Zealand 133 C5
- Seattle** Washington, USA 26 B2
- Ségou** Mali 56 D3
- Segovia** Spain 75 E2
- Segura** *river* Spain 75 E4
- Seikan Tunnel** *tunnel* Japan 112 D3
- Seinäjoki** Finland 67 D5
- Seine** *river* France 72 C3
- Sejong City** *administrative capital of* South Korea 110 E4
- Selfoss** Iceland 65 E5
- Semara** *see* Smara
- Semarang** Indonesia 120 D4
- Semey** Kazakhstan *prev.* Semipalatinsk 96 D4
- Semipalatinsk** *see* Semey
- Sendai** Japan 112 D4
- Senegal** *country* W Africa 56
- Senegal** *river* Africa 56 C3
- Sên, Stœng** *river* Cambodia 119 D5
- Seoul** *capital of* South Korea *Kor.* Sŏul 110 E4
- Sept-Îles** Canada 21 F3
- Seraing** Belgium 69 D6
- Seram, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 121 F4
- Serbia** *country* SE Europe 82 D3
- Serdar** Turkmenistan *prev.* Gyzylarbat, *prev.* Kizyl-Arvat 104 B2
- Serhetabat** Turkmenistan *prev.* Gushgy, Kushka 104 C4
- Serov** Russian Federation 96 C3
- Serpent's Mouth, The** *sea feature* Trinidad & Tobago/Venezuela *Sp.* Boca de la Serpiente 41 F1
- Serra do Mar** *mountains* Brazil 44 D3
- Sérres** Greece 86 C3
- Setesdal** *valley* Norway 67 A6
- Sétif** Algeria 53 E1
- Setúbal** Portugal 74 C4
- Seul, Lake** *lake* Canada 20 A3
- Sevana Lich** *lake* Armenia 99 G2
- Sevastopol'** Ukraine 91 F5
- Severn** *river* Canada 20 B3
- Severn** *river* England/Wales, UK 71 D6
- Severnaya Dvina** *river* Russian Federation *Eng.* Northern Dvina 92 C3
- Severnaya Zemlya** *island group* Russian Federation 137 H3
- Sevilla** Spain *Eng.* Seville 74 D4
- Seville** *see* Sevilla
- Seychelles** *country* Indian Ocean 61 122 B4
- Seyðisfjörður** Iceland 65 E4
- Seydi** Turkmenistan *prev.* Neftezavodsk 104 D2
- Seyhan** *see* Adana
- Sfax** Tunisia 53 F2
- 's-Gravenhage** *capital of* Netherlands *Eng.* The Hague 68 B3
- Shaan** *see* Shaanxi
- Shaanxi** *province* China *var.* Shaan, Shan-hsi, Shaanxi Sheng, Shenshi, Shensi 111 C5

## Shaanxi Sheng — Skagerrak

- Shaanxi Sheng** see Shaanxi  
**Shache** China 108 A3  
**Shackleton Ice Shelf** *ice feature*  
 Antarctica 136 D3  
**Shandong province** China *var.*  
 Lu, Shantung 110 D4  
**Shanghai** China 111 D5  
**Shangrao** China 111 D6  
**Shan-hsi** see Shaanxi  
**Shannon river** Ireland 71 B5  
**Shan Plateau** *upland* Myanmar  
 118 B3  
**Shantou** China 111 D6  
**Shantung** see Shandong  
**Sharjah** see Ash Shāriqah  
**Shawnee** Oklahoma, USA  
 29 G2  
**Shdanov** see Mariupol'  
**Shebeli river** Ethiopia/Somalia  
 55 D5  
**Sheberghān** see Shibirghān  
**Sheffield** England, UK 71 D5  
**Shengking** see Liaoning  
**Shenking** see Liaoning  
**Shenshi** see Shaanxi  
**Shensi** see Shaanxi  
**Shenyang** China 110 D3  
**Sherbrooke** Canada 21 E4  
**Sheridan** Wyoming, USA 22 C2  
**'s-Hertogenbosch** Netherlands  
 68 C4  
**Shetland islands** Scotland, UK  
 70 D1  
**Shevchenko** see Aktau  
**Shihezi** China 108 C2  
**Shijiazhuang** China 110 C4  
**Shikoku island** Japan 113 B6  
**Shikoku Basin** *undersea*  
*feature* Philippine Sea 134 B2  
**Shikotan island** Japan/Russian  
 Federation (disputed) 112 E2  
**Shikārpur** Pakistan 116 B3  
**Shimonoseki** Japan 113 A5  
**Shinano-gawa river** Japan  
 112 C4  
**Shingū** Japan 113 C5  
**Shinyanga** Tanzania 55 B7  
**Shiquanhe** see Gar  
**Shibirghān** Afghanistan  
*prev.* Sherberghān 104 D3  
**Shirāz** Iran 102 D4  
**Shkodër** Albania 83 D5  
**Shostka** Ukraine 91 E1  
**Shreveport** Louisiana, USA  
 30 A2  
**Shrewsbury** England, UK 71 D6  
**Shumen** Bulgaria 86 D2  
**Shymkent** Kazakhstan *prev.*  
 Chimkent 96 B5  
**Šiauliai** Lithuania *Ger.* Schaulen  
 88 B4  
**Šibenik** Croatia 82 B4  
**Siberia region** Russian  
 Federation 97 E3  
**Siberut, Pulau island** Indonesia  
 120 B4  
**Sibiu** Romania 90 B4  
**Sibolga** Indonesia 120 B3  
**Sibu** Malaysia 120 C3  
**Sibut** Central African Republic  
 58 C4  
**Sibuyan Sea** sea Philippines  
 121 E2  
**Sichuan province** China *var.*  
 Chuan, Ssu-ch'uan, Szechwan  
 111 B5  
**Sichuan Pendi depression**  
 China 111 B5  
**Sicilia island** Italy *Eng.* Sicily  
 79 C7  
**Sicily, Strait of sea feature**  
 Mediterranean Sea 79 B7  
**Sicily** see Sicilia  
**Sidi Bel Abbès** Algeria 52 D1  
**Sidon** see Saïda  
**Siednesibirskoye Ploskogor'ye**  
*plateau* Russian Federation  
*Eng.* Central Siberian Plateau  
 97 E3  
**Siegen** Germany 76 B4  
**Siena** Italy 78 B3  
**Sierra Leone country** W Africa  
 56  
**Sierra Madre del Sur mountain**  
*range* Mexico 33 E5  
**Sierra Madre Occidental**  
*mountain range* Mexico *var.*  
 Western Sierra Madre 17 B6  
**Sierra Madre Oriental**  
*mountain range* Mexico *var.*  
 Eastern Sierra Madre 32 D2  
**Sierra Nevada mountain range**  
 Spain 75 E4  
**Sierra Nevada mountain range**  
 W USA 27 B6  
**Sighisoara** Romania 90 C4  
**Siglufjörður** Iceland 65 E4  
**Siguirí** Guinea 56 D4  
**Sihanoukville** Cambodia *var.*  
 Kâmpóng Saôm 119 D6  
**Siirt** Turkey 99 F3  
**Siling Co lake** China 108 C5  
**Silkeborg** Denmark 67 A7  
**Sillein** see Žilina  
**Šilutė** Lithuania 88 B4  
**Simeulue, Pulau island**  
 Indonesia 120 A3  
**Simferopol'** Ukraine 91 F5  
**Simpson Desert** *desert*  
 Australia 130 C4  
**Sinai desert** Egypt 54 B1  
**Sincelejo** Colombia 40 B1  
**Sines** Portugal 74 B4  
**Singapore country** SE Asia 120  
**Singapore capital of** Singapore  
 120 C3  
**Sinking** see Xinjiang Uygur  
 Zizhiq  
**Sinnamary** French Guiana  
 41 H2  
**Sinop** Turkey 98 D2  
**Sint-Niklaas** Belgium 69 B5  
**Sintra** Portugal 74 B3  
**Sion** Switzerland 77 B7  
**Sioux City** Iowa, USA 25 F3  
**Sioux Falls** South Dakota, USA  
 25 E3  
**Siracusa** Italy *Eng.* Syracuse  
 79 D7  
**Siret river** Romania/Ukraine  
 90 C4  
**Sirikit Reservoir Reservoir**  
 Thailand 118 C4  
**Sirte, Gulf of** see Surt, Khalij  
**Sisak** Croatia 82 B3  
**Sisimiut** Greenland 64 C3  
**Sittoung river** Myanmar 118 B4  
**Sittwe** Myanmar *prev.* Akyab  
 118 A3  
**Sivas** Turkey 98 D3  
**Sjælland island** Denmark  
 67 B7  
**Skagerrak sea feature**  
 Denmark/Norway 67 A6

