

Liberia

Geography

Location: Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone

Area:

total area: 111,370 sq km

land area: 96,320 sq km

Land boundaries: total 1,585 km, Guinea 563 km, Cote d'Ivoire 716 km, Sierra Leone 306 km

Coastline: 579 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 200 nm

Climate: tropical; hot, humid; dry winters with hot days and cool to cold nights; wet, cloudy summers with frequent heavy showers

Terrain: mostly flat to rolling coastal plains rising to rolling plateau and low mountains in northeast

Natural resources: iron ore, timber, diamonds, gold

Land use:

arable land: 1%

permanent crops: 3%

meadows and pastures: 2%

forest and woodland: 39%

other: 55%

Irrigated land: 20 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: tropical rain forest subject to deforestation; soil erosion; loss of biodiversity; pollution of rivers from the dumping of iron ore tailings and of coastal waters from oil residue and raw sewage

natural hazards: dust-laden harmattan winds blow from the Sahara (December to March)

People

Population: 3,073,245 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 44% (female 674,155; male 680,952)

15-64 years: 52% (female 768,147; male 844,326)

65 years and over: 4% (female 55,575; male 50,090) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 3.32% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 43.08 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 12.05 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 110.6 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 58.17 years

male: 55.67 years
female: 60.75 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.3 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Liberian(s)
adjective: Liberian

Ethnic divisions: indigenous African tribes 95% (including Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru, Grebo, Mano, Krahn, Gola, Gbandi, Loma, Kissi, Vai, and Bella), Americo-Liberians 5% (descendants of former slaves)

Religions: traditional 70%, Muslim 20%, Christian 10%

Languages: English 20% (official), Niger-Congo language group about 20 local languages come from this group

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1990 est.)
total population: 40%
male: 50%
female: 29%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Liberia

conventional short form: Liberia

Type: republic

Capital: Monrovia

Independence: 26 July 1847

National holiday: Independence Day, 26 July (1847)

Constitution: 6 January 1986

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: 11 equal horizontal stripes of red (top and bottom) alternating with white; there is a white five-pointed star on a blue square in the upper hoist-side corner; the design was based on the US flag

Economy

Industries: rubber processing, food processing, construction materials, furniture, palm oil processing, mining (iron ore, diamonds)

Agriculture: accounts for about 40% of GDP (including fishing and forestry); principal products - rubber, timber, coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava, palm oil, sugarcane, bananas, sheep, goats; not self-sufficient in food, imports 25% of rice consumption

Illicit drugs: increasingly a transshipment point for heroin and cocaine

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 490 km (single track)

Highways:

total: 10,087 km

Ports: Buchanan, Greenville, Harper, Monrovia

Airports:

total: 59