

# Botswana

## Geography

Location: Southern Africa, north of South Africa

Map references: Africa

Area:

total area: 600,370 sq km

land area: 585,370 sq km

Land boundaries: total 4,013 km, Namibia 1,360 km, South Africa 1,840 km, Zimbabwe 813 km

Coastline: 0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims: none; landlocked

Climate: semiarid; warm winters and hot summers

Terrain: predominately flat to gently rolling tableland; Kalahari Desert in southwest

Natural resources: diamonds, copper, nickel, salt, soda ash, potash, coal, iron ore, silver

Land use:

arable land: 2%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 75%

forest and woodland: 2%

other: 21%

Irrigated land: 20 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: overgrazing, primarily as a result of the expansion of the cattle population; desertification; limited natural fresh water resources

natural hazards: periodic droughts; seasonal August winds blow from the west, carrying sand and dust across the country, which can obscure visibility

Note: landlocked; population concentrated in eastern part of the country

## People

Population: 1,392,414 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 43% (female 300,598; male 303,333)

15-64 years: 53% (female 398,347; male 344,838)

65 years and over: 4% (female 25,773; male 19,525) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.36% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 31.01 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 7.41 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

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

Infant mortality rate: 38 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 63.56 years

male: 60.54 years

female: 66.67 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.86 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Motswana (singular), Batswana (plural)

adjective: Motswana (singular), Batswana (plural)

Ethnic divisions: Batswana 95%, Kalanga, Basarwa, and Kgalagadi 4%, white 1%

Religions: indigenous beliefs 50%, Christian 50%

Languages: English (official), Setswana

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1990 est.)

total population: 23%

male: 32%

female: 16%

Labour force: 428,000

by occupation: 220,000 formal sector employees, most others are engaged in cattle raising and subsistence agriculture (1992 est.);

14,300 are employed in various mines in South Africa

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Botswana

conventional short form: Botswana

former: Bechuanaland

Type: parliamentary republic

Capital: Gaborone

Administrative divisions: 10 districts; Central, Chobe, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Kgatleng, Kweneng, Ngamiland, North-East, South-East, Southern; in addition, there are 4 town councils - Francistown, Gaborone, Lobatse, Selebi-Phikwe

Independence: 30 September 1966 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 30 September (1966)

Constitution: March 1965, effective 30 September 1966

Legal system: based on Roman-Dutch law and local customary law; judicial review limited to matters of interpretation; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: light blue with a horizontal white-edged black stripe in the center

## Economy

Overview: The economy has historically been based on cattle raising and crops. Agriculture today provides a livelihood for more than 80% of the population but supplies only about 50% of food needs and accounts for only 5% of GDP. Subsistence farming and cattle raising predominate. The driving force behind the rapid economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s has been the mining industry. This sector, mostly on the strength of diamonds, has gone from generating 25% of GDP in 1980 to 39% in 1994. No other sector has experienced such growth, especially not agriculture, which is plagued by erratic rainfall and poor soils. The unemployment rate remains a problem at 25%.

Industries: mining of diamonds, copper, nickel, coal, salt, soda ash, potash; livestock processing

Agriculture: sorghum, maize, millet, pulses, groundnuts, beans, cowpeas, sunflower seeds; livestock

## Transportation

Railroads:

total: 888 km

Highways:

total: 11,514 km

Airports:

total: 100

Defence Forces

Branches: Botswana Defense Force (includes Army and Air Wing),  
Botswana National Police