- Skellefteå** Sweden 66 D4  
**Skopje** *capital of* Macedonia 83 E5  
**Skövde** Sweden 67 B6  
**Skovorodino** Russian Federation 97 F4  
**Skye** *island* Scotland, UK 70 B3  
**Slavonski Brod** Croatia 82 C3  
**Sligo** Ireland 71 B5  
**Sliven** Bulgaria 86 D2  
**Slonim** Belarus 89 C6  
**Slovakia** *country* C Europe 81  
**Slovenia** *country* SE Europe 77  
**Slov'yans'k** Ukraine 91 G3  
**Ślupsk** Poland *Ger. Stolp* 78 C2  
**Slutsk** Belarus 89 C6  
**Smallwood Reservoir** *reservoir* Canada 21 E3  
**Smara** Western Sahara *var.* Semara 52 B3  
**Smederevo** Serbia 82 D3  
**Smolensk** Russian Federation 92 A4  
**Smyrna** *see* İzmir  
**Snake** *river* NW USA 26 D4  
**Snowdonia** *mountains* Wales, UK 71 C5  
**Sobradinho, Represa de** *Reservoir* Brazil 43 G3  
**Sochi** Russian Federation 93 A7 96 A3  
**Société, Îles de la** *islands* French Polynesia *Eng. Society Islands* 127 H4  
**Society Islands** *see* Société, Îles de la  
**Socotra** *see* Suqutrâ  
**Sodankylä** Finland 66 D3  
**Sofia** *capital of* Bulgaria *var.* Sofija, *Bul. Sofiya* 86 C2  
**Sofija** *see* Sofia  
**Sofiya** *see* Sofia  
**Sognefjorden** *inlet* Norway 67 A5  
**Sohâg** *see* Sawhâj  
**Sokhumi** Georgia *Rus. Sukhumi* 99 E1  
**Sokodé** Togo 57 E4  
**Sokoto** Nigeria 57 F3  
**Sokoto** *river* Nigeria 57 F3  
**Solapur** India 116 D5 114 D1  
**Sol, Costa del** *coastal region* Spain 75 E5  
**Soligorsk** *see* Salihorsk  
**Solomon Islands** *country* Pacific Ocean 126  
**Solomon Islands** *island group* PNG/Solomon Islands 124 C3  
**Solomon Sea** Pacific Ocean 126 B3  
**Somalia** *country* E Africa 54-55  
**Somali Basin** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 122 A4  
**Somaliland** *Disputed territory* E Africa 55 D5  
**Sombor** Serbia 82 C3  
**Somerset Island** *island* Canada 19 F2  
**Somme** *river* France 72 C3  
**Somoto** Nicaragua 34 D3  
**Songea** Tanzania 55 C8  
**Songkhla** Thailand 119 C7  
**Sonoran Desert** *see* Altar, Desierto de  
**Sopron** Hungary *Ger.* Odenburg 81 B6  
**Soria** Spain 75 E2  
**Sorocaba** Brazil 43 F5 45 E2  
**Sorong** Indonesia 124 G4  
**Sotavento, Ilhas de** *island group* Cape Verde *var.* Leeward Islands 56 A3  
**Souâr** Lebanon *anc. Tyre* 100 A4  
**Sousse** Tunisia 53 F1  
**South Africa** *country* southern Africa 60-61  
**South America** 38-39  
**Southampton** England, UK 71 D7  
**Southampton Island** *island* Canada 17 G3  
**South Andaman** *island* India 115 G2  
**South Australia** *state* Australia 131 A5  
**South Australian Basin** *undersea feature* Southern Ocean 124 B5  
**South Bend** Indiana, USA 22 C3  
**South Carolina** *state* USA 31 F2  
**South Carpathians** *see* Carpații Meridionali  
**South China Sea** Pacific Ocean 119 E7  
**South Dakota** *state* USA 24-25 E3  
**South East Point** *coastal feature* Australia 131 C7  
**Southeast Indian Ridge** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 E6  
**Southeast Pacific Basin** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 135 E5  
**Southend-on-Sea** England, UK 71 E6  
**Southern Alps** *mountain range* New Zealand 133 B6  
**Southern Cook Islands** *islands* Cook Islands 127 G5  
**Southern Cross** Australia 129 B6  
**Southern Ocean** *ocean* 123 D7  
**Southern Upland** *mountain range* Scotland, UK 70 C4  
**South Fiji Basin** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 124 D4  
**South Geomagnetic Pole** *pole* Antarctica 136 C3  
**South Georgia** *overseas territory* UK, Atlantic Ocean 136 A1  
**South Indian Basin** *undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 E7  
**South Island** *island* New Zealand 133 D5  
**South Korea** *country* E Asia 110-111  
**South Orkney Islands** *islands* Antarctica 136 A2  
**South Pole** *ice feature* Antarctica 136 B3  
**South Sandwich Islands** *overseas territory* UK, Atlantic Ocean 136 A1  
**South Shetland Islands** *islands* Antarctica 136 A2  
**South Sudan** *country* NE Africa 55 B5  
**South Taranaki Bight** *bight* New Zealand 132 C4  
**South Uist** *island* UK 70 B3  
**South West Cape** *headland* New Zealand 133 A8

## Southwest Indian Ridge — Suntar

- Southwest Indian Ridge**  
*undersea feature* Indian Ocean 123 B6
- Southwest Pacific Basin**  
*undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 125 F4
- Soweto** South Africa 60 D4
- Spain** *country* SW Europe 74-75
- Sparks** Nevada, USA 27 B5
- Sparta** see Spárta
- Spartanburg** South Carolina, USA 31 E2
- Spárta** Greece *Eng.* Sparta 87 B6
- Spencer Gulf** *gulf* Australia 131 B6
- Spitsbergen** *island* Svalbard 65 F2
- Split** Croatia 82 B4
- Spokane** Washington, USA 26 C2
- Spratly Islands** *islands* South China Sea 120 D2
- Spree** *river* Germany 76 D4
- Springfield** Illinois, USA 22 B4
- Springfield** Massachusetts, USA 23 G3
- Springfield** Missouri, USA 23 F5
- Springfield** Oregon, USA 26 A3
- Srebrenica** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C4
- Srednesibirskoye Ploskogor'ye**  
*var.* Central Siberian Uplands, *Eng.* Central Siberian Plateau. *mountain range* Russian Federation 97 E3
- Sri Jayewardenapura Kotte**  
*legislative capital of* Sri Lanka 115 E4
- Sri Lanka** *country* S Asia *prev.* Ceylon 115
- Srinagarind Reservoir** *Reservoir* Thailand 119 C5
- Srpska, Republika** *republic* Bosnia and Herzegovina 82 C3
- Ssu-ch'uan** see Sichuan
- Stalinabad** see Dushanbe
- Stalingrad** see Volgograd
- Stalin Peak** see Communism Peak
- Stalinsk** see Novokuznetsk
- Stambul** see Istanbul
- Stanley** *capital of* Falkland Islands 47 D7
- Stanleyville** see Kisangani
- Stara Planina** see Balkan Mountains
- Stara Zagora** Bulgaria 86 D2
- Starbuck Island** *island* Kiribati 125 F2
- Stavanger** Norway 67 A6
- Stavropol'** Russian Federation 93 A7 96 A3
- Steinamanger** see Szombathely
- Steinkjer** Norway 66 B4
- Stepanakert** see Xankändi
- Stettin** see Szczecin
- Stewart Island** *island* New Zealand 133 A8
- Štip** Macedonia 83 E5
- Stirling** Scotland, UK 70 C4
- Stockholm** *capital of* Sweden 67 C6
- Stockton** California, USA 27 B6
- Støeng Treng** Cambodia 119 D5
- Stoke-on-Trent** England, UK 71 D6
- Stolp** see Slupsk
- Storfjorden** *fjord* Norway 65 F2
- Stornoway** Scotland, UK 70 B2
- Stralsund** Germany 76 D2
- Stranraer** Scotland, UK 70 C4
- Strasbourg** France *Ger.* Strassburg 72 E4
- Stratford** New Zealand 132 D4
- Stratford-upon-Avon** England, UK 71 D6
- Stratonice** Czech Republic 81 A5
- Stromboli** *island* Italy 79 D6
- Struma** see Stymonas
- Strumica** Macedonia 83 E5
- Strymonas** *river* Bulgaria/*Greece var.* Struma 86 C3
- Studholme** New Zealand 133 B6
- Stuhlweissenburg** see Székesfehérvár
- Stuttgart** Germany 77 B6
- Subotica** Serbia 82 D2
- Suceava** Romania 90 C3
- Sucre** *legal capital of* Bolivia 42 C5
- Sudan** *country* NE Africa 54 B3
- Sudbury** Canada 20 C4
- Sudd** *region* South Sudan 55 B5
- Sudeten mountains** Central Europe *var.* Sudetes, Sudetic Mountains, Cz./Pol. Sudety 81 B5
- Sudetes** see Sudeten
- Sudetic Mountains** see Sudeten
- Sudety** see Sudeten
- Suez** see As Suways
- Suez, Gulf of sea** *feature* Red Sea 101 A8
- Suez Canal** *canal* Egypt *Ar.* Qanāt as Suways 54 B1
- Šuhār** Oman 103 D5
- Sühbaatar** Mongolia 109 E1
- Suhl** Germany 76 C5
- Sukabumi** Indonesia 120 C5
- Sukhumi** see Sokhumi
- Sukkur** Pakistan 116 B3
- Sula, Kepulauan** *island group* Indonesia 121 F4
- Sulawesi** *island* Indonesia *Eng.* Celebes 121 E4
- Sulu Archipelago** *island group* Philippines 121 E3
- Sülüktü** see Sulyukta
- Sulu Sea** Pacific Ocean 121 E2
- Sulyukta** Kyrgyzstan *Kir.* Sülüktü 105 E2
- Sumatra** *island* Indonesia 120 B4
- Sumba, Selat** *island* Indonesia 121 E5
- Sumbawanga** Tanzania 55 B7
- Sumbe** Angola 60 B2
- Sumgait** see Sumqayıt
- Sumqayıt** Azerbaijan *Rus.* Sumgait 99 H2
- Sumy** Ukraine 91 F1
- Sunda, Selat** *strait* Indonesia 120 D5
- Sunderland** England, UK 70 D4
- Sundsvall** Sweden 67 C5
- Suntar** Russian Federation 97 F3



