

Solomon Islands

Geography

Location: Oceania, group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Papua New Guinea

Area:

total area: 28,450 sq km

land area: 27,540 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 5,313 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic baselines

continental shelf: 200 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical monsoon; few extremes of temperature and weather

Terrain: mostly rugged mountains with some low coral atolls

Natural resources: fish, forests, gold, bauxite, phosphates, lead, zinc, nickel

Land use:

arable land: 1%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 1%

forest and woodland: 93%

other: 4%

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; soil erosion; much of the surrounding coral reefs are dead or dying

natural hazards: typhoons, but they are rarely destructive;

geologically active region with frequent earth tremors; volcanic activity

People

Population: 399,206 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 46% (female 90,293; male 93,695)

15-64 years: 51% (female 100,183; male 103,374)

65 years and over: 3% (female 5,738; male 5,923) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 3.4% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 38.48 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 4.51 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

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

Infant mortality rate: 26.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 70.84 years

male: 68.38 years

female: 73.41 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 5.59 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Solomon Islander(s)

adjective: Solomon Islander

Ethnic divisions: Melanesian 93%, Polynesian 4%, Micronesian 1.5%, European 0.8%, Chinese 0.3%, other 0.4%

Religions: Anglican 34%, Roman Catholic 19%, Baptist 17%, United (Methodist/Presbyterian) 11%, Seventh-Day Adventist 10%, other Protestant 5%, traditional beliefs 4%

Languages: Melanesian pidgin in much of the country is lingua franca, English spoken by 1%-2% of population

note: 120 indigenous languages

Government

Names:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Solomon Islands
former: British Solomon Islands

Capital: Honiara

Independence: 7 July 1978 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 7 July (1978)

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: divided diagonally by a thin yellow stripe from the lower hoist-side corner; the upper triangle (hoist side) is blue with five white five-pointed stars arranged in an X pattern; the lower triangle is green

Economy

Overview: The bulk of the population depend on subsistence agriculture, fishing, and forestry for at least part of their livelihood. Most manufactured goods and petroleum products must be

imported. The islands are rich in undeveloped mineral resources such as lead, zinc, nickel, and gold.

Industries: copra, fish (tuna)

Agriculture: including fishing and forestry, accounts for 31% of GDP; mostly subsistence farming; cash crops - cocoa, beans, coconuts, palm kernels, timber; other products - rice, potatoes, vegetables, fruit, cattle, pigs; not self-sufficient in food grains

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 1,300 km

Ports: Aola Bay, Honiara, Lofung, Noro, Viru Harbor, Yandina

Airports:
total: 31

Defence Forces

Branches: no military forces; Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP)