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Chapter 1

27

1.1 27.guide

Texified version of data for Benin.

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Benin

1.2 27.guide/Benin

Benin

Geography (Benin)
 People (Benin)
 Government (Benin)
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 Economy (Benin)
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1.3 27.guide/Geography (Benin)

Geography (Benin)

=====

Location:

Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean between Nigeria and Togo

Map references:

Africa, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

112,620 km²

land area:

110,620 km²

comparative area:

slightly smaller than Pennsylvania

Land boundaries:

total 1,989 km, Burkina 306 km, Niger 266 km, Nigeria 773 km, Togo 644 km

Coastline:

121 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea:

200 nm

International disputes:

none

Climate:

tropical; hot, humid in south; semiarid in north

Terrain:

mostly flat to undulating plain; some hills and low mountains

Natural resources:

small offshore oil deposits, limestone, marble, timber

Land use:

arable land:

12%

permanent crops:

4%

meadows and pastures:

4%

forest and woodland:

35%

other:

45%

Irrigated land:

60 km2 (1989 est.)

Environment:

hot, dry, dusty harmattan wind may affect north in winter; deforestation; desertification

Note:

recent droughts have severely affected marginal agriculture in north; no natural harbors

1.4 27.guide/People (Benin)

People (Benin)

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Population:

5,166,735 (July 1993 est.)

Population growth rate:

3.33% (1993 est.)

Birth rate:

48.09 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)

Death rate:

14.8 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)

Net migration rate:

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

112.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population:

51.31 years

male:

49.51 years

female:

53.16 years (1993 est.)

Total fertility rate:

6.86 children born/woman (1993 est.)

Nationality:

noun:

Beninese (singular and plural)

adjective:

Beninese

Ethnic divisions:

African 99% (42 ethnic groups, most important being Fon, Adja, Yoruba, Bariba), Europeans 5,500

Religions:

indigenous beliefs 70%, Muslim 15%, Christian 15%

Languages:

French (official), Fon and Yoruba (most common vernaculars in south), ← tribal

languages (at least six major ones in north)

Literacy:

age 15 and over can read and write (1990)

total population:

23%

male:
 32%
 female:
 16%
 Labor force:
 1.9 million (1987)
 by occupation:
 agriculture 60%, transport, commerce, and public services 38%, industry ←
 less
 than 2%
 note:
 49% of population of working age (1985)

1.5 27.guide/Government (Benin)

Government (Benin)

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Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Benin

conventional short form:

Benin

local long form:

Republique Populaire du Benin

local short form:

Benin

former:

Dahomey

Digraph:

BN

Type:

republic under multiparty democratic rule dropped Marxism-Leninism December 1989; democratic reforms adopted February 1990; transition to multiparty system completed 4 April 1991

Capital:

Porto-Novo

Administrative divisions:

6 provinces; Atakora, Atlantique, Borgou, Mono, Oueme, Zou

Independence:

1 August 1960 (from France)

Constitution:

2 December 1990

Legal system:

based on French civil law and customary law; has not accepted compulsory ←
 ICJ

jurisdiction

National holiday:

National Day, 1 August (1990)

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance of the Democratic Union for the Forces of Progress (UDFP), ←
 Timothee

ADANLIN; Movement for Democracy and Social Progress (MDPS), Jean-Roger

AHOYO; Union for Liberty and Development (ULD), Marcellin DEGBE; Alliance ←
of
the National Party for Democracy and Development (PNDD) and the Democratic
Renewal Party (PRD), Pascal Chabi KAO; Alliance of the Social Democratic
Party (PSD) and the National Union for Solidarity and Progress (UNSP), ←
Bruno
AMOUSSOU; Our Common Cause (NCC), Albert TEVOEDJRE; National Rally for
Democracy (RND), Joseph KEKE; Alliance of the National Movement for
Democracy and Development (MNDD), leader NA; Movement for Solidarity, Union ←
, ←
and Progress (MSUP), Adebo ADENIYI; Union for Democracy and National
Reconstruction (UDRN), Azaria FAKOREDE; Union for Democracy and National
Solidarity (UDS), Mama Amadou N'DIAYE; Assembly of Liberal Democrats for
National Reconstruction (RDL), Severin ADJOVI; Alliance of the Alliance for
Social Democracy (ASD), Robert DOSSOU; Bloc for Social Democracy (BSD),
Michel MAGNIDE; Alliance of the Alliance for Democracy and Progress (ADP),
Akindes ADEKPEDJOU; Democratic Union for Social Renewal (UDRS), Bio Gado
Seko N'GOYE; National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP), Robert
TAGNON; Party for Progress and Democracy, Theophile NATA; numerous other
small parties

Suffrage:
18 years of age; universal

Elections:
National Assembly:
last held 10 and 24 March 1991; results - percent of vote by party NA; ←
seats
- (64 total) UDFP-MDPS-ULD 12, PNDD/PRD 9, PSD/UNSP 8, NCC 7, RND 7,
MNDD/MSUP/UDRN 6, UDS 5, RDL 4, ASD/BSD 3, ADP/UDRS 2, UNDP 1