Sunyani Ghana 57 E4  
 Superior Wisconsin, USA 22 A1  
 Superior, Lake lake Canada/  
 USA 16 C5  
 Suqutrā island Yemen var.  
 Socotra 103 D7 122 B3  
 Šūr Oman 103 E5  
 Surabaya Indonesia 120 D5  
 Surakarta Indonesia 120 D5  
 Sūrat India 116 C5  
 Surat Thani Thailand 119 C6  
 Sūre river W Europe 69 D7  
 Surfers Paradise Australia  
 131 E5  
 Surinam see Suriname  
 Suriname country NE South  
 America var. Surinam 41  
 Surkhob river Tajikistan 105 E3  
 Surt Libya var. Sidra 53 G2  
 Surt, Khalij sea feature  
 Mediterranean Sea Eng. Gulf  
 of Sirte, Gulf of Sidra 85 E4  
 Surtsey island S Iceland 65 E5  
 Susanville California, USA  
 27 B5  
 Suways, Qanāt as see Suez  
 Canal  
 Suva capital of Fiji 127 E4  
 Svalbard external territory  
 Norway, Arctic Ocean 65 G2  
 Svay Riēng Cambodia 119 D6  
 Sverdlovsk see Yekaterinburg  
 Svetlogorsk see Svyetlahorsk/  
 Svetlogorsk  
 Svyataya Anna Trough  
 undersea feature Kara Sea  
 137 H4  
 Svyetlahorsk/Svetlogorsk  
 Belarus Rus. Svetlogorsk  
 89 D6  
 Swakopmund Namibia 60 B3  
 Swansea Wales, UK 71 C6  
 Swaziland country southern  
 Africa 61  
 Sweden country N Europe  
 66-67  
 Sweetwater Texas, USA 29 F3  
 Swindon England, UK 71 D6  
 Switzerland country  
 C Europe 77  
 Sydney Australia 131 D6  
 Sydney Canada 21 G4

Syeverodonets'k Ukraine 91 G1  
 Syktyvkar Russian Federation  
 92 D4 96 C3  
 Sylhet Bangladesh 117 G4  
 Syracuse see Siracusa  
 Syracuse New York, USA 23 E3  
 Syr Darya river C Asia 104 D1  
 Syria country SW Asia 100-101  
 Syrian Desert desert SW Asia  
 Ar. Bādiyat ash Shām 101 C5  
 Szczecin Poland Ger. Stettin  
 80 B3  
 Szczeciński, Zalew bay  
 Germany/Poland 80 A2  
 Szechwan see Sichuan  
 Szeged Hungary Ger. Szegedin  
 81 D7  
 Szegedin see Szeged  
 Székesfehérvár Hungary Ger.  
 Stuhlweissenburg 81 C6  
 Szekešzárd Hungary 81 C7  
 Szolnok Hungary 81 D6  
 Szombathely Hungary Ger.  
 Steinamanger 81 B6

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## T

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Tabariya, Bahrat see  
 Tiberius, Lake  
 Tábór Czech Republic 81 B5  
 Tabora Tanzania 55 B7  
 Tabriz Iran 102 C2  
 Tabuaeran island Kiribati  
 127 G2  
 Tabūk Saudi Arabia 102 A4  
 Tacloban Philippines 120 F2  
 Tacna Peru 42 C4  
 Tacoma Washington, USA 26 B2  
 Tacuarembó Uruguay 44 C4  
 Tadmur see Tudmur  
 Taegu see Daegu  
 Taejön see Daejeon  
 Tafassâset, Ténéré du desert  
 Niger 57 G2  
 Taguatinga Brazil 43 F3  
 Tagus river Portugal/Spain Port.  
 Tejo, Sp. Tajo 74 C3  
 Tahiti island French Polynesia  
 127 H5  
 Tahoe, Lake lake W USA 27 B5  
 Tahoua Niger 57 F3  
 Taibei capital of Taiwan var.  
 Taipei 111 D6  
 T'aichung see Taizhong  
 Taieri 129 New Zealand 133 B7  
 Taihape New Zealand 132 D4  
 T'ainan see Tainan  
 Tainan Taiwan prev.  
 T'ainan 111 D6  
 Taipei see Taibei  
 Taiping Malaysia 120 B3  
 Taiwan country E Asia prev.  
 Formosa 111  
 Taiwan Strait sea feature East  
 China Sea/South China Sea  
 var. Formosa Strait 111 D7  
 Taiyuan China 110 C4  
 Taizhong Taiwan prev.  
 T'aichung 111 D6  
 Ta'izz Yemen 103 B7  
 Tajikistan country C Asia 105  
 Tajo see Tagus  
 Takapuna New Zealand 132 D2  
 Takla Makan see Taklimakan  
 Shamo  
 Taklimakan Shamo desert  
 region China var. Takla  
 Makan 108 B3  
 Talamanca, Cordillera de  
 mountains Costa Rica 35 E4  
 Talas Kyrgyzstan 105 F2  
 Talaud, Kepulauan island  
 group Indonesia 121 F3  
 Talca Chile 46 B4  
 Talcahuano Chile 46 B4  
 Taldykoigan Kazakhstan 96 C5  
 Tallahassee Florida, USA 30 D3  
 Tallinn capital of Estonia prev.  
 Revel, Ger. Reval, Rus. Tallin  
 88 D2  
 Talsen see Talsi  
 Talsi Latvia Ger. Talsen 88 B3  
 Tamale Ghana 57 E4  
 Tamanrasset Algeria 53 E4  
 Tambo Australia 130 C4  
 Tambov Russian Federation  
 93 B5  
 Talsen see Talsi  
 Talsi Latvia Ger. Talsen 88 B3  
 Tamale Ghana 57 E4  
 Tamanrasset Algeria 53 E4  
 Tambo Australia 130 C4  
 Tambov Russian Federation  
 93 B5  
 Tamil Nādu state India 114 D2  
 Tampa Florida, USA 31 E4  
 Tampere Finland 67 D5

## Tampico — Terni

- Tampico** Mexico 33 F3  
**Tamworth** Australia 131 D6  
**Tanami Desert** *desert* Australia 128 E3  
**Tananarive** *see* Antananarivo  
**Tanega-shima** *island* Japan 113 B7  
**Tanga** Tanzania 55 C7  
**Tanganyika, Lake** *lake* E Africa 51 D5  
**Tanger** Morocco *var.* Tangiers 52 C1  
**Tanggula Shan** *mountain range* China 108 C4  
**Tangiers** *see* Tanger  
**Tangra Yumco** *lake* China 108 B5  
**Tangshan** China 110 D4  
**Tanimbar Islands** *see* Tanimbar, Kepulauan  
**Tanimbar, Kepulauan** *island group* Indonesia *Eng.* Tanimbar Islands 121 F5  
**Tanjungkarang** *see* Bandar Lampung  
**Tan-Tan** Morocco 52 B3  
**Tanzania** *country* E Africa 55  
**Taoudenni** Mali 57 E2  
**Tapa** Estonia *Ger.* Taps 88 D2  
**Tapachula** Mexico 33 G5  
**Tapajós** *river* Brazil 43 E2  
**Taps** *see* Tapa  
**Ṭarābulus** *see* Tripoli, Lebanon  
**Ṭarābulus al-Gharb** *see* Tripoli, Libya  
**Taranto** Italy 79 E5  
**Taranto, Golfo di** *sea feature* Mediterranean Sea 79 E5  
**Tarapoto** Peru 42 B2  
**Tarawa** *island* Kiribati 127 E2  
**Taraz** Kazakhstan *prev.* Dzhambul, Zhambyl 96 C5  
**Tarbes** France 73 B6  
**Tarcoola** Australia 131 A5  
**Tărgoviște** Romania *prev.* Tîrgoviște 90 C4  
**Târgu Mureș** Romania *prev.* Tîrgu Mureș 90 C4  
**Tarija** Bolivia 42 C5  
**Tarim Basin** *basin* China 108 B3  
**Tarim He** *river* China 108 B3  
**Tarn** *river* France 73 C6  
**Tarnów** Poland 81 D5  
**Tarragona** Spain 75 G2  
**Tarsus** Turkey 98 D4  
**Tartu** Estonia *prev.* Yur'yev, *var.* Yurev, *Ger.* Dorpat 88 D3  
**Ṭarṭus** Syria 100 B3  
**Tashauz** *see* Daşoguz  
**Tashkent** *capital of* Uzbekistan *var.* Taškent, *Uzb.* Toshkent 105 E2  
**Taškent** *see* Tashkent  
**Tasman Bay** *inlet* New Zealand 132 C4  
**Tasmania** *state* Australia 131 C8  
**Tasman Basin** *undersea feature* Tasman Sea 124 D5  
**Tasman Plateau** *undersea feature* Pacific Ocean 124 C5  
**Tasman Sea** Pacific Ocean 134 C4  
**Tassili-n-Ajjer** *desert plateau* Algeria 53 E4  
**Tatabánya** Hungary 81 C6  
**Tatar Pazardzhik** *see* Pazardzhik  
**Taubaté** Brazil 43 F5 45 E2  
**Taumarunui** New Zealand 132 D3  
**Taunggyi** Myanmar 118 B3  
**Taunton** England, UK 71 D7  
**Taupo** New Zealand 132 D3  
**Taupo, Lake** *lake* New Zealand 132 D3  
**Tauragė** Lithuania 88 B4  
**Tauranga** New Zealand 132 D3  
**Taurus Mountains** *mountain range* Turkey *see* Toros Dağları 94 D4  
**Tavoy** *see* Dawei  
**Tawau** Malaysia 120 D3  
**Taymyr, Ozero** *lake* Russian Federation 97 E2  
**Taymyr, Poluostrov** *peninsula* Russian Federation *Eng.* Taymyr Peninsula 97 E2  
**Taymyr Peninsula** *see* Taymyr, Poluostrov  
**Tbilisi** *capital of* Georgia *prev.* Tiflis 99 F2  
**Te Anau** New Zealand 133 A7  
**Te Anau, Lake** *lake* New Zealand 133 A7  
**Tedzhen** *see* Tejen  
**Tegal** Indonesia 120 C5  
**Tegucigalpa** *capital of* Honduras 34 C2  
**Teheran** *see* Tehrān  
**Tehrān** *capital of* Iran *prev.* Teheran 102 C3  
**Tehuacán** Mexico 33 F4  
**Tehuantepec, Golfo de** *sea feature* Mexico 33 G5  
**Tejen** Turkmenistan *prev.* Tedzhen 104 C3  
**Tejo** *see* Tagus  
**Te Kao** New Zealand 131 C1  
**Tekirdağ** Turkey *It.* Rodosto 98 A2  
**Te Kuiti** Waikato, New Zealand 132 D3  
**Tel Aviv-Yafo** Israel 101 A5  
**Teles Pires** *river* Brazil 43 E3  
**Tell Atlas** *plateau* Africa 84 C3  
**Telschen** *see* Telšiai  
**Telšiai** Lithuania *Ger.* Telschen 88 B4  
**Temuco** Chile 47 B5  
**Ténéré** *physical region* Niger 57 G2  
**Tenerife** *island* Spain 52 A3  
**Tennant Creek** Australia 130 A3  
**Tennessee** *state* USA 30 D1  
**Tennessee** *river* SE USA 31 C1  
**Tepelenë** Albania 83 D6  
**Tepec** Mexico 32 D4  
**Teplice** Czech Republic *Ger.* Teplitz, *prev.* Tepliče-Šanov, *Ger.* Teplitz-Schönau 80 A4  
**Tepliče-Šanov** *see* Teplice  
**Teplitz** *see* Teplice  
**Teplitz-Schönau** *see* Teplice  
**Teraina** *island* Kiribati 127 G2  
**Teresina** Brazil 43 G2  
**Termez** Uzbekistan 105 E3  
**Terneuzen** Netherlands 69 B5  
**Terni** Italy 78 C4

