

Dominica

Geography

Location: Caribbean, island between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, about one-half of the way from Puerto Rico to Trinidad and Tobago

Area:

total area: 750 sq km

land area: 750 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 148 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; moderated by northeast trade winds; heavy rainfall

Terrain: rugged mountains of volcanic origin

Natural resources: timber

Land use:

arable land: 9%

permanent crops: 13%

meadows and pastures: 3%

forest and woodland: 41%

other: 34%

Environment:

natural hazards: flash floods are a constant threat; destructive hurricanes can be expected during the late summer months

People

Population: 82,608 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 29% (female 11,665; male 12,130)

15-64 years: 64% (female 25,606; male 26,890)

65 years and over: 7% (female 3,724; male 2,593) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.4% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 18.63 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.33 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -9.36 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 9.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 77.2 years

male: 74.35 years

female: 80.2 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.95 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Dominican(s)

adjective: Dominican

Ethnic divisions: black, Carib Indians

Religions: Roman Catholic 77%, Protestant 15% (Methodist 5%, Pentecostal 3%, Seventh-Day Adventist 3%, Baptist 2%, other 2%), none 2%, unknown 1%, other 5%

Languages: English (official), French patois

Literacy: age 15 and over has ever attended school (1970)

total population: 94%

male: 94%

female: 94%

Labor force: 25,000

by occupation: agriculture 40%, industry and commerce 32%, services 28% (1984)

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Commonwealth of Dominica

conventional short form: Dominica

Capital: Roseau

Independence: 3 November 1978 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 3 November (1978)

Constitution: 3 November 1978

Legal system: based on English common law

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: green with a centered cross of three equal bands - the vertical part is yellow (hoist side), black, and white - the horizontal part is yellow (top), black, and white; superimposed in the center of the cross is a red disk bearing a sisserou parrot encircled by 10 green five-pointed stars edged in yellow; the 10 stars represent the 10 administrative divisions (parishes)

Economy

Overview: The economy is dependent on agriculture and thus is highly vulnerable to climatic conditions. Agriculture accounts for about 30% of GDP and employs 40% of the labor force. Principal products include bananas, citrus, mangoes, root crops, and coconuts. Development of the tourist industry remains difficult because of the rugged coastline and the lack of an international airport.

Industries: soap, coconut oil, tourism, copra, furniture, cement blocks, shoes

Agriculture: accounts for 30% of GDP; principal crops - bananas, citrus, mangoes, root crops, coconuts; bananas provide the bulk of export earnings; forestry and fisheries potential not exploited

Illicit drugs: transshipment point for narcotics bound for the US and Europe; minor cannabis producer

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 750 km

Ports: Portsmouth, Roseau

Airports:
total: 2

Defence Forces

Branches: Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force (includes
Special Service Unit, Coast Guard)