

Northern Mariana Islands

(commonwealth in political union with the US)

Geography

Location: Oceania, islands in the North Pacific Ocean, about three-quarters of the way from Hawaii to the Philippines

Area:

total area: 477 sq km

land area: 477 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,482 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical marine; moderated by northeast trade winds, little seasonal temperature variation; dry season December to June, rainy season July to October

Terrain: southern islands are limestone with level terraces and fringing coral reefs; northern islands are volcanic; highest elevation is 471 m (Mt. Okso' Takpochao on Saipan)

Natural resources: arable land, fish

Land use:

arable land: 5% on Saipan

permanent crops: NA%

meadows and pastures: 19%

forest and woodland: NA%

other: NA%

Environment:

current issues: contamination of groundwater on Saipan by raw sewage contributes to disease

natural hazards: active volcanoes on Pagan and Agrihan; typhoons (especially August to November)

Note: strategic location in the North Pacific Ocean

People

Population: 51,033 (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 3.04% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 33.05 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 4.61 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 37.96 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 67.43 years

male: 65.53 years

female: 69.48 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.69 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Ethnic divisions: Chamorro, Carolinians and other Micronesians, Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean

Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic majority, although traditional beliefs and taboos may still be found)

Languages: English, Chamorro, Carolinian
note: 86% of population speaks a language other than English at home

Literacy:
total population: 97%
male: 97%
female: 96%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

conventional short form: Northern Mariana Islands

Type: commonwealth in political union with the US; self-governing with locally elected governor, lieutenant governor, and legislature; federal funds to the Commonwealth administered by the US Department of the Interior, Office of Territorial and International Affairs

Capital: Saipan

Independence: none (commonwealth in political union with the US)

National holiday: Commonwealth Day, 8 January (1978)

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal; indigenous inhabitants are US citizens but do not vote in US presidential elections

Economy

Industries: tourism, construction, light industry, handicrafts

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 381.5 km

Inland waterways: none

Ports: Saipan, Tinian

Merchant marine: none

Airports:
total: 8

Defence Forces

Note: defence is the responsibility of the US