- Ternopil'** Ukraine *Rus.*  
Ternopol' 90 C2
- Ternopol'** see Ternopil'
- Terrassa** Spain 75 G2
- Terre Haute** Indiana, USA 22 B4
- Terres Australes et  
Antarctiques Françaises**  
see French Southern and  
Antarctic Lands
- Terschelling** *island* Netherlands  
68 C1
- Teruel** Spain 75 F3
- Tesenev** Eritrea 54 C4
- Tessalit** Mali 57 E2
- Tete** Mozambique 61 E3
- Tétouan** Morocco 52 C1
- Tetovo** Macedonia 83 D5
- Tetschen** see Děčín
- Tevere** *river* Italy 78 C4
- Texas state** USA 28-29 F3
- Texarkana** Arkansas, USA  
30 A2
- Texas City** Texas, USA 29 G4
- Texel** *island* Netherlands 68 C2
- Thailand** *country* SE Asia 118-  
119
- Thailand, Gulf of** *sea feature*  
South China Sea 119 C6
- Thames** *river* England, UK 71 D6
- Thar Desert** *desert* India/  
Pakistan 116 C3
- Tharthār, Buḥayrat ath** *lake*  
Iraq 102 B3
- Thásos** *island* Greece 86 C3
- Thaton** Myanmar 118 B4
- Theiss** see Tisza
- Thermaic Gulf** see Theraikós  
Kólpos
- Theraikós Kólpos** *sea feature*  
Greece *Eng.* Theraic Gulf  
86 B4
- Thessaloníki** Greece *var.*  
Salonica 86 B3
- The Valley** *dependent territory*  
*capital* Anguilla 37 G5
- Thimphu** *capital of* Bhutan  
117 G3
- Thionville** France 72 E3
- Thiruvananthapuram** India *see*  
Trivandrum 114 D3
- Thompson** Canada 19 F4
- Thorn** *see* Toruń
- Thorshavn** *see* Tórshavn
- Thracian Sea** Greece *Gk.*  
Thrakikó Pélagos 86 D3
- Thrakikó Pélagos** *see*  
Thracian Sea
- Three Kings Islands** *island*  
*group* New Zealand 132 C1
- Thule** *see* Qaanaaq
- Thunder Bay** Canada 20 B4
- Thuner** *See lake* Switzerland  
77 B7
- Thurso** Scotland, UK 70 C2
- Tianjin** China *var.* Tientsin  
110 D4
- Tiberias, Lake** *lake* Israel *var.*  
Sea of Galilee, *Heb.* Yam  
Kinneret, *Ar.* Bahrat Tabariya  
101 B5
- Tibesti** *mountains* Chad/Libya  
50 C3
- Tibet** *autonomous region*  
China *Chin.* Xizang 108 C5
- Tibet, Plateau of** *see* Qingzang  
Gaoyuan
- Tienen** Belgium 69 C6
- Tien Shan** *mountain range* C  
Asia 105 G2
- Tientsin** *see* Tianjin
- Tierra del Fuego** *island*  
Argentina/Chile 47 C8
- Tiflis** *see* Tbilisi
- Tighina** Moldova *prev.* Bendery  
90 D4
- Tigris** *river* SW Asia 94 B4
- Tijuana** Mexico 32 A1
- Tiki Basin** *undersea feature*  
Pacific Ocean 135 E3
- Tiksi** Russian Federation 97 F2
- Tilburg** Netherlands 68 C4
- Timaru** New Zealand 133 B6
- Timișoara** Romania 90 A4
- Timmins** Canada 20 C4
- Timor** *island* Indonesia 121 F5
- Timor Sea** Indian Ocean 121 F5
- Tindouf** Algeria 52 B3
- Tinos** *island* Greece 87 D5
- Tirana** *capital of* Albania 83 D6
- Tiraspol** Moldova 90 D4
- Tirgoviște** *see* Târgoviște
- Tirgu Mureș** *see* Târgu Mureș
- Tirol** *region* Austria *var.* Tyrol  
77 C7
- Tiruchchirappalli** India 114 D3
- Tisa** *see* Tisza
- Tisza** *river* E Europe *Ger.* Theiss,  
*Cz./Rom./ISCr.* Tisa  
81 D6
- Titicaca, Lake** *lake* Bolivia/Peru  
42 C4
- Tlemcen** Algeria 52 D2
- Tomasina** Madagascar 61 G3
- Toba, Danau** *lake* Indonesia  
120 B3
- Tobago** *island* Trinidad and  
Tobago 37 G5
- Toba Kâkar Range** *mountains*  
Pakistan 116 B2
- Tobruk** *see* Tûbrûq
- Tocantins** *river* Brazil 43 F3
- Tocopilla** Chile 46 B2
- Togo** *country* W Africa 57 E4
- Tokat** Turkey 98 D3
- Tokelau** *dependent territory*  
New Zealand, Pacific Ocean  
127 F3
- Tokmak** Kyrgyzstan 105 F2
- Tokuno-shima** *island* Japan  
113 A8
- Tokushima** Japan 113 B5
- Tokyo** *capital of* Japan 113 D5
- Toledo** Spain 75 E3
- Toledo** Ohio, USA 22 C3
- Toledo Bend Reservoir**  
*Reservoir* S USA 29 H3
- Toliara** Madagascar 61 E3
- Tol'yatti** *prev.* Stavropol'  
Russian Federation 93 C5
- Tomakomai** Japan 112 D2
- Tomboutou** Mali 57 E3
- Tombua** Angola 60 B2
- Tomini, Gul of** *sea feature*  
Indonesia 121 E4
- Tomsk** Russian Federation  
96 D4
- Tonga** *country* Pacific Ocean  
127 E5
- Tongatapu** *island* Tonga  
125 E3
- Tongking, Gulf of** *see* Tonkin,  
Gulf of

