

Cook Islands

(free association with New Zealand)

Geography

Location: Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, about one-half of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand

Map references: Oceania

Area:

total area: 240 sq km

land area: 240 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 120 km

Maritime claims:

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

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; moderated by trade winds

Terrain: low coral atolls in north; volcanic, hilly islands in south

Natural resources: negligible

Land use:

arable land: 4%

permanent crops: 22%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 0%

other: 74%

Environment:

natural hazards: typhoons (November to March)

People

Population: 19,343 (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.13% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 23.05 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.2 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -6.53 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 24.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 71.14 years

male: 69.2 years

female: 73.1 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.27 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Cook Islander(s)

adjective: Cook Islander

Ethnic divisions: Polynesian (full blood) 81.3%, Polynesian and European 7.7%, Polynesian and other 7.7%, European 2.4%, other 0.9%

Religions: Christian (majority of populace members of Cook Islands Christian Church)

Languages: English (official), Maori

Labor force: 5,810

by occupation: agriculture 29%, government 27%, services 25%, industry 15%, other 4% (1981)

Government

Names:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Cook Islands

Type: self-governing parliamentary government in free association with New Zealand; Cook Islands is fully responsible for internal affairs; New Zealand retains responsibility for external affairs, in consultation with the Cook Islands

Capital: Avarua

National holiday: Constitution Day, 4 August

Constitution: 4 August 1965

Flag: blue, with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and a large circle of 15 white five-pointed stars (one for every island) centered in the outer half of the flag

Economy

Overview: Agriculture provides the economic base. The major export earners are fruit, copra, and clothing. Manufacturing activities are limited to a fruit-processing plant and several clothing factories. Economic development is hindered by the isolation of the islands from foreign markets and a lack of natural resources and good transportation links. A large trade deficit is annually made up for by remittances from emigrants and from foreign aid, largely from New Zealand. Current economic development plans call for exploiting the tourism potential and expanding the fishing industry.

Agriculture: accounts for 12% of GDP, export crops - copra, citrus fruits, pineapples, tomatoes, bananas; subsistence crops - yams, taro

Transportation

Highways:
total: 187 km

Ports: Avarua, Avatiu

Airports:
total: 7