

Western Samoa

Geography

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

Area:

total area: 2,860 sq km

land area: 2,850 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 403 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; rainy season (October to March), dry season (May to October)

Terrain: narrow coastal plain with volcanic, rocky, rugged mountains in interior

Natural resources: hardwood forests, fish

Land use:

arable land: 19%

permanent crops: 24%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 47%

other: 10%

Environment:

current issues: soil erosion

natural hazards: occasional typhoons; active volcanism

People

Population: 209,360 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 40% (female 41,503; male 42,844)

15-64 years: 56% (female 55,683; male 61,065)

65 years and over: 4% (female 4,323; male 3,942) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.37% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 31.74 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.88 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -2.14 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 35.5 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 68.38 years

male: 65.99 years

female: 70.88 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.04 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Western Samoan(s)

adjective: Western Samoan

Ethnic divisions: Samoan 92.6%, Euronesians 7% (persons of European and Polynesian blood), Europeans 0.4%

Religions: Christian 99.7% (about one-half of population associated with the London Missionary Society; includes Congregational, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Latter Day Saints, Seventh-Day Adventist)

Languages: Samoan (Polynesian), English

Literacy:

total population: 97%

male: 97%

female: 97%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Independent State of Western Samoa

conventional short form: Western Samoa

Type: constitutional monarchy under native chief

Capital: Apia

Independence: 1 January 1962 (from UN trusteeship administered by New Zealand)

National holiday: National Day, 1 June (1962)

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: red with a blue rectangle in the upper hoist-side quadrant bearing five white five-pointed stars representing the Southern Cross constellation

Economy

Overview: Agriculture employs more than half of the labor force. The bulk of export earnings comes from the sale of coconut oil and copra. Tourism has become the most important growth industry.

Industries: timber, tourism, food processing, fishing

Agriculture: accounts for about 50% of GDP; coconuts, fruit (including bananas, taro, yams)

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:
total: 2,042 km

Ports: Apia, Asau, Mulifanua, Salelologa

Airports:

total: 3

Defence Forces

Branches: no regular armed services; Western Samoa Police Force