## Tongliao — Tuguegarao

- Tongliao** China 109 G2
- Tongtian He** *river* China 108 C4
- Tonkin, Gulf of** *sea feature*  
South China Sea *var.* Gulf of  
Tongking 111 B7
- Tónle Kông** *river* Cambodia/  
Vietnam 118 E5
- Tónlé Sap** *lake* Cambodia  
119 D5
- Tonopah** Nevada, USA 27 C6
- Toowoomba** Australia 131 D5
- Topeka** Kansas, USA 25 F4
- Top Springs** Australia 130 A3
- Torino** Italy *Eng.* Turin 78 A2
- Tornio** Finland 66 D4
- Tornionjoki** *river* Finland/  
Sweden 66 D3
- Toronto** Canada 20 D5
- Toros Dağları** *mountain range*  
Turkey *Eng.* Taurus  
Mountains 98 C4
- Torre del Greco** Italy 79 D5
- Torrens, Lake** *lake* Australia  
131 B5
- Torreón** Mexico 32 D2
- Torres Strait** *sea feature*  
Arafura Sea/Coral Sea 126 B4
- Torrington** Wyoming, USA  
24 D3
- Tórshavn** *capital of* Faroe  
Islands *Dan.* Thorshavn 65 F5
- To'rtko'l** Uzbekistan *prev.*  
Petroaleksandrovska, *prev.*  
Turkuk', *Uzb.* Türkül 104 C2
- Tortoise Islands** *see* Galapagos  
Islands
- Tortosa** Spain 75 F2
- Toruń** Poland *Ger.* Thorn  
80 C3
- Toscana** *region* Italy *Eng.*  
Tuscany 78 B3
- Toscana, Archipelago** *island*  
*group* Italy 78 B4
- Toshkent** *see* Tashkent
- Tottori** Japan 113 B5
- Touggourt** Algeria 53 E2
- Toulon** France 73 D6
- Toulouse** France 73 B6
- Toungoo** Myanmar 118 B4
- Tournai** Belgium 69 B6
- Tours** France 72 C4
- Townsville** Australia 130 D3
- Toyama** Japan 112 C4
- Tozeur** Tunisia 53 E2
- Tráblous** *see* Tripoli, Lebanon
- Trabzon** Turkey *Eng.* Trebizond  
99 E2
- Tralee** Ireland 71 A6
- Trang** Thailand 119 C7
- Transantarctic Mountains**  
*mountain range* Antarctica  
136 B3
- Transnistria** *region* Moldova  
90 D3
- Transylvania** *region* Romania  
90 B3
- Transylvanian Alps** *see* Carpații  
Meridionali
- Trapani** Italy 79 C6
- Traralgon** Australia 131 C7
- Trasimeno, Lago** *Lake* Italy  
78 C4
- Traverse City** Michigan, USA  
22 C2
- Travis, Lake** *lake* Texas, USA  
29 F4
- Trebinje** Bosnia & Herzegovina  
83 C5
- Trebizond** *see* Trabzon
- Trelew** Argentina 47 C6
- Trenčín** Slovakia *Ger.* Trentschin  
*Hung.* Trencsén 81 C6
- Trencsén** *see* Trenčín
- Trento** Italy *Ger.* Trient 78 C2
- Trenton** New Jersey, USA  
23 F4
- Trentschin** *see* Trenčín
- Tres Arroyos** Argentina 47 D5
- Tréviso** Italy 78 C2
- Trient** *see* Trento
- Trieste** Italy 78 D2
- Trikala** Greece 86 B4
- Trincomalee** Sri Lanka 115 E3
- Trindade** *external territory*  
Brazil, Atlantic Ocean  
49 C6
- Trinidad** Bolivia 42 C4
- Trinidad** Uruguay 44 B5
- Trinidad** *island* Trinidad &  
Tobago 38 C2
- Trinidad & Tobago** *country*  
West Indies 37 G5
- Tripoli** Greece 87 B5
- Tripoli** Lebanon *var.* Tráblous,  
Jarábulus 100 B4
- Tripoli** *capital of* Libya *Ar.*  
Jarábulus al-Gharb 53 F2
- Tristan da Cunha** *overseas*  
*territory* UK, Atlantic Ocean  
49 D6
- Trivandrum** India *see*  
Thiruvananthapuram 114 D3
- Trnava** Slovakia *Ger.* Tyrnau,  
*Hung.* Nagyszombat  
81 C6
- Trois-Rivières** Canada  
21 E4
- Trollhättan** Sweden 67 B6
- Tromsø** Norway 66 C2
- Trondheim** Norway 66 B4
- Trondheimsfjorden** *inlet*  
Norway 66 B4
- Troyes** France 72 D4
- Trujillo** Honduras 34 D2
- Trujillo** Peru 42 A3
- Tsarigrad** *see* İstanbul
- Tschenstochau** *see*  
Czestochowa
- Tselinograd** *see* Astana
- Tsetserleg** Mongolia 108 D2
- Tshikapa** Dem. Rep. Congo  
59 C7
- Tsinghai** *see* Qinghai
- Tsumeb** Namibia 60 C3
- Tsushima** *island* Japan  
113 A5
- Tuamotu Fracture Zone**  
*tectonic feature* Pacific Ocean  
125 H3
- Tuamotu Islands** *island group*  
French Polynesia 125 G3
- Tubmanburg** Liberia 56 C4
- Tubruq** Libya *Eng.* Tobruk  
53 H2
- Tucson** Arizona, USA 28 B3
- Tucupita** Venezuela 41 F1
- Tucuruí, Represa de** *Reservoir*  
Brazil 43 F2
- Tudmur** Syria *var.* Tadmur,  
*Eng.* Palmyra 100 C3
- Tuguegarao** Philippines  
121 E1

**Tuktoyaktuk** Canada 137 E2  
**Tula** Russian Federation  
 93 B5 96 A3  
**Tulancingo** Mexico 33 E4  
**Tulcán** Ecuador 40 B4  
**Tulcea** Romania 90 D4  
**Tülkarm** West Bank 101 D7  
**Tully** Australia 130 D3  
**Tulsa** Oklahoma, USA 29 G1  
**Tundzha river** Bulgaria  
 86 D2  
**Tungaru island group** Kiribati  
*prev.* Gilbert Islands  
 127 E2  
**Tunis** capital of Tunisia 53 F1  
**Tunisia** country N Africa  
 53 F2  
**Tunja** Colombia 40 C2  
**Tupiza** Bolivia 42 C5  
**Turan Lowland** *lowland*  
 Turkmenistan/Uzbekistan  
*var.* Turan Plain, *Rus.*  
 Turanskaya Nizmennost'  
 104 C2  
**Turan Plain** see Turan Lowland  
**Turanskaya Nizmennost'** see  
 Turan Lowland  
**Turčianský Svätý Martin** see  
 Martin  
**Turin** see Torino  
**Turkana, Lake** *lake* Ethiopia/  
 Kenya *var.* Lake Rudolf  
 50 D4 55 C5  
**Turkey** country SW Asia  
 98-99  
**Türkmenabat** Turkmenistan  
*prev.* Chardzhev, *prev.*  
 Chardzhou, *prev.* Leninisk,  
*Turkm.* Chärjew 104 D3  
**Türkmenbaşy** Turkmenistan  
*prev.* Krasnovodsk 104 A2  
**Turkmenistan** country C Asia 104  
**Turks & Caicos Islands** *overseas*  
 territory UK, West Indies 37  
**Turku** Finland 67 D5  
**Turnagain, Cape** *headland* New  
 Zealand 132 E4  
**Turnhout** Belgium 69 C5  
**Turnu Severin** see Drobeta-  
 Turnu Severin  
**Turócszentmárton** see Martin

**Turpan** China 108 C3  
**Turtkul'** see To'rtko'l  
**Türtkül** see To'rtko'l  
**Tuscany** see Toscana  
**Tuvalu** country Pacific Ocean  
 127 E3  
**Tuxtla** Mexico 33 G5  
**Tuz Gölü** *lake* Turkey 98 C3  
**Tuzla** Bosnia & Herz. 82 C3  
**Tver'** Russian Federation  
 92 B4  
**Twin Falls** Idaho, USA 26 D4  
**Tyler** Texas, USA 29 G3  
**Tyre** see Soûr  
**Tyrnau** see Trnava  
**Tyrol** see Tirol  
**Tyrrhenian Sea** Mediterranean  
 Sea 78 C6  
**Tyup** Kyrgyzstan 105 G2  
**Tziá** *island* Greece *prev.* Kéa  
 87 C5

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## U

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**Ubangi river** C Africa 59 C5  
**Uberaba** Brazil 43 F5, 45 E1  
**Uberlândia** Brazil 43 F5, 45 E1  
**Ubon Ratchathani** Thailand  
 119 D5  
**Ucayali river** Peru 42 B3  
**Uchkuduk** Uzbekistan *Uzb.*  
 Uchquduq 104 D2  
**Uchquduq** see Uchkuduk  
**Udine** Italy 78 C2  
**Udon Thani** Thailand 118 C4  
**Uele river** Dem. Rep. Congo  
 58 D5  
**Ufa** Russian Federation  
 96 B3  
**Uganda** country E Africa 55  
**Uíge** Angola 60 B1  
**Ujungpandang** see Makassar  
**Ukhta** Russian Federation  
 92 D4  
**Ukiah** California, USA 27 A5  
**Ukmergė** Lithuania 88 C4  
**Ukraine** country E Europe  
 90-91  
**Ulaanbaatar** see Ulan Bator  
**Ulaangom** Mongolia 108 C2  
**Ulan Bator** capital of Mongolia  
*var.* Ulaanbaatar 109 E2  
**Ulanhad** see Chifeng  
**Ulan Qab** China *var.* Jining  
 109 F3  
**Ulan-Ude** Russian Federation  
 97 E4  
**Ullapool** Scotland, UK 70 C3  
**Ulm** Germany 77 C6  
**Ulster region** Ireland/UK  
 71 B5  
**Ulungur Hu lake** China 108 C2  
**Uluru peak** Australia *var.* Ayers  
 Rock 129 E5  
**Ul'yanovsk** Russian Federation  
 93 C5  
**Umeå** Sweden 66 D4  
**Umnak Island** *island* Alaska,  
 USA 18 B3  
**Una river** Bosnia &  
 Herzegovina/Croatia  
 82 B3  
**Unalaska Island** *island* Alaska,  
 USA 18 B3  
**Ungava, Péninsule d'** *peninsula*  
 Canada 20 D1  
**Ungava Bay** *sea feature*  
 Canada 21 E1  
**United Arab Emirates** country  
 SW Asia 103 D5  
**United Kingdom** country NW  
 Europe 70-71  
**United States of America**  
 country North America  
 16-17  
**Uppsala** Sweden 67 C6  
**Ural river** Kazakhstan/Russian  
 Federation Kaz. Zhayyyk  
 96 B4  
**Ural Mountains** *mountain*  
 range Russian Federation  
*var.* Ural'skiy Khrebet,  
 Ural'skiye Gory 92-93  
**Ural'sk** Kazakhstan  
 96 B3  
**Ural'skiy Khrebet** see Ural  
 Mountains  
**Ural'skiye Gory** see Ural  
 Mountains  
**Urfa** see Şanlıurfa

