

# Djibouti

## Geography

Location: Eastern Africa, bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, between Eritrea and Somalia

Area:

total area: 22,000 sq km

land area: 21,980 sq km

Land boundaries: total 508 km, Eritrea 113 km, Ethiopia 337 km, Somalia 58 km

Coastline: 314 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: desert; torrid, dry

Terrain: coastal plain and plateau separated by central mountains

Natural resources: geothermal areas

Environment:

current issues: inadequate supplies of potable water; desertification

natural hazards: earthquakes; droughts; occasional cyclonic

disturbances from the Indian Ocean bring heavy rains and flash floods

international agreements: party to - Biodiversity, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Ship Pollution; signed, but not ratified - Climate Change, Desertification

Note: strategic location near world's busiest shipping lanes and close to Arabian oilfields; terminus of rail traffic into Ethiopia; a vast wasteland

## People

Population: 421,320 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 43% (female 90,070; male 90,631)

15-64 years: 55% (female 108,824; male 121,715)

65 years and over: 2% (female 4,900; male 5,180) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.48% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 42.79 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 15.51 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -12.46 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 108.8 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 49.7 years

male: 47.83 years

female: 51.62 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.15 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Djiboutian(s)

adjective: Djiboutian

Ethnic divisions: Somali 60%, Afar 35%, French, Arab, Ethiopian, and Italian 5%

Religions: Muslim 94%, Christian 6%

Languages: French (official), Arabic (official), Somali, Afar

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

total population: 48%

male: 63%

female: 34%

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Djibouti

conventional short form: Djibouti

former: French Territory of the Afars and Issas French Somaliland

Capital: Djibouti

Independence: 27 June 1977 (from France)

National holiday: Independence Day, 27 June (1977)

Constitution: multiparty constitution approved in referendum 4 September 1992

Legal system: based on French civil law system, traditional practices, and Islamic law

Flag: two equal horizontal bands of light blue (top) and light green with a white isosceles triangle based on the hoist side bearing a red five-pointed star in the center

## Economy

Overview: The economy is based on service activities connected with the country's strategic location and status as a free trade zone in northeast Africa. Two-thirds of the inhabitants live in the capital city, the remainder being mostly nomadic herders. Scanty rainfall limits crop production to fruits and vegetables, and most food must

be imported. Djibouti provides services as both a transit port for the region and an international transshipment and refueling center. It has few natural resources and little industry. The nation is, therefore, heavily dependent on foreign assistance (an important supplement to GDP) to help support its balance of payments and to finance development projects. An unemployment rate of over 30% continues to be a major problem.

Industries: limited to a few small-scale enterprises, such as dairy products and mineral-water bottling

Agriculture: mostly fruit and vegetables; herding of goats, sheep, and camels

## Transportation

### Railroads:

total: 97 km (Djibouti segment of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railroad)

### Highways:

total: 2,900 km

Ports: Djibouti

Airports:  
total: 13

## Defence Forces

Branches: Djibouti National Army (includes Navy and Air Force),  
National Security Force (Force Nationale de Securite), National  
Police Force