1.6 27.guide/Government (Benin 2. usage)

Government (Benin 2. usage)

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President:
last held 10 and 24 March 1991; results - Nicephore SOGLO 68%, Mathieu
KEREKOU 32%

Executive branch:
president, cabinet

Legislative branch:
unicameral National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale)

Judicial branch:
Supreme Court (Cour Supreme)

Leaders:
Chief of State and Head of Government:
President Nicephore SOGLO (since 4 April 1991)

Member of:
ACCT, ACP, AfDB, CEAO, ECA, ECOWAS, Entente, FAO, FZ, G-77, GATT, IBRD,
ICAO, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, INTELSAT, INTERPOL, IOC, ITU,
LORCS, NAM, OAU, OIC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WADB, WCL, WHO, WIPO,
WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in US:
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 [229] 30-06-50, 30-05-13, 30-17-92
 FAX:
 [229] 30-14-39 and 30-19-74
 Flag:
 two equal horizontal bands of yellow (top) and red with a vertical green
 band on the hoist side

1.7 27.guide/Economy (Benin)

Economy (Benin)

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Overview:

Benin is one of the least developed countries in the world because of limited natural resources and a poorly developed infrastructure. ←

Agriculture

accounts for about 35% of GDP, employs about 60% of the labor force, and generates a major share of foreign exchange earnings. The industrial sector contributes only about 15% to GDP and employs 2% of the work force. Low prices in recent years have kept down hard currency earnings from Benin's major exports of agricultural products and crude oil.

National product: GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$2 billion (1991)

National product real growth rate:

3% (1991)

National product per capita:

\$410 (1991)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

3.4% (1990)

Unemployment rate:

NA%

Budget:

revenues \$194 million; expenditures \$390 million, including capital expenditures of \$104 million (1990 est.)

Exports:

\$263.3 million (f.o.b., 1990 est.)

commodities:

crude oil, cotton, palm products, cocoa

partners:

FRG 36%, France 16%, Spain 14%, Italy 8%, UK 4%

Imports:

\$428 million (f.o.b., 1990 est.)
 commodities:
 foodstuffs, beverages, tobacco, petroleum products, intermediate goods,
 capital goods, light consumer goods
 partners:
 France 34%, Netherlands 10%, Japan 7%, Italy 6%, US 4%
 External debt:
 \$1 billion (December 1990 est.)
 Industrial production:
 growth rate -0.7% (1988); accounts for 15% of GDP
 Electricity:
 30,000 kW capacity; 25 million kWh produced, 5 kWh per capita (1991)
 Industries:
 textiles, cigarettes, construction materials, beverages, food production,
 petroleum
 Agriculture:
 accounts for 35% of GDP; small farms produce 90% of agricultural output;
 production is dominated by food crops - corn, sorghum, cassava, beans, rice ↔
 ;
 cash crops include cotton, palm oil, peanuts; poultry and livestock output
 has not kept up with consumption
 Economic aid:
 US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-89), \$46 million; Western (non-US)
 countries, ODA and OOF bilateral commitments (1970-89), \$1,300 million; ↔
 OPEC
 bilateral aid (1979-89), \$19 million; Communist countries (1970-89), \$101
 million
 Currency:
 1 CFA franc (CFAF) = 100 centimes
 Exchange rates:
 Communauté Financière Africaine francs (CFAF) per US\$1 - 274.06 (January
 1993), 264.69 (1992), 282.11 (1991), 272.26 (1990), 319.01 (1989), 297.85
 (1988)

1.8 27.guide/Economy (Benin 2. usage)

Economy (Benin 2. usage)

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Fiscal year: calendar year

1.9 27.guide/Communications (Benin)

Communications (Benin)

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Railroads:

578 km, all 1.000-meter gauge, single track

Highways:

5,050 km total; 920 km paved, 2,600 laterite, 1,530 km improved earth

Inland waterways:

navigable along small sections, important only locally

Ports:

Cotonou

Airports:

total:

7

usable:

5

with permanent-surface runways:

1

with runways over 3,659 m:

0

with runways 2,439-3,659 m:

1

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

2

Telecommunications:

fair system of open wire, submarine cable, and radio relay microwave;
broadcast stations - 2 AM, 2 FM, 2 TV; 1 Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT earth
station

1.10 27.guide/Defense Forces (Benin)

Defense Forces (Benin)

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Branches:

Armed Forces (including Army, Navy, Air Force), National Gendarmerie

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 1,075,053; females age 15-49 1,170,693; males fit for
military service 550,645; females fit for military service 591,506; males
reach military age (18) annually 56,872; females reach military age (18)
annually 55,141 (1993 est.); both sexes are liable for military service

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$29 million, 1.7% of GDP (1988 est.)