## Urganch — Verkhoyanskiy Khrebet

**Urganch** see Urgench  
**Urgench** Uzbekistan *prev.* Novo Urgench, *Uzb.* Urganch 104 C2  
**Uroševac** see Ferizaj/Uroševac  
**Ūroteppa** Tajikistan 105 E2  
**Uruapan** Mexico 33 E4  
**Uruguaiana** Brazil 44 B4  
**Uruguay** *country* SE South America 44  
**Uruguay** *river* S South America 46 D3  
**Urumchi** see Ūrümqi  
**Ūrümqi** China *prev.* Urumchi 108 C3  
**Usa** *river* Russian Federation 92 D3  
**Uşak** Turkey *prev.* Ushak 98 B3  
**Uşak** see Uşak  
**Ushuaia** Argentina 47 C8  
**Ust'-Chau** Russian Federation 97 G1  
**Ustica, Isola de** *island* Italy 79 C6  
**Ūsti nad Labem** Czech Republic *Ger.* Aussig 80 A4  
**Ust'-Kamchatsk** Russian Federation 97 H2  
**Ust'-Kamenogorsk** Kazakhstan 96 D5  
**Ustyurt Plateau** *upland* Kazakhstan/Uzbekistan 104 B1  
**Usamacinta** *river* Guatemala/Mexico 34 B1  
**Usumbura** see Bujumbura  
**Utah** *state* USA 24 B4  
**Utena** Lithuania 88 C4  
**Utica** New York, USA 23 F2  
**Utrecht** Netherlands 68 C3  
**Uttar Pradesh** *state* India 117 E3  
**Uummannarsuaq** see Nunap Isua  
**Uvs Nuur** *lake* Mongolia 108 C2  
**Uyo** Nigeria 57 G5  
**Uyuni** Bolivia 43 C5  
**Uzbekistan** *country* C Asia 104-105  
**Uzhgorod** see Uzhhorod

**Uzhhorod** Ukraine *Rus.* Uzhgorod 90 B2

## V

**Vaal** *river* South Africa 60 D4  
**Vaasa** Finland 67 D5  
**Vadodara** India 116 C4  
**Vaduz** *capital of* Liechtenstein 77 B7  
**Vág** see Váh  
**Váh** *river* Slovakia *Ger.* Waag, *Hung.* Vág 81 C6  
**Valdés, Peninsula** *peninsula* Argentina 47 C5  
**Valdez** Alaska, USA 18 D3  
**Valdivia** Chile 47 B5  
**Valdosta** Georgia, USA 31 E3  
**Valence** France 73 D5  
**Valencia** Spain 75 F3  
**Valencia** Venezuela 40 D1  
**Valencia** *region* Spain 75 F3  
**Valera** Venezuela 40 C1  
**Valga** Estonia *Ger.* Walk 88 D3  
**Valladolid** Spain 74 D2  
**Valledupar** Colombia 40 C1  
**Vallenar** Chile 46 B3  
**Valetta** *capital of* Malta 79 C8  
**Valley, The** *capital of* Anguilla 37 G3  
**Valmiera** Latvia *Ger.* Wolmar 88 C3  
**Valparáiso** Chile 46 B4  
**Van** Turkey 99 F3  
**Van, Lake** see Van Gölü  
**Vanadzor** Armenia *prev.* Kirovakan 99 F2  
**Vancouver** Canada 19 E5  
**Vancouver** Washington, USA 26 B2  
**Vancouver Island** *island* Canada 18 D5  
**Vänern** *lake* Sweden 67 B6  
**Vangaindrano** Madagascar 61 G4  
**Van Gölü** *lake* Turkey *Eng.* Lake Van 99 F3  
**Vantaa** Finland 67 D5  
**Vanua Levu** *island* Fiji 127 E4  
**Vanuatu** *country* Pacific Ocean 126 D4  
**Vārānasi** India 117 E3  
**Varaždin** Croatia 82 B2  
**Vardar** *river* Greece/Macedonia *prev.* Axios 83 E6  
**Vardo** Norway 66 E2  
**Varkaus** Finland 67 E5  
**Varna** Bulgaria 86 E2  
**Västerås** Sweden 67 C6  
**Vatican City** *country* S Europe 78 C4  
**Vättern** *lake* Sweden 67 B6  
**Vava'u Group** *island group* Tonga 127 F4  
**Vawkavysk** Belarus *Rus.* Volkovysk, *Pol.* Wolkowysk 89 B5  
**Växjö** Sweden 67 C7  
**Vaygach, Ostrov** *island* Russian Federation 92 E3  
**Veles** Macedonia 83 E5  
**Velikaya** *river* Russian Federation 95 E2  
**Velikiye Luki** Russian Federation 92 A4  
**Velikiy Novgorod** Russian Federation 92 B4 96 B2  
**Velingrad** Bulgaria 86 C2  
**Vellore** India 114 D2  
**Venezia** Italy *Eng.* Venice 78 C2  
**Venezuela** *country* N South America 40-41  
**Venezuela, Gulf of** *sea feature* Caribbean Sea 40 C1  
**Venice** see Venezia  
**Venice, Gulf of** *sea feature* Adriatic Sea 78 C2  
**Venlo** Netherlands 69 D5  
**Venta** *river* Latvia/Lithuania 88 B3  
**Ventspils** Latvia *Ger.* Windau 88 B3  
**Vera** Argentina 46 D3  
**Veracruz** Mexico 33 F4  
**Verkhoyanskiy Khrebet** *mountain range* Russian Federation *Eng.* Verkhoyanskiy Range 97 F3

## Verkhoyansk Range — Wabash

- Verkhoyansk Range** see Verkhoyanskiy Khrebet
- Vermont state** USA 23 F2
- Vernon** Texas, USA 29 F2
- Vérola** Greece 86 B3
- Verona** Italy 78 C2
- Versailles** France 72 C3
- Verviers** Belgium 69 D6
- Vesoul** France 72 D4
- Veszprém** Hungary *Ger.* Veszprim 81 C7
- Veszprim** see Veszprém
- Viana do Castelo** Portugal 74 C2
- Viareggio** Italy 78 B3
- Vicenza** Italy 78 C2
- Vichy** France 73 C5
- Victoria state** Australia 131 C7
- Victoria** Canada 18 D5
- Victoria** capital of Seychelles 61 H1
- Victoria** Texas, USA 29 G4
- Victoria river** Australia 128 D3
- Victoria, Lake** lake E Africa *var.* Victoria Nyanza 55 B6
- Victoria Falls waterfall** Zambia/Zimbabwe 51 C6
- Victoria Island** island Canada 19 F2
- Victoria Land region** Antarctica 137 C4
- Victoria Nyanza** see Victoria, Lake
- Vidin** Bulgaria 86 B1
- Viedma** Argentina 47 C5
- Vienna** capital of Austria *Ger.* Wien 77 E6
- Vientiane** capital of Laos 118 C4
- Vietnam** country SE Asia 118-119
- Vigo** Spain 74 C2
- Vijayawāda** India 115 E1
- Vila Nova de Gaia** Portugal 74 C2
- Vila Real** Portugal 74 C2
- Viliya** see Neris
- Viljandi** Estonia *Ger.* Fellin 88 D2
- Villach** Austria 77 D7
- Villahermosa** Mexico 33 G4
- Villa Mercedes** Argentina 46 C4
- Villarrica** peak Chile 39 B6
- Villavicencio** Colombia 40 C3
- Villeurbanne** France 73 D5
- Vilna** see Vilnius
- Vilnius** capital of Lithuania *Pol.* Wilno, *Ger.* Wilna, *Rus.* Vilna 89 C5
- Viña del Mar** Chile 46 B4
- Vinh** Vietnam 118 D4
- Vinnitsa** see Vinnitsya
- Vinnitsya** Ukraine *Rus.* Vinnitsa 90 D2
- Virgin Islands** unincorporated territory USA, West Indies 37 F3
- Virginia** Minnesota, USA 25 F2
- Virginia state** USA 22-23
- Virovitica** Croatia 82 C3
- Virtsu** Estonia *Ger.* Werder 88 C2
- Visākhapatnam** India 117 E5
- Visalia** California, USA 27 C7
- Visby** Sweden 67 C7
- Viscount Melville Sound** sea feature Arctic Ocean 19 F2
- Viseu** Portugal 74 C3
- Vistula** see Wisla
- Vitebsk** see Vitsyebsk/Vitebsk
- Viterbo** Italy 78 C4
- Viti Levu** island Fiji 127 E4
- Vitim river** Russian Federation 95 E3
- Vitória** Brazil 43 G5 45 G1
- Vitória da Conquista** Brazil 43 G4
- Victoria-Gasteiz** Spain 75 E1
- Vitsyebsk/Vitebsk** Belarus *Rus.* Vitebsk 88 E5
- Vjosës, Lumi i** river Albania 83 D6
- Vladikavkaz** Russian Federation *prev.* Ordzhonikidze, Dzaudzhikau 93 B7
- Vladimir** Russian Federation 93 B5
- Vladimirovka** see Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk
- Vladivostok** Russian Federation 97 G5
- Vlieland** island Netherlands 68 C1
- Vlissingen** Netherlands *Eng.* Flushing 69 B5
- Vlorë** Albania 83 D6
- Vojvodina region** Serbia 82 D3
- Volga river** Russian Federation 96 A3
- Volgograd** Russian Federation *prev.* Stalingrad 93 B6, 96 A3
- Volkovysk** see Vawkavysk
- Vologda** Russian Federation 96 B2
- Vólos** Greece 86 B4
- Volta river** Ghana 57 E4
- Volta, Lake** lake Ghana 57 E4
- Volta Redonda** Brazil 45 E2
- Vóreies Sporádes island group** Greece *Eng.* Northern Sporades 86 C4
- Vorkuta** Russian Federation 92 E3 96 C2
- Vormsi island** Estonia *Ger.* Worms, *Swed.* Ormsö 88 C2
- Voronezh** Russian Federation 93 B5
- Võru** Estonia *Ger.* Werro 88 D3
- Vosges mountain range** France 72 E4
- Vostochno-Sibirskoye More** Arctic Ocean *Eng.* East Siberian Sea 137 G2
- Vostok Island** island Kiribati 127 H4
- Wrangel'ya, Ostrov** island Russian Federation *Eng.* Wrangel Island 97 G1
- Vratsa** Bulgaria 86 C2
- Vršac** Serbia 82 D3
- Vukovar** Croatia 82 C3
- Vulcano, Isola** island Italy 79 D6
- Vyatka river** Russian Federation 93 C5

## W

- Wa** Ghana 57 E4
- Waag** see Váh
- Waal river** Netherlands 68 D4
- Wabash river** C USA 22 B4

## Waco — White Sea

- Waco** Texas, USA 29 G3
- Waddeneilanden** *island group*  
Netherlands *Eng.* West  
Frisian Islands 68 C1
- Waddensee** *sea feature*  
Netherlands 68 D1
- Wadi Halfa** Sudan 54 B3
- Wādī Mūsā** Jordan *var.* Petra  
101 B6
- Wad Medani** Sudan 54 B4
- Wagga Wagga** Australia  
131 C6
- Wagin** Australia 129 B6
- Wahai** Indonesia 121 F4
- Wahibah, Ramlat Āl Desert**  
Oman 103 E5
- Waiau river** New Zealand  
133 A7
- Waipawa** New Zealand 132 E4
- Wairau river** New Zealand  
133 C5
- Wairoa** New Zealand 132 E3
- Waitaki river** New Zealand  
133 B6
- Waiuku** New Zealand 132 D3
- Wakatipu, Lake lake** New  
Zealand 133 D7
- Wakayama** Japan 113 C5
- Wake Island atoll** Pacific Ocean  
124 D1
- Wake Island** *US unincorporated  
territory* Pacific Ocean  
134 C2
- Wakkanai** Japan 112 D1
- Walbrzych** Poland *Ger.*  
Waldenburg 80 B4
- Waldenburg** *see* Walbrzych
- Wales** *national region* UK *Wel.*  
Cymru 71
- Walgett** Australia 131 D5
- Walk** *see* Valga
- Walla Walla** Washington, USA  
26 C2
- Wallis & Futuna** *overseas  
collectivity* France, Pacific  
Ocean 127 E4
- Walnut Ridge** Arkansas, USA  
30 B1
- Walvis Bay** Namibia 60 B4
- Walvis Ridge** *undersea feature*  
Atlantic Ocean 49 D6
- Wan** *see* Anhui
- Wanaka** New Zealand  
133 B6
- Wanaka, Lake lake** New  
Zealand 133 B6
- Wandel Sea** Arctic Ocean  
137 G4
- Wanganui** New Zealand 132 D4
- Wanlaweyn** Somalia 55 D6
- Warangal** India 117 E5
- Warkworth** New Zealand D2
- Warrnambool** Australia 131 C7
- Warsaw** *capital of Poland* *Pol.*  
Warszawa, *Ger.* Warschau  
80 D3
- Warschau** *see* Warsaw
- Warszawa** *see* Warsaw
- Warta river** Poland *Ger.* Warthe  
80 C4
- Warthe** *see* Warta
- Wash, The** *inlet* England, UK  
71 E5
- Washington state** USA 26
- Washington, D.C.** *capital of*  
USA 23 E4
- Waterford** Ireland 71 B6
- Watertown** New York, USA  
23 E2
- Watertown** South Dakota, USA  
25 E2
- Wau** South Sudan 55 B5
- Waukegan** Illinois, USA 22 B3
- Wawa** Canada 20 C4
- Weddell Plain** *undersea feature*  
Atlantic Ocean 136 B2
- Weddell Sea** Antarctica 136 A2
- Weichsel** *see* Wisla
- Weissenstein** *see* Paide
- Wellesley Islands** *island group*  
Australia 130 B3
- Wellington** *capital of New*  
Zealand 133 D5
- Wellington, Isla** *island* Chile  
47 B7
- Wells, Lake lake** Australia  
129 C5
- Wels** Austria 77 D6
- Wenden** *see* Cēsis
- Wenzhou** China 111 D6
- Werder** *see* Virtsu
- Werro** *see* Vöru
- Wesenberg** *see* Rakvere
- Weser river** Germany 76 B3
- Wessel Islands** *island group*  
Australia 130 B2
- West Antarctica region**  
Antarctica 134 B3
- West Bank** *disputed territory*  
SW Asia 101 A5
- West Bengal state** India  
117 F4
- Western Australia state**  
Australia 128-129
- Western Dvina river** E Europe  
*Bel.* Dzvina, *Ger.* Düna,  
*Latv.* Daugava, *Rus.*  
Zapadnaya Dvina 88 C4
- Western Ghats** *mountain  
range* India 106 B3, 114 C1
- Western Isles** *see* Outer  
Hebrides
- Western Sahara region**  
*occupied by Morocco*  
N Africa 52 A3
- Western Sierra Madre** *see*  
Sierra Madre Occidental
- Westerschelde** *inlet*  
Netherlands 69 B5
- West Falkland** *island* Falkland  
Islands 47 D7
- West Frisian Islands** *see*  
Waddeneilanden
- West Indies** *island group* North  
America 48 A4
- West Palm Beach** Florida, USA  
31 F4
- Westport** New Zealand 133 C5
- West Siberian Plain** *see*  
Zapadno-Sibirskaya Ravnina
- West Virginia state** USA 22-23
- Wetar Strait** *sea feature*  
Indonesia 121 F5
- Wexford** Ireland 71 B6
- Whakatane** New Zealand  
132 E3
- Whangarei** New Zealand  
132 D2
- Wharton Basin** *undersea  
feature* Indian Ocean 123 D5
- Wheeling** Ohio, USA 22 D4
- Whitehorse** Canada 18 D4
- White Nile river** Sudan / South  
Sudan 55 B5
- White Sea** *see* Belye More



**White Volta** *river* Burkina Faso /Ghana 57 E4  
**Whitianga** New Zealand 132 E3  
**Whitney, Mount peak** W USA 27 C6  
**Whitsunday Group** *island group* Australia 130 D3  
**Whyalla** Australia 131 B6  
**Wichita** Kansas, USA 25 E5  
**Wichita Falls** Texas, USA 29 F2  
**Wicklow Mountains** *mountains* Ireland 71 B5  
**Wien** see Vienna  
**Wiener Neustadt** Austria 77 E6  
**Wiesbaden** Germany 77 B5  
**Wight, Isle of** *island* England, UK 71 D7  
**Wilcannia** Australia 131 C6  
**Wilhelm, Mount peak** Papua New Guinea 126 B3  
**Wilja** see Neris  
**Wilkes Land** *region* Antarctica 137 C4  
**Willemstad** Curaçao 37 E5  
**Williamsport** Pennsylvania, USA 23 E3  
**Williston** North Dakota, USA 24 D1  
**Wilmington** Delaware, USA 23 F4  
**Wilmington** North Carolina, USA 31 G2  
**Wilna** see Vilnius  
**Wilno** see Vilnius  
**Windau** see Ventspils  
**Windhoek** *capital of* Namibia 60 C3  
**Windsor** Australia 130 C4  
**Windsor** Canada 20 C5  
**Windward Islands** see Barlavento, Ilhas de  
**Winisk** *river* Canada 20 B3  
**Winnemucca** Nevada, USA 27 C5  
**Winnipeg** Canada 19 G5  
**Winnipeg, Lake** *lake* Canada 19 G5  
**Winston-Salem** North Carolina, USA 31 F1  
**Winton** Australia 130 C4

**Wisconsin state** USA 22 B2  
**Wismar** Germany 76 C3  
**Wisla** *river* Poland *Ger.* Weichsel, *Eng.* Vistula 63 E3 80 D4  
**W.J. van Blommesteinmeer** *Reservoir* Suriname 41 H3  
**Włocławek** Poland 80 C3  
**Wodzisław Śląski** Poland *Ger.* Loslau 81 C5  
**Wolfsburg** Germany 76 C3  
**Wollongong** Australia 131 D6  
**Wolmar** see Valmiera  
**Woods, Lake of the** *lake* Canada/USA 20 A3  
**Woodville** New Zealand 132 D4  
**Worcester** England, UK 71 D6  
**Worcester** Massachusetts, USA 23 G3  
**Worms** see Vormsi  
**Wolkowysk** see Vawkavysk  
**Wrangel Island** see Vrangeli'ya, Ostrov  
**Wroclaw** Poland *Ger.* Breslau 80 C4  
**Wuday** 'ah Saudi Arabia 103 C6  
**Wuhai** China *var.* Haibowan 109 E3  
**Wuhan** China 111 C5  
**Wuliang Shan** *mountain range* China 111 A6  
**Wuppertal** Germany 76 A4  
**Würzburg** Germany 77 C5  
**Wuxi** China 111 D5  
**Wyndham** Australia 128 D3  
**Wyoming state** USA 24 C3

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## X

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**Xaignabouli** Laos *prev.* Muang Xainabouri 118 C3  
**Xalapa** Mexico *var.* Jalapa 118 C3  
**Xai-Xai** Mozambique 61 E4  
**Xalapa** Mexico 33 F4  
**Xam Nua** Laos 118 D3  
**Xankāndi** Azerbaijan *Rus.* Khankendy, *prev.* Stepanakert 99 G2

**Xánthi** Greece 86 C3  
**Xiamen** China 111 D6  
**Xi'an** China 111 B5  
**Xiang** see Hunan  
**Xiao Hinggan Ling** *mountain range* China 110 D2  
**Xilinhot** China 109 F2  
**Xingu** *river* Brazil 43 E2  
**Xingxingxia** China 108 D3  
**Xining** China 109 E4  
**Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiq** *autonomous region* China *var.* Sinkiang 108 B3  
**Xinxiang** China 110 C4  
**Xixón** see Gijón  
**Xizang Zizhiq** see Tibet  
**Xuzhou** China 111 D5

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## Y

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**Yafran** Libya 53 F2  
**Yakima** Washington, USA 26 B2  
**Yaku-shima** *island* Japan 113 B7  
**Yakutsk** Russian Federation 97 F3  
**Yala** Thailand 119 C7  
**Yalong Jiang** *river* China 111 A5  
**Yalta** Ukraine 91 F5  
**Yamaguchi** Japan 113 B5  
**Yambio** South Sudan 55 B5  
**Yambol** Bulgaria 86 D2  
**Yamdena, Pulau** *island* Indonesia 121 G5  
**Yamoussoukro** *capital of* Côte d'Ivoire 56 D5  
**Yamuna** *river* India 117 E3  
**Yana** *river* Russian Federation 95 F2  
**Yangon** Myanmar *Eng.* Rangoon 118 B4  
**Yangtze** see Chang Jiang  
**Yaoundé** *capital of* Cameroon 59 B5  
**Yap** *island* Micronesia 126 A1  
**Yap Trench** *undersea feature* Philippine Sea 124 B2  
**Yaqui** *river* Mexico 32 B2  
**Yarmouth** Canada 21 F4  
**Yaroslavl'** Russian Federation 96 B2

**Yazd** Iran 102 D4  
**Yazoo** river SE USA 30 C2  
**Yencheng** China 108 A3  
**Yekaterinburg** Russian Federation *prev.* Sverdlovsk 96 C3  
**Yelisavetpol** see Gāncā  
**Yellowknife** Canada 19 E4  
**Yellow River** see Huang He  
**Yellow Sea** Pacific Ocean 110-111  
**Yellowstone** river NW USA 24 C2  
**Yemen** country SW Asia 103 C7  
**Yenakiyev** Ukraine 91 G3  
**Yengisar** China 108 A3  
**Yenisey** river Russian Federation 96 D3  
**Yerevan** capital of Armenia *var.* Erevan, Jerevan, Eng. Erivan 99 F2  
**Yevpatoriya** Ukraine 91 F4  
**Yinchuan** China 110 B4  
**Yining** China 108 B2  
**Yogyakarta** Indonesia 120 D5  
**Yokohama** Japan 113 D5  
**Yopal** Colombia 40 C2  
**York** England, UK 71 D5  
**York, Cape** headland Australia 130 C1  
**Yorkton** Canada 19 F5  
**Youngstown** Ohio, USA 22 D3  
**Ypres** see Ieper  
**Yu** see Henan  
**Yuba City** California, USA 27 B5  
**Yucatan Channel** channel Caribbean Sea 36 A2  
**Yucatan Peninsula** peninsula Mexico 33 H4  
**Yue** see Guangdong  
**Yueyang** China 111 C5  
**Yukon** river Canada/USA 18 C2  
**Yukon Territory** territory Canada 18 D3  
**Yuma** Arizona, USA 28 A3  
**Yun** see Yunnan  
**Yunnan** province China *var.* Yun, Yun-nan 111 B6  
**Yun-nan** see Yunnan  
**Yurev** see Tartu  
**Yur'yev** see Tartu  
**Yushu** China 108 D4

**Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk** Russian Federation *var.* Vladimirovka 97 H4  
**Yverdon** Switzerland 77 A7

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## Z

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**Zacapa** Guatemala 34 C2  
**Zacatecas** Mexico 32 D3  
**Zadar** Croatia 82 A4  
**Zagreb** capital of Croatia 80 B3  
**Zāgros, Kuhhā-ye** mountain range Iran/Iraq 102 D4  
**Zāhedān** Iran 102 E4  
**Zahlé** Lebanon 100 B4  
**Zaire** country see Dem. Rep. Congo  
**Zaire** river see Congo  
**Zaječar** Serbia 82 E4  
**Zákinthos** see Zákynthos  
**Zákynthos** island Greece *prev.* Zákynthos 87 A5  
**Zalaegerszeg** Hungary 81 B7  
**Zambezi** Zambia 60 D2  
**Zambezi** river southern Africa 60 D3  
**Zambia** country southern Africa 60-61  
**Zamboanga** Philippines 120 E3  
**Zamora** Spain 74 D2  
**Zanda** Xizang Zizhiq, W China 108 B4  
**Zanjān** Iran 102 C3  
**Zanzibar** Tanzania 55 C7  
**Zaozhuang** China 111 D5  
**Zapadnaya Dvina** see Western Dvina  
**Zapadno-Sibirskaya Ravnina** Eng. West Siberian Plain. Plain Russian Federation 96 C3  
**Zapala** Argentina 47 B5  
**Zaporizhzhya** Ukraine *Rus.* Zaporozh'ye 91 F3  
**Zaporozh'ye** see Zaporizhzhya  
**Zarafshon** Uzbekistan 104 D2  
**Zaragoza** Spain Eng. Saragossa 75 F2  
**Zaranj** Afghanistan 104 C5  
**Zaria** Nigeria 57 G4  
**Zaysan, Ozero** lake Kazakhstan 94 D3  
**Zeebrugge** Belgium 69 A5  
**Zenica** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C4  
**Zeravshan** river C Asia 105 E3  
**Zeya** river Russian Federation 95 F3  
**Zhambyl** see Taraz  
**Zhayyk** see Ural  
**Zhdanov** see Mariupol'  
**Zhe** see Zhejiang  
**Zhejiang** province China *var.* Che-chiang, Chekiang, Zhe 111 D5  
**Zhengzhou** China 111 C5  
**Zhezkazgan** Kazakhstan *prev.* Zdhezkazgan 96 C4  
**Zhitomir** see Zhytomyr  
**Zhlobin** Belarus 89 D5  
**Zhodzina** Belarus 89 D5  
**Zhytomyr** Ukraine *Rus.* Zhitomir 90 D2  
**Zibo** China 110 D4  
**Zielona Góra** Poland Ger. Grünberg in Schlesien 80 B5  
**Zigong** China 111 B6  
**Žilina** Slovakia Hung. Zsolna, Ger. Sillein 81 C5  
**Zimbabwe** country southern Africa 60-61  
**Zinder** Niger 57 C3  
**Zoetermeer** Netherlands 68 C4  
**Zomba** Malawi 61 E2  
**Zonguldak** Turkey 98 C2  
**Zouérat** Mauritania 56 C1  
**Zrenjanin** Serbia 82 D3  
**Zsolna** see Žilina  
**Zug** Switzerland 77 B7  
**Zuider Zee** see IJsselmeer  
**Zürich** Switzerland Eng. Zurich 77 B6  
**Zurich** see Zürich  
**Zürichsee** lake Switzerland 77 B7  
**Zuwārah** Libya 53 F2  
**Zvornik** Bosnia & Herzegovina 82 C3  
**Zwedru** Liberia 56 D5  
**Zwickau** Germany 76 D4  
**Zwolle** Netherlands 68 D3